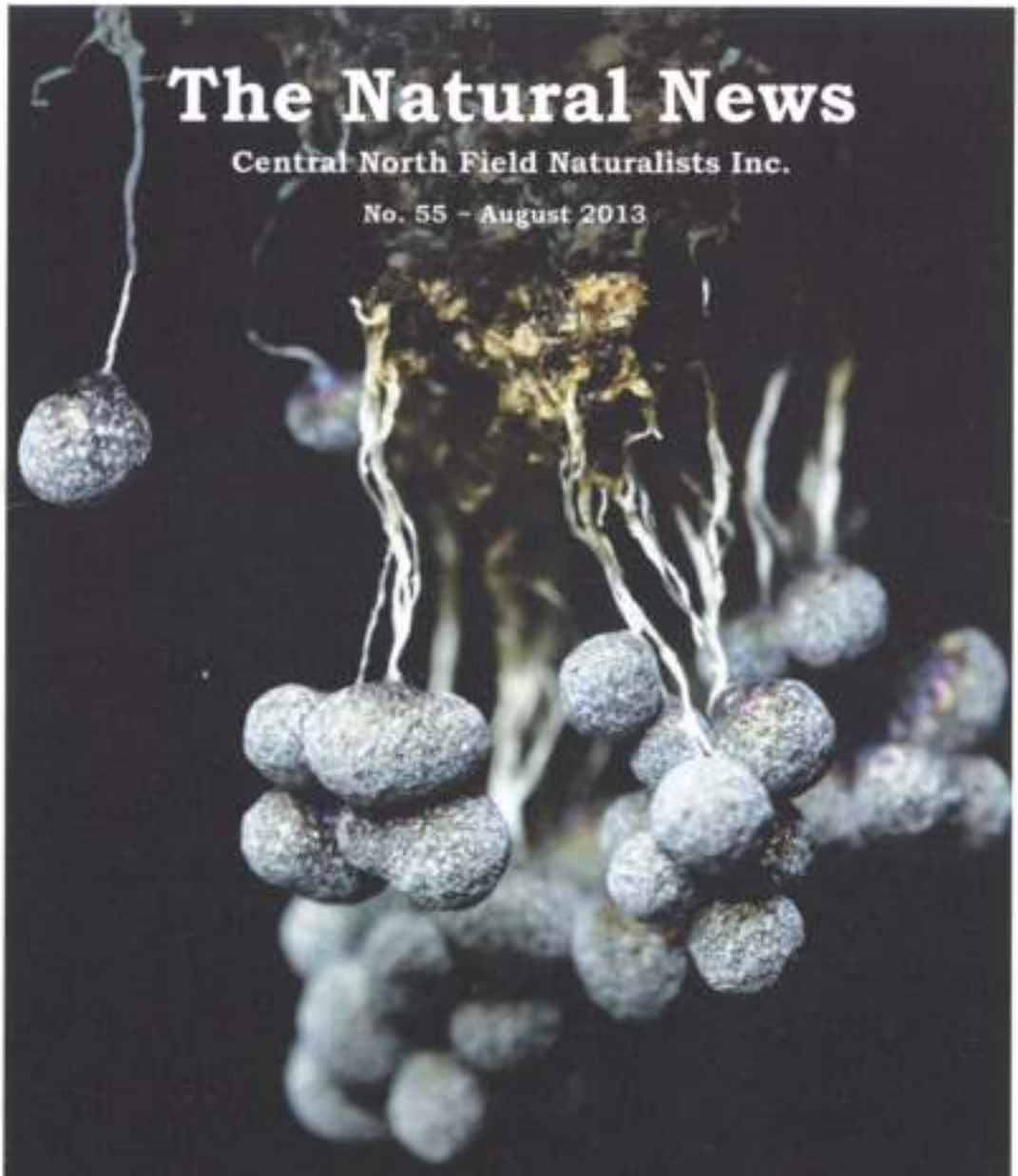
The Natural News

Central North Field Naturalists Inc.

No. 55 – August 2013



Arcyria stipata Photo: S. Lloyd

The Coorong

by Jim Nelson

The Coorong is a national park area in South Australia with a lagoon ecosystem located southeast of Adelaide. Its name is thought to be a corruption of the local Aboriginal name for the area, which is perhaps in keeping with the corruption of much of the area's natural ecosystem.

'In recent times there have been record low river flows to the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region due to drought and over-allocation across the Murray-Darling Basin. For several years the river system was heavily used upstream, and what was left was retained in Lake Alexandrina and prevented from flowing to the sea. This resulted in a range of environmental and community issues affecting the region, in addition to the ongoing long-term issues. Currently, the Murray is flowing out to sea again, and therefore it seemed an appropriate time to visit the area in its state of revival from a dire situation.

