

NATURE

O

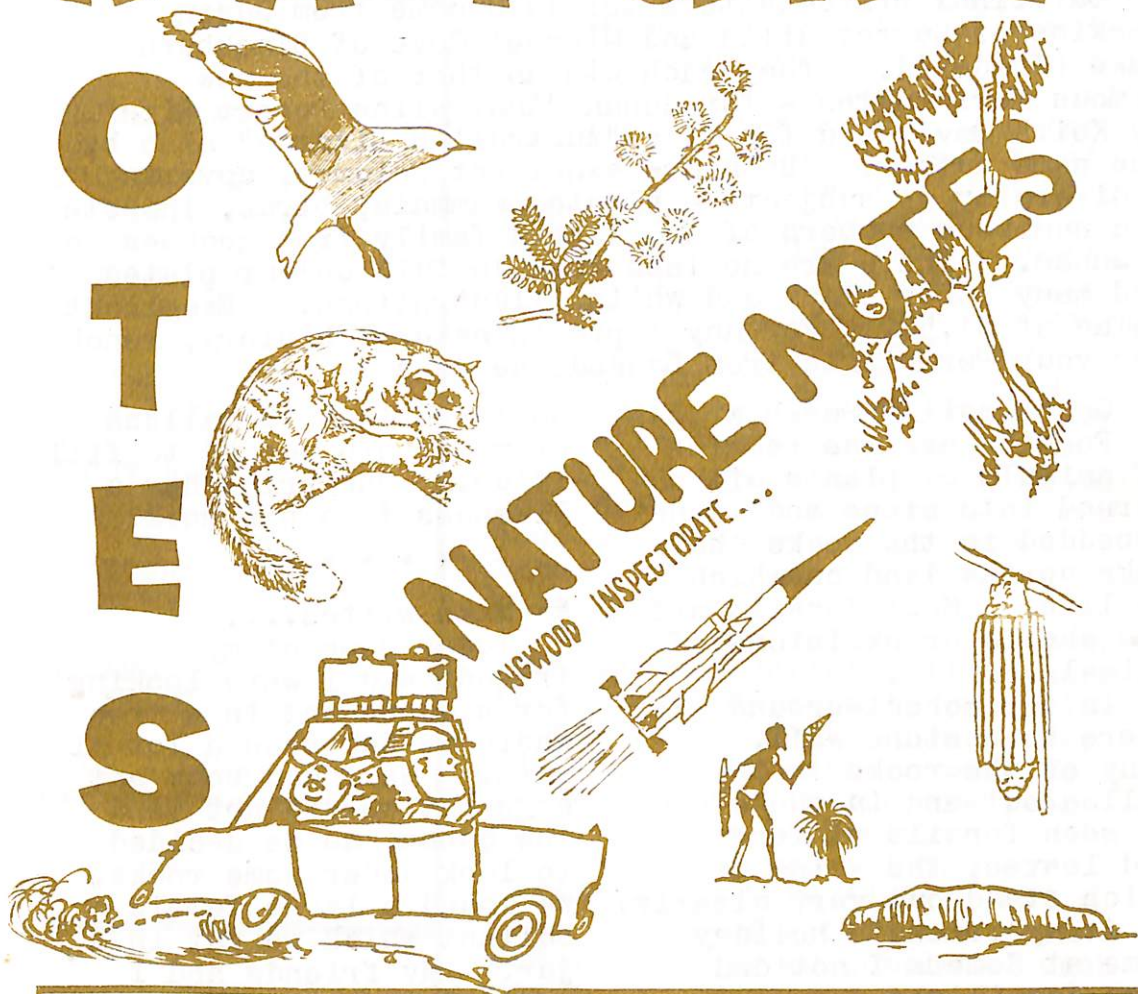
T

E

S

NATURE NOTES

Ringwood Inspectorate ...



Ringwood Inspectorate vol 7 no 10 1970.5c.

Registered at the GPO, Melbourne for transmission by post as a periodical

DEC. 1970

Category 'B'

★ ★ PRIZE LETTER

Our final prize-letters for 1970 come from Susan Jenkins of Surrey Hills and Michael Cove of Blackburn Lake (Grade 4). They each win another of the now famous Periwinkles - for Susan "Australian Desert Life" by Keith Davey and for Mike "Australian Lizards" also by the same author. Both are excellent volumes, covering a diversity of subjects - plants, mammals, birds, insects and numerous members of the lizard family from geckoes to goannas. There are no less than 16 full colour plates and many other black and white illustrations. Excellent value at \$1.50. For any topic in natural history, reach for your Periwinkle from Landsdowne Press.

** On "Fossils" Susan writes

Fossils are the remains of animals or plants often turned into stone and found embedded in the rocks that make up the land on which we live. Most fossils are the shells or skeletons of animals.

In our school-ground there is a stone wall. Many of the rocks have fallen out and in these can be seen fossils of ferns and leaves, the veins of which stand out very clearly.

At my friend's holiday home at Somers I noticed some fossilized ferns on some of the stones which made up the fire-place.

Scientists have found a giant foot-print formed in mud that later hardened into stone. The print is

Nature Notes

so large that 18 gallons of water are needed to fill it up. The print has a likeness to a paw mark.

