



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"

President : Mr. J. Webb, 1 Lalor St., Ainslie (4 3661)
Secretary : Miss M. Sexton, Box 457, P.O. Canberra City
(45795)
Treasurer : Mr. J.L. Schunke, 26 Clianthus St., O'Connor

Monthly Meeting - 3rd Tuesday of the month.

The next two months will be very busy and important months for our Association.

For our June monthly meeting, Vincent Serventy, the author of the recently published book "A Continent in Danger", will give an address on conservation in Australia and show a film that he has produced. As he has come to Canberra at the invitation of our Association, the weekend will be spent viewing reserves and the mountain areas in the A.C.T. Members will be able to attend an outing with him on the Sunday. Mr. Serventy is an excellent speaker and deserves a good audience, so all members are requested to advertise this meeting to their friends. For details of the meeting and outing please look at the pages 7 and 8, but note the change of meeting date and place to Monday 19th June at the Physics Building, A.N.U.

The July meeting is our Annual Meeting, which all members are urged to attend. Nominations (in writing) of members for committee positions to be given to Marie Sexton, the Secretary.

As the Committee feels that the only hope for conservation in the future is to educate and interest the young, an essay and a poster competition for school children is being organised. The essay competition is for high school children only, but the poster competition is for Infant, Primary and High schools. Suitable essay entries will be used for the nature articles published regularly in the "Canberra Times". The winning essay will be displayed in the Monaro Mall from 12th to 17th June. Book prizes will be given for the poster competition and a selection of the best posters will

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also be displayed in the Monaro Mall from 31st July to 5th August . Awards will be made on 4th August at 7.30 p.m. at the Mall.

Conservation in Australia - Before 1788 !

The aborigines of Australia treated their homeland with a respect and commonsense that was and still is lacking in the attitude of the European population that has occupied the land. Mary Gilmore in her book "Old Days - Old Ways" writes of sancturies that the aborigines of N.S.W. had, where native animals could breed unmolested. Parts of deep valleys where there was running water and much timber would be sancturies, and plains by the rivers would in part be reserved for ground-nesting birds. A sanctuary for emus was at Eunonyhariemyha, near Wagga Wagga. Sancturies were made in lagoons, rivers and billabongs for waterbirds and fish. The Barwon and Bogan swamps were especially cared for. Pregaran Pregaran Lagoon at North Wagga Wagga was a sanctuary for Pelicans, swans and cranes. The land between it and the Murrumbidgee was a curlew sanctuary. At Ganmain and Deepwater there were alternately swan and duck sanctuaries. Lake Cargelligo was set aside for birds and fish, and trapping and fishing was allowed on only one side at a time. Mary Gilmore remembered that when she was a child, Pregaran Pregaran Lagoon was covered with pelicans, teal, duck, cranes and swans; possums were plentiful in the trees and the western rivers teemed with fish. This had been the case all over Australia while the large Aboriginal population held ownership, but within a hundred years, once the small European population of the early days of settlement entered an area, the wildlife rapidly disappeared. Animals birds (and their eggs) and fish were destroyed without thought, the swamps drained and the rivers dammed. Mary Gilmore also claims that after a fire, the aboriginal women, under the direction of an elder, would plant seed under any shrub that had been killed by the fire. Grass seed was gathered and scattered over the burnt area to quickly promote cover over the bare ground. The Aborigines had also studied the way to fight a bushfire, and were often called National Parks Association of the A.C.T. Bulletin June-July 1967.

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upon by the early settlers to do this.

If only European settlers had created flora and fauna sanctuaries from the very beginning of settlement, what a wealth of native plant and animal life we would still have.

Upsetting the Balance of Nature

Another example of European man's interference with nature is given in the following article contributed by M.R.L. Want.

When he visited St. Helena, Darwin noted that the pigs and goats that had been introduced to the island had over a period of 220 years, brought about the destruction of forest areas on the island. The following is taken from "Voyage of the Beagle."

"The history of the changes, which the elevated plains of Longwood and Deadwood have undergone, as given in General Beatson's account of the island, is extremely curious. Both plains, it is said, in former times were covered with wood, and were therefore called the Great Wood. As late as the year 1716 there were many trees, but in 1724 the old trees had mostly fallen, and as goats and hogs had been suffered to range about, all the young trees had been killed. It appears also from the official records, that the trees were unexpectedly some years afterwards, succeeded by a wire grass, which spread over the whole surface. General Beatson adds that now this plain "is covered with fine sward and is become the finest piece of pasture on the island." The extent of surface, probably covered by wood at a former period, is estimated at no less than two thousand acres; at the present day scarcely a single tree can be found there. It is also said that in 1709 there were quantities of dead trees in Sandy Bay. This place is now so utterly desert, that nothing but so well attested an account could have made me believe that they could ever have grown there. The fact that the goats and hogs destroyed all the young trees as they sprang up, and that in the course of time the old ones, which were safe from their attacks, perished from age, seems clearly made out.

