

Hamilton Field Naturalists Club President's Report for 2016

15 December 2016

Excursions: Excursions were made to Long Swamp and Picks Swamp, Lake Linlithgow and Yatmerone, The Grampians (Pomonal Tunnel), Koonongwootong Reservoir, Wannon Four Posts & Hewett Park, Kelly Swamp & Logans Beach at Warrnambool, Western block of Little Desert National Park & Nature Glenelg Trust's 'Eaglehawk' camp SA, Mt. Richmond National Park, and Mt. William in Grampians National Park. It was good to join members of the Millicent Field Naturalists Club, in July to look at native scrub at Strathdownie.

Surveys: Remote sensing cameras at Mt. Napier failed to find any evidence of the Brush-tailed Phascogale. The survey ends in early January 2017, after 2 years and 12 periods of survey using up to 10 cameras set through the Mount Napier State Park. We also inspected fauna nest boxes at Bear State Forest, finding several boxes occupied by Sugar Gliders but no Brush-tailed Phascogales.

Special meetings: An interesting range of topics was covered at our Special Meetings. Marcel Hoog Antink reported on his recent trip to Alaska, Nick Petropoulos told us about the snakes and other reptiles in SW Victoria, Diane Luhrs and Rod Bird gave an interesting account of their recent trip to Tanzania, Peter Cunningham spoke on the development of bush food by indigenous communities, and Ross Cayley gave an interesting account of the trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands he made with his wife, Jane.

Submissions and involvement with other groups: Members were involved in fire meetings at Halls Gap and Pomonal. The club's long-held objective of having fuel-reduction burns carried out in a mosaic pattern is now being adopted. Rod Bird prepared a deputation to the Shire of Southern Grampians, seeking support for a submission to government to have VEAC examine the case for restoration of sanctuary status to Lakes Linlithgow & Bullrush. Submissions were also made to the government's 'Review of Native Vegetation permitted clearing regulations 2016' and 'Protecting Victoria's Environment: Biodiversity 2036'.

Weed control on nature reserves: The Club has continued to target weeds at the Fulham Streamside Reserve and Nigretta Falls Flora Reserve. The unusually wet winter has led to a huge increase of African Weed Orchids at Nigretta and Cape Tulip at Fulham. Many trips to deal with this pest were made by Rod Bird, Peter Hocking and Roger Thompson.

Ken Grimes: It is with great sadness that we farewelled Ken Grimes who died as a result of a tragic accident in August. He is sadly missed by all.

Membership: Current membership is 39.

Acknowledgments: I wish to thank Janeen Grimes for the newsletter and Dave Munro for organizing news items about guest speakers and running meetings that Glenys and I were unable to attend. I am grateful to Glenys for her careful management of the Club's finances, and Diane Luhrs for continuing as Minutes Secretary. A big "Thank you" to all those involved in weed control, especially to Rod Bird, Peter Hocking and Roger Thompson.

Rod deserves special thanks for handling a mountain of mail, writing our submissions to government and keeping everyone in the club informed about club-matters *via* email.

John Cayley

President