* * * * *

** Mike writes....

Today some of my friends and I were looking for a queen ant in a tree where we had seen a lot of ants. We found some ant eggs but we did not find the queen, so we decided to look under some rocks. We found a large female bullant which we put in a jar. My friends and I decided to see if we could find any more when we got home from school. One of my friends got a whole lot of them but I did not get any.

* * * * *

CONTENTS

PRIZELETTER	2
THIS N THAT L.J.Delacca	4
MEN IN NATURE G.White	6
BOTTLEBRUSHES F.J.C.Rogers	8
NIGHT BEAT L.J.Delacca	10
ON TOUR G.White	12
LIZARDS F.J.C.Rogers	14
DROP A LINE Centre Supplement.	

Produced by the
Nature Notes
Committee of
Ringwood
Inspectorate

From the
Editor....

Dear Girls and Boys,

For some weeks now I have been pondering the question of how to write my last editorial, and it is still no easy task. Nature Notes is now seven years old, and has grown from a single sheet to its present form. During that time Nature Notes has brought you a variety of stories from a variety of authors but always our basic message to you has been the same. We have tried to awaken your natural curiosity so that you can make intelligent observation of the things around you, thus providing opportunities to develop your ability as thinkers. From your many letters I am sure Nature Notes has succeeded in its main aims.

What of the future? At present, although not certain, it appears that Nature Notes will enter its eighth year in 1971 under a new editor. Your schools will be informed early in the new year as to what is happening.

I have enjoyed editing our magazine and have always felt a tiny thrill of excitement when the first copy is completed each month.

Thank you girls and boys for your encouragement during the years and good observing in the years to come.

Yours Sincerely

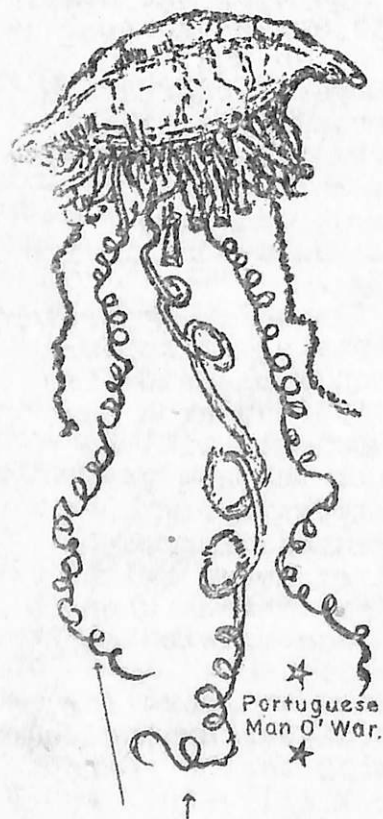
L.J.Delacca

Editor

This n That

DANGER!!

⊕ Holidays are normally very happy times but sometimes danger lurks waiting to trap the unwary. This 'n That this month tells you of a few of the animals of which to be careful.



★ Portuguese Man O' War. ★

↑
Stinging tentacles.



★ Stonefish ★

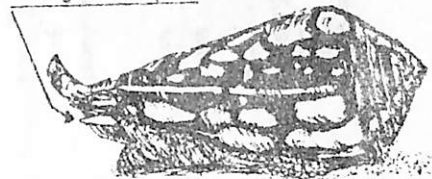
⊕ Much has been said of the deadly ringed octopus. Equally dangerous is the dreaded Stonefish. Watch out for it in more northern waters. It is most difficult to see and the most venomous fish known.

⊕ The Portuguese Man of War or Blue Bottle is a jelly fish also common in northern waters. The sting of its tentacles can cause great pain even when the jelly fish is dead.



⊕ Many people have died from the sting of the cone-shell. The poison is injected by a long pink tongue through the narrow end of the shell.

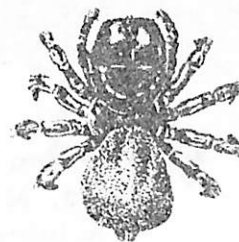
Dangerous part



★ Cone shell with live animal.



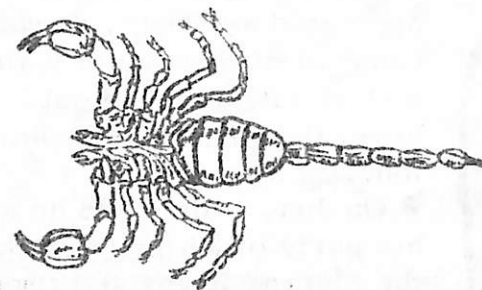
★ The Common Trap-door Spider ★
Male



Female

⊕ We have mentioned many times the danger of a bite from a red-back spider. More common but lesser known is the Trap-door Spider which should also be regarded as dangerous.

⊕ Remember too it can be dangerous to drink from a tap - an unpleasant animal or insect may be hiding up in the tap. A bite or sting inside the mouth could prove fatal.

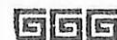


⊕ The Scorpion too has a dangerous sting in the tail. Watch out when lifting stones or pieces of wood.

●● Less dangerous injuries can be caused by sea anemones, marine worms, sea urchins, mussels, razor clams unless protective footwear is worn.

