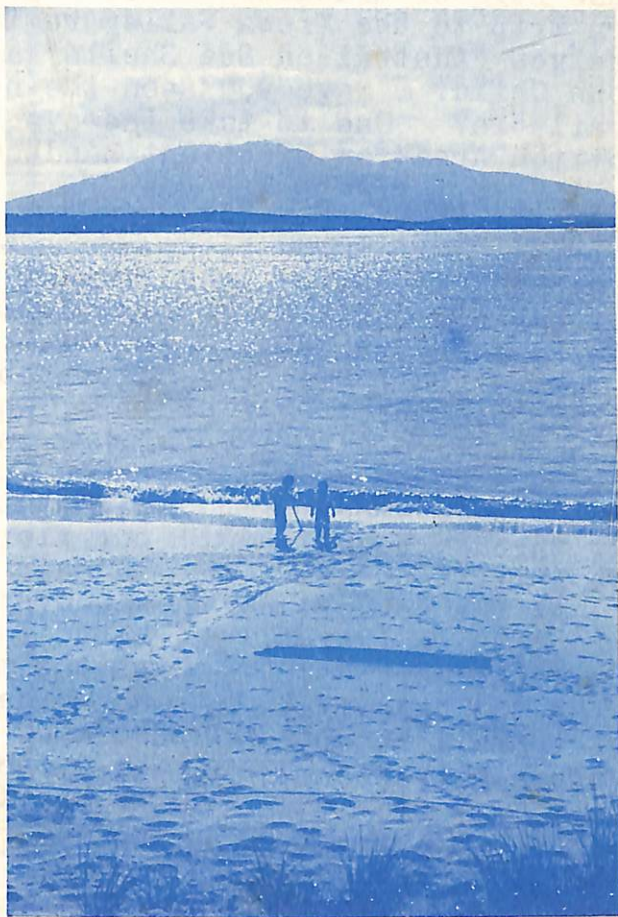


# NATURE NOTES

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PHOTO

T.R. OXLEE

ANOTHER EDEN

# ★ PRIZE LETTER

The letter of the month for November has been awarded to Leanne Begg of Blackburn Lake. Leanne writes about a return trip to the Kiewa Valley region. For her effort she receives "Australian Sea Shells" another Periwinkle from John Child. Have you seen the new title Periwinkle's have available? One to take the eye is "Birds of the Metropolitan Area" an excellent handbook for city schools.

## Return to Kiewa Leanne Begg

One weekend recently my relations and I went for a drive to Falls Creek. Many small and interesting plants, covered out entire view of the area. After a few minutes walk along a track, through bushland, we arrived at the falls. At the top of the rocks, 285 feet high, a few children were looking at the beautiful scenery. Small water ponds were easily seen a few feet away from the main fall. Ferns growing on the rocks were very attractive. Coming home over the "Black Spur" was also fascinating. The tall majestic trees reaching to the sun, made the road very gloomy looking, but the messmate and smaller trees made the surroundings very

pretty. The "Blue Gum", a tree we saw is a medium to very tall tree, with a straight trunk and large crown. It has rough grey-brown coloured bark at the base, while higher up the trunk is a creamy and blue colour. It was a very pleasant day spent amongst our flora and fauna. I re-discovered the beautiful nature of the mountains which had given me so much pleasure on my school trip to the Kiewa Valley Region.

ED. Sketch shows adult leaf and fruit of the Vic. Blue Gum or Eurabbie as it is sometimes called. Scientific name Euc. bicostata. Why?



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Produced by the  
Nature Notes  
Committee of  
Ringwood  
Inspectorate.

## Discovery!

When the lad, sun hat twisted and bathers all sandy, first ventured on to the rocks at the end of the shining beach, his immediate thoughts were, "Must watch my feet!" The heat belted down from the fiery sun and the child had a second thought, "Must cool off!" He splashed into a rock pool, throwing up spray and disturbing the sandy bottom. Tiring of this energetic procedure he quietly sat down. The surface of the pool flattened and the sand, as it settled formed little paths on his legs. A movement caught his eye. A shell moving! They're only good to kick around. Black wavy things from under the shell! Good I will crush it. No wait - look at the path it has made. Where is it going? Over there - a crab! Waving tentacles? I will touch it. It closed up. Was that a fish dart under . . . .?

