



Central North Field Naturalists

CNFN's NATURAL NEWS

Patron - Dennis Morris

2005 WINTER ISSUE

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Program of Excursions: 10 am starts

August 7, Weegee, Jim's workshop for a social day, and local walk if weather allows. Hot soup provided, and bring something to share.

September 3, Meet at Melrose fire station at 10am on C145. We will drive on (about 2K) to an interesting natural area with intriguing social and natural history values. It is called Healy's Gully, and is currently being leased by the Devonport Council. We will begin a species list of flora and fauna values. Come along to see a beautiful area, and participate in identifying species.

October 2, Meet at Gunn's Plains turn-off at 9:30 to travel on to Mountain Valley Log Cabins by 10. We will look at Len's Private Forest Reserve area. We will be compiling lists of flora and fauna values. There are caves, glowworms, and flora and fauna of particular interest. In the afternoon we can move on to Tony & Alison's land next door.

November 6, Meet at 10am at Miena T junction to travel on together to Iris Farm. Peter and John have invited us for a return visit to this mountain paradise. We will probably walk to the water race and the picnic waterfall. Don't miss this one!

☐ Overdue Subscriptions

A red check indicates your mags are overdue
Queries and payments to Sarah

LAKE AUGUSTA

by Helen Jones

Lake Augusta lies on the Central Plateau of Tasmania to the west of Lawrence in an area known as the 19 Lagoons. After glaciers finally retreated, about 7000 years ago, the Tasmanian landscape was probably barren and the climate cooler and drier than today.

Lunettes – small sand dunes – formed on the margins of lakes in the area.

Sandy lunettes are produced by essentially the same processes that form dunes on the coast, i.e. the actions of wind and water. These lakes of the 19 Lagoons area have the only alpine lunettes in Australia and, in fact, sandy lunettes of this type are not known in any other part of the world.

Most of Lake Augusta is shallow and the volume of sand in the lunettes appears to mean that a large area of the lake bed was exposed during a major drought and subjected to the prevailing strong westerly winds. The dunes on the eastern shore of Lake Augusta rise to 5-6 metres.

The climate of the area is cold and wet, frequently suffering snow falls and severe frosts. The few and far between trees are *Arthrostylos cypripedoides*. They are the most frost-resistant woody plant known from Tasmania and are gnarled and twisted by the extreme weather conditions.

Other vegetation consists of heath, tussock sedge/land, tussock grassland, herbs and wind pruned low shrubs. This is considered to be remnant alpine flora of Gondwanan origin.

A report from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council (1998) indicates that a significant proportion of the shoreline around Lake Augusta may contain Aboriginal sites.

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HYPERLINK "<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au>"

Bird Notes From A Small Island (with apologies to Bill Bryson)

by Paul Hyde

Ten days of snow and freezing temperatures overnight are not ideal birdwatching conditions in the UK, but a recent trip to Yorkshire still revealed some interesting species. Despite the sharp decline in many rural and urban bird populations there in recent years, some classic garden species were evident in Wharfedale, making use of the numerous bird feeding stations based on peanuts and seed mixes. The presence of the bird feeders reflects the fact that 1/60 of the population (over 1 million people) are members of the Royal Society for the protection of Birds (RSPB) and the feeders are well used by Blue, Great, Long-tailed and Coal Tits in addition to several finches, to such an extent that Blue Tits have increased their population against the general downward trend. On the ground below the feeders, Robins and Dunnocks picked up the scraps while wrens, treecreepers and the thrushes foraged for invertebrates. All of these species suffer harassment from Magpies, the local "bully" equivalent of our Little Wattlebirds and the feeder manufacturers continue to try to devise feeders more resistant to raids by Grey Squirrels, resulting in an ongoing puissance competition for the squirrels. Noticeably absent, both in the valleys of the Pennines and on the coast, were the winter migrant thrushes (fieldfares and redwings), finches (beambings and redpolls) and waxwings, although there are regular reports of overwintering warblers, possibly reflecting short or longer term climate change.

