

Editorial

Well we at Nature Notes do not profess to have E.S.P. but right after the article on rocks and their formation, Mt. St. Helen erupted. This was a demonstration of the enormous power and effect a volcano can have on its surrounding environment. Volcanic lava plains make very good areas for growing various crops. Some people will buy anything! Volcanic ash is being sold in little bottles for \$4 a bottle.

This month's Nature notes is for the birds! (As you will notice as you read on.) This is an ideal time of the year to attract birds to your garden. How?

This is not normally a time when people consider visiting the "Santuary" at Healesville, however, it is often a worthwhile experience to visit it at different times of the year. The surrounds are constantly changing. This month we are looking at birds which are not kept in cages. Also worth observing are the native plora.

- No. 7

HELP !! I would like to do some articles about identifying "rocks" I would be very interested to hear from any "rockologists" who could . help in any way. Editor, Russell Hall A wonderful bird is the pelican His bill will hold more than his belly can He can take in his beak Food enough for a week But I'm dmned if I see how The helican. -Dixon Lanier Merritt. Written in 1910.



of the dog

gets the bird

The following bizarre tale is all recorded in owner hares after the the latest issue of the pelican but cannot catch newsletter.

The setting is Currumbin Beach on the Queensland Gold Coast. The cast: one very bold pelican and one very aggressive chihuahua. The pelican - long

conditioned by the presence of humans - is nosing close to sun bakers looking for a morsel.

The chihuahua rushes at Big Bird snapping and a-yapping. Big Bird yawns and GULP. Chi- collar and metal name taq! suahua for lunch.

One distraught ... lady Warringal conservation it. Just what she would have done had she snared it is not recorded.

> The lady, in desperation, telephones a local vet. He appears on the scene but also cannot bring Big Bird to heel. The story has since been widely discussed in Queensland veterinary circles. Mainly from the point of view of the bird's digestive powers. Like how it coped with the little fella's flea



'In Black and White column of the 'Herald'. It's not surprising that the pelican was able to take care of the offending chihuahua, as they have been on Earth a long, long while. Fossil remains between 30 and 40 million years old have been found. During that time the bird has not changed much. Do you know how big the first horse was? Or how the elephant got its trunk?

The pelican is a very large inland water bird but may be found virtually anywhere (estuaries-fresh or saltwater, are a favorite place). Its wingspan may be 21/2 metres and it can weigh as much as 7½ kg:-B.E.C. (Before Eating Chihuahuas).

Pelicans use thermals-(a place where hot air is rising) to gain height. Light aircraft pilots have reported seeing them circling in thermals at a height of 3,000 metres. Thermals occur in front of rocky cliffs, when the rock heats up more than the surrounding land.Can you think of any other birds which use thermals in this way? Why? Who else uses thermals? Apart from annoying chihuahuas, pelicans

enjoy fish, prawns, freshwater crayfish, tadpoles and other small creatures. Getting thirsty is no problem for the pelican. The pouch of skin on its lower jaw can hold up to 13 litres of water. Brown pelicans can drink salt water (ugh) as they have an inbuilt method of getting salt out of their body.

These birds are easily recognised because of their dagger bill, black and white feathers, bright yellow eyes and its call of curra-wong.

They live in tall forests during the summer and move to plains, to towns and to cities in the winter months. Some stay in the high country all year round. They are often seen at Mt. Buller.

Millions live in the south-east alone, yet very few people have seen their nests, for they breed as scattered pairs in thick, tall forests in the Great Dividing Range. These birds wander nomadically. Some currawongs may travel 300 kilometres. What town is about 300 km. due east from Melbourne? It begins with an "0".

While wandering it is thought that they prey on stick insects, which at times do considerable damage to eucalypts. Currawongs show a preference for female insects carrying eggs. Sometimes stick insects are nearly wiped out in an area.

Currawongs eat all sorts of things- young birds, carrion (dead animals), insects and berries.







NOT THOSE



Rockin' 'Round



By Barry Archibald

As you can see from the picture(p.6 "Where to find Australian Minerals"), layers of different types of rock are deposited as a result (usually), of either volcanic activity- lava which is molten(melted) rock being tossed out of the vent opening of a volcano, then cooling on the earth; or the effect of wind or wat-

er depositing layers of sedimentary type material,which may include-fossils-or the remains of creatures trapped in-between the deposited layers. One special kind of layered rock is coal- one of Victoria's abundant energy resources. Do you know why?