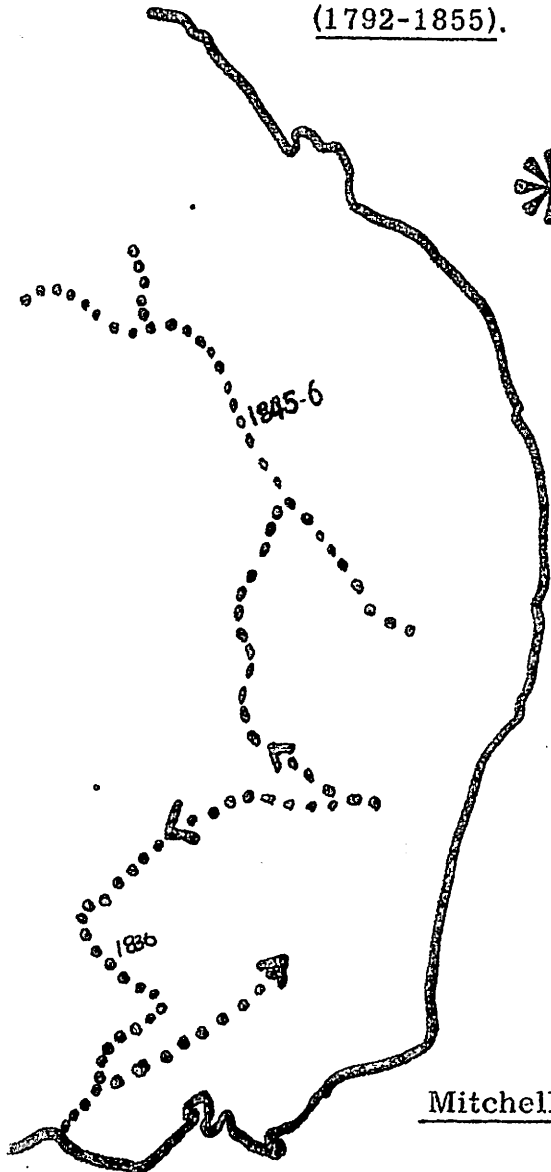


⊕ These are only a few of the many dangers. They can all be avoided if you use all of your six senses to the full, especially the sixth one common sense.



Men in Nature

MAJOR SIR THOMAS MITCHELL
(1792-1855).



* From his earliest childhood, Mitchell wanted to be a soldier. In 1826 he was promoted to the rank of major.

● The next year he was appointed as Deputy Surveyor General of New South Wales and as such carried out several journeys of exploration.

● On June 14th. 1836 he and his party of 23 men crossed the Murray River and travelled south. Mitchell called the area he discovered, "The Australia Felix."

Later journeys opened up much of Queensland.

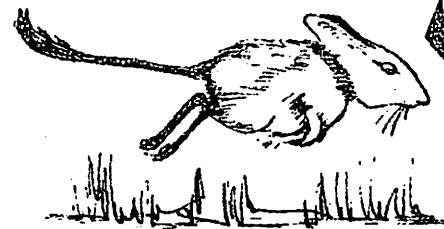
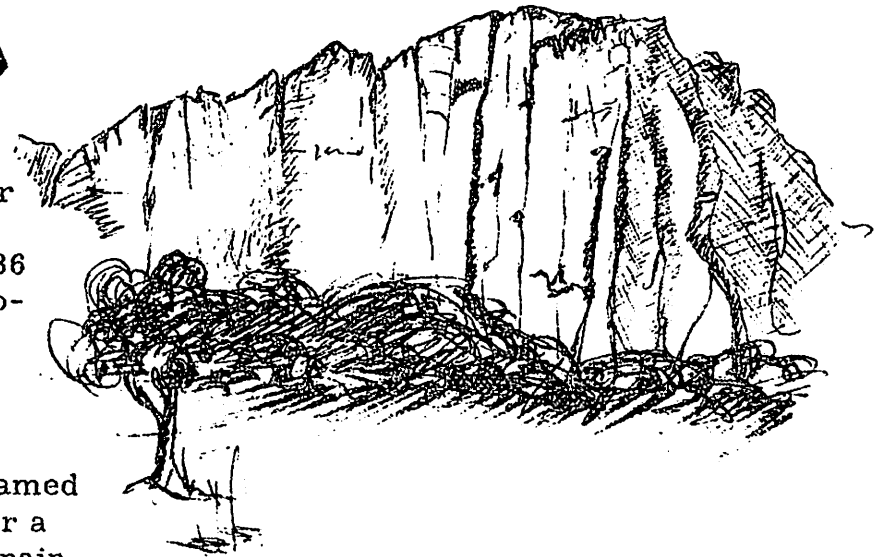
● He was knighted in 1837 and died in 1855 after a lifetime of service to the colony.



Mitchell's Journeys.

Nature Notes..6

● Mount Arapiles is a huge rock outcrop in the Wimmera near Natimuk. On July 23rd. 1836 Mitchell climbed it and saw 27 different lakes on the surface of the plains. He named the mount after a small hill in Spain where his brother had met his death at the Battle of Salamanca some years before.



MITCHELL'S HOPPING MOUSE

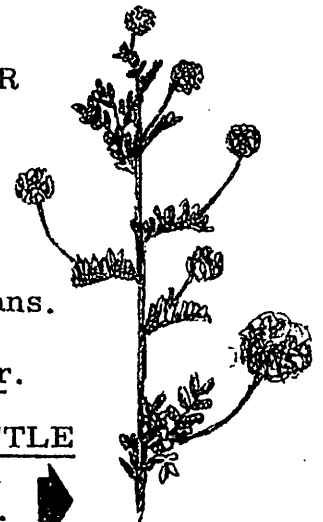
● This tiny creature has a body length of three inches. Mitchell discovered this mouse in the desert surroundings of Reedy Plains in South Australia. It is now considered very rare.