A real sign of the times however was that after a week in the Dales, I saw my first House AFTER I saw a Red Kite. The kites were apparently common in medieval England, scavenging for carrion in the towns, but by the early 20th century, the local population had been reduced to 10 pairs in central Wales, usually only seen at exotic locations like the Tregarron rubbish dump. In the late 1990s a programmed release of birds in the Chilterns, with chicks from healthy populations in mainland Europe, was used to build up numbers for release at other

sites across the country, one on the Harewood estate north of Leeds being the source of my sighting. The bird was searching over a paddock beside the road, the wonderfully mobile fanned tail clearly visible in a quick glance from my driving seat. Although several of these birds have been lost due to illegal trapping/poisoning, the national population is now up to 500 pairs and the species has been downgraded from "endangered" to "threatened", unlike the jumble sparrow which is now on the "endangered" list. Similar success has been achieved with the White tailed sea eagle on Scottish islands and both the Osprey and Golden Eagle now have a talon hold in England.

The crash of the sparrow and starling populations has been attributed in part to changes in agricultural practice which have been blamed for a general decline in farmland birds with even skylarks under threat, but rooks and woodpeckers seemed plentiful and yellowhammers were calling in the hedgerows around a turnip field on one of the few days I could get out on foot. Lapwings are also apparently at risk across the country but a few sizeable flocks were seen as I drove through East and North Yorkshire. A snowy overnight stay on the moors resulted in the early morning spectacle of a mixed flock of 150 finches loitering in a nearby tree, waiting for my host to stock up the feeding tables. The preponderance of goldfinches seemed odd, based on visits to this area in a former life, but it transpired that the seed suppliers have identified the small black Niger seed as a "goldfinch magnet" which is certainly true if this flock is anything to go by.

The pages of the RSPB magazine in recent years include several items on wind power, with literally hundreds of turbines scheduled for installation along the west coast in the next few years. The charitable status of the RSPB limits their official comment to bird conservation issue and they have been successful in negotiating bird strike/breeding mitigation measures with some developers. Members' negative comments on the subject were mainly on aesthetic grounds with occasional reference to migratory bird strikes ("local birds soon learn to avoid them") with little reference to the cancellation of the Danish offshore turbine program in Eire pending a thorough review. Worse still it is now apparent that wind farms at best break even and in some cases result in a net increase in carbon dioxide emissions (per unit power output) due to the need for spinning reserve turbines to stabilise the power supply when

integrating wind sourced power into the grid*
While this may not apply to Tasmania, given our primary reliance on hydro power, it is hard to see how it can be avoided on the mainland, even with the advent of BassLink. Could this be another case of Oz being years behind Europe on an environmental issue - belated banning of TBT antifouling paint springs to mind?

**The Chemical Engineer, March 2004*

Editor's note:

Apparently there was great excitement in Britain this Spring when an American Robin made its way across the Atlantic. Birdwatchers gathered to view the evidence of this marvelous feat just in time to witness a local Sparrowhawk swoop down on the tired traveler.

Birds on Farms: A glovebox guide to birds and habitat restoration and management in NW Tasmania

A Review by Mary Kille

This eagerly-awaited, elegant book is at last available for us all to use and enjoy. With text by Richard Donaghey, glossy ring-bound pages, and illustrations by Susan Lester it is a credit to all those who have put so much work into its production. The publication is part of a project "Restoring birds to North West Tasmania for healthy sustainable landscapes", coordinated by the NW Environment Centre, funded by the Commonwealth Envirofund, and sponsored by Greening Australia Tasmania.

Much more than a field guide to the identification of the birds of Tasmania's North West, its inherent message is a plea to farmers to encourage, and enjoy the presence of these birds on their properties, emphasising the services these birds perform for free controlling insect pests in pastures, crops and plantations, and so playing an important role in keeping landscapes healthy.

Practical work on birds in remnant vegetation, on 53 NW properties, was conducted by Sarah Lloyd and Richard Donaghey, and presentations on the practical conservation messages to farmers were given during six farm field days. Many of us were thrilled to visit the exhibition in the Burnie Regional Art Gallery in November 2002, of the work of Susan Lester who was commissioned in

1987 by WIN Television to paint 200 delicate watercolours of birds of Tasmania. This was to lead to the publication of an exclusive, five-volume colour publication, with text by zoologist, Bob Green and edited by Tim Thorne. Sadly, the book never eventuated. Her exquisite paintings were donated by WIN TV to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and some of these paintings are printed, for the first time, as illustrations for this booklet.

