



# NATURE NOTES

Vol. 21 No. 2. APRIL '8



# EDITORIAL

Hello Readers,

Well, Mrs. Dianne Darley has finally received her marching orders. She has been sent to the bush to search for a new holiday hole for Wally. I will be the new editor of Nature Notes and I am looking forward to bringing you lots of interesting stories this year.

This month's issue is about water. Did you know that every living thing - plants, animals and man - must have water to live? In fact your body is about two-thirds water and you will take into your body about 60,600 litres of water in your lifetime. Can you think of all the ways we use water? Perhaps you will get some ideas from the articles in this month's issue.

Happy Reading,  
Rosalie Collie.  
Editor.



# NATURE in

## Taipan gets a caning!

**BRISBANE** — Australia's deadliest snake, the Taipan, is being wiped out by cane toads — and that's causing an ecological problem.

The Taipans, and other snakes which infested the north Queensland cane fields, used to eat the rats that destroyed vast quantities of valuable cane.

They don't do that any more, and the rats are taking over.

Cardwell Shire Council chairman, Mr Tip Byrne, a cane farmer, made the point outside a conference on rainforests in Cairns yesterday.

"All this money and worry is being spent on rainforests when the three main ecological problems in Australia are being ignored," he said.

"They are cane toads, wild pigs, and the crown of thorns starfish.

"Cane toads were imported into Queensland to wipe out the cane beetle. They have never done that, but they are killing our native fauna.

"The snakes that used to control rats in our cane fields have been almost wiped out.

"They have been poisoned by eating the cane toads. Taipans, which were the deadly enemies of rats, are so rare on my cane farm that I won't kill one when I see it.

"The toads have also killed off most of the ibises which used to eat out the grubs of the cane beetle.

"We are using insecticides to control the beetles that the ibises used to destroy.

"There's that nasty little critter down there!"



Thanks to The Sun 3.2.1984

Do you know that the Cane Toad is a huge amphibian, can reach lengths of about 25 centimetres and weights of about 1 kilogram? One single animal can produce from 8000 to 35,000 eggs and the toads increase rapidly. Their defence is two large poison glands on the shoulders.



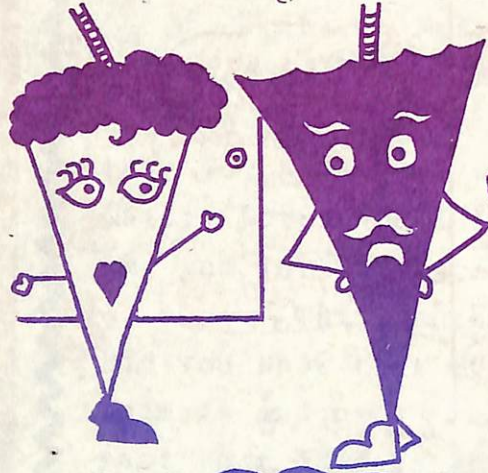
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# The Tale of an

# Anxious Umbrella

Umberto, an expensive imported umbrella, is complaining about the weather in Australia.



It's just not fair, Raylene! Ever since I arrived in Alice Springs all I've done is sit around in this dusty old cupboard. What's even worse, my trendy black nylon outfit is covered in dust. Doesn't it ever rain in Australia?

Stamping your handle won't help at all, Umberto. Let's face it, life for an umbrella in Central Australia is pretty tough.



Two's company  
three's a cloud

You just have to wait until conditions are right. The air around us is full of moisture, like the steam in the bathroom. These tiny drops of water are so small they are taken up into the sky by warm winds and crowd together to form clouds. When the clouds contact cold air, all the droplets join together. Eventually, they



...become too heavy to remain floating and fall as rain. One way you can tell whether or not it will rain is to check the clouds. Those wispy white clouds high up in the sky are called CIRRUS clouds. Rain never falls from them. Rain clouds are low and grey. They're called NIMBO-STRATUS clouds. Also watch for those huge billowing clouds with anvil-shaped tops. These CUMULO-NIMBUS or storm clouds sometimes rise higher than Mount Everest.

Secondly, feel the wind. Clouds are moved by winds and even dark clouds in the distance may be blown away from you.

Of course, another sign of rain is the official weather forecast. The meteorologists who predict the day's weather have studied it very carefully and they're usually right!