The sun was low in the sky when an angry, but relieved father, yelled, "Nicky, come here this minute!" Nic. didn't know he was late - he hadn't thought of anyone else. He had just discovered a new world and he was the explorer.

G. White

# Winged Mariners.



● Greater Frigate-Bird

★ You will see the Oyster Catchers on almost any of our coastlines. Both species are very common. Here again is a bird with an interesting name. Do you think he uses a net to catch his oysters? What do you know of his breeding habits? Are oysters and other molluscs his only food?



● Oyster Catcher

★ Of all the birds perhaps the group that fill us most with their mastery of the skies is the group that live on the ocean and seashore.

The Frigate-birds are normally found in tropical and sub-tropical waters but sometimes wander south. Swift and graceful fliers they spend most of their time in the air and seldom enter the water.

Find out why he is called frigate-bird. What are the reasons for the spectacular orange pouch and when is it most evident? Can you find any more names for this bird? Do they all fit?

★ No doubt most boys think of a Gannet as an attack plane with our naval air arm. This plane is certainly well named, for the Australian Gannet is a dive bomber of the first order being known to plummet into the sea from as high as 100 feet, diving vertically beneath the surface for fish which if caught is swallowed under water. Why does the bird not suffer concussion or a broken neck? Perhaps you can discover this - a visit to the Melbourne Museum to see the skull of a gannet would help. Do any other birds dive beneath the waves?



● Pacific Gull



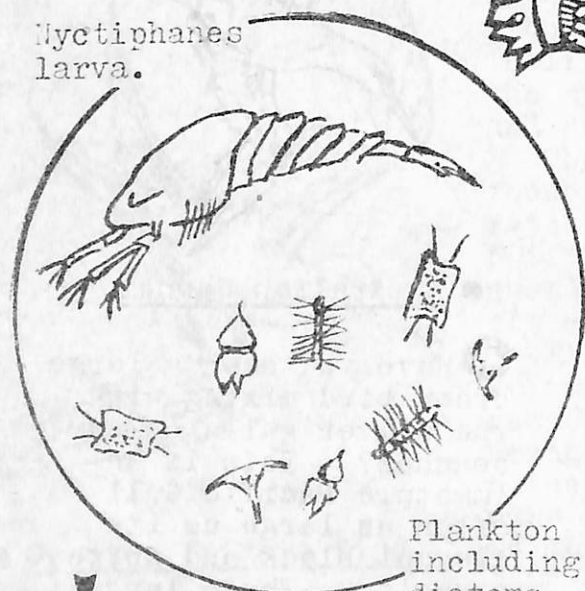
● Australian Gannet.

★ Have you seen a large brown bird mixing with the silver gulls on our beaches? This is an immature Pacific Gull often as large as its elegant black and white parents. These large gulls are great predators often wreaking havoc among smaller sea birds.

▶ On the back page you will find more ocean going birds. Make a project of their migratory habits. Find out where and when they nest. Make a list of birds of the ocean and seashore and tick them off as you see them.

# The Food Chain.

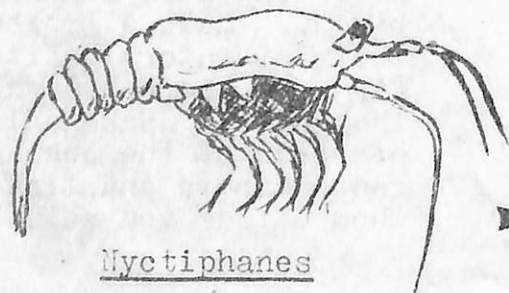
Nyctiphanes larva.



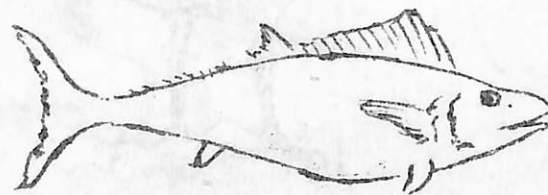
Plankton including diatoms.



