



NATIONAL PARKS  
ASSOCIATION  
OF THE A.C.T.  
BULLETIN

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National Parks Association of the A. C. T. Inc.

"A National Park for the National Capital"

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Monthly meeting - 4th Tuesday of the month

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Our 1965 activities have commenced very successfully with two well attended meetings and outings. The picnic meeting was most enjoyable, due mainly to the folk singer Colin McJannett who entertained us.

The committee wishes to thank our president who prepared at short notice an interesting talk about animals and people in S-W Africa for the March meeting. This talk replaced the programme about German National Parks which we hope to have later in the year.

The very well organised outing to Coolamon and Yarrang abilly Caves was held only a week before a terrible bush fire swept the area. This magnificent country appeared to have been untouched by fire for a long time so the devastation now must be very great.

Conservation News

It is a pleasure to note that the N. S. W. Fauna Protection Panel has appointed an Education Officer, Mr. A. Fox. Conservation of our native flora and fauna will only be really possible and effective if the public is educated to "think" conservation and learn to demand that areas of their country be set aside as native reserves. For information regarding conservation in N. S. W. write to the Education Officer, The Fauna Panel, Caltex House, 167 Kent Street, Sydney.

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National Parks Association of the A. C. T. Bulletin April-May

From the Victorian N. P. A.

No decision as yet has been made about Mallacoota National Park. The proposed inspection mentioned in our last bulletin has been held and the V. N. P. A. now await news as to what recommendation has been made by the Minister of Lands to the Victorian Cabinet.

Conservation Lectures

In the last bulletin these lectures, commencing in June, were advertised. It is with regret that Dr Bird has had to cancel the lectures. However, it is hoped that they can be held at some later time.

A. C. T. N. P. A. Badges

These will be on sale from the beginning of April. They will be displayed at the April meeting and outing. The cost of this fine badge which was designed by Mr E. Slater will cost you 5/-. Buy one and wear it as an advertisement of the National Park Movement.

Membership

The treasurer reports that he has received 151 subscriptions for 1965-66 including 49 family subscriptions. This means that the association has a membership of over 200. It is very encouraging to see the membership growing as we hope it indicates a growing awareness in the community for the need of conservation. We welcome as new members Dr & Mrs Bornemessza, Mr & Mrs W. P. Packard, Dr Hoogland, Mr R. L. Want, Mr & Mrs T. Greaves, Mrs P. M. Walker, Mr & Mrs W. Fabricuis, Mr & Mrs Scollay, Mrs D. Gregory, Mr & Mrs W. T. Cramp, Prof & Mrs D. A. Brown and Miss Sheila Green.

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# WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

ALLEN A. STROM, from "The Living Earth".

*It is difficult to secure a clear picture of the size of wildlife populations when early colonists came to this country; but it is certain that there were many virgin forests, wide-sweeping grasslands, inhabited by a much larger population of animals than exists today. The scattered aboriginal tribes had little or no effect on these teeming populations. In fact, they were so directly dependent upon the wildlife that they were a small and rather insignificant part of the biotic community. The entry of white man into occupation has had a vastly different effect upon the country's fauna and flora and store-house of natural environments.*

So the problems of wildlife management began just as soon as the European first set foot on Australian soil and commenced to change the face of the continent with his development of agriculture, industry and urban living, causing permanent destruction of the environments over a great area. Although he is loath to admit it, Man has been responsible, by his own activities, in providing easily accessible food and water supplies, for declaring certain animals as "desirable" and others as "undesirable" and in the process of acquiring a habit of looking over the whole world from the point of view of economic utility. The result has been that a great many animals have been forced to become "undesirable" species. . . . there has been a steady decline of their species to go.

Efforts to control forms of wildlife destructive to property, livestock, and always be part of a Game Conservation Programme because the goodwill of the rural community is essential.

But it has also been slowly realised that populations of "valuable" wildlife can also be too great for their own good. This is because the carrying capacities of available lands today are a different story from those existing in the ecology of the primitive environments.