# \* WATERFALLS wash Wally well \*



Have you ever had a waterfall shower? Wally often scrubs up under his local waterfall. It's a very private one, hidden among rocks and ferns, and he finds it most refreshing.

Perhaps you don't have a waterfall nearby. Waterfalls are usually found in mountainous country. In Australia they are mostly found in the eastern states.

Water falls are formed when a river flows over rocks that are not equally hard. The softer rock is worn down and washed away leaving the harder rock as an obstacle. Sometimes it forms a hard ledge like the edge of a cliff and the water plunges down a sudden drop of levels.

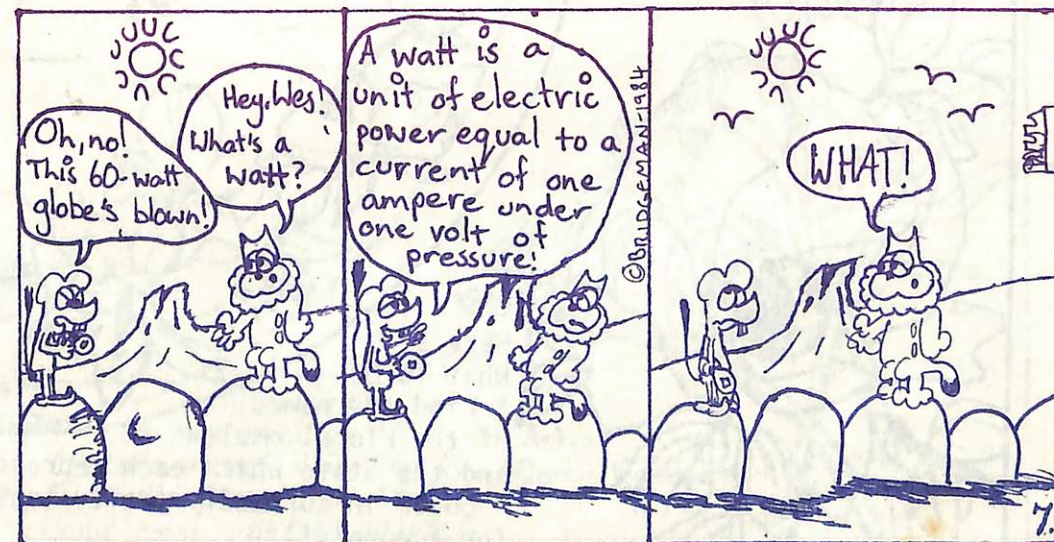
If you have never seen a waterfall you may like to look at a map of your state and find the nearest one to your home.



## MORE OF WES AND HERBIE'S ANTICS \_ FROM PAUL.

### OTHER THINGS TO DO:

- \* Name some waterfalls in Australia.
- \*\* What is the highest waterfall in the world?
- \*\*\* Which waterfall carries the largest volume of water?

