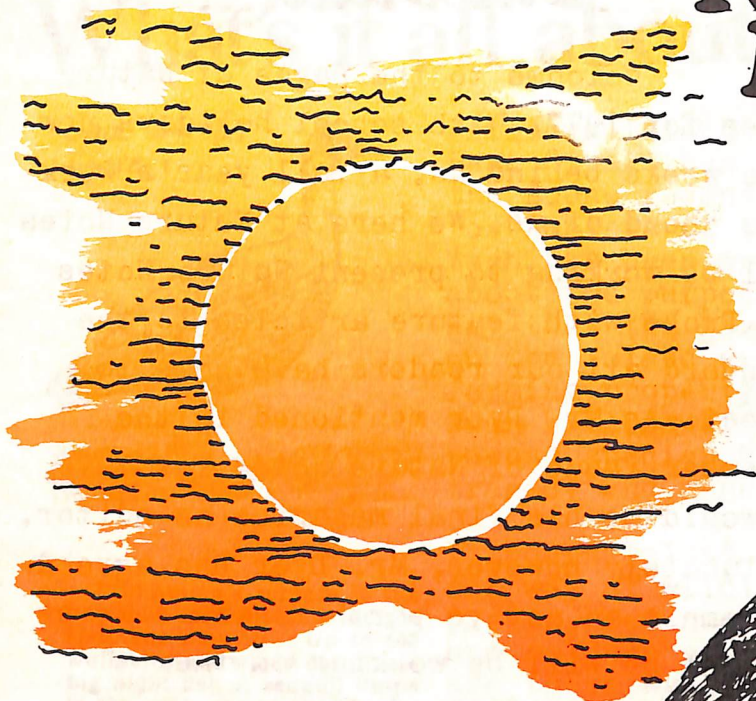


NATURE NOTES



RINGWOOD INSPECTORATE

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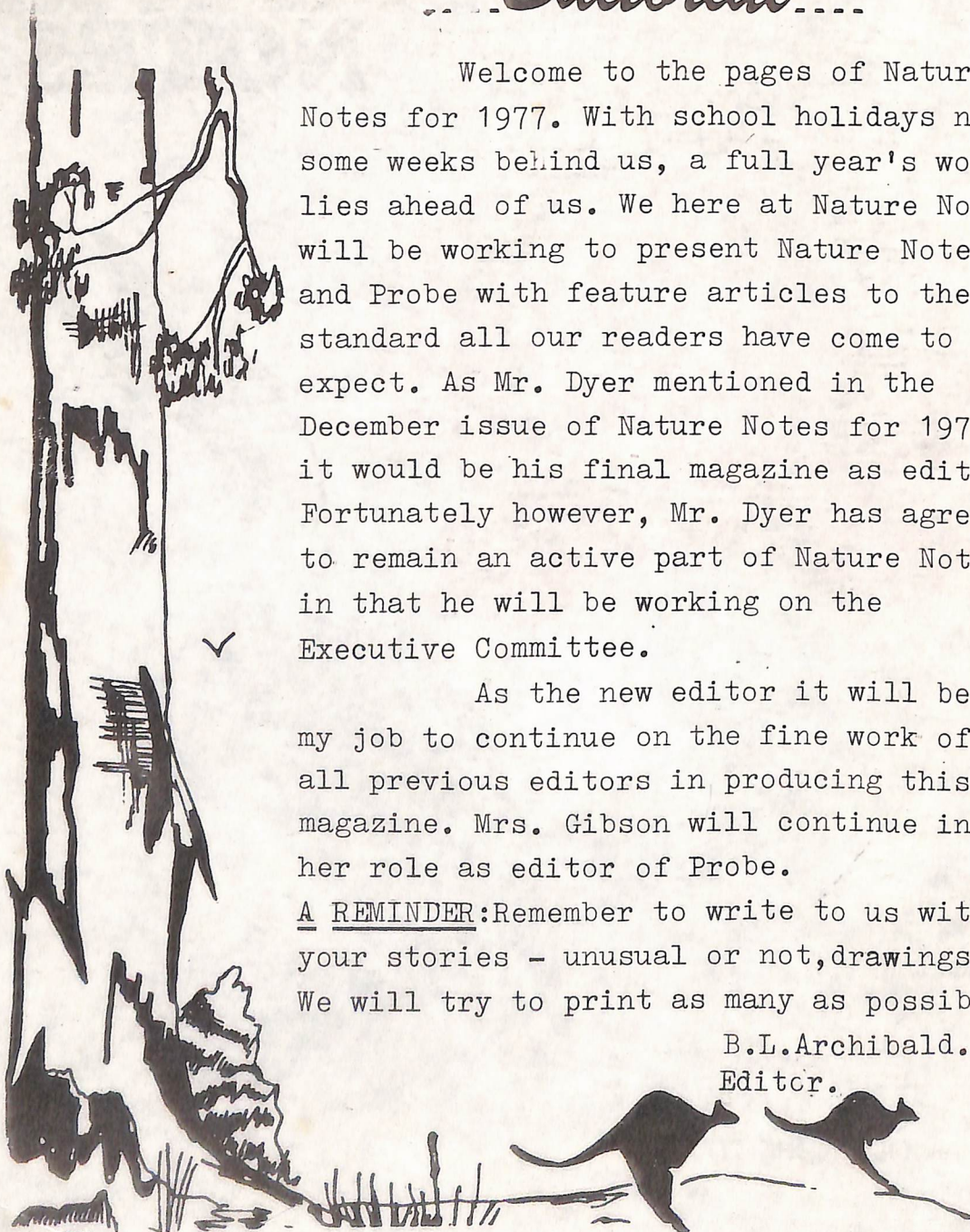
Editorial

