



The Granite Belt Naturalist



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Web site <https://mysd.com.au/fieldnats/>

AIMS OF THE CLUB

1. To study all branches of Natural History
2. Preservation of the Flora and Fauna of Queensland
3. Encouragement of a spirit of protection towards native birds, animals and plants
4. To assist where possible in scientific research
5. To publish a monthly newsletter and post it to members



Meetings 4th Wednesday of each month at Uniting Church, Small Hall, 113 High Street, Stanthorpe, at 7.30pm

Outings: The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each month (Saturday outings as pre-arranged)

Subs: Single \$20.00, Family \$30.00 per annum, July to June

CLUB OFFICE BEARERS – 2019/2020

President	Peter Haselgrove	46837255
Vice-presidents	Kris Carnell	46835268
	Leon McCosker	46811737
Secretary	Lyn Collins	0428810156
Treasurer	Gunter Maywald	46810674
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Carnell	46835268
Publicity Officer	K & M Carnell	46835268
Librarian	Laura Maywald	46810674

The Club thanks the Queensland Country Credit Union for their donation that enabled us to buy a printer.

Stanthorpe Field Naturalists is a group member of Granite Borders Landcare.

Management Committee: President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer



**SCALE OF DIFFICULTY FOR WALKS
ON NATS OUTINGS**

1. Flat walking, road or track
2. Road or track, gentle hills
3. Track, some hilly sections
4. Track, some steep sections
5. Cross country, easy open forest, gentle slopes
6. Track, steep sections common, with steps
7. Cross country, some hills, some thick undergrowth
8. Cross country, steep sections with scrambles over rocks, etc., and some thick undergrowth
9. Cross country, steep, hilly, rough, thick undergrowth
10. Mountain climbing, hard going, higher level of fitness or plenty of time required

Coming Up

Sunday 27th September: Blue Mountain with Kerrie & Leon McCosker

Wednesday 30th September: *Insects* with Gunter Maywald

**Deadline for next newsletter
12th October 2020**

Pre-Outing Report to Blue Mountain – September 27th 2020

Leaders: Kerrie & Leon McCosker

This month's outing will be to Blue Mountain adjoining Kerrie's & Leon's property at Dalcouth. We will also be exploring their property in a section where there are remnants of tin mining.

Because of COVID 19 restrictions, we can only have groups of 10 or less and we are able to organise the day so that we can have two groups. We will need to stay in our smaller groups of 10 or less for the whole day for the benefit of both the Club and Kerrie & Leon. Therefore, there will be a maximum of 20 people able to attend on the day. For this reason, members will need to register to advise they are coming by emailing (preferred) to fieldnats@granitenet.com.au or phoning Peter on 0409 006 063 before 23rd September. After registering the address will be sent to you. Since we cannot carpool, we will meet at Kerrie's & Leon's house at 9:30am.

We'll have morning tea first and then group A will explore Blue Mountain and group B the mining area. After lunch the groups will swap.

**Outing Report, Plants flowering and birds at Eukey Road, Ballandean
23 August 2020**

Eleven members showed up for this day despite the rather bleak forecast. In fact, it was not as bad as expected and as most of the walk was in a steep valley, we got a fair bit of shelter and the day was quite pleasant. We had morning smoko at the cars and then carried our lunches down the valley to an open flat rock area with good views of the lower reaches of Doctors Creek, some packing sheds near Lyra and across the north-western edge of Girraween.

It was still a bit early in the season for



wildflowers, but even so Oleander and Wallangarra wattles were flowering down Eukey Road and Prickly Moses in the gully we walked along. Mirbelias were still flowering along the walk and two different hoveas added to the display. Numerous specimens of *Notolea linearis* in heavy bud were also seen along the creek and two hop bushes were common.



Notolea linearis

Two wombat burrows were seen in the bottom of the valley, neither particularly long but presumably still in construction.



Leionema rotundifolium

The lunch spot was amongst wildflowers on an open rocky area and after lunch we retraced our steps back up the gully to the cars. We then explored the surrounding area. We headed for home after our afternoon smoko.

Although the bird list was fairly short, as Lynette and I were shutting the gate the call of a weebill in the trees above us was a nice finish to a lovely day.

A subsequent tally gave us about 28 species of plants flowering, six species of eucalypt, one angophora and six bird species.

Thanks to Ian for keeping a record of the plants.

