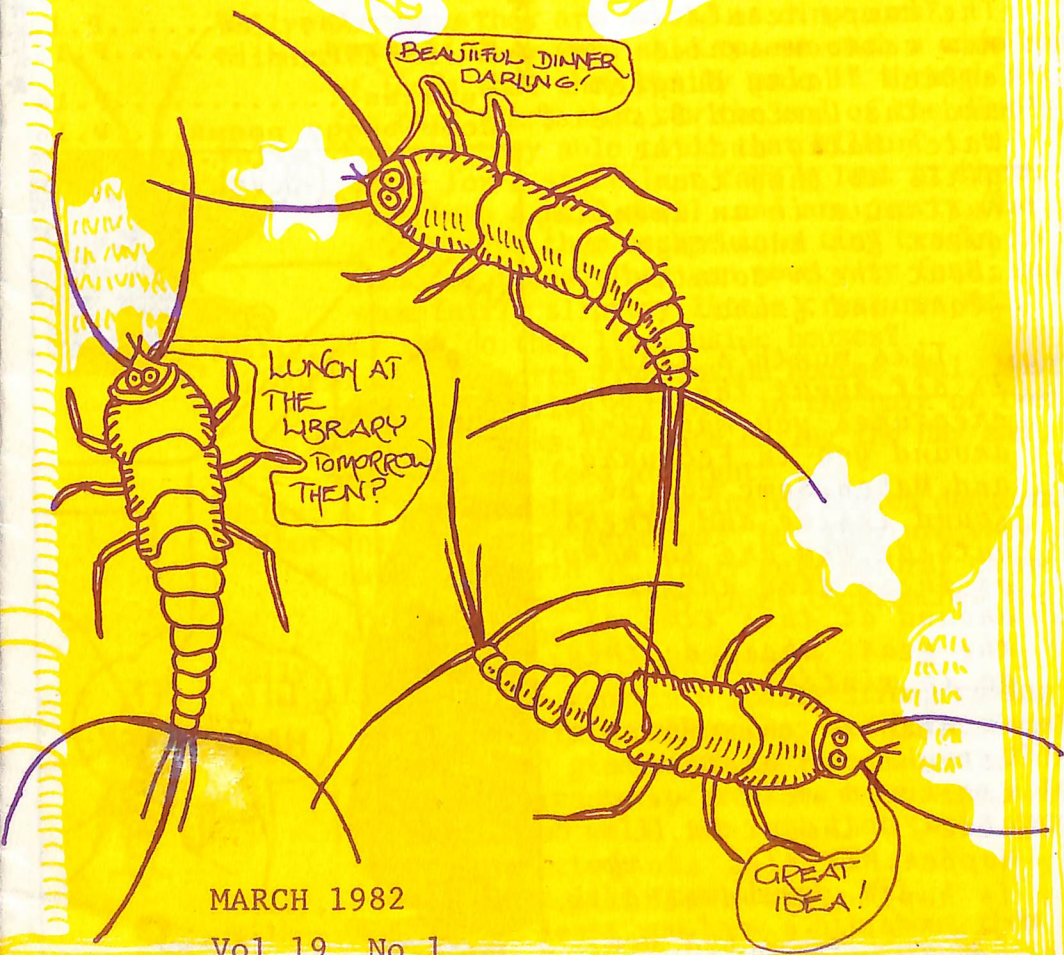


Nature Notes



MARCH 1982

Vol.19 No.1

***** Editorial *****

Hello there,

Are you glad to be back at school? Wally Wombat is sure you will be when you find out what he's got lined up for "Nature Notes" in 1982. He and Ernie Echidna (from "Probe") spent their holidays searching the country for new talent. The happy result is a new cartoon series called "Hairy Bungler and the Lowland Sisters." Watch Hairy and the girls as they tour Australia in an onending quest for knowledge about their country's flora and fauna.

This month's issue is all about the tiny creatures you may find around you in February and March. Some can be found inside and others outside. Why are so many of these tiny animals around at this time of the year? Where do they go in winter?