FOLLOW UP.

1. A cockatoo once carried the name of MAJOR MITCHELL COCKATOO. It is now called
2. Mitchell was surprised to meet some settlers at Portland. Who were they?
3. Mitchell and his party spent a freezing night on the top of in the Grampians.
4. What does "Felix" mean?
5. Find some details about Mitchell's character.

MITCHELL WATTLE

● Grows well in the Wimmera. ➡

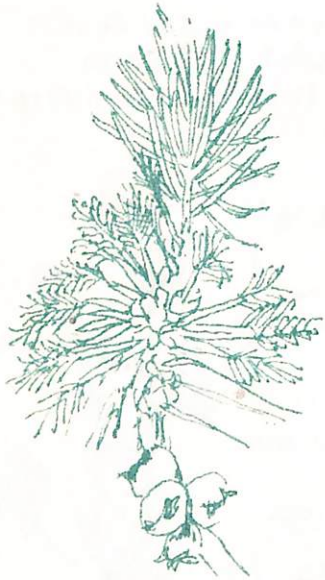




Bottlebrushes



Bottlebrush
or
Callistemon.



Calothamnus
One sided
Bottlebrush



Gravel
Bottlebrush
Beaufortia sparsa



Fruit of
Callistemon



Flower of
Callistemon

► The flower arrangement of some of our Australian plants is often compared with those bristles of a bottle-cleaning brush and we use the common name "Bottlebrush" for a number of them.

► Some of the plants which are called "Bottlebrush" are Melaleuca - better called Paperbark or Honey-Myrtle; Calothamnus - One - sided Bottlebrush or "Net-Bush"; Beaufortia and Callistemon. I like to keep the name "Bottlebrush" for the Callistemon.

► Callistemon is made from two Greek words "kallos" meaning beauty and "stemon" meaning stamen. This is a very good name because the showy part of the flower is the stamens. There are five small petals to each flower but we need to look carefully to see them.

► The flowers are grouped together to make a spike at or near the end of the branches. It is not uncommon for leaves to begin to grow out the top of the Bottlebrush before the flowers are properly out.

► There are about twenty species of Callistemon throughout Australia. They are shrubs or small trees with rather tough leaves and often papery bark. Now is a good time to look for Callistemons in the bush, or in gardens because they are very adaptable and grow well in badly drained or well-drained positions.

► What colours do you find? * * There are white, pink, yellow, green, red and purple.

To help us to distinguish Callistemon from other plants we need to look very closely. If we have a small hand lens we can have a lot of fun.

► As we mentioned before the stamens are the showy part. In Callistemon they are free to their point of attachment, but in Melaleucas, Calothamnus and Beaufortia the stamens are joined for some distance.

If we look at a new flower of Callistemon we may find the five sepals, which are soon shed; but in Kunzea the sepals persist; they may even be found on the old seed capsules.

► The seed capsules of Callistemon are retained on the shrub for a number of years except in a few species.

► You may like to try growing some plants from seed. Take several seed capsules from a shrub and place them in an envelope or container so that the seeds will come out of the capsules as they dry. You will have fun looking after your seedlings as there are so many and you may have some to give to your friends for them to grow in their gardens. • • • •



Flower of
Calothamnus



Flower of
Melaleuca

Night-beat!

This month we are going to talk about birds which do all of their hunting during the hours of darkness and spend the day resting in a hollow or asleep on the limb of a tree. These birds are called NOCTURNAL PREDATORS. Can you guess why?

To be able to hunt at night there must be some very special features about these creatures. I wonder if you can find out what these features may be! Naturally, this will be hard to do by observation, as the birds are extremely hard to find in daylight and when found, are usually motionless. So books will be your main allies. Here are a few clues:

The first special feature concerns the eyes. How are they different from other birds? What effect does this produce?

Secondly, the flight is very silent - why? Most of the larger daylight-flying birds make some noise, but not those night-shift workers.

There are two distinct types in this specialized bird group. Firstly, the frogmouths and nightjars; and secondly, the owls!

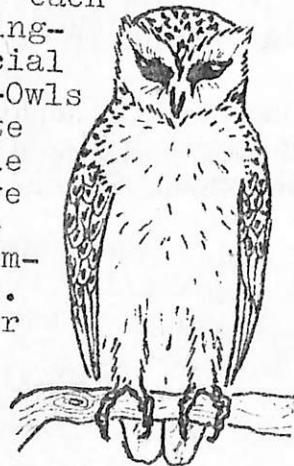


Boobook Owl

rare in Vic., though I did see one once near Yellingbo.