Apogonops anomalus



Nyctiphanes



Young Mackerel

Plankton generally consists of tiny microscopic plants and animals which drift around at the direction of the ocean currents. The diatoms, which are the plants in the plankton, build up their food from the minerals in the sea water by using the energy in sunlight. These minerals will have been washed down from the land by the rivers or could have come from the decaying matter in the ocean. The Nyctiphanes larva (plankton) which feeds on the diatoms, in turn is eaten by the Apogonops anomalus and that is eaten by the adult Nyctiphanes. The adult Nyctiphanes is eaten by the young mackerel and that by the Cucumber fish

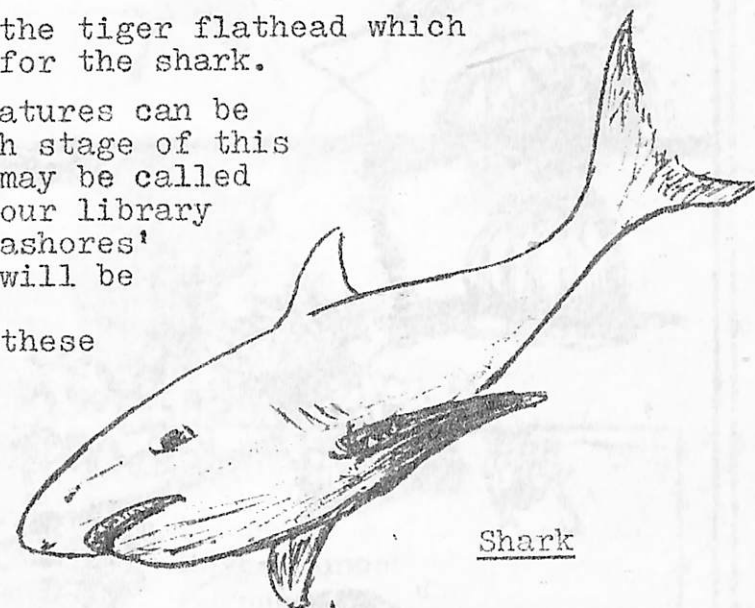
## *No. 2 In the Sea..*

which is eaten by the tiger flathead which is the basic diet for the shark.

Many other sea creatures can be connected with each stage of this food chain and it may be called a good web. If your library has 'Australian Seashores' by W.J.Dakin, you will be able to find more information about these 'webs'.

### ★ NOTE:

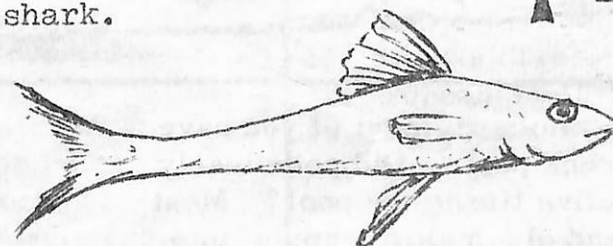
The biggest of all animals, the blue whale (up to 120 tons) depends directly and entirely on plankton and so does the biggest species of shark - the harmless basking shark.