Also in this month's issue is an exclusive interview with a very elderly insect-Mr. G. Hopper. His life story is hopping good reading.

2 Cheerio for now,
DEBRA BRYDON

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Wilbur and Wally at home

Wally: EEEEEEEKK!!!!!! What was that Wilbur?

Wilbur: Just a cockroach, Wal.

Wally: But cockroaches are dirty little pests, Wilbur!

Wilbur: No, they're not Wal, they're one of the few prehistoric animals that were smart enough to survive right through to today.

Wally: You mean they are as old as dinosaurs?

Wilbur: Yes Wal. They were able to eat such a wide range of foods that they easily made it through all the hard times that saw the end of the dino's.

Wally: How were they able to do that Wilbur?

Wilbur: Well, for a start just take a look at them. They have a hard shell and are pretty flat, which helps them escape into tiny cracks in rocks or trees. They can move very fast and seem fairly slippery little creatures, Wal.

Wally; But why do they live inside houses?

Wilbur: Only some sorts live inside houses, Wal. Most cockroaches live outside, in the bark of trees or under rocks. They hide during the day and come out and feed at night.

Wally; Are the ones that live inside houses dangerous?

Wilbur: They can carry germs Wal but they are very hard to get rid of. Their only natural enemy is the centipede. They think cockroaches are a real delicacy.

Wally; Well, how do they breed Wilbur?

Wilbur: The eggs are kept in a really strong casing until the little cockroaches are born. Some species even give birth to live babies. This is another reason cockroaches have been able to survive so well, the fact that their young are so protected.

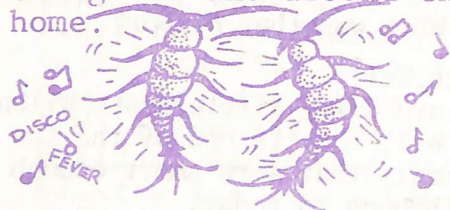
Wally; I still don't like them though, Wil.

Wilbur: No, but at least you know a bit about them now Wal. And I promise that they DON'T bite!!!!



The Silverfish A

No, silverfish aren't fish dressed in sparkling clothes. They are little pests that eat amazing things in and around the home.



They are nocturnal eaters hiding away in dark, secret places during the day.



Silverfish eat all sorts of starch; including flour sugar and glue. They chomp through wallpaper paste, book bindings, paper and clothes as well as foods.



As insects, they are special because of two things. Firstly, they have no wings. Now you may say "So what?" but most insects do have, or have had, wings at some stage. Ants and cockroaches are good examples of these "flightless" insects. Silverfish have never had wings.



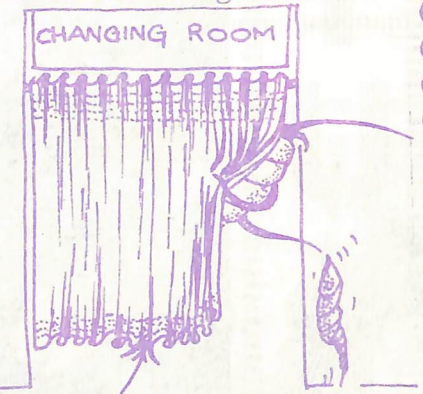
Starchy Customer!

ARTIST: Carol Measures
BY A. CARMICHAEL

Silverfish babies look exactly the same as adults except smaller. Most insects' young are really different and must go through several changes before they come to their adult stage. What examples can you think of here?



The silverfish baby has of course got to shed its skin a few times as it grows bigger, but it does this even in its adult stage.



There are several native species of silverfish, that live in the leaf litter on the forest floor. They eat both starch and vegetable matter and help turn the leaf litter back into soil. They don't live inside our houses.

It is only the European silverfish that lives with man and has been brought over here by him.

How do you think this has happened?



PHOTO: Thanks to "THE SUN",
11-11-81, p.17



● THRIPS infest a white rose.

Take a tip on thrips

This summer saw thrips invade Melbourne's clotheslines in their thousands. Sometimes the plague became so bad, washing had to be dried indoors. Thrips are tiny sap-sucking insects well known for their damage to garden plants. Of the 4000 different types of thrip throughout the world, 400 are dinkum Aussies. Aren't we lucky? The plague in Melbourne is thought to have been caused by weather conditions.