Welcome to the pages of Nature Notes for 1977. With school holidays now some weeks behind us, a full year's work lies ahead of us. We here at Nature Notes will be working to present Nature Notes and Probe with feature articles to the standard all our readers have come to expect. As Mr. Dyer mentioned in the December issue of Nature Notes for 1976, it would be his final magazine as editor. Fortunately however, Mr. Dyer has agreed to remain an active part of Nature Notes in that he will be working on the Executive Committee.

As the new editor it will be my job to continue on the fine work of all previous editors in producing this magazine. Mrs. Gibson will continue in her role as editor of Probe.

A REMINDER: Remember to write to us with your stories - unusual or not, drawings.. We will try to print as many as possible.

B.L.Archibald.
Editor.



What's it all about..?

Cape Barren Goose.



Wild animals scream in the bloodlust ritual of midnight spotlight slaughter. Up to 400 wallabies are wiped out in one big night out. A seagull limps in the main street outside the pub in which a thousand beers are downed to up the aggression. A Cape Barren goose

wears one foot the wrong way around. Cars, wielding bull bars, or battered by running into animals, look like rusted-out tanks.

Animals are killed for fun or bait. Some of the Flinders Island people who see them thus only as commodities, think mainlanders are mad to make all the fuss over the geese shoot.

Other animals and birds do not die quickly, but are poisoned by 1080 which burns out their guts. The thing does not stop there, for 1080 can be passed on through the food chain.

Wombats are shot out in the bush, their bones becoming a graveyard where they fall. Roads are littered with dead creatures, sometimes more than beer cans.

Flinders Island in Bass Strait has been the scene recently of an open season for hunters of the Cape Barren Geese. Much has been written in the Press about the purpose of the hunt. Some say that the large flocks of geese on the Island are destroying valuable farming property - others claim that such killing of one of the world's rarest species by the hundreds is a tragedy and unnecessary.

Flinders Island has much to offer in the way of wildlife - curlew sandpipers, red neck stints, turnstones and golden plovers. Black swans are there by the thousands along with grey teal, chesnut teal, musk duck, black duck and bluebills. Pelicans, white faced herons, dove prions and shearwaters. Wombats, wallabies, kangaroos, anteaters and possums. Some other creatures such as the bandicoot and Tasmanian Devil are now extinct.

Perhaps you may have read John Larkin's observations in the Melbourne 'Age' when he paid a visit to Flinders Island during the shoot on the Cape Barren Geese. Are such hunts necessary? Has the Cape Barren Goose created problems for us? Is anything gained from such killing? Write to us at Nature Notes with your thoughts and ideas.

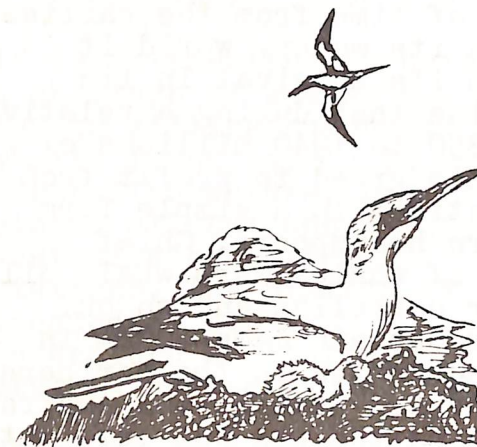
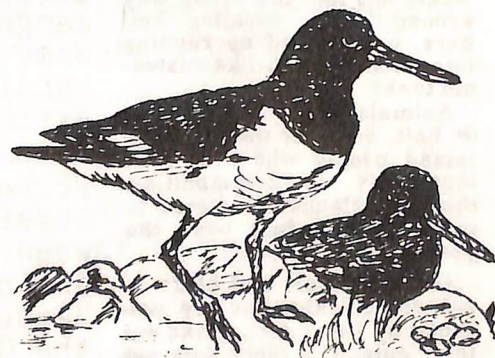