Shark

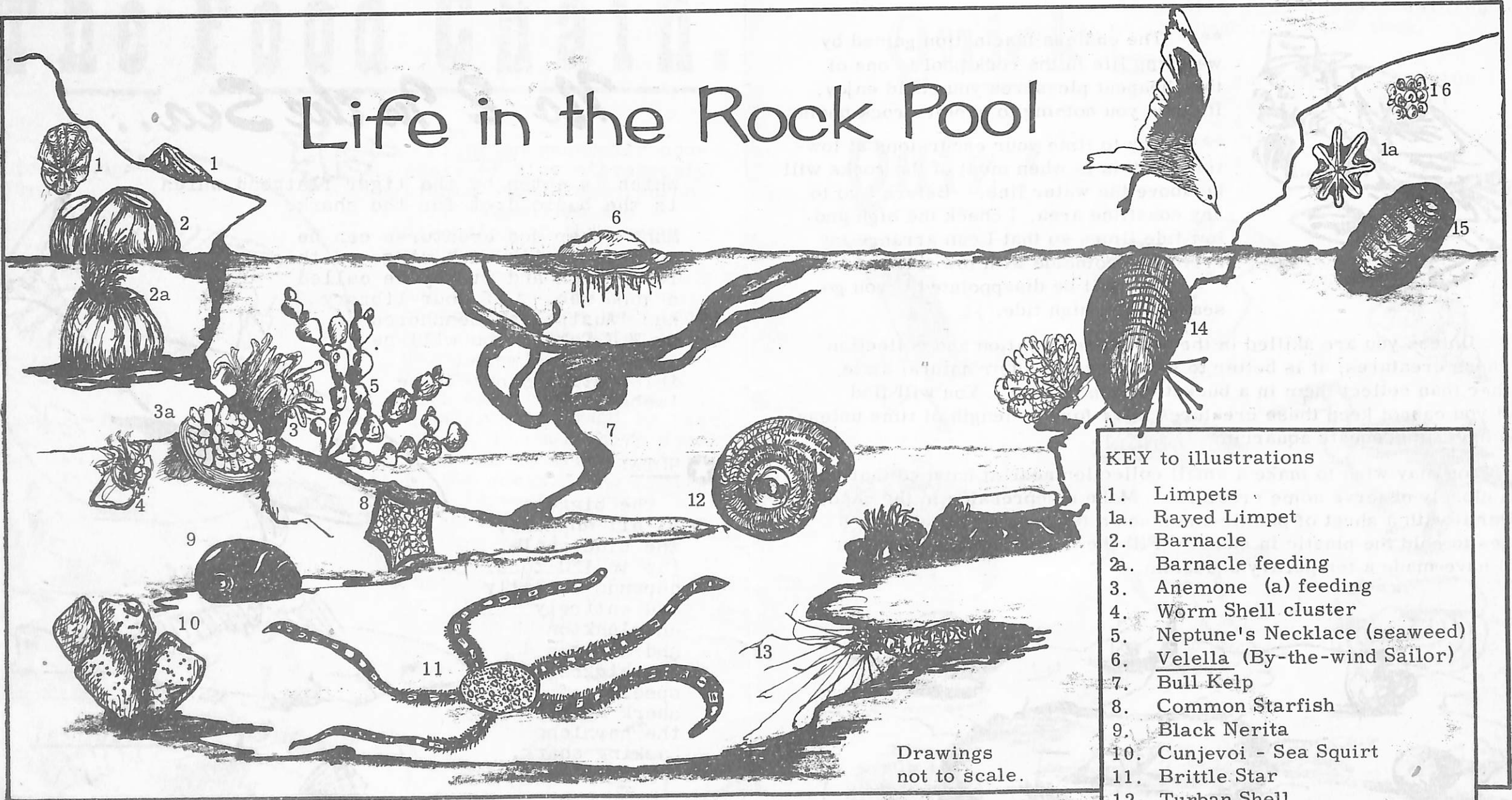


Tiger Flathead



Cucumber Fish

# Life in the Rock Pool



Drawings  
not to scale.

## KEY to illustrations

1. Limpets
- 1a. Rayed Limpet
2. Barnacle
- 2a. Barnacle feeding
3. Anemone (a) feeding
4. Worm Shell cluster
5. Neptune's Necklace (seaweed)
6. Velella (By-the-wind Sailor)
7. Bull Kelp
8. Common Starfish
9. Black Nerita
10. Cunjevoi - Sea Squirt
11. Brittle Star
12. Turban Shell
13. Terebella (Tube worm)
14. Mussel
15. Chiton
16. Blue Australwinks

At one time or another, most of you have delved into a rock pool. Did you closely observe the active life in the pool? Most of us, young and old, enjoy peeping into this small world. This guide may intro-

duce you to one or two new creatures. When searching remember these rules:  
 \*\*Always replace overturned rocks.  
 \*\*Take no more than two live specimens.  
 \*\*Wear strong footwear and a shady hat.



