



HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB



NEWSLETTER, March 2011

Another decade, another program! This year, we are trying yet another date for our meetings in an attempt to avoid clashes with other events. From April on, our **meetings** will be on the **Second Thursday** of every month, with excursions as usual on the following weekend. The only exception will be in November, when the meeting will be on the second Friday instead, to enable our speaker to get here from Melbourne.

Our **bird-counts** at the **Hamilton Wetlands** will take still place on the Thursday following each meeting, which now means that they will be on the third Thursday of every month: come to the parking area on Mt Bainbridge Road at 8 am, or join us later on our way around the ponds.

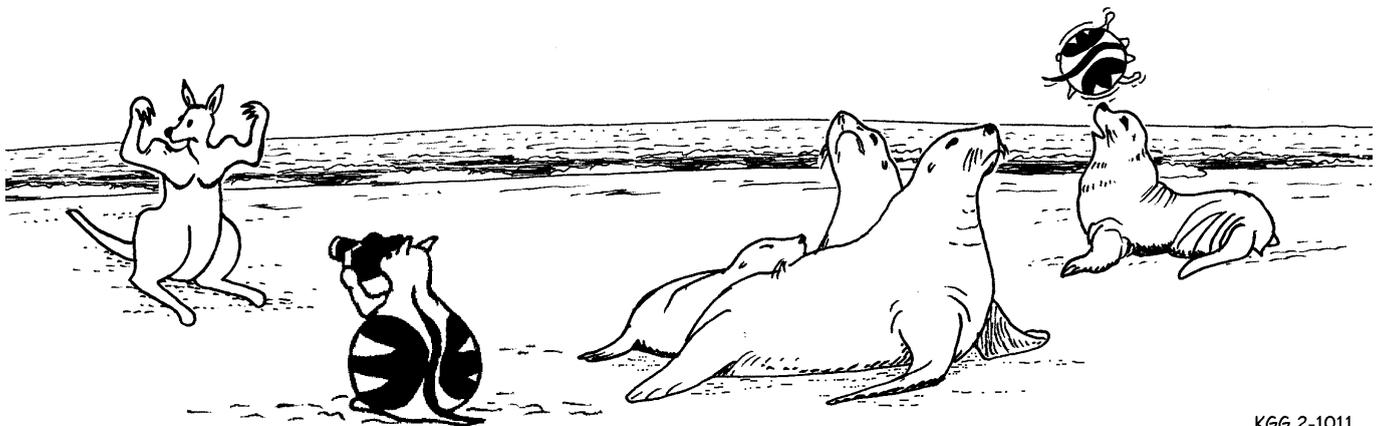
MARCH – LIZARDS AND FIRES AND KANGAROO ISLAND

This month's meeting and excursion are both exceptions to the above rules: –

The **Special Meeting** will be on the **third Thursday, 17th March**. Our speaker will be **Evelyn Nicholson** from the DSE in Heywood, on: **The impact of fire frequency on small reptiles in heathy woodlands of south-western Victoria**. Evelyn has looked at 29 sites with different fire histories, to see how varying times between fires may have affected the number of reptile species present, with particular focus on six species including the threatened Striped Worm-Lizard. It is some time since we've had a talk on reptiles, so it will be good to be reminded what an important part of our ecosystems they are. As usual the meeting will be in the Bandicoot Room at HIRL, beginning at 7.30 pm.

The **March excursion** will consist of a whole week on **Kangaroo Island**. We are going at the invitation of former members Penny and Brian Moon, who now live near Kingscote. We will spend a few days camping at their place, and a few days at a rented farmhouse nearer the western end of the Island. This is a great chance to see seals, sea-lions, penguins, chunky muscle-bound western grey kangaroos, neat little Tamar wallabies, black tiger snakes, limestone caves, emu wrens, remarkable rocks, rare trigger plants... practically everything a naturalist could wish for.

At this stage 10 or 11 of us are planning to go, crossing on the car ferry from Cape Jarvis on the evening of **Saturday 19 March**, some of us returning on the following Saturday morning and some staying a few extra days. It's not too late to join us; Dave Munro is co-ordinating the trip so you need to ring him as soon as possible (5576 5485). You'll need to bring all your own food but don't forget that it is illegal to take any uncooked fruit or vegetables over the border into South Australia.



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APRIL TO JUNE – GEESE AND SWAMPS AND VOLCANOS AND FUR

For our **April excursion to Bradys Swamp** on the **16th**, we'll go back to our more usual day-trip format, leaving the Visitor Centre in Lonsdale Street at 9.00 am. Last time we visited this swamp it was dry, but this

year it has water in it and should have plenty of waterbirds. The day will involve an easy walk of about 3 kilometres.

The **Special Meeting on 12 May** will feature **Bill Weatherley** talking about: **The ecology and behaviour of Cape Barren Geese**. Bill is a farmer who during the 1970's studied these birds at Serendip reserve and on the Bass Strait islands. This will be followed, on **14 May**, by an excursion to the **Great Barrier** in the Harmon Valley. This is an amazing volcanic feature which is not well known to local people. The editor had lived here 20 years before she stumbled upon it last year. Note that word "stumbled" – getting to it involves a walk of a couple of kilometres over very rocky ground so participants will need to wear stout footgear and proceed carefully. Time permitting, we will also visit Elmore's Cone, a small volcano near Mount Napier.

Our **June excursion to Youngs State Forest** will see the final part of the mammal survey that Reto Zollinger and others have been conducting there. This will mean locating hair tubes that have been put out on the previous day, and collecting them – hopefully complete with a few hairs each from various native mammals.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Annual subscriptions are still only \$15 per person or \$20 for a family. We need your contribution to keep running, so please fill in the enclosed form and send it with your cheque to: Hamilton Field Naturalists Club, PO Box 591, Hamilton Vic 3300. Alternatively, bring it to the next meeting and pay the Treasurer in person.

The Treasurer for this year is still Glenys Cayley. However, there have been a couple of changes on the Committee. Reto Zollinger has stepped down after three years' sterling service as President and his place has been taken by John Cayley. And, after heroically recording our meetings for more than a decade, Diane Luhrs has retired from the post of Minutes Secretary; this position has been filled by Meri Macpherson-Hone, whom we recently welcomed as a new member. Other positions have remained unchanged, as shown below. These are the people you should contact if you have any queries. If you intend to come on an excursion and have missed the preceding meeting, it is always advisable to contact a committee member (or the trip organiser, indicated on the program by their initials), in case we have had to make last-minute changes owing to weather or other factors.

This year we have included a line on the membership form for your email address. This is optional, but if you provide it we can advise you by email of any changes to the program or other events of interest. We may also trial circulating the minutes of meetings by email.

COMMITTEE FOR 2011

President	John Cayley	5572 3737
Vice President	David Munro	5576 5485
Correspondence Secretary	Rod Bird	5572 3639
Minutes Secretary	Meri Macpherson-Hone	5572 3350
Treasurer	Glenys Cayley	5572 3737

The Club's address is: PO Box 591, HAMILTON 3300.

Email address: hamiltonfnc@live.com.au