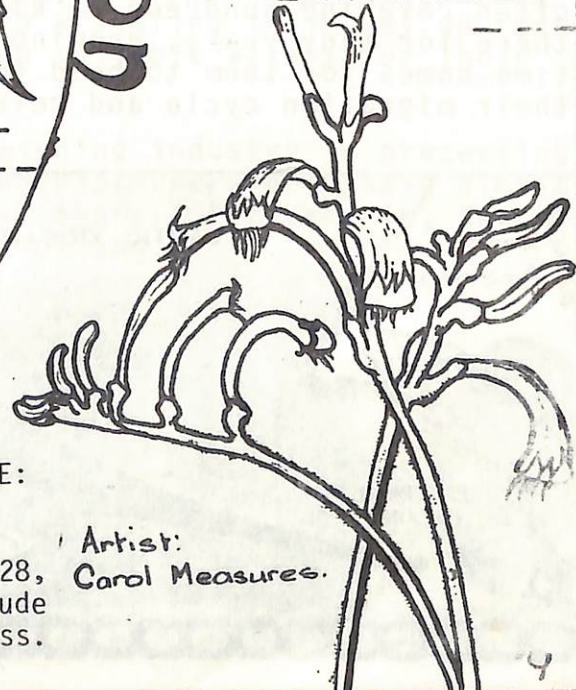
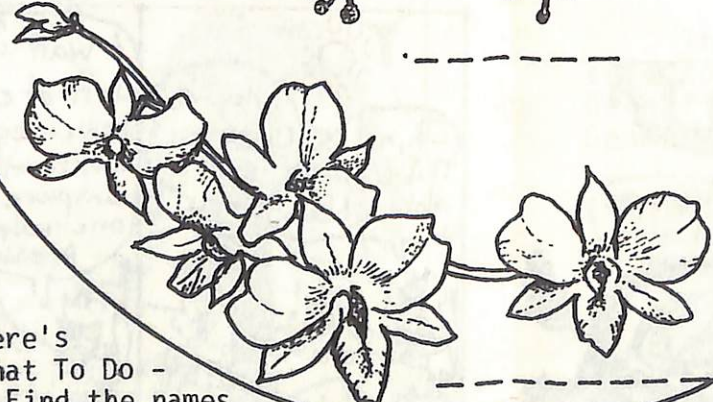
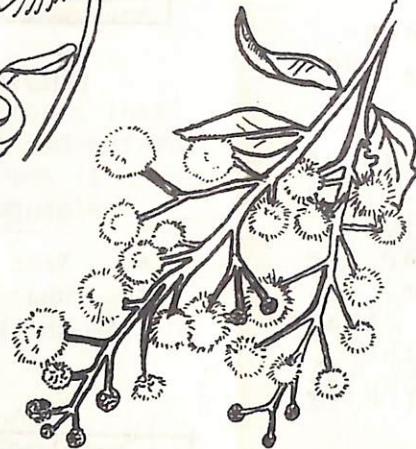
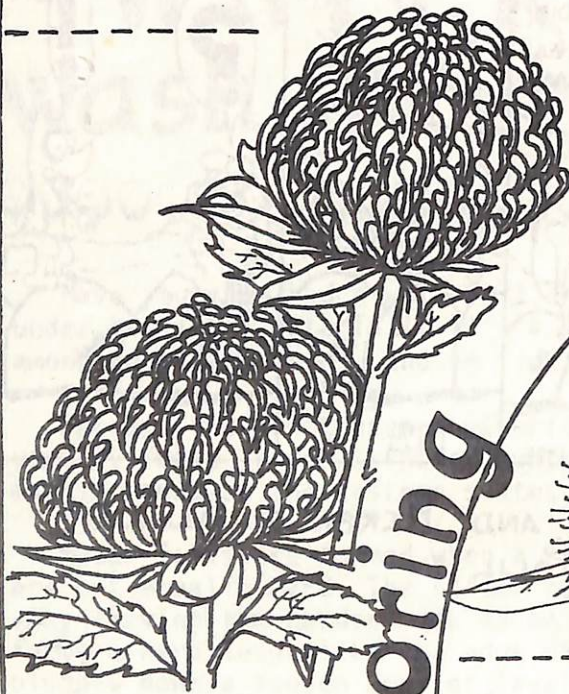




# FLORAL EMBLEMS AUSTRALIA

coloring

competition



Here's  
What To Do -  
\* Find the names  
of the Floral emblems,  
and the State which each represents.  
\* Color in correctly (Wally looks  
for accuracy!)  
GOOD LUCK!! Winners will be announced in the July issue.

CLOSING DATE:  
30th April.

Send your entries to -  
"Nature Notes" P.O. Box 28,  
Ringwood East 3135. Include  
your name, age and address.

Artist:  
Carol Measures.