Peter Haselgrove

Birds:

White-throated tree creeper, Grey thrush, Grey fantail, Yellow-faced honeyeater, Spinebill, Magpie, Weebill, White-throated gerygone

Plants flowering:



Hovea graniticola

Actinotus helianthi flannel flower, *Trachymene incisa*, *Olearia gravis* (rare; in bud), *Ozothamnus obcordatus* (in bud), *Melichrus urceolatus*, *Leucopogon neoanglicus*, possibly a 2nd *Leucopogon*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Hovea graniticola*, *H. heterophylla*, *Glycine clandestina* twining glycine, *Mirbelia speciosa* showy Mirbelia, *Pultenaea hartmannii* Stanthorpe pea, *Goodenia bellidifolia*, *Acacia ulicifolia* prickly Moses, *A. adunca* Wallangarra wattle, *A. neriifolia* Granite silver wattle, *A. pruinosa* frosty wattle, *A. venulosa*, *Harmogia densifolia* Syn *Baeeckea densifolia*, *Muehlenbeckia rhyticarya* Lignum, *Notelaea linearis* narrow-leaved mock olive, *Phyllanthus*

gunnii, *P. mitchellii*, *Pomaderris lanigera*, *Cryptandra amara* var. *floribunda*, *Leionema rotundifolium*, *Correa reflexa*, *Dodonaea falcata* three-leaved hopbush, *D. triquetra* large-leaved hopbush, *Caladenia filamentosa* daddy long-legs, *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii* grass tree, *Ptilothrix deusta* horned sedge, *Lomandra leucocephala* woolly matrush, *Cymbopogon obtectus* silky heads, *Dichelachne* sp.? plume grass.

Scales and Galls.



Adult female of *Apiomorpha* alongside a winged adult male on a

I brought some specimens of galls and flakes of bark to the August meeting and Gunter suggested he could ask a friend who had studied scale insects to identify the culprit. The response came back that it was *Apiomorpha karschi*, so I searched for that on line and came up with this informative article on Wikipedia. The culprit that removed the tops of the galls I can only presume was a Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, which have been



Galls on *E blakelyi*

feasting on lots of trees here, stressed by drought and subsequently attacked by borers.

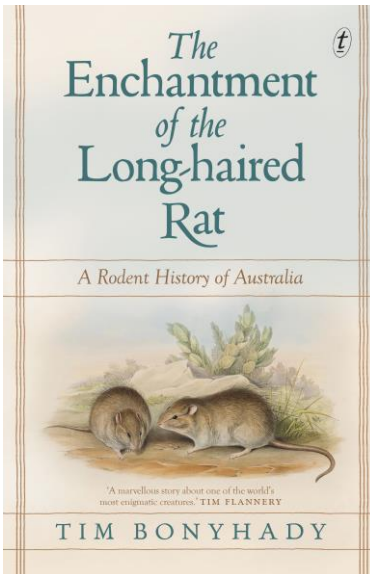
Apiomorpha is a genus of scale insect that induces galls on species of *Eucalyptus*. Galls are initiated by first- instar nymphs (crawlers) on new plant growth and, when mature, the galls exhibit marked sexual dimorphism. Those induced by females are among the largest and most spectacular of arthropod-induced galls whereas those of males are small and most are tubular. *Apiomorpha* is known only from Australia and New Guinea although its host, *Eucalyptus*, has a wider distribution into Indonesia as well.

Like other scale insects, *Apiomorpha* is highly sexually dimorphic. Adult females are wingless, have very small (or no) eyes, and their legs are short and stubby. A female remains within the gall she initiated when a crawler, mating through the small apical opening of her gall. She reproduces inside the gall and her tiny offspring (≤ 0.4 mm) escape through the same small opening. Adult females of



Apiomorpha can range in length from 2 mm to 45 mm, depending on species, and can live up to five years as adults. In contrast, adult males of *Apiomorpha* are small (about 1 mm in length) and winged. Like males of other eriococcids, they do not have a mouth and, instead, have an extra pair of eyes on the underside of their head (i.e., they have four eyes, two on top and two underneath). Males leave their galls as adults and search for females. They are weak fliers and typically walk on their host plant looking for females before taking to the air. After leaving their gall, adult males only live about one day.

Rob McCosker



Book Review: "The Enchantment of the Long-haired Rat" by Tim Bonyhady

Peter purchased this book and was quite "enchanted" by it. He then found this review in The Saturday Paper and was given permission to reproduce it.

Reviewer: *Andrew Fuhrmann*

That versatile polymath historian Tim Bonyhady's latest book is nostalgic in the weirdest way. Where, he asks, are the great rat plagues of yesteryear, those rodent hordes that, in times past, regularly swept the back blocks of Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia?

The native long-haired rat, or mayaroo, baffled and amazed 19th-century colonists. Reports describe the rats pouring down in their millions from the country between Cooper's Creek and the Bulloo River, infilling tanks and wells, destroying gardens, erasing dirt roads and eating food stores and leather saddles.

Bonyhady's *The Enchantment of the Long-haired Rat* is a kind of social history of this spectacular natural phenomenon. Quoting extensively from newspaper reports, he attempts to map colonial encounters with the mayaroo and to document local attitudes to its sudden appearances in vast numbers. Despite the mayaroo's resemblance to the European black rat, fear and loathing was not the universal response. Indeed, some people thought the mayaroo might be a potential saviour, an exterminator that could halt the dreaded rabbit in its apparently relentless march north. Still, the rats were a nightmare for towns in central and western Queensland: in 1880, for example, the residents of Winton said that not even the hair on a sleeper's head was safe from depredation.