The Coorong itself is a long, shallow, brackish to hyper-saline lagoon about 130 kilometres in length. It is separated from the Southern Ocean by a narrow sand dune peninsula. Saline waters of the Coorong lagoons and Murray Mouth estuary are prevented from backing up into the lakes and the Murray River by a series of barrages (weirs) built in the 1930s.

The Murray Mouth lies at the western end of the Coorong lagoon. The lagoon is separated from Lake Alexandrina by the barrages designed to control the flow of water out to sea as well as keeping salt water from backing up into the lake. This engineering blight on the landscape of the north-western end of the lagoon area ensures that Lake Alexandrina retains enough fresh water for irrigation and other uses. During times of low flow of the Murray River, it also can ensure that the river does not flow out to sea as has been the case until recently. In spite of these engineering efforts, the beauty of the Coorong in its present state still impresses. While many are fascinated by the engineering expertise of the barrage system, I found myself trying to imagine just how glorious the area had once been.

Alas, this is a recurring dilemma for those of us who enjoy the technological ease of being able to visit special natural areas while finding many of our impacts on them to be unacceptable. We are told to accept the need for "balance", but all too often the balance called for seems drastically out of tune with our sensibilities.

Our camping in the Coorong National Park during early May had the advantage of having the area practically to ourselves. Deb and I travelled with field nats members, Tony and Alison, who are dedicated "birdos". For anyone interested in water birds, the Coorong

is certainly a destination to consider. The bush birds, however, were mostly conspicuous by their absence. A pair of Mallee Fowl was seen near their nest, and one wonders how these ground nesting birds can survive the scourge of foxes. Perhaps they are fierce fighters? They certainly seem to be relatively unconcerned about being watched.

On one of our walks we encountered some back water areas where there were numerous duck species. The pink-eared duck was particularly striking, as I had never seen it before.

Pink-eared duck

Besides bush birds, mammals were also virtually unseen, even rabbits. I spotted a single Eastern Grey Kangaroo off in the distance one morning. There were numerous signs put up announcing a temporary closing of the Park for a large scale fox poisoning event about to commence, which perhaps offered some clue to the absence of wildlife. Out on the Coorong Lagoon, however, there were water birds in their thousands, but they mainly had to be viewed from shore at long range through a telescope.

We had booked to go on an interpretive cruise on a boat leaving from Hindmarsh Island near Goolwa, and this turned out to be a great choice to get closer to the birds. Most of the birds were residents but there was a scattering of Northern Hemisphere birds still hanging around. Pelicans were seen in large numbers, and the Coorong is a significant breeding area for the species. There is a Pelican watching hut opposite the low lying barren islands where they hatch their young in large colonies.

Allison and Tony were quite excited to see a Red-necked Avocet, but when the boat

Red-necked Avocet

rounded a corner there was a large flock of these wonderful birds. This was typical as many of the birds species were in large flocks.

The Coorong has been recognised by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area. It has supported over 1% of the world populations of Chestnut Teal, Australian Shelduck, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Banded Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Pied Oystercatcher and Red-capped Plover. Australasian Bitterns have been recorded. It has also supported

Adult and juvenile Banded Stilt

significant numbers of Orange-bellied Parrots, Fairy Terns and Hooded Plovers, although their use of the site has declined due to reduced freshwater inflows.

Our boat skipper and guide stopped at a few spots along the southern side of the Coorong where the long spit of land, the Younghusband Peninsula, borders the ocean on the southern side. In his guide role he demonstrated how one could dig down through the sand with bare hands to freshwater. The peninsula was a significant area of Aboriginal occupation and permanent wells were established for the water. The middens consisted mainly of cockle shells, and we were served up a feed of these delicious shell fish cooked with garlic and spices. Cockles are harvested commercially from the Coorong, and are in high demand.

Ngarrindjeri is an Aboriginal nation of 18 language groups who occupied and still inhabit the Lower Murray, Coorong and Lakes area of South Australia. They are the descendants of Ngurunderi, one of the main ancestors of the Dreaming of southern Australia, and their totem is the Australian Pelican. Their lands and waters extended 30 km up the Murray from Lake Alexandrina, the length of the Coorong and the coastal area to Encounter Bay. Today this Aboriginal group is still very strong, with a large and proud community of people still based in the Lower Murray and Coorong.

Environmental flows of water are obviously a big topic following the Coorong's deprivation of this life blood. Hopefully, environmental priorities will be established which will allow this wonderful area to thrive.

The Coorong is a long day's drive from Melbourne, but we found it well worth the trip. With a bit of time on hand, the wonderful Grampians area would beckon for a look and a rest along the way.

Internet References:
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coorong_National_Park
www.southaustralia.com/info.aspx
Coorong interpretive boat cruises, Goolwa S.A.
Map by Hullwarren (Creative Commons copyright) downloaded from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CoorongMap.jpg

The photos accompanying this article were taken at the Coorong in 2011 by Sarah Lloyd.