'Snakebite Sam' song of safety

*Snakebite Sam has a snakebite plan,
He will help you when you need him,
Just remember Snakebite Sam.*

The song has a snappy title, succinct words, a sparkling tune and according to snake bite expert Dr Struan Sutherland it is destined to be a hit.

'Snakebite Sam' was composed by a Glen Iris songwriter, Ms Judy McKinty, so schoolchildren could learn the correct technique for coping with snakebite.

Yesterday the song was launched by a folk singer, Mr Francisus Henri, backed by an enthusiastic choir of children from Errol Street Primary School, North Melbourne, and Maffra High School.

Dr Sutherland said at the launching that in recent years the number of deaths from snakebite had been reduced dramatically by better methods of treatment.

But the best cure was prevention, and he quoted the fourth verse of 'Snakebite Sam':

*Snakebite Sam says that snakes
get frightened too.*

*If you're scared of them, remember
they're just as scared of you.*

Sheet music for the song is available free from the Child Accident Prevention Resource Centre, Courtney Street, North Melbourne, or from the 'Age' Information Centre in the City Square. Schools may also obtain copies by writing to 'Snakebite Sam', c/- 'The Age', GPO Box 257C, Melbourne, 3001.

ARTICLE/PHOTO:
THANKS TO "THE
AGE", 2-12-81,
page 14

RIGHT: Do you approve
of this sport? Why
or why not?

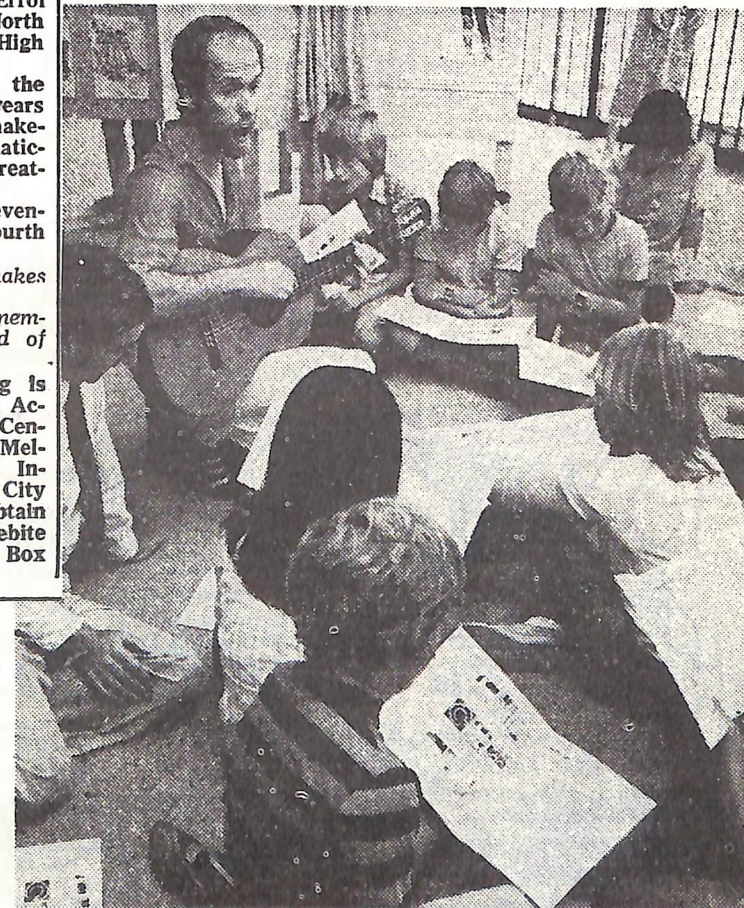


An illustration from the folder
in which the song is printed.

Shark and the lions

LONDON, Thurs., AAP.
— Hunters who paid to shoot lions on a game ranch in Ellisras, South Africa, have discovered why they never saw any lions despite masses of tracks, the Daily Express reported.