Nature Notes

The owls are divided into two groups - each group being distinguished by its facial disc. The Hawk-Owls have an incomplete facial disc, while the Barn-Owls have the eyes near the centre of each complete facial disc. The largest member of the former group is the Powerful Owl which is fairly

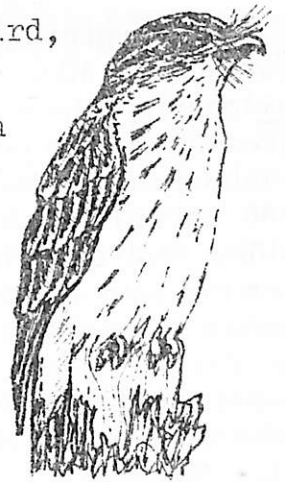


Barn Owl

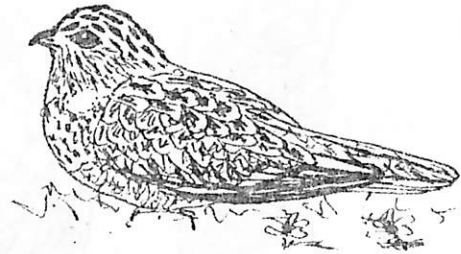
..10

All owls nest in hollows in tree trunk or limbs. Find two distinctive features about their eggs? The Boobook Owl deserves a special mention because of its well known call which we have translated as "more-pork", or better known as "mopoke".

It has been argued that another bird, the Tawny Frogmouth, also makes a "mopoke" call. Perhaps you can help to settle this argument by observation and reading! In any case, the Tawny Frogmouth is an interesting bird. Once I found a nest in a tree in Wattle Park, and what a problem it was to see this camouflage expert! During the day it remains in a curious 'frozen' position on the tree branch. The Frogmouth, though mainly an insect eater, will feed on mice. It should be easy to discover why it is so well named.



The Camouflage Expert.



Nightjar.

The final group of night-hunters are the Nightjars, of which two of the three species are found in Victoria. The famous Whip-poor-will of America is also a member of this family.

These birds do not build a nest, but lay their eggs on bare ground or among pebbles which match their colouring. Nightjars fly about at dusk catching insects on the wing. Their wide mouth is ideal for this purpose. During daylight they rest on the ground. One of the nightjars has an extraordinary call which may cause some anxiety if heard when alone in the bush on a dark night.

In all, nocturnal predators are a very interesting group of birds and one that is certainly worth a much closer study.

ON TOUR *with Nature Notes*

One hundred and fifty miles south-east of Melbourne is Wilson's Promontory, the southern-most tip of mainland Australia. Established as a National Park in 1898, this area is a wonderful holiday centre. There are facilities for good swimming, surfing, boating, fishing and hiking. During the summer season thousands of people spend their vacation at Tidal River which nestles 1845 ft. below Mt Oberon.

The area is rich in interesting plant life. In a relatively small area (102,000 acres) you can see vegetation ranging from coastal, mountain and swamp types.

Any of the walks will show you this, but a visit to Lilly Pilly Gully and Mt. Oberon feature for the variety of plant life to be seen.

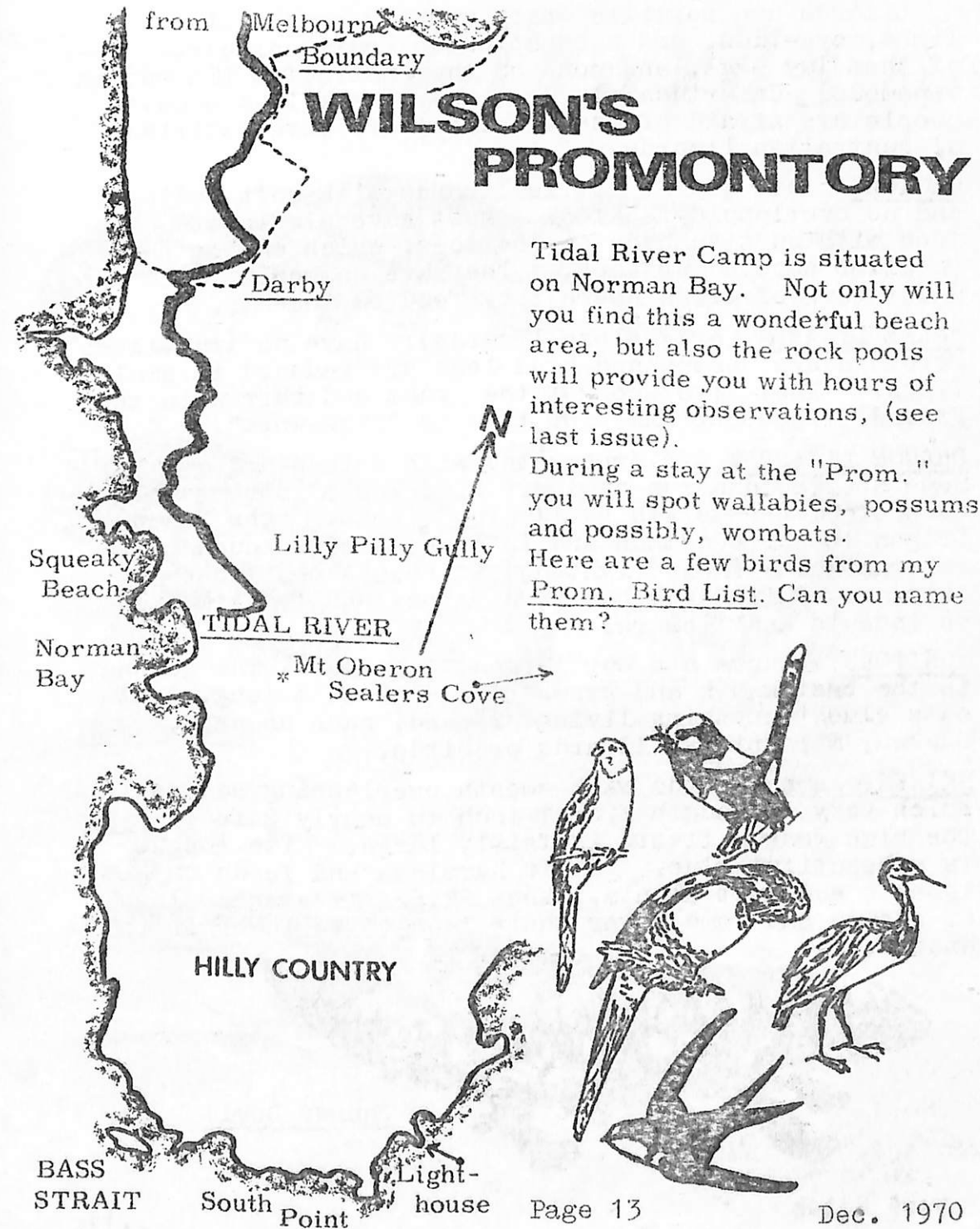
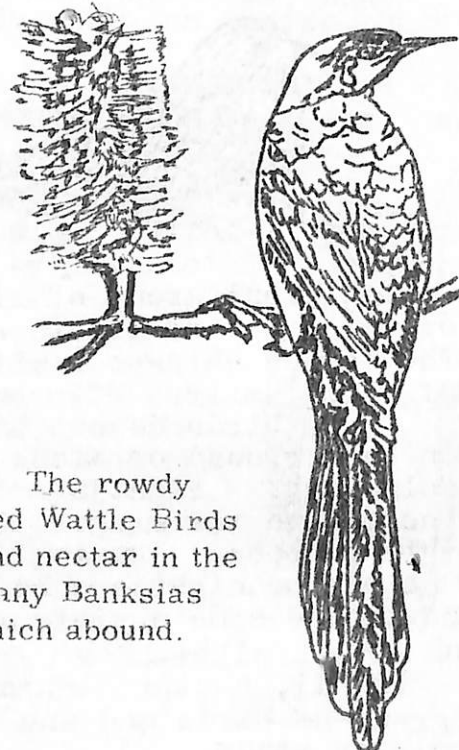
Many keen hikers take the long walk to Sealer's Cove, a distance of 9 miles away.