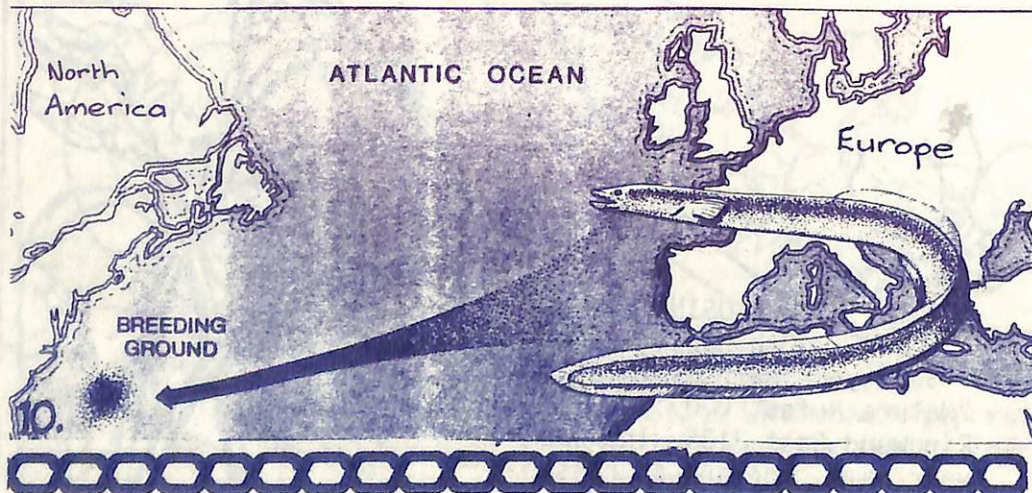
# The MYSTERY of

As long ago as the time of the Greeks and Romans, people have been mystified by the double life of the eel. It lives part of its life in streams and lakes, and part in the sea.

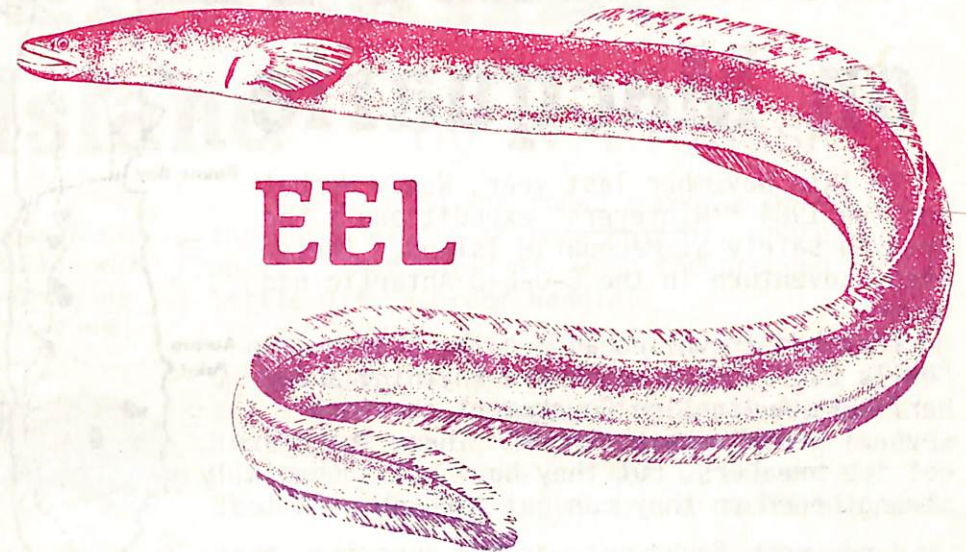
Recently, fishermen in Europe noticed that each autumn the rivers were alive with fat, silvery eels, all moving downstream and disappearing into the sea. In Spring they observed huge numbers of tiny eels, or elvers, re-entering the rivers.

After 15 years of observation, their spawning ground was located. In the Sargasso Sea, one of the deepest parts of the Atlantic Ocean.

After hatching, the larval eels live at about 200 to 300 metres depth until they are 2½ cm. long. Then they begin the 7,000 kilometre, 3 year long, journey back to Europe. The males remain near the sea, but the females fight their way upstream, often covering hundreds of kilometres. They remain there for many years, growing larger, until the time comes for them to head for the sea to complete their migration cycle and release the eggs.

