nature notes

victorian parks

vol. 8 no.6

6 cents

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Sketches:

Mrs. Hensler

Mrs. Sharpin

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editorial

Dear Girls and Boys,

In this

issue of Nature Notes we are
introducing you to our National
Parks and similar areas.

It is hoped that all of you can visit some of these parks. In some of them there are facilities for camping; but in nearly all cases camping can be done nearby. Some parks have rangers who are only too willing to talk about their park with you. Those of you who want to spend more than one day at a park would be wise to contact:

THE NATIONAL PARKS AUTHORITY TREASURY PLACE MELBOURNE 3002

Telephone: 63-0321
They will tell you all you want to know about facilities and conditions.

We would like to thank the National Parks Authority for the help they have given us in preparing this issue. If you turn now to page 8-9 we think you will be surprised there are so many parks to choose from. With this in mind, we wish you all the very best for your holidays.

M.J.Coote, I.H.Legg, Editors.

introduction

. Dear Girls and Boys,

As this issue is about National Parks, let us consider how the term arose. In 1870, a party of men, after exploring some of the wonders of a large area of land in Wyoming, U.S.A., sat around the camp fire one night to discuss what might be done with the land. They had found great geysers, beautiful waterfalls, birds and animals, magnificent mountains, rivers and forests. They decided that the land should not belong to any single person, but that it should forever belong to the nation and be available to all the people for all time. Two years later, the American Parliament declared the area as the Yellowstone National Park.

This was the first; now there are national parks in most countries. We have twenty-three national parks in Victoria. In these we preserve the birds, animals, vegetation, seascapes, landscapes everything in the park, but we also share these precious contents with the people. There is no substitute for our national heritage. We owe it to the foresight of the people who came before us. We must use our heritage carefully, so that we, too, can pass it on to those who come after us.

GUARD IT WELL - FOR IT IS ALL WE HAVE.

L. H. Smith
Director of National Parks.

And now, Nature Notes will give a <u>Perriwinkle</u> book prize for the best letter from one of our readers. The letter is to be about a visit to one of our National Parks during this year. Let us know what you think about the flora and fauna to be found in these places. <u>Ed</u>.

the west

As you can see from our map of Victoria on pages 8-9, we have divided the state into three sections. These are The West, The Central and The East. The numbers we are going to give to these parks will be the same as the numbers on the map. After the name of each park the size of the park and its distance from Melbourne will be given. It must be remembered that there is much more to be found in the parks than will be mentioned in the following brief descriptions.

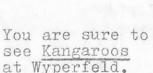
1. HATTAH LAKES NATIONAL PARK.

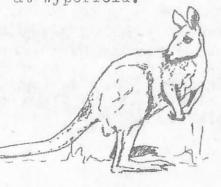
Size 44,000 acres. Distance from Melbourne 300 miles N.W. The flood-waters of the Murray River fill these lakes in the poor, sandy mallee country of Northern Victoria. Winter and spring are the best times to visit this park as in summer it is very hot. Camping is permitted in the park; and a full-time ranger is there to help you. Fauna: barking geckos, blackfaced grey kangaroos, red kangaroos, black-backed wrens. crested bellbirds, striated grass wrens, pelicans.

. WYPERFELD NATIONAL PARK.

Size 139,760 acres. Distance from Melbourne 280 miles N.W. This park, which is on the edge of the Big Desert, is Victoria's largest. There are many walking tracks, but you should tell the ranger about long hikes you wish to go on.

Whistling Eagle.
It is really a "Kite".





The best season to visit this park is the Spring, during September and October. It is then that the semi-desert country bursts into colour with a patchwork of pink, white, yellow and violet wildflowers. The trees range from red-gums and black-box to mallee.

There are emus and kangaroos; and among the more exotic birds there are the lovely pink and white Major Mitchell cockatoo, Smoker parrots, the yellow, green and crimson ring-necked parrots, and little blue fairy wrens. The park is also kept sweet with birdsong by large numbers of magpies, babblers, honeyeaters and choughs.

This is not very far from Wyperfeld and is well worth a visit if you are in the area.

4. LITTLE DESERT.
Size 86,870 acres. Distance
225 miles from Melbourne. This
park is famous for the mallee fowl and the mounds made



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.

If you see him perched in a tree when you are using your binoculars, he may be the one on guard to warn the flock.