****Green hood Orchid**



****Helmet Orchid**

The rowdy Red Wattle Birds find nectar in the many Banksias which abound.



WILSON'S PROMONTORY

Tidal River Camp is situated on Norman Bay. Not only will you find this a wonderful beach area, but also the rock pools will provide you with hours of interesting observations, (see last issue). During a stay at the "Prom." you will spot wallabies, possums and possibly, wombats. Here are a few birds from my Prom. Bird List. Can you name them?



Lizards are reptiles which usually have visible limbs, eye-lids, and a conspicuous external ear. Most of them lay eggs, and none of the Australian lizards is venomous. Unfortunately many are killed because people are afraid of them. There are five families of Australian lizards.

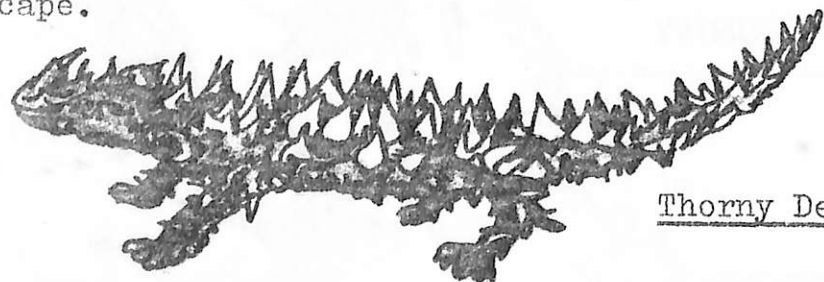
GECKOES: are quaint little lizards with soft bodies and no overlapping scales. Most have simple clawed toes with suction pads on the toes, which enable them to climb smooth surfaces. They are commonly found under bark of trees where they feed on insects.

SNAKE LIZARDS (or legless lizards): have no true legs. Forelegs are absent and hind legs are reduced to small flaps. They live amongst the grass and burrow in the ground. Another name for them is "Slow-worm".

DRAGON LIZARDS: are ornamented with spines and frills. Some species can run on their hind legs; others try to protect themselves by looking fierce. The Bearded Dragon is quite common and is covered with rough protuberances. When frightened it raises the loose skin around its neck but is harmless and feeds mainly on insects and flowers.

MONITORS: these are our largest lizards. The goanna is the best known and grows to 6 or 7 feet long. It eats almost anything living or dead, such as eggs, snakes, marsupials, lizards or birds.

SKINKS: are lizards with smooth overlapping scales which vary in length from 1 inch to nearly 2 feet. The Blue Tongue lizard is fairly large. Its tongue is a beautiful blue. It is harmless and feeds on insects and soft plants. Most Skinks live under logs or stones and some sever their long tails in order to escape.