WINGED MARINERS



Of all the birds perhaps the group that fill us the 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 the 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?

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 about his breeding habits? Are oysters and other molluscs his only food?



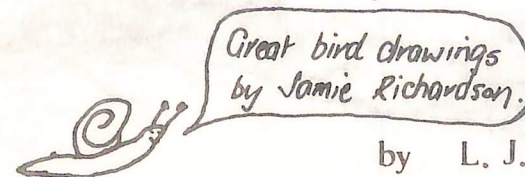
No doubt most boys think of a Gannet as an attack plane with our naval air arm. This plane is certainly well named, for the Australian Gannet is a dive bomber of the first order being known to plummet into the sea from as high as 100 feet, diving vertically beneath the surface for fish which if caught 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?

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.



Bird Watchers. .

Other examples of winged mariners are the Giant Petrel, White Fronted Tern and the Australian Pelican. Make up a chart 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.



by L. J. DELACCA.

A Whale of a Tale

The whale has survived the passing of time from the earliest forms of life to the present day. In its watery world it is both ancient and timeless. Yet with its survival in its various species it is hard to imagine that during a relatively short period of time from around 1850 to 1940 millions of whales were slaughtered by man in his greed to profit from such killing. Whaling had been practised in a simple form for a thousand years in the northern hemisphere. Chief products obtained from the killing of whales were whale oil for lamps and candles, whalebone for umbrellas and so on. As a result of observations made by Captain James Cook in his ship the 'Resolution' whaling industries in the northern hemisphere swamped the waters around New Zealand and Australia for the rich whale harvest. Antarctica too was not left out of the relentless search for whales. The total amount of whales killed in this area of the world was in the order of tens of thousands each year, particularly during the 1930's. With such unchecked killings several species were almost killed out of existence. Indeed today the numbers of the Right Whale and the Bowhead whale are uncertain.

Many attempts in recent times to fix the amount of whales in each species killed each year have been tried. The International Whaling Commission which meets in London each year tries to set annual whaling limits but it has no real power to enforce them. Many species of whales are now protected. They include the Blue, Humpback, Right, Bowhead and Gray Whales. These whales are protected

Ringwood East. P.S.

since the percentage of them remaining today is questionable although known to be low.

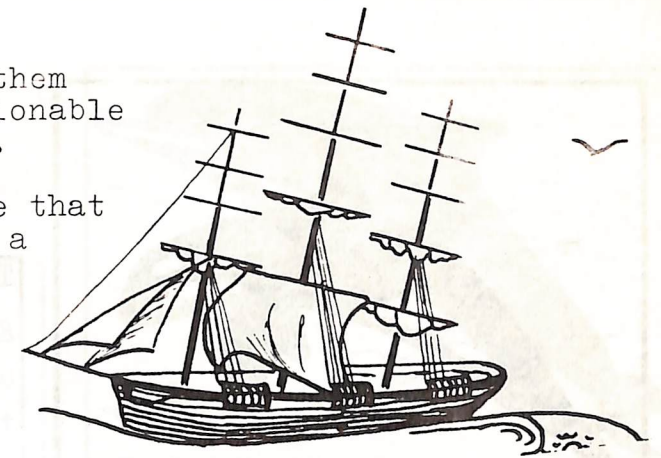
It is interesting to note that a shortage of whales and a ban on killing humpback whales, found mainly in Australian waters, has closed all but one of Australia's whaling stations. The station is located at Albany in Western Australia. Some of you may have visited the station during annual holidays.