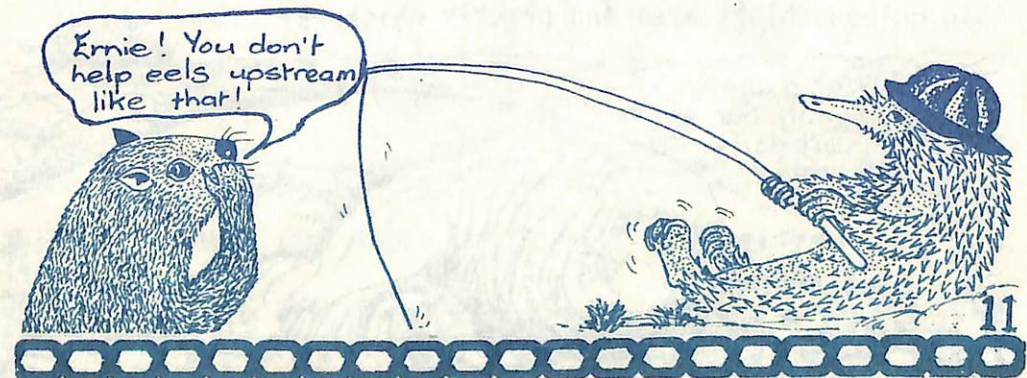


# the Freshwater



Australian eels also migrate seaward, but where they go is still a mystery. In New South Wales and Victoria each summer hundreds of pencil sized eels can be seen wriggling their way up rocks and dam faces to reach suitable waters for their growth period.

There is a flourishing industry in processing eels to export to countries where eels have almost been fished out of existence. For example, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Holland.





# MAMMOTH on Macquarie

By late November last year, Wendy Wombat and the 1984 \*'Winterers' expeditioners had arrived safely at Macquarie Island. Their great adventure in the C-O-L-D Antarctic had begun.

They had travelled aboard the Danish ship "Nella Dan". Have you heard anything about her? The Australian Government charts several vessels each summer. These ships are not ice breakers, but they have hulls specially strengthened so they can get through pack ice.

Wendy soon found out, to her surprise, that the wildlife had no fear of humans. Isn't that wonderful! She was amazed at the sight of Elephant seals lying everywhere in great heaps. The big bull elephant seals weigh over 3 tonnes and are 6 to 7 metres long!

Measure the width of your classroom and then you will have some idea of their immense size. Almost as big as whales aren't they? They spend most of the day sleeping on the stoney beaches.

Baby Elephant seals were everywhere. Wendy thought they looked just like pork sausages with big bulbous black eyes and prickly whiskers!



# MAMMALS Island by W. Prohasky.

One morning she found a couple of babies on the porch of the science building where she works. They moved off when she prodded them a little with a broom handle!

Now a big 'elle' (nickname) seal has taken up residence on the porch - as its home; door-mat and all..... so each morning Wendy Wombat has to get one of the men on the island to help her shift it, so she can get in the door!! Plucky little Wendy, helping to shift big seals.

Elephant seals are rather clumsy on land and have flippers, that they use as we use our arms, with ridiculously small back flippers, like a couple of empty gloves attached to their rear ends.

Wendy watched them play games, where they rear up and bang their heads together. The one who bellowed loudest and raised his head highest usually won. The other one shuffles away backwards, defeated.



\*Winterers means that those people will be staying on the island for a year.

Do you know what pack ice is?

Find out how and when Elephant seals catch their food.

Look in your school library for suitable books to help answer the questions.



One of Super Snail's most dangerous assignments begins when he is asked to investigate the strange disappearances of Worker Ants ...

**SUPER SNAIL**  
MIGHTY MOLLUSC  
of  
THE UNDERWORLD

WELCOME TO  
ANTHILL  
TION 12,074

The Ant Queen tells him that Ants sent out to forage for food have vanished without a trace. Super Snail suggests that a Worker Ant is sent out into the danger-area and he will follow . . .

YES, YOU!

Don't worry, little chap. When whatever-it-is gets you, I promise to rescue you.

tremble  
tremble

Get moving, then,  
my brave lad. Out  
into the wilderness

if you get back,  
I'd give you a nice  
medal.

Boa

One of Super Snail's most dangerous assignments begins when he is asked to investigate the strange disappearances of several Worker Ants ...

WELCOME TO  
ANTHILL  
TION 12,074

My Good idea, Mighty Mollusc. Now, I want one volunteer

**YOU!**

ME!  
Who me?  
Not me?

Super Snail slinks from rock to rock following the hapless worker...

SUDDENLY

A

А  
А  
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К

The Mighty Mollusc zooms to where the unfortunate Ant has disappeared...

He sees a  
dreadful sight

GOTCHA

It is an Ant-Lion,  
a larva which hides  
in a pit it has made  
and when an ant falls  
in, grabs it and eats  
it.

GREEN

**SUPER SNAIL  
LEAPS DOWN TO THE  
RESCUE!**

LATER..

Here is the  
culprit, your majesty

Many thanks  
Super Snail.  
And here is  
your medal,  
my lad!

and Super Snail keeps the Ant Lion as an unusual pet!

