



HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

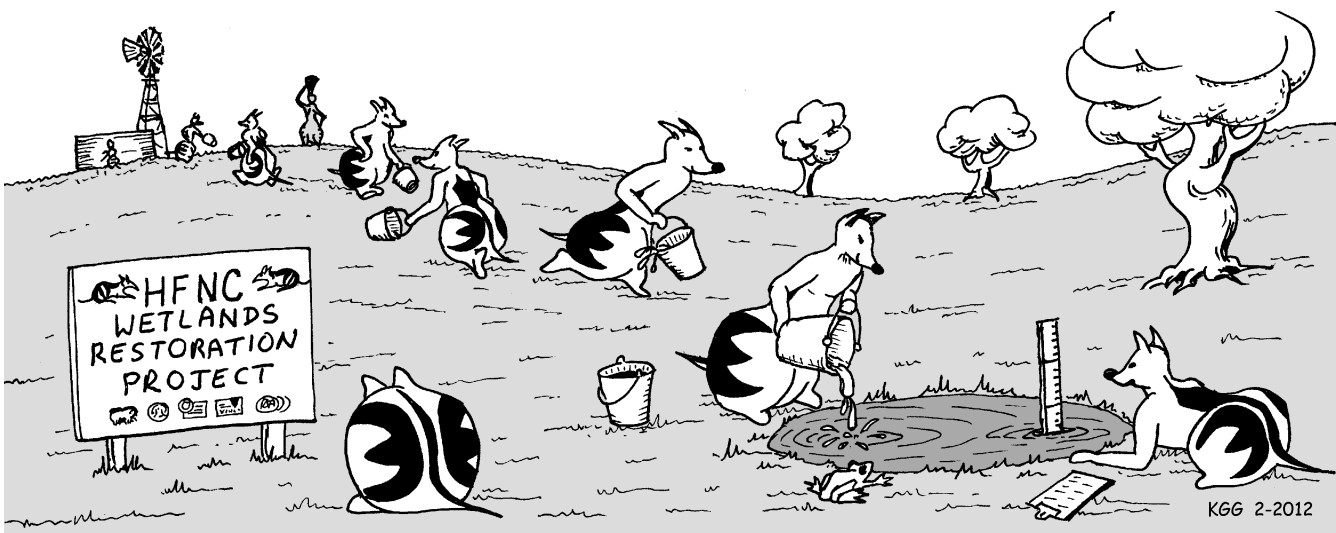


NEWSLETTER, March 2012

Good news! After several years of wandering all over the month, Hamilton Field Naturalists' meetings are now back to the traditional **Third Thursday** of each month. The only exception will be in December, when we will move to the second Thursday so as not to be too close to Christmas. As always, each excursion will be on the weekend following a meeting. The enclosed Program gives you all the dates.

WETLANDS NOW and TO COME

At our first **Special Meeting** for the year, on **15 March**, Mark Bachmann will be talking about **Wetland Restoration**. Mark is currently working with **Nature Glenelg Trust** to restore some of the many wetlands that have been drained since European settlement, both here in South-West Victoria and in South-East South Australia. He has previously worked as an ecologist with the SA Government and the Nature Conservation Society of SA and was involved in the restoration of Pies Swamp. Many of our members will recall our visit to this wetland a few years ago and how impressed we were to see it full of water plants and birds.



Later in the year, for our October excursion, we shall be visiting another South Australian wetland, Bool Lagoon. Meanwhile, members on last month's excursion to Lake Linlithgow and adjacent wetlands saw lots and lots of wading birds including a few brolgas, as well as coots, ducks and grebes.

The weekend of our **March excursion** coincides with that of the SEANA camp-out at Camperdown hosted by the Timboon Field Naturalists. As several of our members will be attending this (hoping to see wetlands and old volcanoes), we have not scheduled a separate excursion. However, at the meeting on the Thursday beforehand, people who are not going to Camperdown may decide to organise a day's outing for the Saturday. If you are interested in this and can't get to the meeting, please contact the President.