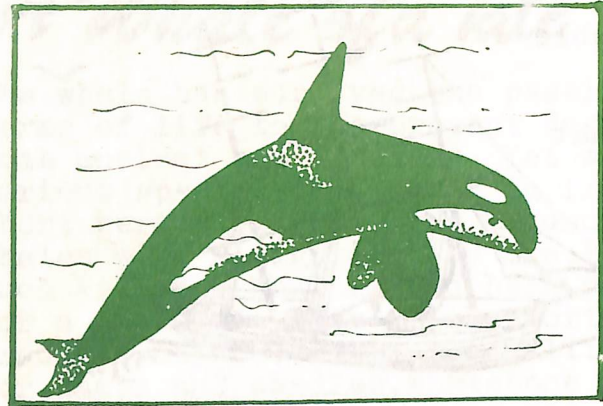
There is an urgent need in our materialistic world to ensure that such mass killings do not in future endanger the life of unique creatures. Man in his desire for profit is gradually becoming more aware of the need to preserve and not annihilate. Whaling is but one area of abuse in nature. Other stories could equally be written about wildlife threatened in Africa for example - the elephant or indeed our own kangaroo. We must all become increasingly aware of our responsibility toward preserving life in nature and not simply abuse it. Do you know of any extinct animals or birds killed off by man? Write to us at Nature Notes about them. Remember, book prizes will be awarded for the most interesting stories received each month.

Remember:

Letters to Nature Notes should be addressed as follows:

The Editor
Nature Notes,
P.O. Box 28,
RINGWOOD EAST. 3135.





KILLER WHALE

Orcinus Orca grows to a length of 25 feet. It usually hunts in packs preying on fish and seals. It is the largest of the dolphin species.

GIANTS OF THE DEEP

Just crept in to keep these heavyweights in check.

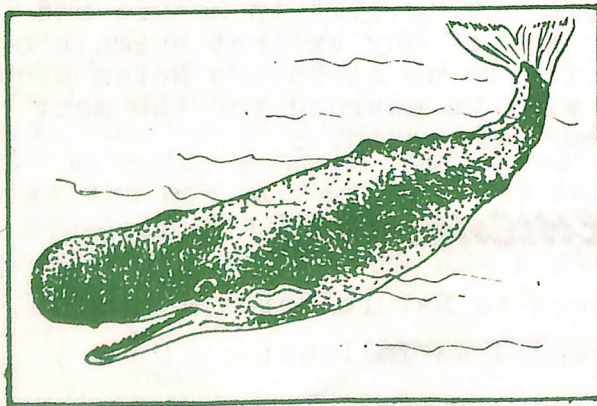


BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN

Tursiops truncatus grows to a length of 9 feet. It is a lively species and adapts readily to captivity. It is known to have a very high affinity with man.

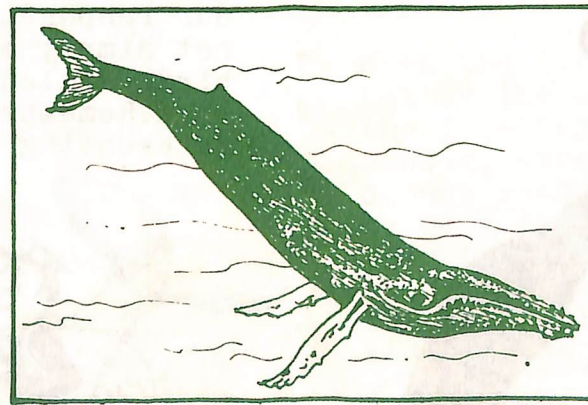
There are numerous types of whales but all conform to two groups or orders of Cetacea: toothed whales (Odontoceti) and Baleen whales (Mysticeti). In the 'toothed' category there are 65 species in all and include the giant Sperm whales - even porpoises and dolphins.

The Baleen whales are larger in size and include the Blue, Humpback, Right, Gray and Bowhead whales. Do all types of whale eat plankton? What is the 'spout' of a whale? Why is it that whales are not classified as fish? Are the whales shown here toothed or Baleen whales?



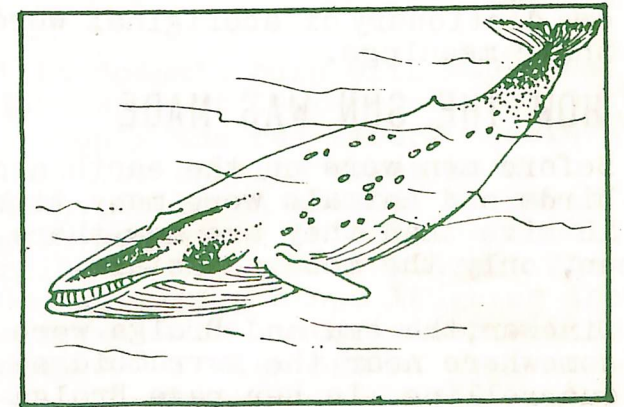
SPERM WHALE

Physeter catodon is the largest of the toothed whales. It is able to dive a mile or more for its food. It can remain under water for at least an hour.