The approach to birds differs from most other field guides, in its emphasis on the birds' behaviour, food and foraging, and especially on their habitat, and on the encouragement of farmers to establish and extend these habitats, not only for their agricultural benefits, but also to give increasing enjoyment in the healthy existence of these precious creatures of NW Tasmania.

This article is reprinted with the author's permission from the Burnie Field Naturalist's Newsletter

Birds on Farms is available from the CNFN (see Sarah), from the Tarkine Shop in Burnie, and from the Burnie Regional Art Gallery. \$10



10 Days Under the Long White Cloud (South Island NZ)

by Jim Nelson

There ain't no Moa
on of Aotearoa,
Can't get 'em',
They've 'et 'em,
There ain't no Moa!

(Author unknown (thankfully))

In early April, Deb and I flew to Christchurch NZ where we met my brother and sister-in-law from the U.S. with plans to travel as much of the lower half of the South Island as we could. Our interests were firmly focused on natural history, and we read up beforehand about things we expected to encounter. The books didn't really prepare us for the wonderful beauty of the natural areas, and 10 days was certainly too little time to do anything more than get an overview in order to plan a return visit.

The drive south down the East coast from Christchurch displayed a tidy landscape of farmland with many windbreaks, radiata plantations everywhere, and hardly a trace of native vegetation. Even a visit to the Botanic Garden in Christchurch revealed only a small section of native flora, while the entire city exhibited an abundance of beautiful trees from around the world, with the exception of anything native to NZ.

Heading south from Dunedin we took the coast road and stopped near Oiwaka for supposedly a short walk along a beach known for having the endangered Hooker's sea lion (*Phocarcarcus hookeri*). But the tide was in forcing us to walk through thick scrubby vegetation for about 1/2 an hour following meandering tracks that I thought must have been made by cattle. Later I discovered they were sea lion tracks, and that they can travel up to 1 km inland! When we finally discovered the sea lions, they were lying lug-like on a sandy beach. My brother decided to climb up a dune for a better view, where he suddenly did a fine, entertaining aerial pirouette to the accompaniment of a roar as he almost stepped on a large, angry male sea lion. Memories of this episode entertained the rest of us for the remainder of the trip.

Further south we finally began to see some native forest areas around the Catlins Forest. Most NZ plants are evergreen, with ferns, climbers and epiphytes abundant among the rainforest tree species. The distinctive character of the plants and animals of NZ began when the Tasman Sea made its first

appearance around 120 million years ago and Gondwanaland began to be dismembered. Many life forms such as dinosaurs have come and gone in NZ, but others such as the podocarpus, tuataras (lizard-like ancient reptiles), kiwis and wetas (very ancient cricket relative) are reminders of a unique evolutionary past.

The vegetation certainly developed along unique lines, with more than 80% of flowering plant species occurring nowhere else. The podocarp species, for instance, evolved from their Gondwanan ancestors and flourished in NZ to their greatest extent. The varied geology and the dynamic, changeable environment and climate must have served to foster such speciation.

When we arrived at Invercargill it turned out to be a rather stark looking city after the charm of Christchurch and Dunedin. It is described in the Lonely Planet Guide as "a place of plaid shirts and bad haircuts". But our destination was Stewart Island, which is a one hour ferry ride leaving from Bluff. Stewart Island has in recent years been proclaimed a National Park, and has only one settlement at Halfmoon Bay. Our main objective was to visit the bird wonders of Ulva Island which is uninhabited, and reached by water taxi from Stewart Island. Ulva Is. is one of a number of island areas where intensive removal of feral pests has been carried out, and provides a safe haven where ground nesting birds such as the Stewart Island kiwi are able to flourish. Removal of rats in particular has caused a lush recovery of plants as well as birds.