Black-tailed Native-hen

BowerBird – a database for naturalists

About 2 years ago, the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) funded Museum Victoria to develop Australia's first social science website and iPhone App dedicated to the globally growing workforce of Citizen Scientists. There are only three other similar websites worldwide and because they are in the Northern Hemisphere (Project Noah and iNaturalist in the USA and iSpot in the UK), Australians wishing to upload, share and discuss their natural history images have had to use these sites.

BowerBird http://www.bowerbird.org.au has been developed for use by professional and citizen scientists and is intended to be an effective interface between these two communities.

BowerBird primarily facilitates:

- **Media uploads**
- **Projects** can be created by anyone and joined by anyone. Members of a Project build its content through observation uploads, adding GPS coordinates and date sighted, making identifications, adding descriptive or commentary text and creating tags. Members can also vote for image quality or identification accuracy or effectiveness of descriptive text. Any member can comment, vote and add anything to any observation within a project but only the original uploader of an observation can modify the observation itself (i.e. Add more images, change title etc).

Projects also define your personal view of BowerBird. Rather than seeing every single upload added to BowerBird, you see only Observations or News Items for the Projects or Organisations you have joined or the People you are following.

- **Organisations** can be created and members can join. Through News Items, (eg. field trips, special finds, AGMs) Organisations act primarily as information conduits to the membership.

- All BowerBird data is uploaded to the ALA dataset.

- BowerBird has a fully interactive Australian Master Names Species Checklist consisting of almost 210,000 individual species names across 7 Kingdoms. It can be searched by Text for common or scientific name or searched by Classification (Phylum to species). The numbers in brackets indicate the number of taxa below that taxon level.

The first thing to do after you Register and Login to BowerBird is to Create or Join a Project or an Organisation or choose someone to Follow. Until you Join a Project or Follow someone – NOTHING WILL APPEAR IN YOUR BOWERBIRD BROWSER.

A BowerBird User Guide is available at URL: http://researchdata.museum.vic.gov.au/padil/BowerBird/BowerBird_User_Guide.htm

If you have any questions or problems, either use the Blog or contact project manager who can assist with the initial setup of Projects and Organisations as well as observation uploads.

Dr Ken Walker (Project Manager)
Senior Curator, Entomology
Museum Victoria GPO Box 666
email kwalker@museum.vic.gov.au

Things to keep in mind

- Even though websites like Flickr, Facebook and YouTube now have over 40 billion images, they are not considered to be effective Citizen Science interfaces because few of them upload data into aggregated and public natural history databases.

- Pre-release testing of BowerBird showed that most user problems were associated with old web browsers. It is suggested that people use the latest versions of Chrome or FireFox and if you must use Microsoft IE, get version 9.

Vagrant Birds

by Sarah Lloyd

Many of Australia's bird species have adapted to a climate characterised by prolonged dry periods interspersed with flooding rain. This leads to "irruptions", i.e. irregular movements (rather than regular migrations) in which birds, sometimes in big flocks, move into areas where they are not usually seen.

Tasmanians have been lucky enough to see some unusual mainland visitors this year. Approximately 700 banded stilt were observed at Moulting Lagoon in May; a lone black-tailed native-hen was photographed at Waratah in April; and pink-eared and freckled duck were seen at Goulds Lagoon in the south and at several other locations.

Pink-eared Duck

'Zebra duck', the common name of the Pink-eared Duck, more appropriately describes this extra-ordinary looking species, given its bold black and white markings and inconspicuous pink 'ears'.

Pink-eared Duck are usually associated with the ephemeral wetlands of inland Australia where they feed in warm shallow water by filtering algae, plankton and aquatic invertebrates with their peculiarly-shaped, flanged bills. When the inland wetlands dry out the birds move coastward and if suitable invertebrate-rich warm water is not available, they will feed in deeper water where seeds comprise a greater proportion of their diet.

Pink-eared duck sometimes feed by "vortexing", an action which concentrates food in a water column. Vortexing involves birds rotating bill to tail about a central point.

Black-tailed Native-hen are usually confined to mainland Australia but as they are not flightless like their Tasmanian cousins they sometimes appear in unexpected places. This bird was seen at Waratah.

Freckled duck are considered "rare, nomadic and irruptive". They have been seen at several sites in Tasmania this year. The freckled duck (left) was photographed with chestnut teal. (Photograph: Bruce Longmore)

Pink-eared Duck are usually seen on ephemeral wetlands of inland Australia but will move coastward when the wetlands dry out. These birds were observed on Goulds Lagoon in southern Tasmania. (Photograph: Bruce Longmore)

A tropical slime mould in Tasmania

by Sarah Lloyd

The following is an excerpt from Fungimap Newsletter #48
Tubifera bombarda (Berk & Broome) G.W. Martin—a tropical slime mould in Tasmania.