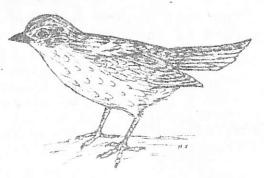


by these incredible birds can always be seen.
There is a full-time ranger who lives in the old Kiata store on the Western Highway. A nature trail booklet is available and ask for a bird and plant list.
Fauna: mallee fowl, scrub robin, tree creepers, white-browed babblers, grey thrush, wrens, honeyeaters.
Flora: black tea-tree, yellow gum, stringy-bark, acacias.

5. THE GRAMPIANS.
This is a very well known area and is well worth a visit.

LOWER GLENELG. Size 22,400 acres. This is an interesting area, it stretches for about 40 miles along the magnificent Glenelg River. There are two large areas at either end of this strip of land and these contain a great variety of wildflowers and animals. The best time to visit is spring for heath flowers and summer for the river. Take along bush walking clothes, or clothing suitable for swimming or boating.

7. MOUNT RICHMOND.
Size 2,036 acres; about 250
miles from Melbourne via the
Princes Highway. This area is
well known for the wildflowers
of the sandy soil. There are
about 450 species of flowering
plants; 50-odd orchid species.



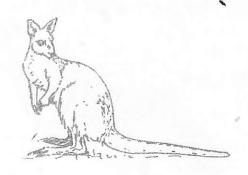
Southern Scrub Robin.

If you watch this bird very closely you will notice how it seems to prefer hopping along the ground to flying.

They eat insects of any kind as well as seeds.

They are usually quiet and shy. Some bird observers say that you can call them up easily by squeaking at them.

Red-necked Wallaby.

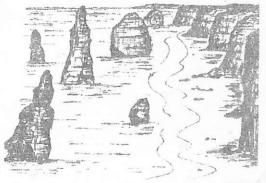


MOUNT ECCLES. Size 974 acres. Distance about 200 miles west of Melbourne near Hamilton. It is well known for its crater lake, Lake Surprise. There are caves and collapsed lava tunnels. The lava from this volcano gave us much of the superb soil of the Western District. At the picnic area you are surrounded by the melody of the birds: the grey thrush, the pardalote, several varieties of honeyeaters, the orangewinged sitella, the blue wren, and others. There are excellent views from the top of the crater.

9. TOWER HILL.
This is near Warrnambool and
170 miles from Melbourne.

10. PORT CAMPBELL. Size 1,750 acres. You can go via the Great Ocean Road, 180 miles; or you can go via Colac, 150 miles. The area stretches along about 20 miles of coastline and has some spectacular views. There are sheer cliffs of yelloworange limestone, with rockstacks, blowholes and arches. There is a camping area with a charge for admission. A park ranger is living in Port Campbell. While you are there, find out as much as you can about the Loch Ard Gorge and the ship that was wrecked there in 1878. The Blue Wren is a restless insect eater. They are multi-brooded, and the young of one brood will often help in the feeding of the following batch of chicks.

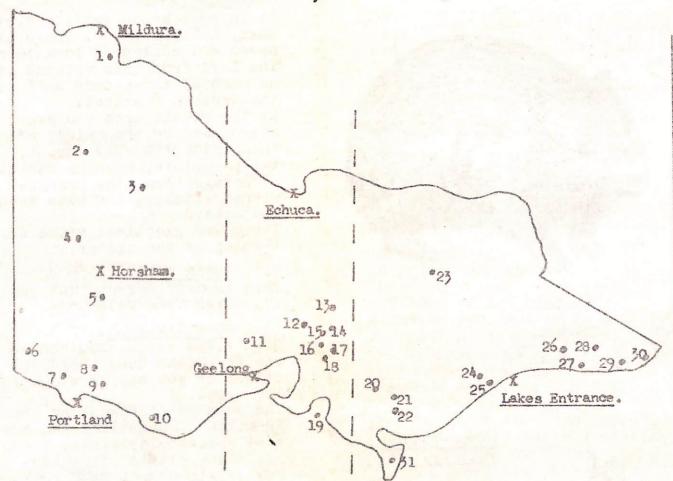
There are some spectacular views from the cliffs at Port Campbell.