Coal was formed from rotting or 'decomposed' vegetationplants and trees. Many thousands of years ago,giant forests covered many parts of the Earth. At that time,giant ferns and trees grew. As these trees and plants died and fell upon the ground they were, in time, covered with layers of sand and mud. Eventually, the sand and mud layers were 'pressed' into rock.



The dead wood between the layers became either brown and/or black coal. Why are some coal deposits <u>brown</u> in color and others <u>black</u>?The Latrobe Valley open cut near Morwell in Victoria is a source of brown coal.At Wonthaggi in Victoria,the

deposit of coal is black. Not all ancient forests have been preserved in this way. As the picture Shows, the trunks and root



systems of trees have been turned into stone.(page 35,'ROCKS AND FOSSILS') This process has created a 'fossil forest'and if you touched the trees here,you would indeed feel stone.



In many fossil areas, small creatures have been trapped such as Trilobites (mentioned last month), which looked like wood-lice. These creatures could roll themselves up into a ball.Larger creatures, such as sea-scorpions, some of which were 9 metres long, were also trapped. (photo-'ROCKS AND FOSSILS', page 39) Even the skeletons of Dinosaurs and other prehistoric life forms have been preserved or fossilized in rock. Scientists who investigate such lifeforms are known as Paleontologists and this field study is known as Paleontology. When a whole collection of bones has been treated, think how difficult the task is to carefully sort out and label all the bones in order to fit the skeleton. If you visit your city's natural history museum you will no doubt find some examples of fossilized bones of prehistoric creatures. The task of men conducting this type of work results in little success. Can you think why?



Written by Kath Hanscombe.

At this time of the year the Fauna Park gains a number of birds which tend to winter in the lowlands, (Why?) and return to their breeding site in the Great Dividing Range as spring approaches. Can you find the. Great Dividing Range on a map? How long is it?

Pied currawongs breed mainly in the mountain forests but flocks of them may be seen here during the winter months feeding on

young birds, carrions, insects and berries. You will possibly notice them in parks or in your garden at home.(One is on COVER)



on Young male bower bird from 'WILDLIFE HERITAGE'' What's HERITAGE'' Yellow-tailed black dense forest in s cockatoos nest in tree er bird builds a

cockatoos nest in tree hollows high above the ground in heavy forest. During the winter, particularly in very cold weather they are commonly

seen here feeding on the larvae of wood boring insects in acacias (wattle trees), and eucalypts. To extract the grubs from the trees the cockatoos cut a board to stand on! This board works in the same way as those used by axemen when they wanted to cut off a tree high above the ground. When the cockatoo has chopped out enough wood to uncover the larval tunnel, it probes with the upper part of its beak to get to the grub.

Ground thrushes are also regular visitors but are harder to see because of their well camouflaged plumage and habit of moving among the undergrowth searching for insects, worms, molluses(snails), and fruit.

Female and/or immature satin bower birds, like the ground thrushes, are regular visitors, but difficult to see. They are fairly timid and move

> quickly and secretively through the undergrowth or from tree to tree searching for fruit and leaves and some insects. They return to the

dense forest in spring when they breed. The male bower bird builds a bower from which it courts the female. It decorates it with a collection of blue objects usually.

The sacred or white ibis are permanent residents in the park. The winter months are a time of great squabb-

ling as the birds itories in prenesting around for them carrying nesting to their chosen sites.

> Ground Thrush from "Complete Book Of Australian Birds"

establish their terrparation for August. Look materials



The Nature of Things..

How many different activities do you think your hands would perform in one minute? Perhaps your neighbor could make a count when you are unaware. If you both did this it

would be interesting to compare your results.

Now perhaps you could make a list of 20 things you do with your hands. Then you could show the person sitting next to you how your hand operates as you pretend to do each activity. For example -

using a paint brush. Can you give some ideas why



our hands are able to make and do things that other creatures cannot do?

(Or, how is it possible for monkeys to peel and eat a banana using only one hand?) What part of your hand, if



removed, would make it almost impossible for you to do your list of 20 activities?

This drawing shows the bones in your hand. Turn your hand over and see how many you can feel.

Good detectives discover much about a person by his hands. Try this : Make a screen out of



THE HAND BY MR.G.NIELSEN.

cardboard or cloth with a hole just large enough to put a hand through, and so you can't see the owner of the hand. Have a number of people (adults too) put a hand through the hole in turn. Write down what you can find out about the people from their hands. How good are you as a detective?

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• Are all fingerprints different? Take a clear fingerprint of each person in your class (use a stamp pad). Are there any patterns?

If you could make some clear prints on an overhead projector screen you would have some examples to compare



more easily. How do the police use fingerprints at the scene of a crime? OTHER TOPICS ON HANDS TO EXPLORE : * Sense of touch.

