

THE NORTH QUEENSLAND
NATURALIST

The Official Journal and Magazine of the North Queens-
land Naturalist Club.

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EDITORIAL.

The work goes on. Although in some respects the Club received checks during the month, in other respects steady progress has been noted. It was particularly manifest in the field work. Although it has been difficult to arrange field excursions with good attendances, the work of individual members has been eager. This was revealed in a fine number of exhibits at the April meeting. Members are becoming interested in the educational work of the Club also. Apart from that the President, especially, is frequently approached by telephone, by letter and personally for advice and information. The Club is repeatedly being asked to use its influence on behalf of the natural flora of the district. The result? It is not obvious yet, but it will undoubtedly take the form of greater public interest in the things that Nature has given us.

THE NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALISTS CLUB.

Meeting Rooms: Motor Boat Club Rooms, Cairns.

General Meetings are held on the second Monday in each month and committee meetings are held on the first Monday, both meetings at 8 p.m.

Agenda Paper -- Minutes, Correspondence, Reports Nomination and Election of Members (New members are nominated at one meeting and elected by a ballot at the following monthly meeting).

Excursions - Members are invited to submit plans and suggestions for outdoor excursions to the meetings.

Exhibits - It is desired that members having interesting specimens to exhibit at general meetings shall also make a few explanatory remarks upon them and hand a written summary of the remarks to the Secretary (Mr. J. Weyer) for inclusion in the Club's books. This request is also made to the lecturers at the meetings.

Lecture and adjournment - After the ten minute interval, Mr. Pedder will deliver a lecture on Taxidermy.
Date of Meeting - May 8th, 1933

CLUB OFFICIALS: President, Dr. H. Flecker: Vice-Presidents, Capt. W. P. Fish and Miss Hooper: Secretary, J. Weyer: Executive Committee, the fore-going with the addition of M. J. Manski and W. M. Grant: Treasurer, R. J. Gorton: Editor and Librarian, Victor Kennedy.

MIGRATING INSECTS OF QUEENSLAND.
(By Miss K. M. Dodd)

Though most people know that certain birds make seasonal migrations, few are aware that some insects, too, feel the call that causes them to travel - often for incredible distances to the goal that nature has ordained.

It is with several of these insects I propose to deal.

Comparing the migration of birds and insects there are several differences. Most migrating birds travel far greater distances than do the insects, which is only reasonable when one considers the frail structure of the latter creature.

Birds, when they migrate, travel the same route year by year, the young generation keeping with the older birds until they, too, know the way and can fly unerringly to their destination.

In insect migration there are no leaders to show the way, because the migrating brood dies soon after its arrival at the feeding ground.

The insects I will speak about are two Queensland Butterflies and a Moth. These three are most interesting travellers, each being seen in Cairns areas for a few days only as they pass on their way.

I shall deal with the "Migrating White" butterfly, (*Anaphaeis java tertonia*) first. It breeds in South Queensland in thousands, feeds for a short time and then begins its journey north. Only a small percentage of these butterflies reach as far as North Queensland and these specimens begin to appear in the Cairns district generally late in October. In a few days the number increases amazingly. Further south people wonder at their swift flight. In places so

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numerous are they, that they remind "old country" folk of a snowstorm. Many play about in gardens for a time and then on they go northwards in the quest for their particular food plant.

Having been successful in this, the female butterflies lay their eggs and shortly after, their work accomplished, they die.

The eggs hatch and soon the caterpillars are feeding voraciously, changing their skins as the old ones get too small. On reaching full size, the caterpillars change into the dormant chrysalis stage, and when the butterfly emerges it flies south to the regions from whence its parents came, though strangely enough, the Northern bound flight is composed of many more insects than the returning body.

The other butterfly, (*Bedamia exclamationis*) is a dun coloured species of the "Skipper" family, about two inches across the wings. It is so plain that it remains unnoticed by most folk though it passes our district in millions and millions. Its flight is particularly rapid and has been estimated at between twenty and thirty miles per hour.

This butterfly also begins its life in Southern or Central Queensland where its caterpillars are seen often in tens of millions upon the trees on which they feed and the chrysalids can be found in great numbers. Then, when the butterflies emerge, the flight north begins. The first specimens appear in this locality towards the end of February and then the numbers increase. At our garden in Kuranda we have seen hundreds in a few moments. Here are some interesting particulars of a flight of a few years ago of which my father took particular notice. In our side street coming from the south east and flying along a ninety foot street we did our best to count them. In the first five minutes at 9 a.m. we counted 500; at 11 a.m.

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they were in such startling numbers that we again essayed a count, and estimated 2,000 in five minutes. As we were hardly likely to sight and count all the skippers we may safely assume that their numbers were in excess of our count.