Goats were introduced in the year 1502; eighty-six years afterwards, in the time of Cavendish, it is known that they were exceedingly numerous. More than a century afterwards, in 1731, when the evil was complete and irretrievable, an order was issued that all stray animals should be destroyed. It is very interesting thus to find, that the arrival of animals at St. Helena in 1501 did not change the whole aspect of the island, until a period of two hundred and twenty years had elapsed, for the goats were introduced in 1502, and in 1724 it is said "the old trees had mostly fallen."

The parallel afforded with our own country, which has been settled for a little less than 200 years, is rather disturbing. The destruction of our native bushland would not only involve the disappearance of our native fauna, but would in the long run be detrimental to our pastureland as well. Our bushland is threatened by economic forces, but there are also economic factors in favour of its preservation. Its value in the preservation of gully erosion, its value for windbreaks, its value for forest timber; it is desirable for these factors to be stated clearly before it is too late.

Pesticides

The Department of Primary Industry is seeking a "Pesticide Co-ordinator", and will "co-ordinate Commonwealth and State activities in the use of agricultural pesticides, examine control procedures and overseas requirements concerning pesticide residues in foodstuffs and ensure effective Australian participation in international agencies concerned". As people who are interested in Conservation, we know that the indiscriminate use of pesticides is upsetting the balance of nature by killing the natural food of many Australian birds, and killing fish when it is washed into the rivers. It is good that this problem will be looked at on a nationwide scale.

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EYES OR NO EYES

There are three species of Bottlebrush that grow in the A.C.T. All of them have creamy or pale yellow flowers.

The one figured is the Swamp Bottlebrush (Callistemon paludosus) and it is common on the banks of creeks and rivers, such as the banks of the Molonglo in the Gorge. Its leaves are 1-2 inches long and the flowering "brushes" are up to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter.

Alpine Bottlebrush (C. sieberi) is a common shrub in swamps and along mountain creeks at high levels such as Snowy Flats at Mt. Gingera. It has smaller leaves and brushes less than one inch in diameter.

Lemon Bottlebrush (C. pallidus) is less commonly seen because it grows in open heathy vegetation on high mountain slopes. One such place is near the summit of Mt. Coree. It has broader leaves 1- $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and brushes to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.

N.T.B.

MEETINGSJune

Date : Monday, 19th June, 1967 at 8 p.m.
 Place : Physics Building, A.N.U. Main door and turn right.
 Feature : Mr. Vincent Serventy - his theme "A Continent in
 Danger".
 Our guest speaker of the year who has come to
 Canberra following an invitation from our Association.
 Mr. Serventy will also show a conservation film he
 has made.
 This is a special meeting. Bring your friends.

July

Date : Tuesday 18th July 1967 at 8 p.m.
 Place : Institute of Anatomy
 Feature : ANNUAL MEETING
 Annual report and election of committee for 1967-68.
 Bring any slides you have of 1966-67 outings.
 A N.S.W. Fauna Protection film will be shown.

Subscription Renewals: Mrs. Monahan, Prof. Koch-Emmery, Mr. &
 Mrs. Nix.

Remember your subscriptions for 1967-68 fall due at the annual
 meeting. Bring your sub. with you when you attend the meeting.
 Single membership \$2.00
 Family membership \$3.00

STOP PRESS: At Annual Meeting, Outstanding colour film "Into Your
 Hand" produced for Fauna Protection Panel will be shown. Allan Fox
 of Sydney, Protection Panel Education officer, will introduce it.

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OUTINGS

June

Date : Sunday 18th June 1967.

Place : Gingera Mountain

Leader : Our president, who will be showing Vincent Serventy the typical high mountain country found in the A.C.T.

Meeting

Place : 11.30 a.m. at Gingera Flats (just past Mt. Franklin).

June

Date : Weekend Outing: 24-25 June

Place : Jervis Bay - staying overnight in the "Riverhaven" motel at Nowra (\$3 a night). Please inform leader if motel room required.

Leader : Jim Webb who will lead the party to areas not viewed during the February outing. Jervis Bay is of special interest to our Association as it is part of the A.C.T.

Meeting

Place : Saturday morning at 9 o'clock - Nowra Motel or the main turnoff to Jervis Bay from the Pacific Highway at 9.45 a.m.

July

Date : Sunday 23rd July 1967

Place : Wee Jasper Caves

Meeting

Place : Wee Jasper at 11 a.m.

Feature : Examining the vegetation near the caves and exploring a cave which is inhabited by bats. If you want to go caving bring old clothes and a torch.