7 .

victorian parks

- 1. Hattah Lakes
- 2. Wyperfeld
- 3. Wathe Fauna Reserve
- 4. Little Desert
- 5. Grampians
- 6. Lower Glenelg
- 7. Mount Richmond
- 3. Mount Eccles
- 9. Tower Hill
- 10. Port Campbell



- 116. Fern Tree Gully
 - 17. Sherbrooke Forest
 - 18. Churchill
 - 19. Phillip Island

- 11. You Yangs
- 12. Kinglake
- 13. Fraser
- 14. Sir Colin McKenzie Sanctuary
- 15. Yellingbo Wildlife Reserve

20. Morwell

Bulga

Tarra Valley

Mount Buffalo

Captain James Cook

Mallacoota Inlet

Wilson's Promontory

Glenaladale

The Lakes

Lind

Alfred

Wingan Inlet

26.

28.

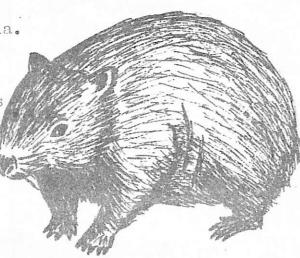
central area

ine first area in our survey of the central area of Victoria. You can see them as you drive along the road to Geelong.

Size 14,096 acres. Distance is about 40 miles N.E. of Melbourne. This area has big timber, waterfalls, and a good view of Melbourne from the nearby Sugarloaf Peak. There are wombats, wallabies, and lyre birds. At Mason's Falls, there is

At Mason's Falls, there is a picnic kiosk and parking area, and a graded foot track leads up to a viewpoint above the tumbling aters.

5. FRASER. Size 7,746 acres. This park is about 90 miles north of felbourne near Alexandra. he camping facilities are ery good here and it is an leal spot for boating, Mishing and water sports. here are grey kangaroos and black-tailed wallabies in the hills. There is a nature walk, and if you see the Ranger, he will give you a brochure. "Birds of Fraser National Park" is a booklet you can get from the National Parks Authority.



Wombats may be seen at many of our National Parks.



14. SIR COLIN MCKENZIE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY. This sanctuary near Healesville is well known for its display of platypus.

15. YELLINGBO WILDLIFE RESERVE. This is 32 miles from Melbourne and was in the news a short time ago as one of the last remaining homes of the helmeted honeyeater.

16. FERN TREE GULLY. Size 931 acres. Distance about 22 miles east of Melbourne in the nearer parts of the Dandenong Range. There are temperate forest trees, messmate large gums. Attractive walks can be taken throughout the park. The park is famous for its lyre birds. There is an excellent lookout tower at One Tree Hill. The park provides protection for many kinds of native fauna, including wallabies, wembats and possums. The main picnic area and kiosk are approximately half a mile by foot track from the Upper Fern Tree Gully railway station. This makes it one of the easiest parks to visit during the school holidays.

17. SHERBROOKE FOREST. Further along the road from Fern Tree Gully, this park is also famous for its walks, and bird life, especially the lyre bird.





18. CHURCHILL.
Size 477 acres. Distance is about 20 miles east of
Melbourne. The park is about 8 miles north of Dandenong.
Any fine day in spring or autumn is the best time for
a day out at Churchill. Do not forget your camera and
binoculars for there is a good variety of birds of the
Melbourne area to be seen here.

19. PHILLIP ISLAND.
It is hard to say what size this park is, because you can find places of interest scattered throughout

the whole island. It is a good place for long holidays as well as one day visits. Along the roads you can see koalas; though they are likely to be very high up and hard to see. Your binoculars will help you to overcome that problem. Out on Seal Rocks, a great seal colony may be watched at play. Towards dusk of course, vou can visit Summerland Beach to watch the

penguins trooping

home to their

rookeries after
a hard day's fishing.
The Little Penguin or Fairy Penguin
is called Eudyptula minor by the
scientists. We may call it Australia's
own penguin and it is certainly a
strange thing the way they live in
whole colonies instead of in pairs.
If you ever see a penguin in the
water, try to see its swimming style.
Thet are very fast, but they seem to
zig-zag.

Little Penguin.

Seal Rocks .

Phillip

Island.

the east

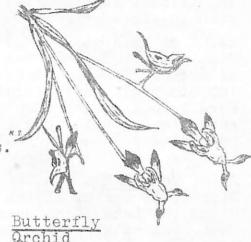
20. MORWELL.