The owner was walking around with rubber "lion paws" on his feet.



Franciscus Henry teaches children the 'Snakebite Sam' song.

Hairy Bungler and the Lowland Sisters

◦ TREKKING ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE, OUR ◦ FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN NATURALIST HAIRY BUNGLER JOINS THOSE OTHER FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS, THE LOWLAND SISTERS. IN AN UNENDING QUEST TO SOLVE THE MANY MYSTERIES OF NATURE.....



WHILE THE MECHANIC TRIES TO REPAIR HAIRY'S LANDROVER, THE TRIO ARE FORCED TO SPEND THE EVENING TOGETHER.....

VAMPIRE MOVIES MAKE MY BLOOD RUN COLD, GIRLS

LOOK WHAT'S ON AT THE FLICKS TONIGHT BUNGIE!

I'M NOT ALL THAT COMFORTABLE, GIRLS.... I THINK SOMETHING IS BITING ME!!

FORGOTTEN THE AEROGARD, HAIRY?...

HAIRY ANIMALS LIKE OUR MATE OFTEN HAVE PROBLEMS WITH SCRATCHING, AND BITING INSECTS LIVING ON THEIR BODIES

YOU MEAN LIKE INSECT VAMPIRES

YES, LUCY, THE FLEAS BOTHERING HAIRY NOW ARE EXPERT BLOOD SUCKERS

THEIR BODIES LOOK SOME-THING LIKE A COIN STANDING ON EDGE. THIS MEANS THEY CAN MOVE EASILY BETWEEN THE HAIRS.....

WELL, WHY DOESN'T HAIRY SCRATCH THEM OFF THEN?

YOU MIGHT THINK THAT WHEN HAIRY SCRATCHES HIMSELF, HIS PAW WOULD EASILY PUSH THE FLEAS OUT OF HIS FUR...

ALL OVER A FLEAS BACK AND UNDERSIDE ARE ROWS OF LONG, STIFF SPIKES. LIKE THE TEETH OF A COMB....

MAYBE FLEA COLLARS AREN'T SUCH A BAD IDEA, GIRLS...

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME LUCY, IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO SQUASH A FLEA BECAUSE THEIR SKINS ARE SO TOUGH

..BUT DON'T WORRY TOO MUCH, HAIRY, - A FLEA DOESN'T STAY TOO LONG ON THE SAME ANIMAL

LET'S GO HOME, LILLY I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF VAMPIRES FOR ONE NIGHT

.... THE NEXT DAY.....

SORRY MATE - IT'S A WRITE OFF. LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL HAVE TO STICK WITH YOUR FRIENDS FOR A WHILE

WILL THE LOWLAND SISTERS EVER GET RID OF THEIR HAIRY COMPANION? - READ NEXT MONTH'S EPISODE

.... WHEN A FLEA IS PUSHED BACK-WARDS, ITS SPIKES CATCH ON HAIRS, AND WEDGE IT TIGHT... WHEN THE ANIMAL STOPS SCRATCHING, THE FLEA STARTS MOVING FORWARD AGAIN.

EXCLUSIVE

interview

YES, SON. IT'S MY
LIFE STORY. I'VE JUST
FINISHED WRITING IT. HERE...
TAKE A LOOK.

ER, EXCUSE
ME, SIR. THAT
LOOKS LIKE A
PRETTY
INTERESTING
BOOK.

HOW
GREEN
WAS
MY
VALLEY

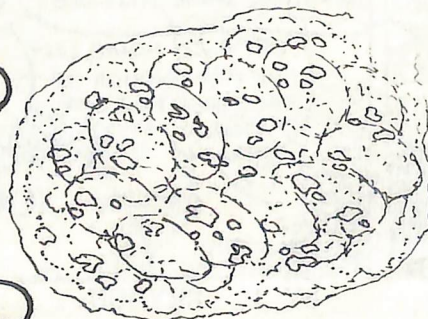
MY LIFE BEGAN LAST
SUMMER.....