It has taken well over a century for authority to realise the existence of a need for wildlife management. Even today, we are still belaboured by the erroneous concept that the land is so big that there is little need for such a service, despite the fact that scientific enquiry tells us that about 42 per cent. of the marsupial species in New South Wales are so scarce as to be regarded as extinct or about so . . . all gone since 1788!

The major facets of the wildlife management problem are well demonstrated in the great wave of publicity that struck the newspapers some little time ago regarding the "Kangaroo" and the effect of the marsupial on the Australian economy, in particular, the wool industry. Not all the publicity of course, has been in the best interests of clear thinking and unchallengeable facts. The general public as is usual, has been caught in the middle of the stream, and altogether, has had to make up its mind in a rather muddled sort of fashion . . . that is, if it really wanted to know the facts, anyhow. There has been talk about eliminating the kangaroo to run more sheep and a counter-offensive for giving the land back to the kangaroo, forgetting that we have destroyed so much "good earth" in about one hundred and seventy years.

Extremism is a false premise at any time and when the talk turns to wild animals there usually seems no limit to man's capacity to expand his imagination. Firstly, if this nation of ours wants the kangaroo to be something more than a symbol on the coat-of-arms, then the animal must live with the man-on-the-land and compete to some extent with sheep and crops. In other words, the economy of the country must contribute to a fauna conservation programme in accordance with our evaluation of fauna as being a cultural necessity. The question really is . . . what can we afford to expend on retaining the kangaroo (or any other fauna, for that matter)?

That seems to be the three-hundred-dollar question, as the various interests all have a different answer and somehow the fauna management authorities have got to supply a solution to satisfy reasoned judgement. Certainly this country of ours has sufficient in resources to ensure the survival of existing species. On the one hand, it seems unrealistic to have hundreds (or perhaps, thousands) of kangaroos eating us out of house and home, yet on the other hand, to reduce numbers until the sight of a kangaroo is as rare as seeing a koala, would be ridiculous. Someday, even from a pure tourist angle, we will measure the worth of a mob of kangaroos in "full flight" across the plain. If we had had the foresight to plan another Kruger National Park for the Red (or Plains) Kangaroo, then the problem would have resolved itself much more readily. But the truth of the matter is that we have nothing left in the West for such an enterprise and hence we come back to the old roundabout . . . sometimes we must protect the kangaroo and sometimes the landholder. It looks like going

on forever, unless the 'roo gives up in despair or the State is bequeathed several holdings, well-watered and well-grassed!

The most disturbing feature of the whole story has been the way in which ALL the macropods have come up for criticism and slaughter . . . pademelons, wallabies, wallaroos kangaroos, in fact, anything that hops! Conferences of grazing interests want the protection lifted off "kangaroos and wallabies" regardless of species or district . . . a mild form of "anti-macropod hysteria". No matter where fieldwork has taken the staff of the Fauna Protection Panel, there is someone waiting to label the nearest macropod with being in "plague proportions". In fact, misguided and hopeful folk, young and old, call at or ring the office of the Fauna Protection Panel intent upon "lending a hand to reduce the plague", and most imagine this can be done by firing a .22 rifle just beyond the suburbs of Sydney.

The "demon" in the case is of course, the Red or Plains Kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*) and the biggest concentrations are in the "West Bogan country". But the amazing facts of the case are that there has been an open season for kangaroos in the Western Division for seven years. Who is charged with the task of taking action? Certainly not the Fauna Protection Panel. The Panel is a conservation body whose function it is to recommend the removal of protection when it is considered that such protection is no longer necessary. But the Panel is most anxious to solve the riddle of the ecological problems concerning the kangaroo and this involves biological studies. The Panel took a forward place in seeking to have the C.S.I.R.O. undertake the work which it has now commenced.

