

# HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB



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AGM at HIRL, Thursday 8 December 2011

## President's Report for 2011

2011 has been an interest-packed year for the club. The highlight for me was the trip to Kangaroo Island in the autumn. Other trips away from SW Victoria by members include attendance at Geelong FNC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner, and the trip to Phillip Island to attend the SEANA camp in October.

Excursions, surveys and trips: In addition to the traditional outing at Lake Linlithgow, the club members were involved in trips to Kangaroo Island, Hamilton Wetlands, Lake Condah, Brady's Swamp, Young's State Forest, Byaduk Caves and the Great Barrier, Lake Muirhead & Mt William Swamp, Wilkin Flora Reserve and Fulham Streamside Reserve.

Surveys conducted included: Young's SF, using remote cameras affixed to trees and triggered when an animal moved in the field of view; the monthly bird count at the Grange Wetlands; the annual Lake Linlithgow bird survey in February, with surveys also on 10 other wetlands in the region. Members again contributed to Birds Australia's Shorebird 2020 Project Survey in February and the Red-tailed Black-cockatoo count at Dergholm in May.

Guest speakers: Our guest speakers covered an interesting range of topics. Evelyn Nicholson from Casterton DSE spoke on the fire ecology of reptiles in SW Victoria; Bill Weatherly spoke on his post-graduate studies on the life of Cape Barren Geese; Rod Bird & Diane Luhrs provided a photographic trip through more National Parks in America than most people will visit in a lifetime; Tom Guthrie gave an inspiring account of dealing with damage inflicted by the Mt Lubra fire and introduced to us the Environmental Farmers Network; Ross Cayley gave interesting insights (and superb photos) into the people, wildlife and mountains of central Africa.

Projects on weed control: Control work continues at the Wannan Falls Scenic Reserve, Nigretta Flora Reserve & the Scenic Reserve, Kanawalla and Fulham Streamside Reserve. We are making real progress here and it shows the value of recording changes in numbers or extent of weeds in order to gauge progress. The worst weeds are African Weed orchid and Blue perwinckle at Nigretta, *Sparaxis bulbifera*, Cape Tulip, Bridal Creeper and Phalaris at Fulham, and *Oxalis purpurea* at Kanawalla.

HFNC Website: After a difficult start, our website is being put together. It will be a great source of information on the natural history of the Hamilton region.

Submissions & involvement with other groups: HFNC members have attended 2 meetings of the Grampians Stakeholders Group and one with the Grampians Outcome Setting Workshop. It remains to be seen what is being, or can be, achieved by either group. Submissions were also made to the Fire Operations Plans for Far SW and Wimmera Regions. Ken Grimes & Rod Bird were members of Lake Condah Restoration Committee and Ken presented a talk on volcanics at the symposium in June.

Membership: Current membership is 37, up 8 on last year.

Acknowledgments: All members extend a very sincere "Thank You" to Diane Luhrs for taking on the job of Minutes Secretary. We also thank Janeen Samuel and Ken Grimes for the cheery newsletters. Dave Munro provided the Spectator with informative notes on the Guest Speakers (thanks Dave). Reto Zollinger & Yvonne Ingeme did a great job organising accommodation for the Kangaroo Island visit in March. Reto also did a sterling job preparing the Bush Guardian signs. His photo banners and Ken's imaginative cartoons, were used to great effect in the development of the website by Rod Bird. We also thank Glenys Cayley for her careful book-keeping and Rod for his work as Correspondence Secretary, his role as the club's "Weed Warrior", and his drive in constructing the website.

**John Cayley, President**