



NEWSLETTER, March 2007

Greetings in this year of the Comet! We hope you all had a good view of it in the southern sky back in late January.

Memberships for this year are now due: still only **\$15 per individual or \$20 for a family**. Please tear off the attached slip and post it to Ken Grimes at PO Box 591, or bring it to the March meeting.

Our **program**, up to February 2008, is on the **enclosed** sheet. As always, unforeseen events may force us to change it at short notice. So if you can't get to the meeting preceding an excursion, it's advisable to contact one of the committee to check the details. However, note that the September excursion, camping-out and weed-spraying at Fulham Stream-side Reserve, will be on the weekend **before** the September meeting. All meetings start at 7.30pm but departure times for excursions vary.

Empty Lakes and Cold Volcanos

Our February excursion as usual was to Lake Linlithgow. Once again the lake was completely dry, and once again the only water bird seen was one white-faced heron (maybe the same one as last year?). However, there were many other types of bird, including a flock of blue-winged parrots.

At our **Special Meeting on Thursday 15 March**, as promised, John and Glenys Cayley will be showing us photographs of a variety of landforms of **Central Australia**. Their trip last winter, which they describe as their first "really scary four-wheel-drive foray," took them through the Flinders Ranges to Lake Eyre (dry), the McDonnell Ranges and the Finke River. The meeting will be at HIRL as usual, from 7.30 pm.

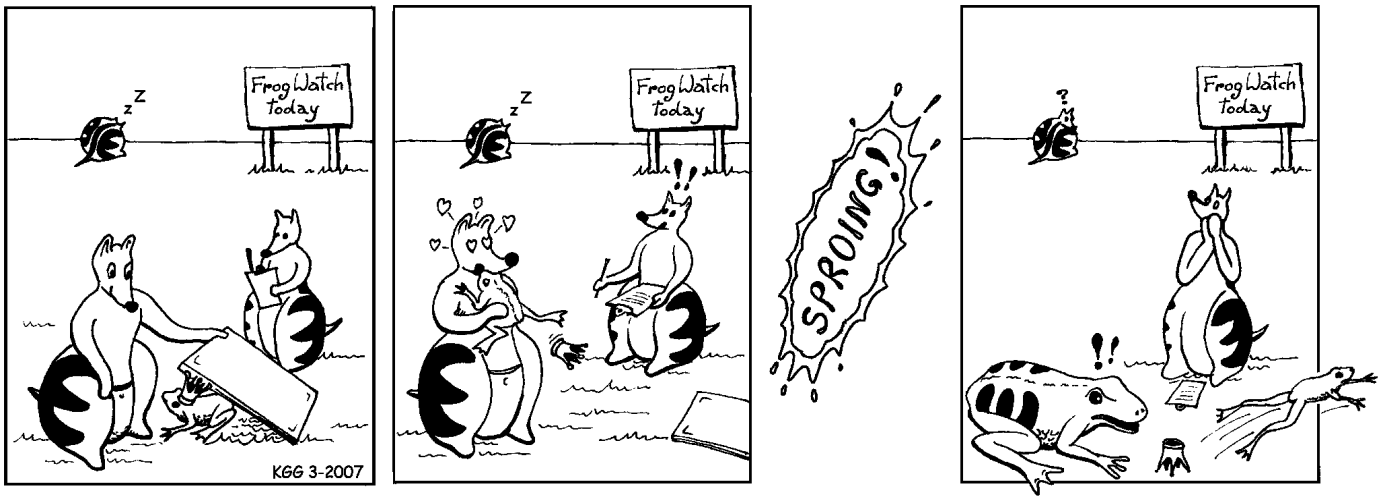
The **excursion on Saturday 17 March** will be to **Mount Rouse** to look at ancient volcanic geology and recent re-vegetation. From there we may go on to other sites of interest: grassland, holes in the ground, or if we're lucky the flock of brolgas that has been in the area lately. We will meet at the Hamilton Visitor Information Centre at 9.30 am.

The following month, on **Saturday 21 April**, we will visit another extinct volcano: **Tower Hill**. This should appeal to anyone who likes rocks, plants, birds, marsupials, or beautiful views. We will combine this with a walk around **Griffith Island** at Port Fairy, which should provide more of the above. As this will be a longer journey, we'll set off from the Hamilton Visitor Centre at 9.00 am.

Frogs and Water

The speaker for the following **Special Meeting on 17 May** will be Ray Draper on **Frogs of Western Victoria**. Ray is co-ordinating a frog-mapping project over the Glenelg-Hopkins Catchment; he gave a talk in Hamilton last year which some of us enjoyed so much we want to hear it again! Members

Hamilton Field Naturalists Club.	Subscription for year:
Name:	
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I enclose payment of (\$15 single, \$20 family):	\$



who have frogs on their land, or who know of good sites, might want to discuss participating either in the census (taping frog calls) or in his survey of the prevalence of the disease-causing chytrid fungus.

The next two months' excursions both include **walks along the Wannon**. The first, on **Saturday 17 May** will be along the Settler's Walk at Cavendish. Depending on time, we may return via a quick look at Mount Cavendish and at our plantings at Kanawalla Rail Reserve (see below).

For the second, on **Sunday 24 June**, we'll go to the Wannon Falls and follow the far (west) bank downstream. We may also go upstream a little way to the Coleraine Rail Reserve. There will be a third excursion to the Wannon, this time even further upstream at the Rapids, in November.

Planting Days

In addition to the programmed excursions we shall have two planting days in the spring:

One of these will be at the Kanawalla Rail Reserve. Many of the plants we put in there last spring are doing well in spite of the drought, and we have now obtained a grant from the Glenelg-Hopkins CMA to enable us to have the remaining feral pines removed. When this has been done we shall need to do some more planting of native species.

There will also be a day of planting on the revegetation project just north of the Hamilton Community Parklands. We'll advertise the dates of these events closer to the time, as they will depend on a few imponderables such as the weather.

Hamilton Wetlands

On every Thursday following a meeting (i.e. the fourth Thursday of each month) we meet at the Hamilton Wetlands (in the parking area on Mt Bainbridge Road) at 8.00 am for birdwatching. Our list of species at present stands at 66, with highlights including Baillon's crakes, Latham's snipe, shovellers, and a family of cygnets that we've watched grow from balls of grey fluff to be almost indistinguishable from their parents. It's always a pleasant outing, usually lasting about an hour; if you can't make it quite on time you could easily join us part way around.

Committee 2007

President	John Cayley	Ph. (03) 5572 3737
Vice-President	Reto Zollinger	Ph. (03) 5571 2544
Secretary:		
Minutes	Diane Luhrs.	Ph. (03) 5572 3874
Correspondence	Glenys Cayley	Ph. (03) 5572 3737
Treasurer	Ken Grimes	Ph. (03) 5573 4503
Newsletter Editor	Janeen Samuel	Ph. (03) 5571 4503
Media Liaison	David Munro	Ph (03) 5577 2268