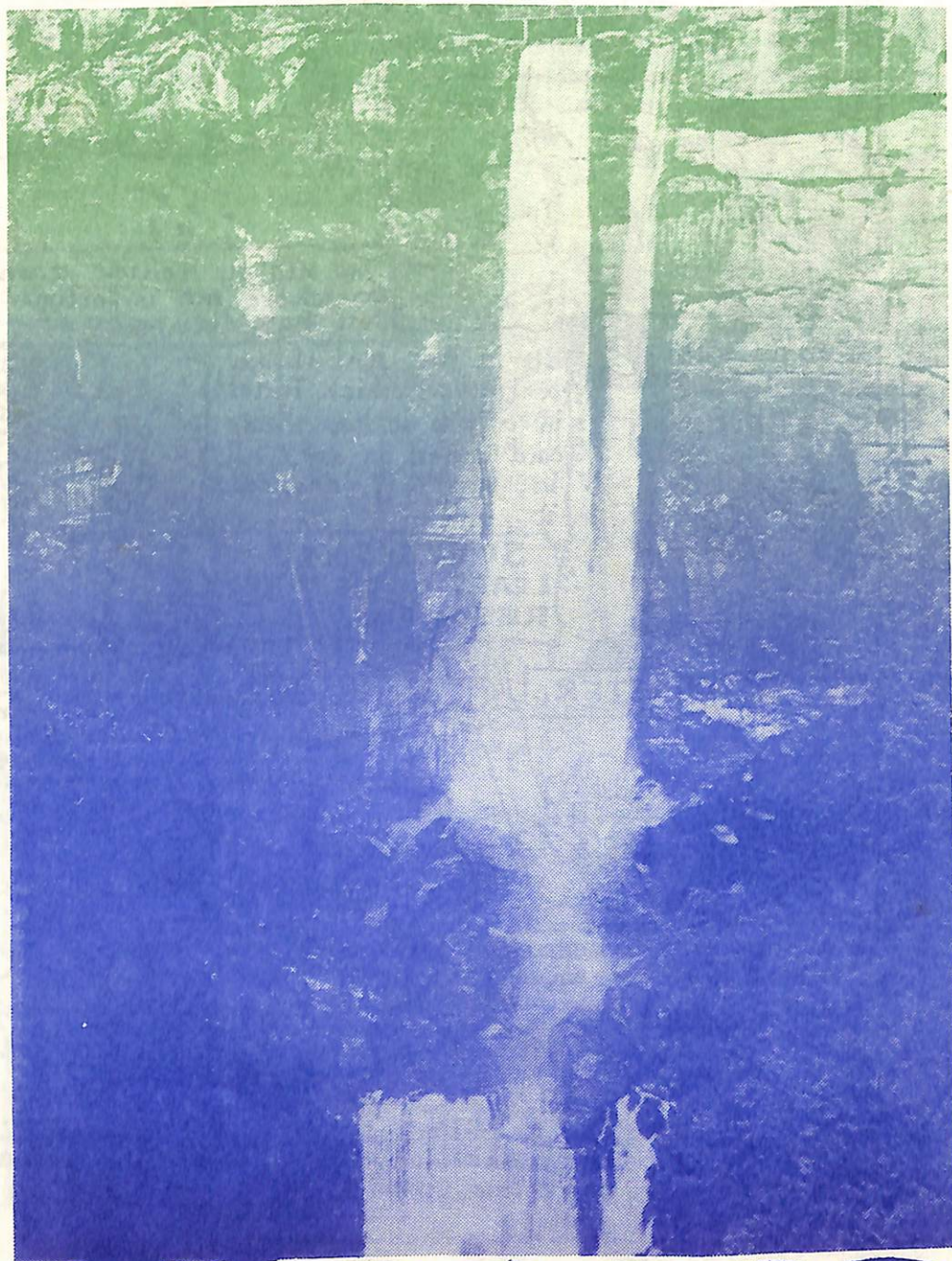
He watches it become a little ball-like pupa, its case made of silk and grains of sand, then one day it emerges as an adult Ant-Lion, a handsome insect. So I let's

So he opens the cage and lets it go.

4. Can you make a list of animals that live in fresh and salt water?

★ Can you list all the water insects?





Fitzroy Falls in Morton National Park,  
New South Wales.