...IN A GOLDEN, GRASSY MEADOW.
MUM USED THE HARD, SHARP POINTS
AT THE END OF HER TAIL TO DRILL INTO
THE SOFT DIRT. WHEN SHE HAD FINISHED
MAKING A LONG, DEEP HOLE, SHE DROPPED
ABOUT 70 TINY EGGS (INCLUDING ME)
INTO THE BOTTOM OF IT.

SEE YOU
LATER

Artist: W. Prohasky.

SUDDENLY, ALL THE EGGS WERE
COVERED WITH A FOAMY, STICKY STUFF.
THIS QUICKLY DRIED OUT TO BECOME
A COVER, SOMETHING LIKE A BATH
SPONGE. IT WAS FULL OF TINY HOLES
SO THE AIR COULD STILL FLOW
THROUGH. THE LAST WE SAW OF
MUM WAS A TINY SPECK,
FLYING OFF TO DIG MORE HOLES.



with Mr. G. Hopper...

EAST RINGWOOD'S MOST ELDERLY GRASSHOPPER

BY D. BRIDON

GOSH, THIS
IS
BORING!

MOST OF MY
POOR BROTHERS AND
SISTERS WERE EATEN
BY FLIES AND
BEETLES.

WHAT A
GOOD-LOOKER!

WINTER CAME AND WE HEARD
THAT MOTHER HAD DIED OF OLD AGE.
WE HAD TO WAIT FOR THE WARMER
WEATHER TO HATCH SO THAT THERE
WOULD BE ENOUGH FOOD. EVENTUALLY, MY
EGG CRACKED OPEN AND I CRAWLED UP
THROUGH THE 'SPONGE', THROUGH THE DIRT
AND INTO THE SUNLIGHT.

UNLIKE
MOST OTHER
BABY INSECTS, I LOOKED
JUST LIKE MY PARENTS,
EXCEPT WITHOUT WINGS.

HOW
BEAUTIFUL

AS A YOUNG FELLOW WITH GROWING
WINGS, I WAS MOSTLY INTERESTED IN
FOOD, THAT IS, GRASS.

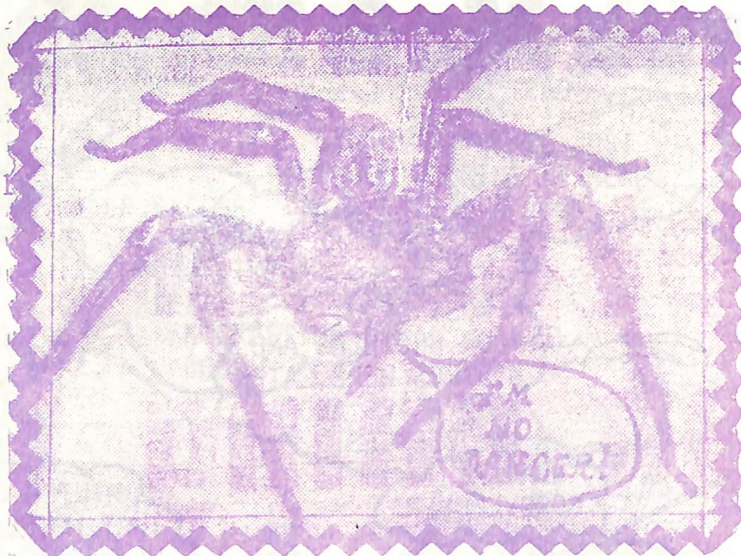
WHEN WE WERE
FULLY GROWN, MY
MATES AND I FOUND THAT WE COULD
MAKE BEAUTIFUL GRASSHOPPER MUSIC BY
RUBBING OUR FRONT WINGS AGAINST OUR
BACK LEGS. ALL THE GIRLS CAME TO
LISTEN.

NEAR
THE END OF
SUMMER, A YOUNG

LADY GRASSHOPPER CAME TO ADMIRE MY MUSIC (WHO
CAN BLAME HER?). WE GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER WELL
AND AFTER A WHILE SHE LAID SOME EGGS. SLOWLY
I GAVE UP MAKING MUSIC. MY LIFE IS NEARLY
OVER NOW, SON. MY JOB IS DONE!