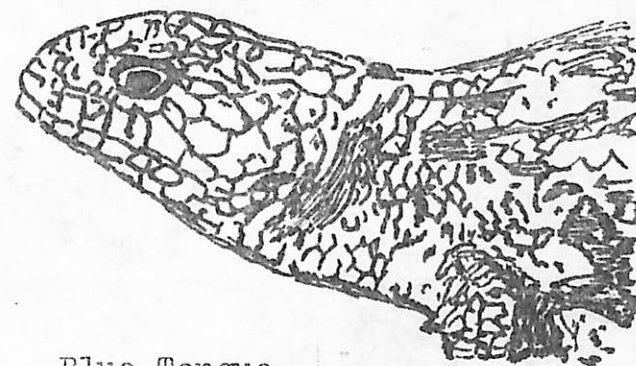


Thorny Devil

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Lizards ⊕ ⊕



Gecko



Blue Tongue



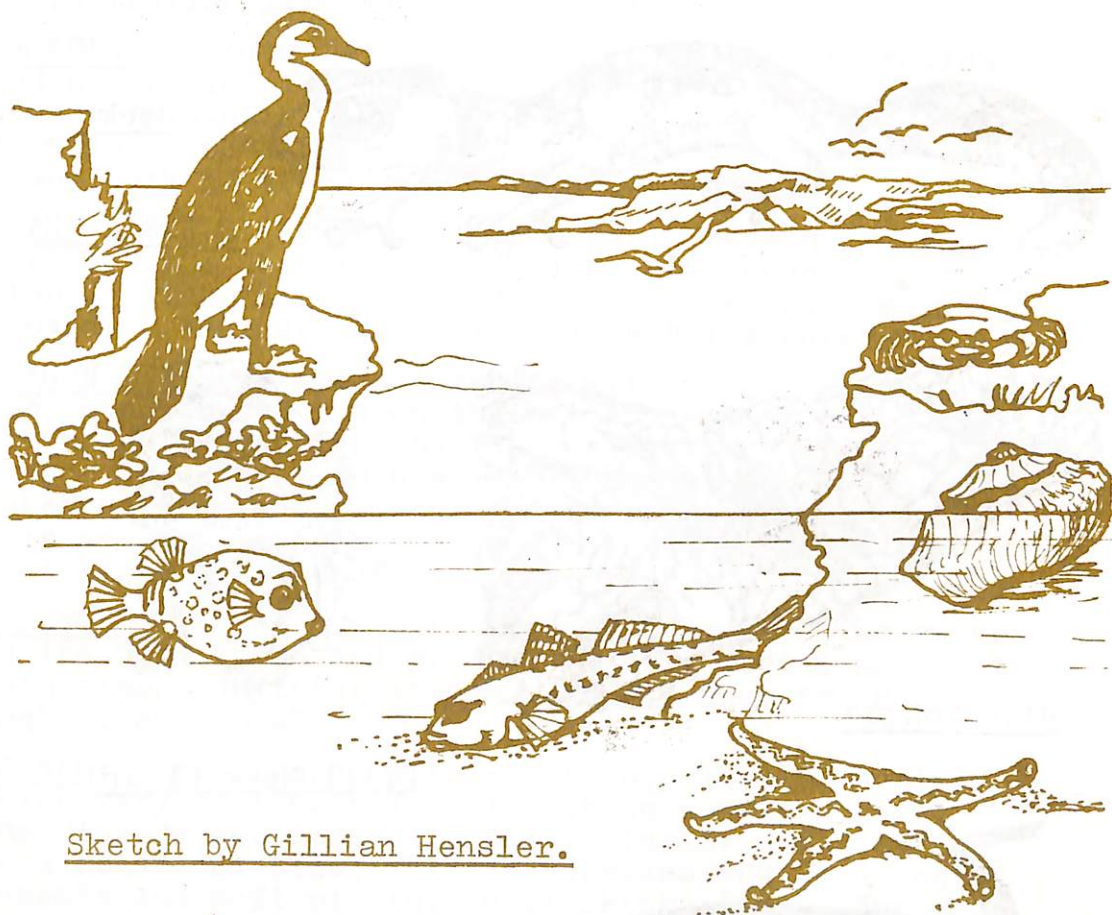
Frill Neck Lizard



Goanna

NOTE Drawings not to scale.

Last Issue ★ Aquanauts



Sketch by Gillian Hensler.

★ In the sketch above are some of the creatures you will meet on your approaching holiday, if you plan to travel around the coast-line. How many can you recognize now? By watching their habits see what you can discover about them; and a happy holiday to you. ★★★★★★

* * * * *

NATURE NOTES COMMITTEE:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ● Mr. F. J. C. Rogers . . . | ● P. S. Lilydale. |
| ● Mr. G. White . . . | ● P. S. Bayswater South. |
| ● Mr. L. J. Delacoe (Editor). . . | ● P. S. Blackburn Lake. |

Drop a Line



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

Dear Girls and Boys,

As this is our last issue for the year we have printed a special supplement this month so that we can fit in as many of your letters as possible. For the same reason we have cut out the pictures that usually go with "Drop a Line". Best wishes to you all.

L.J.Delacca.

Our first letter comes all the way from Jimmy Hoover at Leederville Primary School in Western Australia.

Jimmy writes.....

Although I do not live in Victoria now I am very interested in Nature Notes which I used to receive when in Victoria.