Apart from the Fungimap target species (e.g. *Fuligo septica*, *Lycogala epidendrum*, and *Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa*) that are relatively conspicuous, there are very few slime moulds that are easily recognisable in the field. Most are extremely small (less than 2 mm tall) and cryptic, and occur in dark wet places such as the underside of decaying logs. Furthermore, most slime moulds require microscopic examination of their spores and other features for positive identification.

In contrast, illustrations of *Tubifera bombarda* suggest that it is easily recognisable. It is described by Stephenson (1994) as *'a striking species, known only from the tropics ... stalked and [with] a pseudocapillitium consisting of a cluster of rigid, bristlelike filaments arising from the centre of each sporangium.'* I wasn't expecting to see it in Tasmania.

I first collected *T. bombarda* from a fallen dead *Eucalyptus* sp. in August 2011 and have photographs of numerous sporangia on a eucalypt stump at various stages of development in August 2010. In August 2012 an extensive fruiting covering approximately 45 x 5 cm appeared on a bryophyte-covered log on the ground on a regularly walked track. Mature sporophores were collected on 13th September 2012 and lodged at the National Herbarium of Victoria (MEL).

On 19 Jan 2013 another old colony with some fungal infection was found on a large burnt log on the ground in a nearby gully.

According to Martin and Alexopoulos (1969) *T. bombarda* has been collected from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Sumatra, Philippines, Costa Rica, Puerto Rica and Jamaica. In addition, a map on the Discover Life website (Web Ref. 1) indicates that it was collected in the north east United States near the Canada/ USA border in 1855. This species is not listed as occurring in Australia by Mitchell (1995), nor is it listed in a later unpublished paper by Stephenson (2011).

Acknowledgements
Paul George confirmed identification of *T. bombarda* and made suggestions after reading a previous draft of this article.

References

Martin, G.W. & Alexopoulos, C.J. (1969) *The Myxomycetes*. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City.

Mitchell, D. (1995) The Myxomycota of Australia. *Nova Hedwigia* 60: 269-295

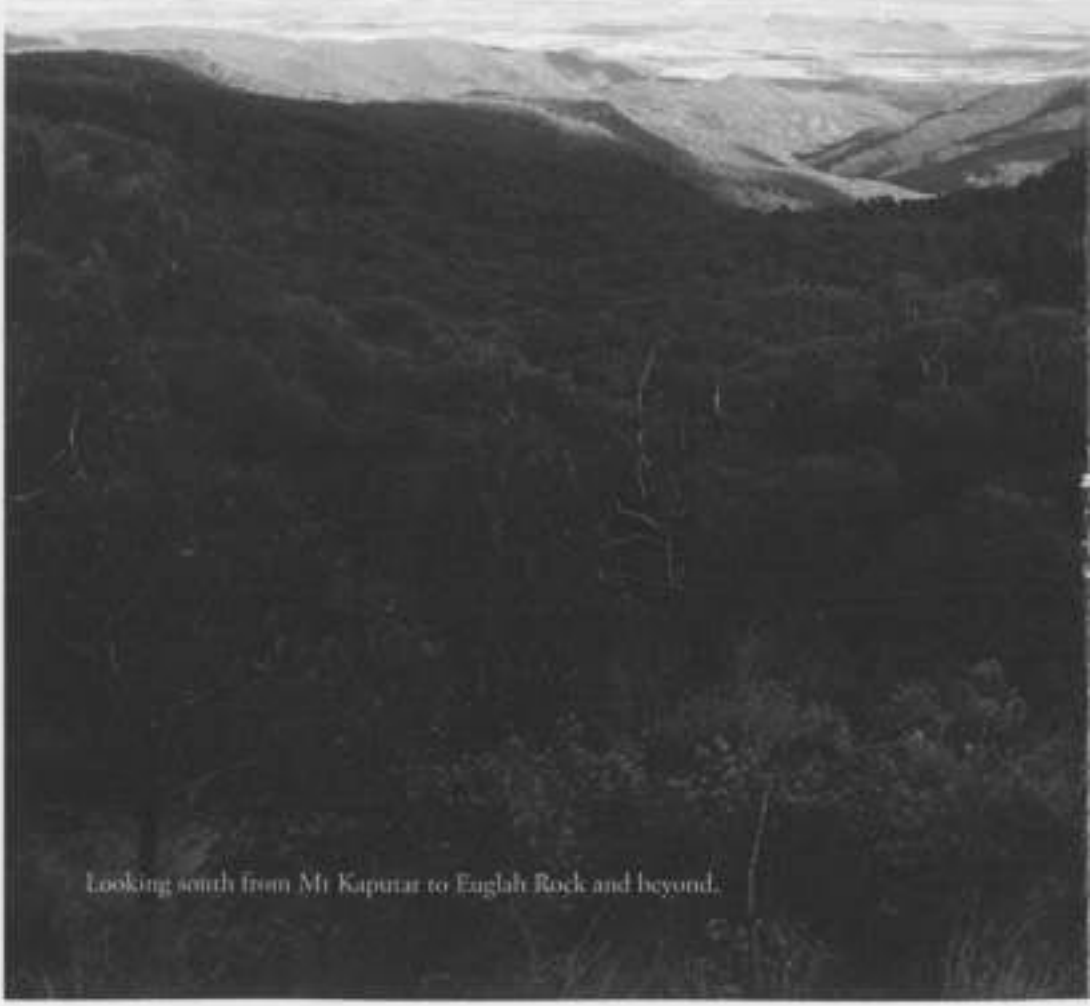
Stephenson, S.L. & Stempen H. (1994) *Myxomycetes a Handbook of Slime Moulds*. Timber Press, Oregon.