The Kiore (*Rattus exulans*) is the Pacific rat brought to NZ by the Maori as a favoured food. Huge numbers of this species eating the seeds, fruit and young plants (not to mention eggs, lizards, frogs, invertebrates, and birds), have an enormous impact. The Dept of Conservation recommends eradication on islands. The arrival of the black rat (*R. rattus*) and the Norwegian rat (*R. norvegicus*) outcompeted the Kiore on the mainland where they are now in low numbers. Islands are their refuge, and ones such as Ulva where the rats have been removed continue to be scattered with specially designed 1080 tube-traps in case any rats arrive on boats or debris. Recovery after removal of rats has been astonishing.

Another disastrous introduction was the Tasmanian brushtail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) in 1848 for a fur trade. They are now distributed over 92% of NZ, and number around 60 million which causes them to be the most frequently encountered roadkill. The decline in a fur trade has resulted in an explosion of animals. They have caused a collapse of plant diversity in many areas, are the major transmitters of bovine tuberculosis, cost around \$40 million a year to

control and are implicated in bird decline.

Birds such as the kiwi are examples of the great 'bird experiment' that occurred in NZ. With virtually no land mammals (3 bats) to compete with, birds occupied flightless niches unknown from anywhere else. The moa (11 species all now extinct) became the equivalent of giraffes; millions of takahē (*Porphyrio mantelli*) grazed like sheep – less than 300 now left; the mammal-like kiwis (5 species – all now threatened), kakapo (*Strigops habroptilus*) the world's largest parrot – less than 100 left. A number of other now extinct birds also became flightless. With few predators, flight was done away with as not worth the effort. Thus, they were unprepared for the arrival of man and his destructive companion mammals, the rats, cats and dogs. Then came the mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels) brought in to (unsuccessfully) control the introduced rabbit. Birds and eggs have instead been the chief diet of these very successful mustelids. There was also a great deal of fire used to clear the forest, followed by sheep and cattle, and of course industrial forestry. It's a wonder any survived.

Our first encounter with the flightless weka (*Gallinula australis*) occurred on Ulva Is. While watching a large parrot called the kaka (*Nestor meridionalis*) through our binoculars, a small rail about the size of a half grown chicken appeared from behind a tree just in front of us. Its beautiful variegated brown feathers and its bold nature were immediately endearing. It was only when we stopped for lunch that we found that wekas are accomplished thieves. They are in fact renowned for carrying anything portable into the bush to study, perhaps at their leisure, making them unpopular to some. Deb had her sandwich snatched from her hand, and apparently the weka thought tuna fine to eat without further study.

We could easily have spent a week on Stewart Island instead of two days. Deb and I started out on a trail, and a half hour later we had only moved 20 metres while we tried to identify all the ferns. The ferns of NZ are just wonderful in their abundance. There are close to 200 species, with some familiar to us as occurring in Tassie, but many others totally new to us. We met a woman of Maori descent on the path who was looking for the fuchsia – the track was called the Fuchsia Walk. She was looking near the ground, but Deb pointed out that the fuchsia there were a tree (*Fuchsia excorticata*). Later we met her again in the pub and she informed us that the very large *Blechnum*

novae-zealandiae fern we had been looking at was what the Maori used for covering their 'hangi'. We asked if it delivered a flavour to the food, and she replied that it was used because it did not flavour the food, but was good for holding in the steam.

The young mountains of the South Island are stunning. The Southern Alps have only been raised in the last 5 million years, and are the result of two continental plates colliding. The process continues today as they are hoisted about 10 mm a year, but erosive forces probably equal things out. Snow-covered Mt Cook stands out like a classic postcard, but it was the beech-clad almost vertical slopes of some of the smaller peaks that appealed to me. Outside the National Parks, many unbelievably steep areas are grazed down to the soil, while the ugliness of radiata plantings replacing native vegetation paints a familiar picture of shame. The Forest Amendments Act of 1996 put an end to large-scale clearance. This was the result of the people raising their voices to the outrage, and one wonders how long the ugly native forest removal will have to continue in Tasmânia before enough people will be heard.