THANKS TO
G. PIZZEY
("Herald-21/5/81"
page 26) FOR
THE MATERIAL
AND PHOTO IN
THIS ARTICLE

NO



TARANTULAS..

...but we have plenty of hunters. The name we give to those large grey, leggy spiders who love to exercise on our bedroom ceilings doesn't really belong to them. Although "tarantula" now belongs to an enormous black, hairy but non-deadly ygalomorph spider from central America, the name was first used to describe a wolf spider living around Tarantum in Italy. This was supposed to have had a bite dangerous to humans. When bitten, the victim appeared to be performing a wild dance known as the tarantella. Later on, when the first settlers and seamen came to Australia, they saw large hairy spiders

and gave them the same name as the spiders back home. Even worse, some people started calling them other names as well. The name "triantelope" was in use in Australia as early as 1834. No-one really knows where the even longer name of "triantewobbetegong" came from.

Australia has over 60 different types of hunters. Despite their frightening appearance, most are pretty harmless. Only the smaller and less flattened looking 'Olius' huntsman can give a bite dangerous to humans. Notice that their bodies are specially made for narrow places, with legs bending sideways rather than vertically.

Long before the word spit-fire became famous as the name of a fighter plane during World War II, it was a familiar term in the Australian bush. Every bush walker knew those bundles of greasy looking, slug-like larvae. When disturbed, they would rear their head and tail. Out of their mouth would pour a thick yellow fluid, smelling strongly of eucalyptus. They certainly don't sound very attractive, do they?

Have you ever seen a spitfire? If not, you may

have seen their parents, who are sawflies. These insects are not really flies but four-winged wasps. Female sawflies have a very interesting egg laying instrument - a cutting tool. It's not really like a carpenter's saw but more like two tiny saws, one inside the other. After finding a suitable leaf, the female scrapes away its waxy surface with the tip of her abdomen. Using the saw, she then cuts a slot in the leaf and lays an egg in the hole. Her work continues along the leaf until up to

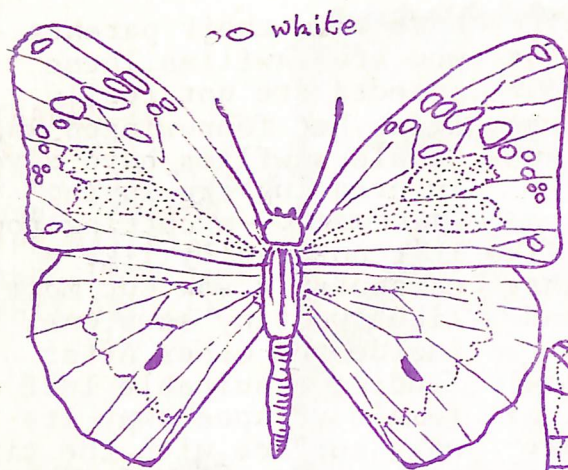
BUT PLENTY OF SPITFIRES



forty eggs are laid. After a while, the eggs hatch into larvae, which cluster together on the home leaf during the day.

Feeding on leaves, the spitfires will often 'strip' a tree so they move in a group from tree to tree.

In spring, the whole colony moves down the tree trunk and goes on a long march. They bury themselves in cocoons until autumn, when they emerge as.....

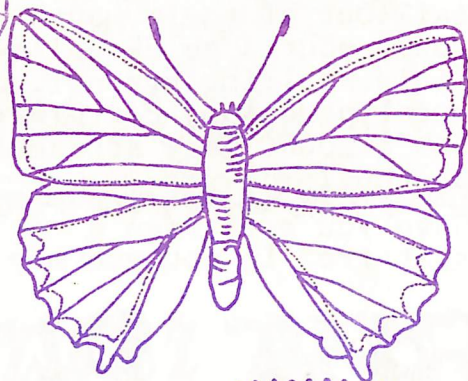


→ THE BLACK AND WHITE TIGER can be found anywhere between the Torres Straits islands to the Clarence River in N.S.W.