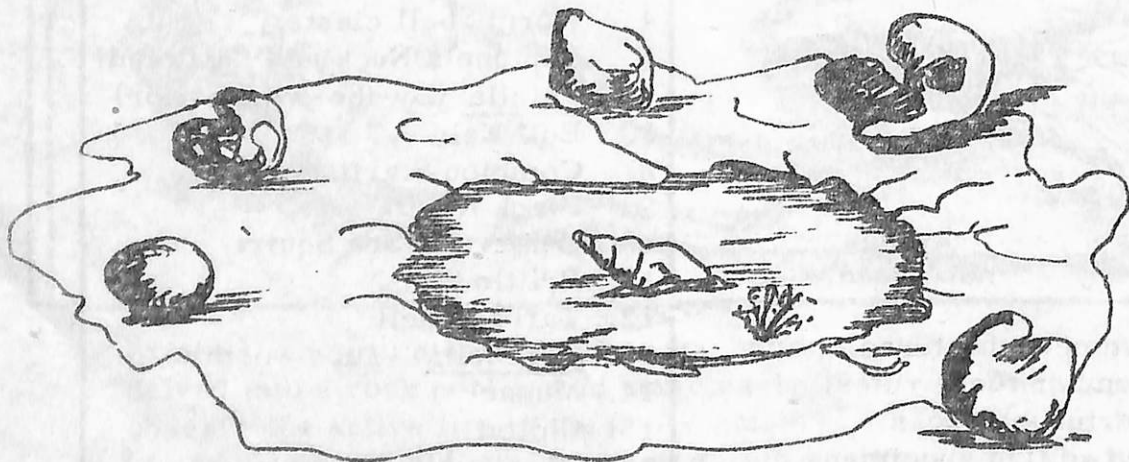
\*\*\* The endless fascination gained by watching life in the rock pool is one of the cheapest pleasures you could enjoy. It costs you nothing to explore rock pools.

\*\*\* Try to time your excursions at low tide for this is when most of the rocks will be above the water line. Before I go to any coastline area, I check the high and low tide times so that I can arrange my arrival to coincide with low tide.

You will be disappointed if you go searching at high tide.

\*\*\* Unless you are skilled in the art of preservation and collection of these creatures, it is better to watch them in their natural state, rather than collect them in a bucket to take home. You will find that you cannot keep these creatures alive for any length of time unless you have an adequate aquarium.

\*\*\* You may wish to make a small collection near at hand so that you can closely observe some creature. Make a depression in the sand, cover it with a sheet of plastic and place a few rocks around the edges to hold the plastic in place. Fill the hole with seawater; you will have made a temporary aquarium.



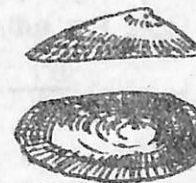
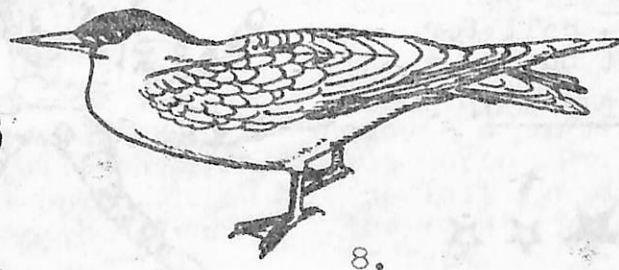
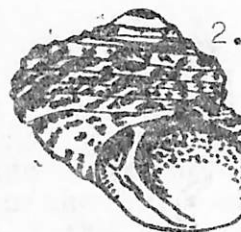
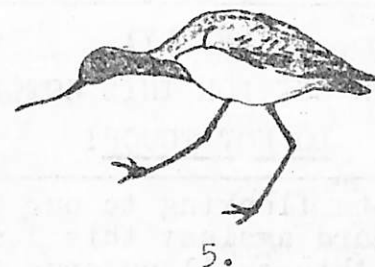
# Quick

You will find these creatures at the beach. Name them.