Stephenson, S.L. (2011) Myxomycetes from Australia. Unpublished.

Web Ref. 1. Discover Life: Tubifera bombarda. <http://www.discoverlife.org/20/m?kind=Tubifera+bombarda&cb=EOL/pages/2857515> (viewed September 17th 2012)

Mt Kaputar National Park

On a good day ten percent of New South Wales is visible from the summit of Mt Kaputar. This peak, at 1512 m, is the highest point in the Mt Kaputar National Park, and is one of a series of spectacular landforms that resulted from repeated volcanic eruptions 17-20 million years ago. The park, part of the Nandewar Range about 30 km east of Narrabri, encompasses several vegetation communities including open ironbark and cypress pine woodlands on the lower slopes, wet eucalypt forests and sub-alpine heaths and woodlands.



Looking south from Mt Kaputar to Euglah Rock and beyond.

If you find this page depauperate (or you're tired of reading about slime moulds) please submit an article! Short or long articles (with or without photographs), observations, poems, or quotations about any aspect of natural history can be emailed to the editor (sarahlloyd@iprimus.com.au). Please ensure that images are no larger than 1MB.

Deadlines for articles: July 30, November 30 and March 30.

Sykes Sanctuary, Railton

by Sarah Lloyd

"I give my buildings, contents and tools for you to use as a bush camp in the hope that you will continue my work of beautifying the property."

So wrote Norman Sykes in 1987 when he bequeathed 40 acre of bush on the outskirts of Railton to the Kentish council with instructions that it be used as a nature sanctuary.

Norman Sykes was a fighter pilot in World War 1 after graduating from Leeds University with an engineering degree. He met and married his wife, Gladys Edith Sykes (nee Grant), who had left Australia to travel and work following her graduation with a degree in mathematics. In 1947, the Sykes family immigrated to Melbourne but soon moved to Claude Road, Sheffield, and later to Devonport where their children attended high school. While living in Devonport, Norman purchased 40 acres of bush which became his 'sanctuary' after the death of his wife in 1953.

Sykes, disillusioned by war and modern living, gave up many comforts to live as close to nature as possible. He lived in a shack by himself and frequently rode his bicycle to Devonport. He collected dead animals off the road for his pot and used his bicycle to generate electricity for his reading lamp. He is often described as one of Tasmania's earliest conservationists.

A feature of the reserve is the monument covered by mathematical quotations and symbols erected by Norman's son Ian.

On July 7th, one of the coldest days this year, when more than a dusting of snow covered the slopes of the Great Western Tiers, ten field naturalists visited Sykes Sanctuary to document its flora, fauna and fungi.

One of the noteworthy things about the reserve is the large number of birds it supports. First on the list during Sunday's outing was a Grey Goshawk, followed by Golden Whistler, all four endemic honeyeaters and the range of bush birds you'd expect to see at such a place (see list). We discussed the possible reason for the high number of birds and concluded that the reserve is in reasonably good condition with all layers of vegetation, especially the understorey, mostly intact.

This is in stark contrast to similar-sized bush blocks on farming land where wood collecting, frequent burning and livestock grazing degrades the understorey. This makes areas unsuitable for a range of species, especially those that either forage or nest in the understorey. For example, the Yellow-throated Honeyeater (whose frequent vocalising during our visit suggested that spring is not far away) is an example of a species that relies on good vegetation structure to flourish. This is because it forages on the upper branches and trunks of eucalypts but breeds near the ground in understorey vegetation.

Cutting grass (*Gahnia grandis*) and swordsedge (*Lepidosperma* sp). form a significant, and in

many areas impenetrable, understorey. Where we were able to push through we encountered paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia* and *M. squarrosa*), treeferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*), a steely blue fungus (*Cortinarius rotundisporus*) and chimneys of burrowing crayfish, something that Jim, (who came prepared with gumboots) had expected to encounter because of the swampy ground. It is very likely that the species is the endangered *Engaeus granulatus* as it occurs on private properties to the north and south of the reserve.