HUMPBAC WHALE

Megaptera novaengliae emits a long 'songlike sound or squeel. It is able to steer with huge winglike flippers. It reaches 45 feet in length.



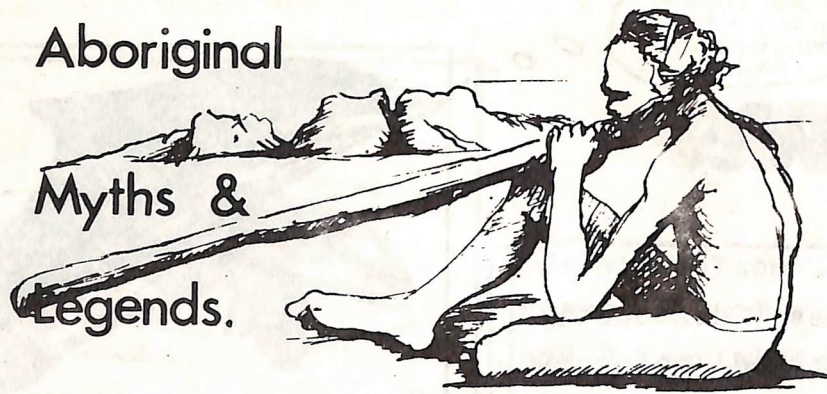
BLUE WHALE

Balaenoptera musculus is the largest whale often reaching 100 feet in length. Once it has reached maturity, it can eat 8 tons of krill - plankton a day.

Aboriginal

Myths &

Legends.



It is hoped that this subject will become a regular feature of Nature Notes this year. Aboriginal customs and beliefs have been directly related to the environment in which they live. Many fascinating stories involving many creatures from the Australian bush have been told and retold. It will be our aim to show you through this feature an area of nature you perhaps have not experienced and perhaps present you with some understanding of the closeness the Australian Aborigine has with nature. It may be a worthwhile task to make your own dictionary of aboriginal words and their meanings.

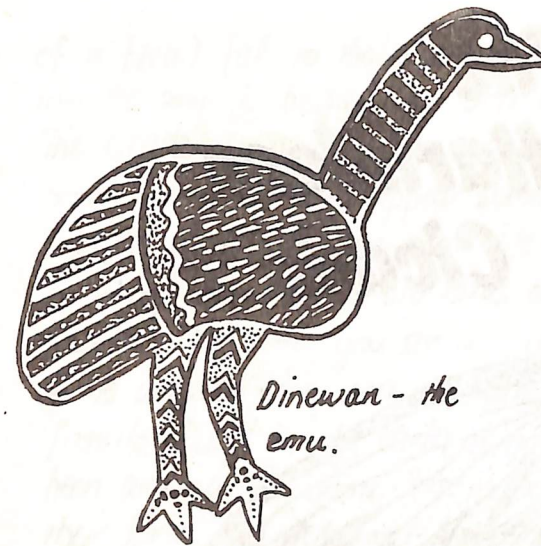
HOW THE SUN WAS MADE

Before men were on the earth and when birds and animals were many times greater in size than they are now there was no sun, only the moon and stars.

Dinewan, the emu and Brolga were on a plain somewhere near the Murrumbidgee one day, quarrelling. In her rage Brolga rushed to the nest of Dinewan, seized one of the large eggs and threw it up into the sky. The egg broke on a heap of firewood which burst into flame as the yolk spilt over the wood. The creatures on the earth were dazzled by the brightness and



Brolga - the native companion



Dinewan - the emu.

couldn't believe their eyes.

A good spirit who lived in the sky saw how beautiful the earth looked and decided that a fire should be lit each day. All night the spirit and his helpers would collect wood then send the morning star to warn those on earth that the fire would soon be lit. The spirits found that this warning was not enough for those who slept and failed to see it. They began to search around for some noise that they could use as the

warning. After much searching they heard the sound they wanted - that of Goo-goor-gaga, the laughing jackass. The spirits told him that he was to laugh as loud as he could as the morning star faded and day dawned. If he did not agree to this they would refuse to light the fires any more. Goo-goor-gaga agreed to laugh at every dawn and has done ever since. "Goo-goor-gaga, goo-goor-gaga, goo-goor-gaga."