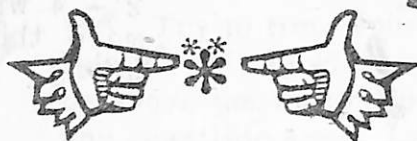
Score

- |                   |                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| All correct       | - champion                            |
| 1 wrong           | - winner                              |
| 2 - 4 wrong       | - good                                |
| more than 5 wrong | - you had better keep your eyes open. |

## Quiz!



# This n That



DEADLY! \* DEADLY! \* DEADLY!

WATCH OUT FOR THIS OCTOPUS!

DO NOT TOUCH!

★ Soon you will be flocking to our beaches and rock pools so be on guard against this death dealing marine.

The poison of this small octopus is more deadly than almost any other living creature. Common in rock pools in Southern Australian waters; it is brightly coloured. When angered the dark bands change to an iridescent blue - purple.

There is as yet no known antidote to the poison but our scientists are working ceaselessly to produce one. (Did you see the special feature on "This Day Tonight" a few weeks ago?)

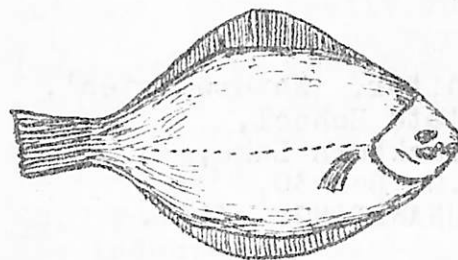
Some people have survived its bite, but probably because they received a very small amount of poison.

Remember if you see it - call for an adult but

DO NOT TOUCH.



...12



# Fishy Facts

★ Among the vertebrates (back boned) members of the great Animal Kingdom, the fishes form the most numerous group. They are so varied that even today it is hard to classify them all, and scientists do not agree on the method by which the species should be grouped.

★ The oldest type of fish of which specimens are found still living is the coelacanth, which was thought to have become extinct 60 million years ago. In 1938 a living coelacanth was caught and since then others have been netted.

★ When eating molluscs or other small shellfish, the starfish pulls on the shell until it opens. Then it removes the flesh of its victims.

★ Herman Melville's famous novel "Moby Dick" was based on the exploits of a real whale Mocha Dick reputed to have sunk two whalers, a schooner, fourteen whale boats and killed thirty men. "Moby Dick" was a sperm whale.

The huge blue whale may be 90 feet long (measure this distance in your schoolground) and weigh up to 120 tons yet it eats the tiniest of food - we call it plankton and you can find it in the story of The Food Chain on p.6.

★ Both eyes of the sole, and other flatfish, are on the same side of its head. Yet, during the first few days of its life the eyes of the fish are in a normal position, but during its growth the left eye moves towards the right. (See sketch at top).

# Drop a Line



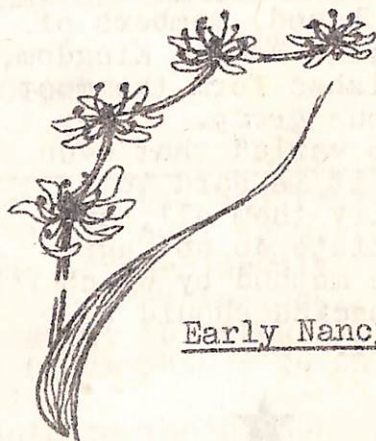
★ This month our mail bag is really full. We will print as many letters as possible and cut down on the sketches. Our first batch comes from Grade 4A Blackburn Lake. Lyn Hucks and Kerry Hickcox write about the School Sanctuary.

● In our sanctuary there are many kinds of flowers. The Early Nancy is one of my favourite flowers. It has a white petal and pale purple centre. We also found the common heath, beard heath, golden wattle, correas, appleberries and many others. In our science book we made a page about it. We wrote down the date then next to it the names of all the plants in flower. It is called a sanctuary because none of the plants have been or will be touched or harmed in any way.

ED. Thank you girls, Yes we are lucky to have a sanctuary at our school.

Nature Notes

Editor, 'Nature Notes',  
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Blackburn Lake,  
P.O. Box 30,  
NUNAWADING. 3131.