It was the mixed wet forests of the West coast that will lure me to a return visit. Beech trees (*Nothofagus* species) combine with podocarps and broadleaf species along much of the coast, with a gap in the middle where no beech occur. It is believed that glaciers destroyed the forest here, but podocarps and broadleaf trees have been able to recolonise from seeds spread by birds. Beech trees can only advance very slowly, and whether they will eventually fill the gap before the next ice age is a question.

Perhaps it is also part of a unique evolution that the NZ people have come to pronounce their vowels so strangely. I was told in one eating establishment that "Lunch is finished, and dinner is for sex", which momentarily left me speculating about strange cultural practices.

Just as 10 days was too short for a visit, it is far too long to cover in an article. I hope to return to the South Island and experience more, and can recommend it highly to natural history enthusiasts.

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Kings Creek - A Vision for Creating a Community Asset

by Jim Nelson

The Latrobe Council has carried out an engineering solution for flood mitigation of Kings Creek at the Bass Highway site near the Hospital area roundabout. The design originally involved a detention basin which also included a buffering wetland. Unfortunately, costs prohibited the building of the wetlands part of the project.

This wetlands idea offered some solution to the pollution problems in the creek, by providing a high degree of bio-remediation of the water. The issue of addressing the pollution of Kings Creek has been now been raised as a priority by the environmental planning branch of the DPIWE.

Of particular concern is a burrowing crayfish (*Engaeus granulosus*) on site which is currently listed as an endangered species, and is being considered under the Federal Department of Environment for listing as Critically Endangered. This species potentially could help attract some of the funding needed to create a spectacular expanded vision of the original wetlands idea.

The vision for a wetlands at this site could have many benefits for the community, as well as enhancing the environment. Because of the prominence of the site on the major tourist highway, a development that carries a visionary message promoting the Town of Latrobe could be a major asset for the community. This entrance to Latrobe could become a source of town pride through environmental beauty, rather than the current management problem of what to do with an ugly dam wall. The creation of the flood retention dam has not added to the visual qualities of the landscape at this important entrance point to Latrobe. However, with the enhancement value of a wetlands along with an interpretative viewing area where tourists could pull into, not only could the site be much more attractive, but the town could benefit by visitors being invited into the town for a visit once they have viewed the area.

There is little doubt that Tasmania offers visitors a wealth of natural beauty. Nature based tourism is a real draw card, but is practically non-existent along the Bass Highway except as distant vistas of mountains. Practically every tourist coming to Tasmania appreciates nature at least as part of the back drop, and many are interested in exploring how

easy it is to see platypuses and other animals in the wild.

One of the consistent draw cards for tourists around the world are local water birds. Water birds are easily attracted to wetlands, and wetlands are fairly easy to create and maintain. Given that the Kings Creek site is already a wet one, and given that the Creek itself presents problems in terms of water quality and flooding, perhaps the creation of a significant wetlands is a logical concept for turning problems into assets.

If the water from Kings Creek were to be diverted into a wetlands to receive suitable bio-remediation by filtering through a series of wetland species, there is then potential for a large retention area which would create a bird paradise. Such a wetlands could cover a considerable amount of the site without the need for further large earthworks given the flood retention wall in place. Shallow wetlands areas such as the one at Narawntapu National Park are immensely popular with birds, as well as people.

Given water, wetlands are largely capable of creating much of their own plant and invertebrate diversity necessary to attract the water birds. The water plants seem to come in pretty much on their own, presumably carried by seed and vegetative parts on the feathers of the birds. The invertebrate fauna also will find its own way to a wetlands, and thus the driving force of the food chain begins to build. Frogs will flock to the area, and would almost certainly include the Green and Gold frog (*Litoria raniformis*) which is a threatened species in Tasmania, and exists around the Latrobe area.

If areas that are not going to be inundated are planted with suitable native species, then the bird fauna for the area will extend to the passerines, thus increasing interest particularly for the native honey eaters, and also creating more biodiversity at the site.

The site is currently supporting a few remnant eucalypt trees which probably date back to the time the land was cleared. They are the species *Eucalyptus ovata*, or swamp gum, and they were probably once the emergent trees within a stand of *Melaleuca ericifolia* with scattered *Acacia melanoxylon* (blackwoods). This would undoubtedly have been a flood plain area with prime habitat for the burrowing crayfish, as is evidenced by the rare intact remnants in the district where the crayfish still flourishes. This flood plain for Kings Creek, with the flood waters spreading out, slowing down and nourishing the plant community has largely been changed by channelling of the creek. The flood waters now accelerate through the area and cause damage downstream.

There are still remnants on the site of the plants that

once flourished there. Seed from these could be used to rehabilitate areas, and the community could be involved in such rehabilitation.

The Mersey NRM Group have decided to seek funding for the project. Funding opportunities are readily available to assist threatened species, and the Engaun Recovery Team as well as the DPTWE has supported the idea. Thus, there should be few impediments and many supporters to advance the vision.

Other benefits of the project would be a much cleaner Kings Creek that could be regulated for an environmental flow, and which doesn't pollute the Mersey River to the current unacceptable level. It seems a project hard to resist!

Fungimap Conference

by Sarah Lloyd

In late April/early May this year, 70 people from interstate and overseas gathered at Gowrie Park near Sheffield in northern Tasmania, for Fungimap III, the third national Fungimap conference.

The spectacular backdrop to Gowrie Park, provided by Mounts Roland, Van Dyke and Claude, more than made up for the very basic accommodation in the ex-hydro village and the rapidly cooling showers experienced by some during the first days of the conference (this problem was soon rectified by the very amenable owner of Gowrie Park, Clinton Downing).

The topics of the talks and the display in the meeting room reflected the themes of the conference: history, ecology and conservation. Dr Betty Rees' beautifully presented display on the history of Mycology in Tasmania immediately caught the eye, as did the colourful poster series *The Forgotten Flora*, depicting mosses, liverworts, lichens - all those organisms usually overlooked by the majority of people.

The talks began with an introduction to the biogeography of Tasmania by Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, after which we heard from a variety of speakers on such topics as Strategies for fungal conservation, Fungi and Climate change, Ecological roles of fungi, Wood decay fungi and their relationships with saproxylic beetles in living trees, Fungi and Birds, Truffles, Chytridiomycosis - a serious fungal disease of frogs and the Perth Urban Bushland Project. Dr Mary White, leading author and palaeobotanist presented the keynote address "The Complete Story of Symbiosis".

(Although a very serious topic, Ian Bell's talk on Fungi and Climate change caused a great deal of laughter, so much so that I have completely forgotten the alleged link between the Greenhouse effect and sex - or was that just a ploy to keep us all listening?)

From an organiser's perspective, it was the culmination of a year's work and exciting to see things come together at last. It was also a great relief that, after a nerve wrackingly dry autumn, April rain stimulated enough fungal growth to keep everyone happy. The field trips to the Cradle Mountain National Park, with just enough snow, sleet, and spectacular scenery to satisfy most people (some mainlanders have never seen snow) and the Iris Farm Private Nature Reserve, with delightful hosts Peter Sims and John Wilson, were among the highlights of the conference.

As Tasmanian state Fungimap coordinator, I would especially like to thank members of the Central North Field Naturalists. Their generous donation towards the running of the conference was greatly appreciated and ensured right from the start that the conference was on a secure financial footing. It was also good to see many members attending and helping in so many ways. Patricia Ellison ensured the success of the day of talks by keeping everyone to time and always asking an interesting and pertinent question at the end of each session.

Dave Obendorf's presentation on the Chytrid fungus and frog declines was greatly appreciated, not just for his careful detail, but also for the amount of work that a community group can achieve with very little funding. This project has involved the time and energy of not just Dave, but also a tremendous amount of work by CNFN members Jim Nelson, and Wade and Lisa Clarkson.

Peter Sims, this time with his bus driver/interpreter hat on, ensured that the field trips ran to schedule and were not quite as chaotic as they appeared to be. A special thanks to CNFN members and friends Jim and Marianna Hunter, Joan Elliott, Annie and Ian Heyes and Jo and Ric Easton for allowing us to explore their properties and to Helen Jones, Jim Nelson and Patricia Harrison for their assistance in transporting people into the field. Alison Parkes, Tony Britz and Patricia Harrison collected microscopes from Burnie, Debbie Hill ensured that interstate visitors had a comfortable trip across Bass Strait and Ron Nagorska did more than his fair share of fetching and carrying as well!