When the fire is first lit it doesn't burn with much heat, but by the middle of the day the heat is intense. Later the fire begins to die until only the red embers remain at sunset, except for a few that the spirits cover up with clouds ready for the new dawn. Children are not supposed to copy the sound of Goo-goor-gaga just in case he should hear them and stop his warning of the oncoming dawn. The spirits know that if the Goo-goor-gaga stops laughing then the time will come that no more Daens - aborigines will be seen on the land and darkness will reign again.

Nature Notes Committee ~ 1977

Mr. Pruden - District Inspector.

Mr. D. Dobson

Mrs. L. Sanderson.

Mr. "This 'n' That" Delacca

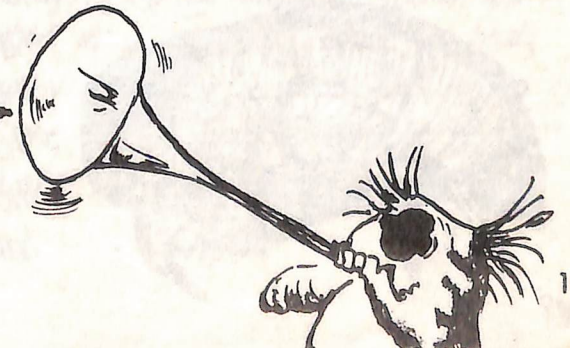
Mr. K. Dyer

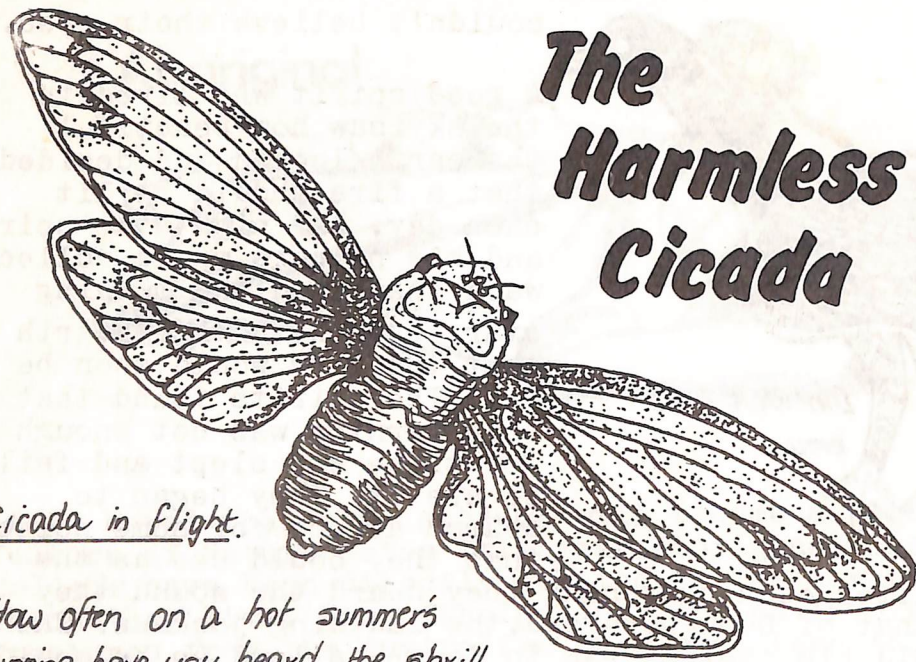
Mrs. A. Gibson - 'Probe'

Mt. F. Little.

Mr. B. Archibald - Editor

Nature Notes - March. 1977.





The Harmless Cicada

Cicada in Flight.

How often on a hot summer's evening have you heard the shrill pitched noise of the cicada. No doubt you have seen the outer shell or dried out skin once it has been shed from the young cicada.

The young cicada (or nymph) lives under-ground for some years living on sugary sap from the roots of plants while it grows. Then one night, as though 'fed-up' with this way of life, it makes its way up to the surface of the soil, climbs onto a branch or twig and waits for its skin to split open.

Did you know that it is only the adult male that sings? The sound is made by a sort of drum on the abdomen. As this drum is moved in and out by the movements of its muscles, the sound is produced.

The Nymph Underground.

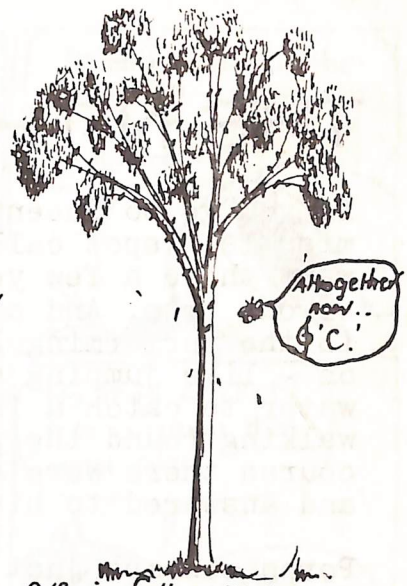


The main reason for the singing of the cicada is to attract the female's attention. Cicadas have no ears, but the female cicada feels the vibrations.