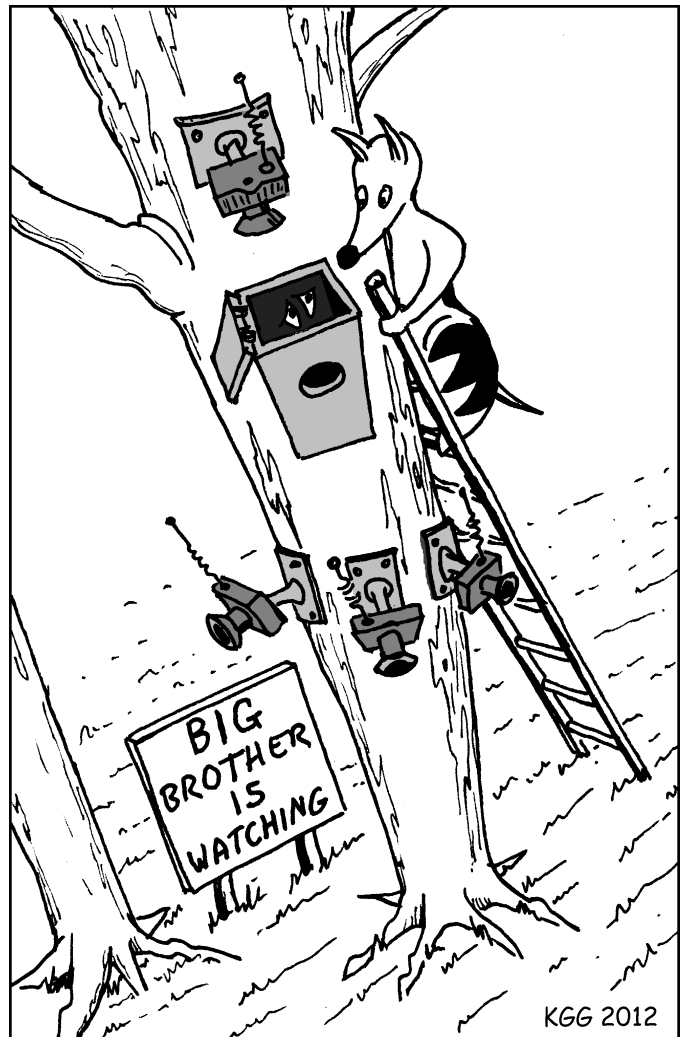
Still on the subject of wetlands, for six years now we have been doing monthly surveys of birds at the Hamilton Wetlands. We have recorded a number of birds there, both water birds and others – up to 38 species on a single visit – and we've seen some breeding, including swans and dusky moorhens. We found the largest number of species, and of individual birds, in the driest months when other bodies of water were scarce. This year we are going to switch our surveys to Lake Hamilton. As before, the survey will be on

the Thursday following each meeting – i.e. the **fourth** Thursday of the month – beginning at 8am. We shall be concentrating on the upstream end of the Lake near the footbridge, parking near the swimming beach. All are welcome, from aged experts to sharp-eyed novices.

SPYING ON SMALL ANIMALS

Both our **April** and **May excursions** will involve visits to Bear Forest, south of Rocklands. This is because we are hoping to set up remote cameras in trees to monitor wildlife, and also nest boxes. These boxes are specially made to accommodate small arboreal mammals, such as Brush-tailed Phascogales. They have a lid that can be lifted to check who is at home without disturbing the resident too much. The April excursion could be fairly fully occupied in getting the boxes and cameras in place. For the May excursion we will be checking them but this should take less time so we shall also do some exploration in the Craig's Road area.

For our **May Special Meeting** we hope to have Sally Purnell tell us about her recent participation in fauna surveys at the **Charles Darwin Reserve** in Western Australia. However, it is possible that Sally will have to cancel this because of other commitments, in which case we shall either bring forward Rod and Diane's talk on Bhutan, which is scheduled for November, or have an evening of members' slides. We will let you know about this via emails and/or an ad in the *Hamilton Spectator*.



SUNDRY MATTERS

In the second half of the year we will have talks covering the wildlife of three continents – in Tanzania, Bhutan and Griffith Island. Excursions will include two trips to the Grampians, one of which, in July, will be on the recently re-opened Mount Abrupt track for a view of the landslides that came down last summer. There will also be several working bees to control invasive plants in areas of native grassland.

The Committee for 2012 is listed on the accompanying program. Keen observers will note that it does not differ substantially from last year's, all office bearers having nobly agreed to stand for another term. Glenys Cayley, the treasurer, is eagerly awaiting your subs for this year – still at the same amazing value as ever, \$15 per person or \$20 for a family, so please fill in the sub slip enclosed and bring it to a meeting or post it to her at PO Box 591, Hamilton, 3300.

At the last meeting it was suggested that we send minutes of all club meetings to the people on our email list. If you don't want to receive these, please notify the Correspondence Secretary, Rod Bird.