## EYES OR NO EYES NO. 12

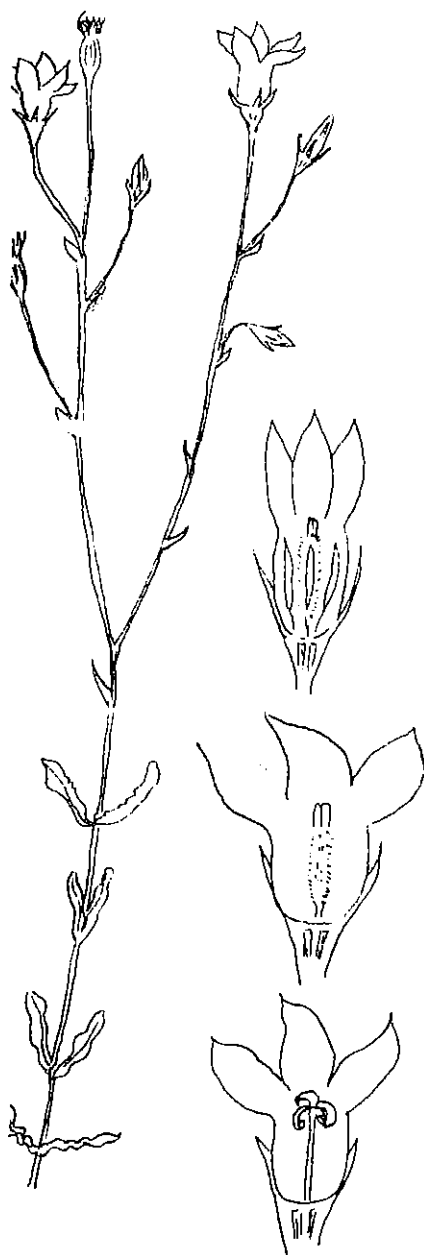
Among the few flowers still to be seen this very dry summer are some Australian Bluebells. These belong to the genus Wahlenbergia.

The one shown in the plant sketched here is given about half size. It grows in woodland and dry forest places such as Mt Ainslie, Black Mt and Red Hill and flowers earlier in the season. Another one with flowers about the size of those in the drawing but with many stems grows in open places and often persists in Canberra gardens. It is this kind that can still be found in flower.

If you look at a flower you will probably fail to find any anthers. These open in the bud and shed their pollen on to the hairy style. They soon wither away. Only in advanced or old flowers will you find the top of the style split into two or three stigmas ready to receive pollen. The flowers have developed this special way of making sure they are not pollinated by their own pollen.

Have you ever noticed this?

N. T. B.



MEETINGSApril

Date : Tuesday, 27th April at 8 o'clock

Place : Institute of Anatomy

Features : A talk by Prof. Pryor entitled "Biological Aspects of National Park Management". Prof. Pryor has visited National Parks whilst overseas and has studied their methods of management.

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May - A special general meeting

Date : Monday, 3rd May at 8 o'clock

Place : C. S. I. R. O. lecture room in the main block.

Features : Mr A. G. MacArthur will speak on "Meteorological and Ecological conditions of the Kosciusko Bushfire".

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May General Meeting

Date : Tuesday 25th May at 8 o'clock

Place : Institute of Anatomy

Features : Films -

1. "The Changing Forest" - an account of the ecology of a deciduous forest area (in colour). The forest is shown as an intergrated community of living things both plant and animal.
  2. "Natural Enemies of Insect Pests"
  3. "Nests in the Bush" (an Australian film)
  4. "Prehistoric Animals of the Tarpits". Describes the tarpits at Rancho La Brea in the city of Los Angeles and shows the skeletons of some of the animals taken from them.
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OUTINGSApril

Date : Sunday, 25th April  
 Place : Shearsby's Wallpaper and viewing the geological features of the surrounding area.

Leader : Professor Brown.

Details : Travel towards Yass and turn off along the Wee Jasper Road. At the first sight of the backwaters of Burrinjuck Dam, turn into the first road on the right - called Bloomfield Road. Meet at this junction at 10.30 a.m. Bring a cut lunch as there will be some walking.

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May

Date : Sunday 30th May 1965  
 Place : Gibraltar Falls, Kangaroo Flats, Corin Dam.  
 Leaders : Dr Story and Mr Green.  
 Details : The meeting place will be at the junction of the Tharwa Road and Paddy's River Road at 10 a.m. As there will be some walking, a packed lunch is advisable.

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The June outing will be a visit to the Wild Life Division of C. S. I. R. O. Belconnen during the morning and a walk up Mt. Majura in the afternoon.

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Remember : - The wilderness we now have, is all that we, or any men, will ever have .....