Weeds are not a big issue in the reserve largely because some of the significant problem plants such as Spanish heath, blackberry and pines have been removed by Staff from the Kentish council. We noticed several individual plants, especially Spanish heath, some of which we removed.

An endangered vegetation community dominated by *Eucalyptus ovata* is widespread in the sanctuary and a small area of buttongrass (*Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*) was an unexpected find.

It is quite unusual that we have the opportunity to watch the activities of birds during our field outings (probably because of the mid-morning start and the chatter of naturalists) so it was great to see at quite close range the various honeyeaters as they foraged under the shedding bark of the eucalypts. So far, the birds observed at the reserve include two endangered species (swift parrot - heard during a visit on February 21st - and grey goshawk) and several migratory species including dusky woodswallow and satin flycatcher that were observed during a "birds, fungi and slime mould" field day organised by the Kentish Council on March 5th 2013.

The endangered vegetation community dominated by *E. ovata*, two endangered bird species and the possible occurrence of *Engaeus granulatus* are reasons enough for the sanctuary's long-term protection. The high number of so called 'common' species, such as dusky woodswallow and beautiful firetail that anecdotal evidence and monitoring indicate are declining or disappearing from some areas, adds significantly to the importance of the area.

Everyday terms for those committed to preservation of natural areas such as "endangered", "threatened" and "biodiversity conservation" were probably not in common use when Norman Sykes bequeathed his land to the Kentish Council. Knowing what we do about Mr Sykes we feel that he would approve of our interest in his beloved sanctuary.

It is intended that we will visit the reserve on a regular basis with the aim of compiling as comprehensive a species list as possible. It is likely that orchids and other herbaceous plants will be added in spring, as will more fungal species during the autumn and winter months. Once the easy groups have been documented, we aim to tackle the mosses, liverworts and lichens.

Numerous chimneys of burrowing crayfish (*Engaeus* sp.) were observed in a swampy area.

Species recorded at Sykes Sanctuary

Fauna

Swamp Harrier
Grey Goshawk
Tasmanian Native-hen (e) (heard)
Masked Lapwing
Common Bronzewing
Brush Bronzewing
Green Rosella (e)
Swift Parrot (he)
Fan-tailed Cuckoo (m)
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo (m)
Laughing Kookaburra (i)
Superb Fairy-wren
Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote (m)
Tamanian Scrubwren (e)
Brown Thornbill
Yellow Wattlebird (e)
Yellow-throated Honeyeater (e)
Strong-billed Honeyeater (e)
Black-headed Honeyeater (e)
Crescent Honeyeater
New Holland Honeyeater
Eastern Spinebill
Scarlet Robin
Golden Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Satin Flycatcher (m)
Grey Fantail (m)
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (m)
Dusky Woodswallow (m)
Grey Butcherbird
Australian Magpie (heard)
Grey Currawong
Forest Raven
Beautiful Firetail
Goldfinch (i)
Tree Martin (m)
Silvereye (m)
Common Blackbird (i)
Engaeus sp.
Pademelon
Brushtailed possum (scat)
Ringtailed possum (drey)

Flora

Acacia melanoxylon	blackwood
Acacia verticillata	prickly moses
Acacia dealbata	silver wattle
Acaena novae-zelandiae	buzzy
Cassinia aculeata	dollybush
Clematis aristata	clematis
Coprosma quadrifida	native currant
Eucalyptus amygdalina	black peppermint
E. obliqua	stringybark
E. ovata	swamp (black) gum
Exocarpus cupressiformis	native cherry
Gahnia grandis	cutting grass
Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus	buttongrass
Lepidosperma sp.	swordsedge
Leptospermum lanigerum	woolly teatree
Lomandra longifolia	sagg
Melaleuca ericifolia	swamp paperbark
Melaleuca squarrosa	scented paperbark
Olearia lirata	forest daisybush
Senecio linearifolius	fireweed

Ferns

Blechnum nudum	soft waterfern
Blechnum wattsii	hard waterfern
Cyathea australis	rough treefern
Dicksonia antarctica	treefern
Gleichenia dicarpa	coralfern
Histiopteris incisa	batwing fern
Polystichum proliferum	mother shieldfern

Fungi

Byssomerulius corium
Calocera sp.
Chlorociboria sp.
Cortinarius rotundisporus
Flammulina velutipes
Lazcaria sp.
Mycena interrupta
Oudemansiella radicata
Russula sp.
Scleroderma sp.
Tremella fuciformis

Cortinarius rotundisporus

Life on a blackwood log

by Sarah Lloyd

The heavy rain in May 2013 was enough to saturate logs, litter and other coarse woody debris. This resulted in a good flush of fungal fruiting bodies but very few slime moulds. Because I had observed numerous slime moulds after each bout of wet weather during the previous few months I was expecting that pattern to continue. However, research in the Northern Hemisphere indicates that although slime moulds can appear at any time of the year, they tend to peak in spring and summer. It is not known when they peak in Australia, this is something more field research should determine.