Our class was given four silk worms for observation purposes a month ago. We feed them on mulberry leaves and they never seem to stop eating. Recently the largest of the four has spun a cocoon in the corner of the show box in which we keep them. The other three are turning slightly yellow so before long we may have four cocoons. Something troubles us though; how can we extract the silk? Could you please tell me?

ED. In Japan the extraction of the silk means the death of the silkworm, for the worms are killed before the several filaments of silk are reeled off and run together to make a fine silk thread.

* * * * *

Now Stephen Blackburn of Marcellin our October prizewinner continues the story of his Gum Emperor.

...There is no change in my Gum Emperor cocoon since I wrote to you in September. My father said that all moths live for very little time so

I am going to put honey

(i)

Supplement to Nature Notes

Dec. '70.

and water mixed together in a saucer beside the cocoon. When the moth emerges it will drink the honey and water and will live much longer. Under the letter I wrote into "Nature Notes" you asked me if I kept a diary about the different stages of the Gum Emperor. I am sorry that my answer is no, but I can remember most of the changes in the caterpillar that drained itself out to make a cocoon.

When I received the book I had won, I found a picture of a Black Elephant Snail. I found one of these snails up at Phillip Island. I also found a shell of a Black Elephant Snail on some rock. Thank you for the lovely book you gave me for my letter, because I can identify many things on the beaches along which I have often wandered. ED. Stephen continues with a story on bull ants but we have run out of space so will have to leave it for another time. Very good work Stephen. You may have a future as a Naturalist.

* * * * *

From Stephen Griffin,
Lilydale P.S.....

Four days ago I found a dead butterfly with yellow and white markings on the side of the wing, the rest of the wing is black. It has brown eyes and tongue and is a perfect specimen. I can't find its name in books and wondered if you could identify it. I found it near an ants nest with ants around it.

ED. I passed your butterfly over to Mr. F. Rogers who has an excellent reference book on insects but even he is baffled. We are still trying and will notify you when we identify the specimen.

* * * * *

Patrick Keane from Marcellin writes.....

On the 6th of June a friend of mine and I went for a hike. We decided to have lunch near some fir trees. While I was having my lunch I found some fungi. The fungi had a soft, strong sort of leaves and the colour is a creamish-white. It felt like a piece of rubber because I could poke the knife into it. I cut a piece of the fungi off the broken tree so I could take the fungi to school.

ED. This fungi was probably of the shelf type. There is such a tremendous variety of fungi in Australia that it makes a fascinating subject to study.

* * * * *

Ian Bexley of Surrey Hills P.S. writes...

On the 10th of October I went to a scout camp and observed most people were bothered by leeches. Most could be knocked off but some had to be burnt off. When I got back I looked up leeches in the encyclopaedia. It said that leeches are also called blood suckers. Then it went on to say leeches are $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 4" long. Most of them at the camp were about $\frac{1}{2}$ " long. I also noticed a little disc on their body. The encyclopaedia said the disc is at the head and that the disc is used to suck the blood out of your body. I also discovered leeches were used by doctors to suck out poison.

ED. Yes Ian, leeches make an interesting study. In fact the name "leeches" has been used to describe humans who indulge in another form of blood-sucking.

* * * * *

From Marcellin College again Alistair Feehan writes.....

Recently while visiting Phillip Island I found a skeleton of a bird. It had long legs and we could not identify it. When we returned to Melbourne we all had turns of taking it to school. One teacher thought it might have been an albatross but we were not sure so we decided to send it to the museum. They identified it as the skeleton of a very large black swan and asked if they could use it to help restore some other incomplete specimens which they had. We now feel proud that we have contributed something to the museum. We enjoy reading "Nature Notes" and hope you enjoy my letter.

ED. Yes I did enjoy your letter Alistair and hope it is not your last to "Nature Notes". Well done!!

* * * * *

Janet Songdahl of Camberwell C.E.G.G.S asks why some birds fly in V formation.

ED. The reason for this Janet is because of the airstream. The bird in front is "breaking the air" for those behind.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

During the past three years, during which time I have been the Editor of "Nature Notes", I have received tremendous assistance from many people, without whose aid "Nature Notes" could not have carried on.

The Editorial Committee regulars F.J.C. Rogers and J. White ably assisted by articles from Ken Rogers, J.A. Baines and other guest contributors.

Gillian Hensler, our artist with the splendid sketches.

Betty Ney and Mary Hook and her very patient, very skilful band of printers.

Peg Maxwell and her happy chatty collaters.

June Alexander - typiste, weigher etc and her willing wrappers.

Maureen Dyer our treasurer.

Blackburn Lake School Committee for financial assistance when it was needed most.

The numerous mothers who helped distribute "Nature Notes" to the depots.

Mr. Vern Barnett of Copycraft for the stencils,

Mr. R. Cant and Mr. A. McCurdy for the covers.

Principals and Organizers in Depot Schools.

All the girls and boys whose interest has made it so worthwhile.

Finally my very patient wife who has done all of the typing for the mock-ups.

To all these people "Nature Notes" says most sincerely "THANK YOU VERY MUCH". Without your unstinted help we could not have even begun to satisfy our many thousands of interested readers.

If I have missed anyone I am truly sorry and if "Nature Notes" continues into 1971 as I sincerely hope it will, then I am sure it can count on support from the above.

* * * * *