The female cicada deposits her eggs in the bark of trees. Once the eggs are hatched, the tiny cicadas (about the size

of a flea) fall to the ground and dig deep into the soil to begin their long lives as nymphs. The cicada is a harmless insect, even though to some the insect may appear somewhat ugly. Cicadas do not damage plant life nor do they bite or sting. Their enemies are birds and other hungry animals. Next time you see a cicada be aware of its unusual story and its harmless existence. - fossils found in the earth suggest that it has been around for some 400 million years and their form has remained remarkably unchanged.

P.S. If you are in the vicinity where cicadas are in full chorus, you may suddenly have heard them all stop. Old timers have it that this is the spot where they all turn their music to the next page..



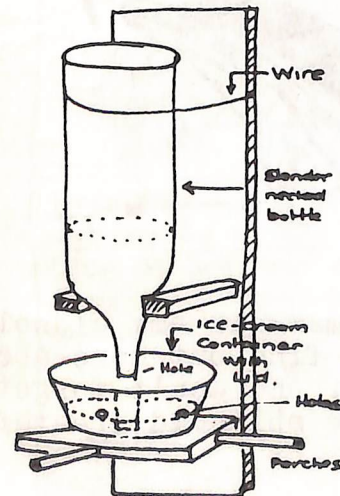
Invite Some Friends To Dinner

Garden enthusiasts are becoming more conscious of the need to attract and keep birdlife in the garden. Here's one idea:

- Build a nectar feeder as shown in the diagram and then keep it filled with bird nectar.

BIRD NECTAR RECIPE

$\frac{1}{2}$ kg. honey, $\frac{1}{2}$ kg raw sugar, 900ml. water. Mix together in a saucepan over low heat, stirring until all sugar is dissolved. Keep in bottles in the 'fridge. Serve in a ratio of two parts of water to one part of nectar.



THIS 'N' THAT - GETS WET.

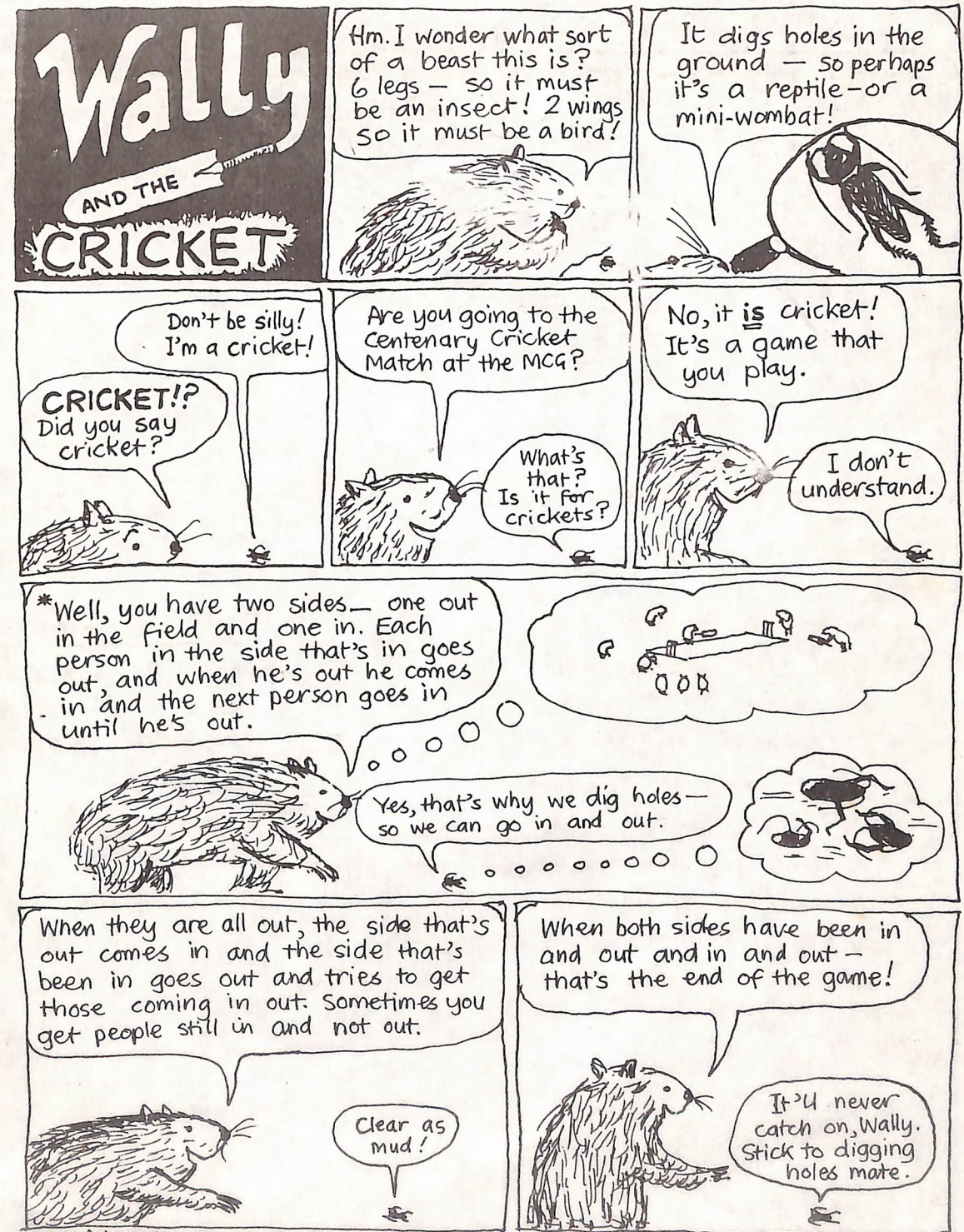
If you go to Queensland, one of the places you must not miss is a spot called 'Marineland,' on the Gold Coast. We went there a few years ago and it was one of the highlights of our trip. And of course the most famous attraction there is the performing Dolphins. And what a performance they put on - like jumping about 6 metres (18 feet) but of the water to catch a fish, leaping through a hoop of fire , walking round the pool on its tail to name just a few. Of course there were several dolphins there but each one knew and answered to his/her own name.