* Comparing hands with claws, paws & nippers

* Mechanical hands - can you make one?

SOME EXPERIMENTS WITH

EXPERIMENT ONE :

Find three saucers that are all the same. In the first put ONE teaspoonful of water, in the second TWO and in the third THREE teaspoonfuls. Put them on the window-ledge and examine them every hour. Which saucer became empty first? Which was the last to become empty?



This disappearing trick of water (and any other liquid, is called evaporation and it is going on all the time in







From puddles. EXPERIMENT TWO :

From rivers.

From the sea.

Put two teaspoonfuls of water into a saucer, a cup and a clear bottle. Put them on the window ledge and let them stand. From which container did the water evaporate first? Which one second? I think the saucer will be the winner. Why?



It GUODOVATES. the water, the quicker more air that touches ANSWER: BECQUSE THE

EXPERIMENT THREE

Draw two squares on a blackboard and wet both of them lightly with a damp cloth. Fan one of them, but not the other. Which dries first?

Wind carries the water away faster than still air does. Water is made up of tiny drops called MOLECULES and it

is these that the wind blows away. EXPERIMENT FOUR :



H.J.Lawry.

Mathematics

I'll do anything

if it means washing

maths off the

blackboard!

Take two clean cotton handkerchiefs and wet them



thoroughly in water. Hang one of them in a warm place and one in a cool place. (Both indoors.) Watch to see which one dries first. Molecules of water

go into warm air faster than into cold. This is

because warm air moves faster than cold air. Next month we will look at another experiment with water and then we will see how the five experiments tell us something about our weather.

(Adapted from 101 Science Experiments, by I. Podendorf.) ALSO, TRY

to the brim

Filling a cup exactly ... tip the water into a saucepan and bring it to the boil

... then tip the water back into the cup. How much have you Lost? Where has it gone?



Long ago the cuckoo was a lazy bird who sang and played while other birds built their nests.



So the Great One punished her by sending her up to the north, far, far away from her friends.



But the lazy bird kept singing till at last her voice wore out and she could not sing any more.



Then she decided to lay an egg and get a baby, but alas! she had forgotten how to build a nest.



So the cuckoo flew to the south and laid an egg in the nest of another bird; but the bird who owned that nest thought the egg was her own, and when the baby was born she became its mother.

LEGEND TIME...



Then the cuckoo had no nest, no song, no baby But each spring she still flies south to lay eggs, and then we hear her wailing cry, sadly calling to her babies who have found another mother.

On our Easter holiday we fed a brush-tail possum by hand. We put some bread on a fork of a tree and the brush-tail possum didn't eat it and it was stretching its head out for us to feed it , so my friend went up to it and fed it with the bread he had. Then I went up to it and fed it the bread and it grabbed it and ran up the tree and it kept on coming back for more and more. Later on in the night it came or more so my mum fed it an apple and it ate it.

LETTERS ... LETTERS ...

The next day we went up to Melville Caves and I spotted 72 of them. Later on we spotted some more of them but there weren't as many. It was really great experiencing both of these animals.

> YOURS SINCERELY, DARREN HORN.

Lettens. Congratulations, David! You're the winner of this month's book award



Hi, here is a puzzle from Tracey Forster who is in grade 5. (ANSWER HIDDEN INSIDE)

MY FIRST IS IN WALLY, BUT NOT IN POLLY.

MY SECOND, IS THE FIRST IN OLD, THEN THE SECOND IN SOLD.

MY THIRD IS IN MAN , BUT NOT IN LADY.

2

3

4

5

6

MY FOURTH IS IN BAT, AND IS IN BIG.

MY FIFTH IS IN 'AN, AND IN LADY.

RIDDLE

MY SIX TH IS IN ATTACK, AND IN ATTRACTI WE. (WHICH I AM?)

Ed. Altered slightly, Tracey.

CRACK THE CODE! CLUE &= (a=1, b=2, etc.) 23,1,12,12,25 8,1,19 19,17,21,1,18,5 6,18,15,13 23,1,20,3,8,9,14,7 20,15,15 13,21,3,8 20,22. (19,55, 14.)

Where's the paintbrush, Wally?

(It sure does

Q: What happened to the hen that swallowed a yo-yo ?
Q: What side of an alligator is greenest?
Q: Why are rats and mice unhappy in bad weather?
Q: Why did the dog turn round and round before it lay down?
Q: How many hairs in a possum's tail?
Send your pzlzscu?/letters/riddles to us!
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