Although disappointed not to find some fruiting bodies I had the rare opportunity to watch a sclerotium as it was reactivated after rain, and then to track the progress of numerous active plasmodia as they inched along a tangle of dogwood and blackwood branches in the swamp, an area that is close enough to visit several times each day. On May 24th I left Tasmania for the Fungimap conference and thought little more about it.

On 6 May 2013 rain reactivated the sclerotium, the dormant stage of a slime mould. The change of colour from the orange dormant stage to the yellow active stage is just visible in the above photograph.

When I returned on June 30 there was a spectacular display of fruiting bodies. On the dogwood and blackwood branches were eleven clusters of stalked sporangia of *Badhamia utricularis* at various stages of development: there was one cluster of orange sporangia still in the process of maturing, and eleven clusters of mature sporangia (see front cover) that had completely dehisced (i.e. fully matured and released their spores) to reveal the intricate network of limey 'badhamoid' threads characteristic of the genus. There were also

The 'badhamoid' capillitia (sterile threads within the spore mass) of *Badhamia utricularis* consist of reticulate, delicate lime tubules.

twelve active plasmodia. However, as several additional species were observed on the log on July 22nd, the plasmodia were not necessarily those of *B. utricularis*. (Slime moulds are impossible to identify at the plasmodial stage.) Two of the species (*Physarum viride* and *P. album*) are in the same order (Physarales) as *B. utricularis* and their plasmodia look similar. A further three species (*Arcyria pomiformis*, *A. globosa* and *Comatricha nigra*) are in different orders, that have different looking plasmodia.

It is not known what prompts plasmodia to transform to fruiting bodies. In the laboratory changes in ambient conditions such as pH, moisture and temperature, or exhaustion of the food supply have been suggested as triggers. My

After soaking rain in mid July several other slime mould species appeared near *Badhamia utricularis*. They included extensive colonies of *Physarum album* (pictured) as well as *Comatricha nigra, Arcyria pomiformis* and *A. globosa*.

observations of the mature *B. utricularis* right next to actively feeding plasmodia that are all experiencing the same conditions, suggest that other factors are involved.

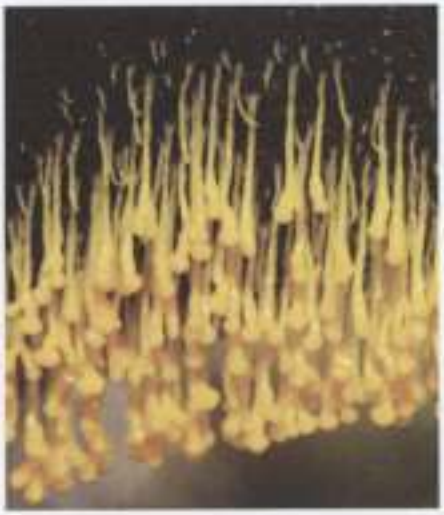
After the mid May appearance of the slime mould plasmodia, I recalled that mature sporangia of the very same species had appeared about two metres away on the very same blackwood log in September 2010 and I had collected a sclerotium of *B. utricularis* in the mistaken belief that it was *Hemitrichia serpula*, a very distinctive bright red slime mould whose fruiting structure is a plasmodiocarp, i.e. it resembles the veins in a plasmodium.

Badhamia utricularis is a great slime mould to study because it has relatively large (0.5 to 1.0 mm diameter) usually stalked globose, ovate or pear-shaped sporangia. It seems to remain in the field longer than most other species, and if the sporangia do get a fungal infection its long thread-like stalks are distinctive enough for identification. In addition, its sclerotium, the dormant stage, is pale orange and quite easy to see on a log – I am yet to find the sclerotia of any another species.

B. utricularis is one of a handful of known fungivorous slime moulds (it can cause problems in mushroom farms) which is an additional aspect of interest. It has been recorded growing in the presence of several fungal species, most commonly *Stereum hirsutum* and *Phlebia radiata*, but will devour other agarics and brackets. It contains a cocktail of enzymes known as 'mycolase' which have been investigated as possible controls of animal pathogens.

I have not kept records of the fungal species on the log, but in July 2013 I noted *Mycena interrupta*, *Calocera* sp., *Chlorociboria* sp., unidentified gilled brackets, several "paint splash" (i.e. resupinate) fungi and numerous extremely small ascomycetes. A colony of *Physalacria* sp., a white inflated fungus resembling a miniature capsicum, has appeared on the lower end of the log since 2010.

These 'plasmodial tracks' were visible on the blackwood log. They are excreted matter deposited along the margins of the veins of the plasmodium. Actively feeding plasmodia will not cross the tracks, possibly to avoid re-engulfing harmful substances they have excreted.



On July 20, after several days of heavy rain, another plasmodium started to transform. This photograph was taken at 1104; by 1433 the stipes were white and thread-like.

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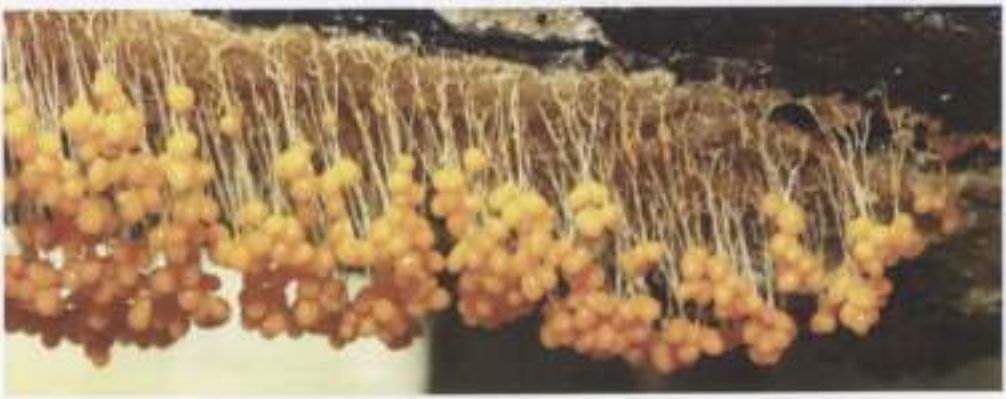
Ing, B. "The phytosociology of myxomycetes." Tansley review No. 62 New Phytol (1994), 126, 175-201 p. 176

Keller H.W. and Everhart S.E. (2010), "The importance of Mycomycetes in Biological Research and Teaching", Fungi Volume 3:1 Winter 2010.

Madelin, M.F. (1984) "Presidential address Myxomycete data of Ecological Significance." Trans. Br. Mycol. Soc. 83

Unusual "capsicum" fungus *Physalacria* sp.



On Aug 10 a thick layer of plasmodium was making a meal of a toothed fungus growing on a log on which the blackwood was leaning. By the following day the teeth had been "eaten" and this magnificent display of fruiting bodies appeared.

Walks and other events

Sunday September 8th Greens Beach. Meet at the Greens Beach shop for a walk to West Head.

September TBA Monitoring *Spyridium obcordatum* at Hawley Nature Reserve and Hawk Trap Hill, Port Sorell. A small number of people are needed in the second half of September to assist with our annual monitoring. Please register interest with Phil Collier at phil@rubicon.org.au or 0438122110. Further information: 'Latest additions' at http://www.disjunctnaturalists.com/articles.htm

October 11–13 Federation of Field Naturalists Weekend hosted by CNFN Inc.
Field trips to Rubicon Sanctuary and Narawntapu NP, a sumptuous Indian banquet and a field nats quiz night are among the activities planned for the Federation Weekend.

Accommodation is available at Camp Banksia, Port Sorell. Bunk room - $26 per person per night. Limited camping permitted - $20 per person per night. Please book with Robin Garnett by Tuesday 1 October. (email robin@rubicon.org.au or phone 0438 002 615)

Federation Weekends present an excellent opportunity to meet and share knowledge with members of other field naturalists groups. CNFN is hosting this Federation weekend so it would be great if members could come along - there's sure to be washing up to do!

Sunday November 3rd 10.00. Reedy Marsh. Private Forest Reserve at 75 Saddlers Run Road. Take River Road from the "bottom" roundabout in Deloraine (near the Deloraine Hotel and the train park). Drive along River Rd for 7.8 km until you come to Saddlers Run Rd. Driveway to No. 75 is first on the left opposite Willowdale Poultry. Please keep gate closed.
For more details contact Jennifer: 0417 607 786

Sunday December 1st AGM at Weegena. Meet at John and Lynn's cabin at Hawleys Road, Weegena for a walk starting at 10.00. BBQ lunch at 12.00 (bring something to share) followed by AGM at 2.00 pm. As in previous years we will be voting on obtaining an audit exemption.
Hawleys Rd is the 2nd turn to the left after Kelly's Cage Rd. Jim will put up red tape at the turnoff, and again at the gate into the property (third turn to the right). Drive through the property until you come to the cabin. There is a toilet, running water, cutlery, etc at the cabin.

Sunday January 5th February Plains: Meet at O'Neils Picnic Ground, Gowrie Park (clearly signposted on the Mt Roland side of Claude Road, with toilets) at 9:00am. We will pool transport from here. A 4 km return walk (with 200 m gentle climb) to the edge of February Plains and the recently restored Basil Steer's trappers hut at 1050 m altitude. This is west of the Mersey River and south of the Borradaile Plains. The road is steep in places but OK for a 2WD with care.

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