Porpoises are just as playful in the open sea too. They are often seen playing around the prows of ships. Sometimes they have been known to play volleyball with a poor old sea-turtle, tossing it backwards and forwards and if not too big even into the air. However it is all in play and the turtle doesn't really get hurt.

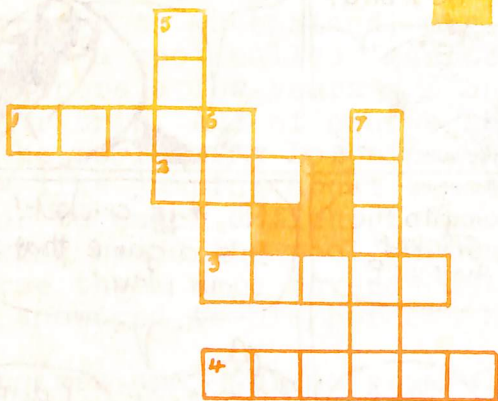
Here is a true story about a woman who leaned too far over the rail at an aquarium and spilled all the contents of our handbag into the water, whereupon a dolphin tossed everything straight back at her - lipstick, a soggy handkerchief, pencil, money, notebook and each one accompanied by a generous squirt of water.



In this story I have talked about porpoises and dolphins. These two mammals are closely related and very similar. See if you can find out more about them and how they differ from each other. And don't forget - if you get a chance be sure and see these splendid creatures, you'll be glad you did.



PUZZLES



Which are which?

Two of these are Birds of Prey, two climb, two run, two wade and two swim...

CORMORANT. HERON. OWL. EMU.

OSPREY. PARROT. FLAMINGO.

OSTRICH. PENGUIN. WOODPECKER.

When you finish this puzzle, the name of one of the young of the creatures listed should appear in the darker squares. (rabbit, hare, horse, swan, goose, parrot.)

1. The Brolga is Australia's only true....

2. Eagle's nest.

3. Bird of Prey.

4. Diving Sea-bird.

5. Name of a bird.

6. A game and an insect too.

ACROSS:

1. A whale's

2. Young Cicada.

3. Snake-like fish.

4. A "dive bomber".

DOWN:

5. Winged mariner.

6. Largest known whale.

7. A lively mammal.

Psst...
Answers
are in this
issue



Artists this month

were: Mrs. W. Prohasky

Mrs. R. Cassidy. Jamie

Richardson, Mr. G.

Archibald.

