



HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

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NEWSLETTER, March 2000

The Old Order Changeth...

...but not very much. We have ushered in the Year 2000 with a slight modification of the committee. The **President**, **Secretary** and **Treasurer** remain unchanged: Dave Munro, Janeen Samuel and Ken Grimes respectively. However, the new **Vice-President** is Rod Bird and **Media Liaison Officer** is Kay Aldridge. Many thanks to John Cayley and Yvonne Ingeme for filling these posts so ably for the last two years and we're sorry they found the duties so onerous that they've had to resort to going overseas to avoid being re-elected. Membership fees remain at \$15 single and \$20 family (Hint! Hint!).

Program for 2000

The program for the year is attached. Details for some events later in the year remain to be worked out, and we will let you know about these by newsletter or at meetings. Please contact one of the committee (phone numbers at the bottom of the program) if you need to know anything about any of the events. Note that we are hoping to have a speaker (or two) from Melbourne at the September meeting, and if they are able to come the meeting will be on a Friday night.

Events in March

The first talk of the year will be given by Ken Cunliffe, a new arrival in Australia from Zimbabwe, whom some of you will have met at our February meeting. Ken has worked in big game areas in Southern Africa and his talk should present some challenging ideas about how to conserve Africa's fauna plus accounts of even more challenging encounters with members of that fauna.

His talk will be on Thursday 16 March, 8 pm at HIRL as usual. On the following Saturday 18, we will have an excursion to Bridgewater Bay and Cape Bridgewater. Ken Grimes will take us out on rock platforms from the Bay to look at the volcanics that underlie the limestone. The tide should be low and steady, so we will need only sunscreen and solid shoes, no water-wings. After that, we can follow the path around to the viewing platform to watch the fur seals.

Other important March events include the wedding of Yvonne and Reto on 11th and the Cayleys' return from Europe on the 8th. We trust that Bandicoot Burglaries inc. have left a few oddments in their house!

April variations

Because of Easter, our activities for April will be a week later than usual. The General Meeting will be on the



fourth Thursday, 27th. For the excursion on Sunday 30th, we are organising a boat trip, weather permitting, to the Continental Shelf to observe pelagic birds and possibly blue whales. The charter of the boat costs \$800 and it can take about 12 passengers: i.e. it will cost around \$65 per person. The boat leaves Port Fairy at 7.00 am and the trip takes eight hours. People who would like to go should contact Rod Bird by the date of the March meeting. Note that the boat can only set out if the weather is suitable; this means there is only about a 50% chance of it going. The rest of us will head for Port Fairy at a more civilised hour (leaving the Visitor Information Centre at 9.00 am), spend a pleasant day exploring various aspects of the foreshore, and meet spouses and friends off the boat at 3.00 pm.

May

The speaker for May will be Susan White, a geomorphologist and caver from Melbourne who spoke to us a few years ago about China. Sue has made several visits to Vietnam, and also been into Laos, and she will be showing us some of the spectacular scenery formed in limestone in these countries. The excursion on Sunday 21 will be to the Cobbobonee State Forest. We will be joined by some members of the Portland Field Naturalists, who have been working very hard to try to get this area protected under the Regional Forest Agreement.

Recent events

The Hamilton Field Naturalists put in a detailed submission to the Regional Forest Agreement process on the forests and woodlands in our area, and David Munro and Kay Aldridge spoke at the hearing in Hamilton in February. All that can be done now is to await the outcome.

The excursion to Lake Linlithgow in February found no water at all, and the birds seen, not surprisingly, differed markedly from our previous years' sightings. Fifty Masked Lapwings were the only "water birds" but there were several birds of prey: brown falcon, whistling and black-shouldered kites, swamp harrier, brown goshawk and nankeen kestrel. Let's hope next year sees a return to the water birds!



