



Out 'n' About

Newsletter of the Southland
Natural History Field Club

Vol 10 Issue No. 7 August 2010

Meeting Thursday 12 August 7.30pm

Committee Meeting at 7.00pm

at the Hearing Association meeting rooms, 126 Leet Street

**Bruce McKinlay from Dunedin will be
speaking about the Albatross programme on
Taiaroa Head**

Forest and Bird: Tuesday 10 August 2010 – Short Films Night! – “The Coal Mining Story”, The world premiere of the “Te Rere Yellow-eyed penguin Reserve story”, and more. Venue - Room B1:11 SIT Tay St Entrance 7.30pm

Forest and Bird: Saturday 14 August 2010 – Te Rere working day – second planting day – Leader Brian Rance ph 2130732 bookings essential.

Fieldtrip Sunday 15 August. Visit Mokomoko Inlet. I want to start doing a seasonal bird count on the Mokomoko Inlet. Away from about 10am to 1pm. A walk around the edge of the inlet counting the gulls, stilts, herons etc.

Fieldtrip Saturday 21 August. A walk up Ben Bolt, a hill on Bartrum’s farm beside the Otapiri Stream. There is a farm track to the top. Good view and interesting plants. \$5 for driver.

Fieldtrip Sunday 12 September Beach walk! This is our annual walk from Riverton to the main entrance of Oreti Beach. It takes about five hours. Low tide is 10.30am which means we can cross the Waimatuku River mouth without getting wet (snigger).

Contact Lloyd 2130404 if you are interested in these.

Borland Weekend I have made a provisional booking for Borland Lodge for the weekend of Friday 8 October to Sunday 10 October. This is the last weekend of the September Holidays. Friday night to Sunday afternoon. Cost \$28 per person per night plus food and transport. Lots of short tracks, good night sky and up to Borland Saddle if the weather is good. Please contact Lloyd by the end of the month if you are keen as I have to confirm the booking then.

Mason Bay A possible trip in late November.

Turning ten This month we turn ten. Not a bad innings. Here is the original committee:

Treasurer: Carol West; **Secretary:** Kathryn Pemberton; **Chairman:** Lloyd Esler; **Committee:** Phil Rhodes, David Moss, Cathy Allan, Linda Batson, Brian Batson, John Cutt, Eric Edwards, Pete McClelland, Ainslie Lamb, Lynne McFarlane.

Lake Hauroko On 17 July ten of us did the hike up to the Lake Hauroko lookout. It was a good



day in Fiordland, with little wind, a clear sky and good reflection in the lake. The water level was low and beds of shallow-water plants were exposed, notably quillwort *Isoetes kirkii* which is common in the southern lakes but usually underwater. It looks like a stunted rush but it actually a relative of the ferns.

The lake was unruffled and reflected the snow-capped Caroline Mountains, Hump Ridge and Mary Island. I had expected to see freshwater mussels but there were none. It is ten years since the Fieldclub had climbed to the lookout. It was one of our first trips.

The track was a bit longer and steeper than I had remembered but we made good time. Danielle, aged seven, lead the way and bounced lightly up the hill, albeit unencumbered with any luggage. We watched a little enviously as she leapt gazelle-like from one rock to another but comforted ourselves with the knowledge that experience and treachery will always overcome youth and enthusiasm.

At the top we had lunch. The view was amazing but it lasted only minutes before light cloud wafted across. At the same time the sun crested a ridge to the north and produced our first brockenspectres (see photo above). This phenomenon is seen in the mountains where a shadow is cast on cloud or fog below the climber. Concentric circles of colour form a halo around the viewer's head and the shadow can give the impression of the monstrous spectre lurking in the clouds.

The birdlife was sparse with a few bellbirds, robins, rifleman, fantails, grey warblers, brown creepers and tomtits, an no birdlife visible on the lake.

Here is Lyneke Onderwater's photo of the merry crew



Help dress Weathercat. I had a toy cat at Kidzone which the kids christened Weathercat, the feline weather station. Just sit the cat outside and observe it: cat is wet.... it's raining; lots of cats and dogs... torrential rain; cat is dry... it's not raining; cat's fur being ruffled... it's windy etc.

I am looking for suitable gear for Weathercat – doll's umbrella, boots (Puss in Boots), rainhat and raincoat, sunglasses, small barometer etc. Can you help? The toy cat is about the size of a half-grown cat.

No more bottletops please I had an excellent response to the request for bottletops for Kidzone. We made 500 anemometers. I have a couple of sacks of bottletops left so I'm not collecting any more in the meantime.

Banded tui On 9 July Ray Blake of 738 North Road Invercargill had a colour-banded tui at his bird table. Interesting to see that there are some still around, rather exceeding the expected longevity.

A FROST ANGEL? Tash Nicholson of Cromwell wants to know what this is?? Several identical patterns appeared on her frosty lawn. They were about 60cm long and she didn't see any footprints

around them. I suspect frost angels made by a prankster.

Rices Expo: There is a fundraising opportunity for the Fieldclub coming up. Rices need manpower at their Expo for three days



Friday 3 September to Sunday 5 September – four people each day. They make a generous donation to the organisation providing the help. If anyone is available to assist on one or more of these days please contact Lloyd by Friday. Thanks

Mokomoko Bird count

Mokomoko on 13 July: 14 godwits, 1 curlew, 100 stilts, 20 SIPO, 20 Black oystercatchers, some herons, Black-backed gulls, paradise ducks, mallards, kingfishers and fernbirds.

Rat news – continued...

I was talking to some scouts about badge collecting and the discussion turned to animals that collect. Not many non-human life forms collect anything above the bare essentials of existence. Squirrels collect and store acorns against a hard winter and other animals store different sorts of food. Adelie penguins collect stones. A weka pilfers shiny objects and a male bower bird obsesses about his blue stuff. A camouflaged crab collects snippets of sponges and seaweed and a hermit crab collects a shell.

Some pets have a collection of medals, ribbons and certificates but I suspect they don't care for them as much as they do for food.

One of the scouts had met a rat that was collector. It got into a box of jamboree gear and collected enough strips of ribbon badges to make a comfortable nest. Nothing valuable fortunately. I wonder what sort of badges a rat scout would collect - a Seamanship badge for a ship rat, a Camp Sanitation badge for a sewer rat and a scientist badge for a lab rat perhaps?

The real collector of the animal world is the pack rat, a North American rodent that builds a midden of ill-gotten gains, eventually having to leave and start another home when the bedrooms, lounge, corridors and carport are packed to the gunwhales. You probably know people like that.

IEC Website Check out the Invercargill Environment Centre in SIT arcade or visit their interesting website iec@paradise.net.nz



This picture was taken at Deep Cove on 1 August. It looked like bursts of red, orange and blue smoke coming out of the cliff but was actually the northern end of the rainbow catching spray from the Helena Falls. Very spectacular

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