They are not always in such numbers. However in our garden of 100 yards with thousands passed daily for weeks. The flight extends from the Coast inland for some distance, numbers of the butterfly being noticed at Tolga and Ravenshoe. Thus we can but dimly grasp the wonders of this vast migration. In seven or eight months time we see a return flight, members of another generation, but never in extraordinary numbers.

Now for our big friendly day flying moth (*Nyctalemon Orentis*) which most people think is a butterfly, and which often flies inquiringly into our homes, or inspect the lines on washing day, and seems to be irresistably drawn by the smell of petrol. This insect does not make such a long trip as either of the butterflies referred to, but generally travels from the coast inland for a distance of two or three hundred miles, in search of food. This moth is a splendid flier and can be seen as the tiniest speck hundreds of feet in the air, flying along calmly out of reach of the surface winds.

You may wonder what is the reason behind these migrations. Probably the chill of winter is no more pleasing to certain insects than it is to the birds, and again the search of food is an important factor. If the insects stayed in the same regions the whole year round, the good plants would be entirely consumed, so nature wisely sends the insects forth, giving the trees time to recuperate and be ready to support the insects when they return to their nature soil.

EXHIBITS.

The following natural specimens were exhibited at the April meeting of the Club:-

Nest of wasp made of segments of leaves by wasp.
Exhibited by Capt. W.P. Fish.

Hawk Moth. $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long with Proboscis $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, coiled like a watch spring beneath head.
Collected by Dr. P.S. Clarke.

Beetle (Cetonidae) Collected by Mr. Simmonds.

Nest and eggs of Grass Warbler (*Cisticola exilis*) collected about 3 miles S.W. of Yungaburra. Nest a very frail structure, leaves sown together and lined with cobwebs and thistle down and placed in small bush about 2 feet from ground. 4 eggs in nest. Presented to N.C. Museum by Mr. W.H. Coleman.

Nest of Sun Bird. Leaf nest and grub of wasp. Also eggs and hatched insects (bugs). Exhibited by M.J. McAuliffe.

Funnel-webbed spider (Most deadly species of Australian Spider) Found inside a termites' nest after breaking it up. Appears to have 5 pairs of large legs, but front pair are palpi. Exhibited by Mr. E. Locke.

Honey-comb nest of Wasp, also Firefly (Beetle). The light comes from under surface of hinder part of abdomen.
Exhibited by Dr. Flecker.

3 eggs of common skink (lizard) (*Amphibolurus*) also Case Moth and Wire Worm - Exhibited by Dr. Flecker.

Devils Pincapple (*Tapeinocheilos pungens* var *Queenslandiae* order Scitamineae) Exhibited by M.J. Manski

A large centipede was kept in a cardboard box by a Club member, but it found an exit by boring a hole through the lid. In the process it tore away large strips of the layers of card, or paper, forming the cardboard. Then it bored the thinned-down material leaving a mass of fine shredded paper.

SNAKE SWIMMING.

Perhaps most people who have never seen a snake swim in water believe that they travel on the surface. At Lake Barrine, the handsome rock python (*Python amethystinus*) was seen to dive neatly into the depth of the water and swim away neatly by its own undulatory movement entirely beneath the surface.

MEMBERSHIP.

At the April meeting of the Club, Mrs. Dick of Kuranda was nominated for membership. Dr. P.B. English of Cairns and Mr. W.H. Coleman of Yungaburra were elected.

A GREAT WORK.

With the next issue of this Journal, it is proposed to commence the publication of a census of all the Natural fauna and flora of this district. The task is ambitious but is one that can be accomplished by the active participation of all members. Also it is a work that has awaited for nearly 60 years the advent of a Naturalists Club, without which it could not be effected.

IDENTIFIED SPECIMENS.

The following communication was received from the Director of Queensland Museum (Mr. H. A. Longman). The Club had written to the Director enclosing some shells and other marine specimens for identification:-

"The photographs sent by you for identification are being returned with generic and specific names, as available, written on back. Brittle-stars cannot be identified from photographs. Until these are adequately illustrated in a comprehensive monograph the classification is extremely difficult, except to a few specialists.

The shells forwarded are identified as follows:

59 - Melania denisonensis Brot. 71. - Acmaea costata Sowerby. 55 - Helix forsteriana Pfr. These names have not been revised. It should be noted that some of the old genera, such as Helix, are now split up into several distinct genera, according to some authorities.

I should be exceedingly pleased if two or three specimens of the marsupial musk rat-kangaroo, Hypsiprymnodon moschatus, could be obtained and preserved whole in spirits and sent to the Queensland Museum. This is one of the most interesting of our smaller marsupials from the anatomical standpoint. It is found in your district, and I understand that it is known as the "Black Bandicoot."