Early Nancy ✓

What about some letters from the other six schools with sanctuaries?

\* \* \* \* \*

★ The next letter comes from Marilyn Hiscox, age 10 years who omitted to mention her school. She writes .....

● One holiday we went to Walhalla which is about forty miles away from Yallourn. There were many huge sloped rocks some of them were made of slate and granite. It amazed me to see such huge rocks tipped as if they would fall

but they were really very sturdy. I would be very interested to know how the geologists could explain how these rocks came to be like this.

ED. For our answer we are indebted to Dr.J.A. McAndrew, Geologist at Melb. University .....

The large surface boulders, or "tors" form by weathering of nonbanded, massive, impervious rocks such as granite. Weathering of these begins along joints (cracks) particularly near the intersection of joints and where the joints are widely spaced, the unweathered core between such widely spaced joints remains as solid rock after surrounding rock has weathered away to form tors.

Thanks Dr. McAndrew.

## Answers Bird Quiz No. 8.

1. Kookaburra, 2. Little Wattlebird, 3. Fairy Martin,
4. Black Swan, 5. Eastern Spinebill, 6. Emu,
7. Blackbird, 8. White-backed Magpie, 9. Welcome Swallow, 10. Red-capped Robin, 11. Willy Wagtail,
12. Brolga or Native Companion.

How Did You Fare?

- 10 - 12 correct.
- 6 - 10 correct.
- Less than 6

You know your birds.  
Fair to middling.  
Been watching wrong birds.

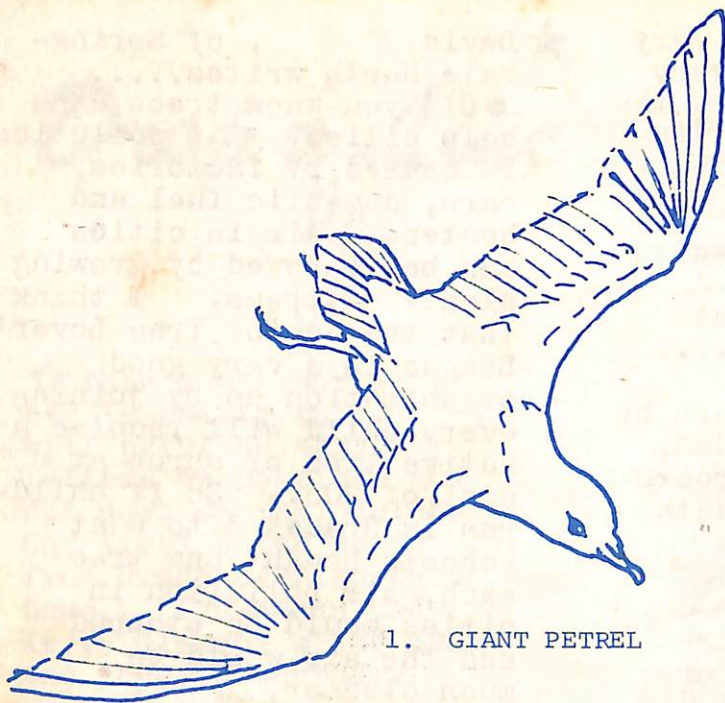
★ David , of Springvale North writes.....

● Did you know trees can help cities? Air pollution is caused by factories, cars, domestic fuel and heaters. Air in cities can be improved by growing plenty of trees. I think that the Junior Tree Lover's League is a very good organization as by joining every child will receive a native tree or shrub at a cost of 20c. So if children in Grades 3 to 6 at schools bought one tree each, air pollution in cities would be stopped and the air would be much cleaner.

ED. Yes David, but do you know just how plants help to purify our air? Let's hope many more schools will join the Junior Tree Lover's League. The address: Natural Resources Conservation League of Victoria, Springvale Road, Springvale South, 3172.

WINGED MARINERS

Sketches by G. Hensler



1. GIANT PETREL



2. WHITE FRONTED TERN



3. AUSTRALIAN PELICAN

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NEXT ISSUE WILL BE AT DEPOTS ON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3rd

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