

Wetlands speaker at Field Nats

WETLANDS ecology and conservation will be the topics covered by the guest speaker at the next meeting of the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club.

The speaker will be Dr Michelle Casanova, a freshwater ecologist and wetlands consultant.

Dr Casanova began her career by studying marine biology but after moving to the Western District decided to switch to freshwater studies.

She says she has always liked working with "wet things".

She is interested in all sorts of aquatic plants, but has made a special study of the freshwater macro algae. This is an area of natural history that will be new to most of the club members.

Michelle says that the

Nature Notes

This article is one of an occasional series contributed by members of the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club.

district has lost many of the original shallow seasonal wetlands that were present before settlement. Those that were easiest to drain were often turned over to grazing while others were ploughed and cropped.

If the drains are plugged, many of the original plants can return, even on long-time grazed areas, but are lost forever once the wetland has been used for crops.

Because of the loss of these areas, many of the plants found in and around them are classified as threatened.

The photos show two

plants found locally which are considered to be vulnerable and endangered. These plants are further threatened by weed competition and illegal worm digging.

The club intended to visit two local wetlands for the weekend excursion but, in common with most other such areas in the district, they are both quite dry.

Members and intending visitors to the meeting should note that it will be on Friday, November 18, not Thursday as is usual. It will be held at HIRL, North Boundary Rd at 8pm.

As usual visitors will be made very welcome.



GORAE Leek orchid - an endangered wetland plant.



SWAMP everlasting, a threatened plant being monitored at a local wetland.