Today there are still eruptions – the most recent was in 2011 – but, according to Bonyhady, these are minor compared with the great pre-Federation plagues. And, although the mayaroo is not officially endangered, he seems resigned to its eventual extinction.

Is Bonyhady's almost fatalistic, all but elegiac description of the mayaroo's decline justified? Well, Australia is a world leader when it comes to the annihilation of small furry animals. But, even if extinction is not imminent, the mayaroo's diminished presence should give us pause. Those old-time plagues must have felt like sheer mockery to the colonists in their faltering attempts to subdue the country, an upsurge of all that was inscrutable and unconquerable in nature. Now, though, the balance has tipped. The outback has been degraded. And soon, perhaps, there'll be no more wonders of vitality – no strange and multitudinous others – to confound us and to defy us, and, yes, to enchant us.

This article was first published in the print edition of The Saturday Paper on Aug 17, 2019. We thank The Saturday Paper and Text Publishing for allowing us to reproduce this article.



Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.

held in the Uniting Church Hall, Stanthorpe on Wednesday 26th August 2020

Meeting opened: 7:30am

Attendance: Present 10, Apologies 6 as per attendance book

Minutes of the previous meeting, held in July confirmed by Lyn Collins seconded by Graham Rayner Carried

Business arising from the minutes:

BIO Blitz. We were to participate in this during the Blue Mtn. outing, but as Robin has heard nothing back from his application to participate, we will leave this until we hear further. It was suggested that the Blitz may be completed by September.

Correspondence: as per folder moved by Lyn Collins seconded by Gunter Maywald Carried

Financial Report:

Bank Balance \$1,904.84 as at 26/8/2020, including subs for 35 members. 8 members have not as yet paid. A reminder note will be sent to these members with their Newsletters. moved by Gunter Maywald seconded by Peter Haselgrove Carried

Outing Reports:

The Eukey outing led by Peter and Lynette to a private property was a very interesting day. Quite cold and windy, but we rugged up and ended up with a long list of flora, some species rare. We lunched high on a rocky outlook, where it was cool, but with lovely views. Peter will give a list of species to Alan, the owner, and Lyn sent a letter of thanks.

Pre-outings:

Blue Mountain – 27th September - to be led by Leon and Kerry - morning tea on arrival, before walking to the top.

General Business: Nil

Specimens: Robin brought along a container of galls and bark found on a red gum, with holes bored by gall wasps or scale insects, as well as a chunk of redwood with a sculptured centre, made by smelly black ants, rather than termites.

Next Meeting: 23rd September, with presentation by Gunter on insects.

Meeting closed: 7:50 pm

Presentation: Bibbulmun Track walk done in 2000 by Jeff Campbell, presented by Robin.

Spottings



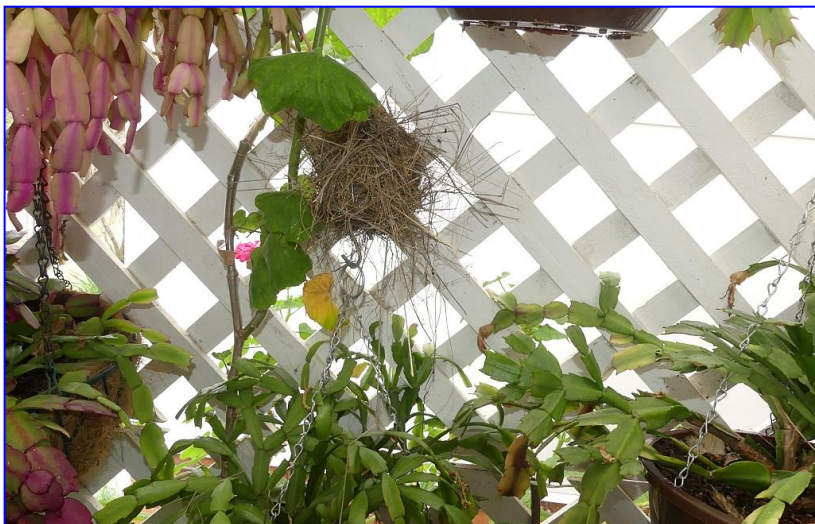
Above: A Superb Lyrebird in Ian Milinovich's yard.

Right: Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo in eucalypt spotted by Rob McCosker.

Below Left: Ian Milinovich saw these interesting grass tree shapes on the Girraween outing .

Below Right: Mark McCosker photographed this Powerful Owl





Top Left: Old Scrub Wren's nest in outside office window.
Top Right: Current Scrub Wren's nest in a crate of ropes in the shed.
Middle Left: Scrub Wren keeping watch on the rafters.
Middle Right: Grey Shrike Thrush on the nest built on a shelf in the shed. It doesn't mind the junk. Kris feels that his shed has been taken over by wildlife.
Left: Nest in lattice outside office window. It was built while we were away. We're not sure who it belongs to.