I am sure that all those who attended left with memories of good times and much laughter - I certainly did.

Astacopsis Daft Recovery Sham

by Jim Nelson

A Draft Recovery Plan for the Giant Freshwater Crayfish, *Astacopsis gouldi*, has been put out by the DPIWE in electronic form for public comment. It is good they didn't waste paper for this sham document! For those who don't know, this species became our logo after the 1991 work we carried out with a federal grant that eventually led to the listing of vulnerable.

The Plan's introduction mentions contributors. It is stated that "no endorsement is implied" by the people listed who have been involved in the Recovery Plan over the years. In actual fact there is no endorsement for this Recovery Plan from the Recovery Team (RT). Instead, this document can only be condemned for its blind obedience to forestry interests above those of the animal, and its rude slap in the face to the RT. It is quite simply a sham document, because it actually fails its purpose to adequately protect the habitat of the species, and it ignores the efforts of the majority of the RT members to put effective recovery measures in place. It poddles compromise but reeks of capitulation.

There seems to be little hope in trying to enlighten the Minister or the Tasmanian bureaucrats, as they seem duty-bound to support a government so one-eyed about industrial forestry that little else matters. The Commonwealth funds Recovery Plans, and so we are left to complain that a Recovery Plan should not be funded when it does not reflect the requirements necessary to bring an animal into recovery as clearly set out by the majority of the Recovery Team. Meanwhile, if we are to go down this path we would need the Commonwealth to ensure proper protective measures are in place for the species pending the production of a proper Recovery Plan – someday.

Having delayed a Recovery Plan for about 8 years, the forestry interests have now seriously impacted on much of the habitat of the species. The strategy for protecting the crayfish throughout its habitat instead of setting up special reserves is now probably not adequate. Todd Walsh has surveyed several areas of remaining good habitat in the NW where we think reserves should be declared. Unfortunately there is no known habitat that we are aware of left in the NE rivers good enough to make into a reserve.

Astacopsis gouldi is the world's largest crayfish and freshwater invertebrate. It is an icon species that occurs no where else in the world but Northern Tasmania. It is on par with the Tasmanian Tiger as a significant Tasmanian species. The long delay in

producing a Recovery Plan shames Tasmania.

We will communicate to the Federal Minister regarding our views on the strange path to production of this duplicate document, but only with vague hopes of bringing the DPIWE to account regarding their proper responsibilities. It is simply a sorry day for threatened species in Tasmania, and a disgrace to a Department that puts other interests above the needs of a priority species it is entrusted to conserve.

The CNFN owes Bill Thomas a debt of gratitude for his years of representing us on the Recovery Team. Bill was instrumental in bringing stream buffer issues forward as essential measures for bringing the species into recovery. Bill has now decided that he has had enough given the inability of the government agencies to give the animal priority over forestry's unbending attitude towards looking after our headwater streams in Tasmania.

Orchid Help Needed!

Tasmania has 195 formally recognised orchid species, of which 68 are listed as threatened on the Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act and 32 species are listed on the Commonwealth EPBC Act. Under previous classifications, Tasmania was home to 35 species of *Pterostylis* of which 13 species were listed as threatened. At present, the recent taxonomic upheaval of the subtribe *Pterostylidinae* has meant that the conservation status of several species has been downgraded, upgraded or listed as uncertain within Tasmania. This situation has made it increasingly difficult to implement the management plans outlined within the Draft Tasmanian Threatened Orchid Recovery Plan (2004) and has highlighted further the need for taxonomic resolution, adequate baseline ecological information and an understanding of the evolutionary processes driving speciation within the group.

My PhD project at the University of Tasmania aims to resolve some of these issues through molecular analysis of the *Parviflora* complex. However, finding known populations of *Pterostylis atricola*, *Pterostylis parviflora*, *Pterostylis uliginosa* and *Pterostylis aphylla* is difficult and time consuming. If any orchid enthusiast should come across a population of these species, or any other *Pterostylis*, please contact me.

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