Body_ brown
Dotted area_ P. blue
Outer wings_ brown

Body_ brown
Inside wings to dots_ D. blue
Outer edges_ brown

THE GENOVEVA AZURE →
is found in most states, except W.A.
What does 'azure' mean?



THIS YEAR AT "NATURE NOTES" -Themes

- *MARCH: Small creatures-Silverfish, Cockroaches, Grasshoppers, Fleas, Tarantulas, Spitfires
- *APRIL: Conservation-What is conservation? Wood-chipping, Carp, Extinction, Pandas, Franklin R.
- *MAY: Earth-Glaciers, Land forms, meteorites, Volcanoes, Waterfalls, Erosion
- *JUNE: Alpine-Antarctic, Animals and plants adapting to snow conditions
- *JULY: Monsters-Plant and animal "monsters"
- *AUGUST: Underground-Caves and their flora and fauna.
- *SEPTEMBER: Fliers-Birds and their habits, inc. the Kiwi, Brolga, Jabiru. Bird nests, body struc.
- *OCTOBER: Rainforest-Flora and fauna of the rainforest, conservation issues.
- *NOVEMBER: Lakes and Rivers
- *DECEMBER: Barrier Reef

As this is only intended as a brief outline, it does not include the many other aspects of nature we hope to cover this year.

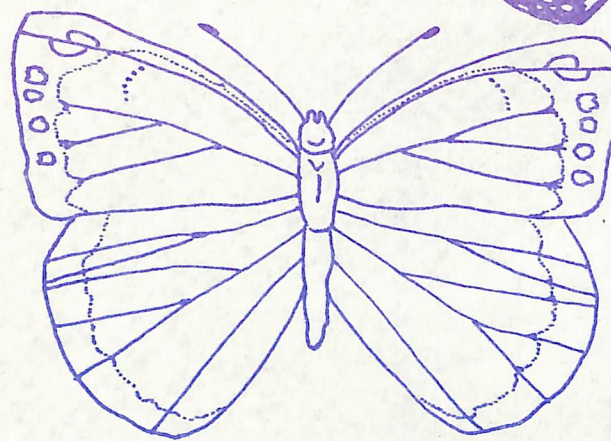
butterflies to colour in

Body_ black
Top wings_ orange
Lower wings_ gold

THE WANDERER (or MONARCH) →
is found in every continent of the world and is found in all Australian states except W.A.



Body_ grey
Edges of wings_ D. brown
Inner parts_ white
oo white



← THE IMPERIAL WHITE
is common throughout south-eastern Victoria. There are 8 different types.

Australia has many very beautiful butterflies but unlike koalas, kangaroos and echidnas, they are also found in New Guinea and other islands to the north. The only exception to this rule is the small CABBAGE WHITE BUTTERFLY, which was accidentally introduced from New Zealand in 1938. For many years, it threatened to become a very serious pest of cabbages, cauliflowers and other garden vegetables until the State Agricultural Department set about introducing some of its natural enemies from Europe. Has this ever been done before? Was it successful?

SOME BUGGY POEMS

AN ODD APPETITE

by Tom Mc.Gowen

A dainty dish
For a silverfish
is flour, and sugar, too
But they've also a taste
For dried old paste,
And laundry starch, and glue!
(A secret I'll share-
I sure wouldn't care
To eat such stuff-would you?)

MOSQUITO

by Mary Ann Hoberman

O Mrs. Mosquito quit biting me, please!
I'm happy my blood type with your type agrees.
I'm glad that my flavour
Has met with your favour
I'm touched by your care;
Yes, I'm touched everywhere:
On my arms and my legs, on my elbows and knees,
Till I cannot tell which
Is the itchiest itch
Or which itch in the batch
Needs the scratchiest scratch.
Your taste for my taste is the reason for these,
So Mrs. Mosquito, quit biting me, please!

THE PUZZLED CENTIPEDE

Author unknown

A centipede was happy-quite!
Until a toad in fun
Said, "Pray, which leg moves after which?"
This raised her doubts to such a pitch,
She fell exhausted in the ditch
Not knowing how to run.

Source: "The Bug Book"
pub. The (Childcraft) How and
Why Library

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