Size 346 acres. This park is ten miles south of Morwell.

Plant life is the main feature as the park consists of timbered slopes of a valley growing vegetation typical of the Gippsland area. There is magnificent blue gum and grey gum with typical smaller plants. It is the home of the rare epiphytic Butterfly Orchid and many kinds of birds.

21. BULGA.
Size 91 acres. 120 miles from
Melbourne and half-way between
Traralgon (Princes Highway)
and Yarram (Sth. Gippsland
Highway).
This park contains very large
mountain ash trees, superb
tree ferns and many lyrebirds.

22. TARRA VALLEY.
Size 315 acres. Between Yarram and Traralgon, nearer Yarram.
Very similar to Bulga, there are five types of tree ferns; these include the Soft tree-fern, Rough tree-fern, Slender tree-fern and Skirted tree-fern. There is a museum of local fauna at the Park Office.
Mammals include the platypus, echidna, koala, and blacktailed wallaby, as well as possums, phascogales and gliders.



can be seen at Morwell.

Tree Ferns.

Aug. 71. 13.

23. MOUNT BUFFALO.
Size 27, 280 acres. About 200 miles from Melbourne, 60 miles east of Wangaratta.
Magnificent mountain scenery, rich in flora.

24. GLENALADALE.
Size 403 acres. 18 miles north of Princes Highway at Fernbank, 180 mi es east of Melbourne.
Have a look at the "Den of Nargun", which is a cavern that is connected with aboriginal Regend.

25. THE LAKES.
Size 5,238 acres. At the
Gippsland Lakes, on Spermwhale
Head Peninsula between Lakes
Victoria and Reeve.
The area is noted for kangaroos,
wallabies and emus, sand plain
flowers (especially Thryptomene
Micrantha).

26. LIND.
Size 2, 882 acres. 280 miles from Melbourne on the Princes Highway. Mainly dry forest, but also there is flora of the dense, sub-tropical rainforest type. The brilliant red Gippsland Waratah is common.

YOUR NATIONAL PARKS
SET ASIDE FOR YOUR
ENJOYMENT.



CAPTAIN JAMES

COOK.

Size 6,700 acres. This is the area of land first seen by Cook in April, 1770. It is untouched country; probably just as it was first seen by white men. It is forest swamp and heathland grading down to sand dunes.

28. ALFRED.
Size 5,406 acres. 300 miles east of Melbourne on the Princes Highway. This area preserves the sub-tropical jungle near Mt. Drummer. Many plants that are hard to find elsewhere in the state.

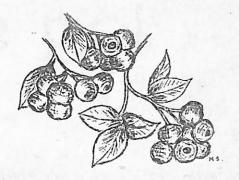
29. WINGAN INLET.
Size 4,730 acres. 330 miles east of Melbourne.
Very good for observing shore birds, especially wading birds and migratory birds.

30. MALLACOOTA INLET.
Size 11,225 acres. 326 miles from Melbourne.
The shore line of this inlet is timbered down to the water's edge and the scenery is beautiful. A good example of animal - plant association: the Bloodwood, which is noted for its creamy-coloured blossoms, attracts hundreds of Rainbow Lorikeets in the autumn.

31. WILSON'S PROMONTORY.
Size 120, 875 acres
140 miles from Melbourne.
A good association of plants along with an extensive population of birds and animals.

* * * * * * So there we are, a brief survey of our National Parks. We hope it has been helpful to you.

Do not forget the prize we mentioned on page 3.

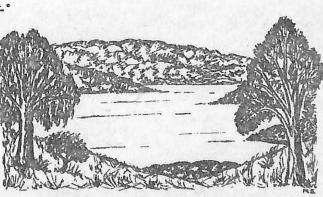


Lilly Pilly.



Rainbow Lorikeet.

The tongue is a kind of brush for getting nectar from blossoms.



Mallacoota Inlet.

Aug. 71.

log sheet

| | Name of the park: | |
|----|--|---|
| | Date: Time taken | |
| | Distance from Melbourne | |
| | Nearest large town: | |
| 5. | Interesting features seen on the journey: | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | Size of the park: | |
| 7. | Make a sketch-map of the park: show the main | |
| | entrance, camping areas, walks you went on and | |
| | show on the map where you saw any interesting things | • |

8. Make a list of the animals, insects, trees, wildflowers and bird life you have seen: