



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

PO Box 19
CHURCHILL 3842

Ranger: (051) 221478
Secretary: (051) 221046

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 1996

JANUARY ACTIVITY

On 21 January 1996 Friends collected seeds from flora in the Billys Creek section. The seeds were collected for sowing in 1996 for planting in 1997, The seeds collected were:

Prickly Currant	<i>Coprosma quadrifida</i>
Apple Box	<i>Eucalyptus bridgesiana</i>
Swamp Gum	<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>
Manna Gum	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>
Musk Daisy Bush	<i>Olearia argophylla</i>
Tall Rice Flower	<i>Pimelea ligustrina</i>
Hazel Pomedarris	<i>Pomaderris aspera</i>

In addition, Ken Harris collected seeds of Messmate *Eucalyptus obliqua* on 26 December 1995, The vast majority of seeds collect by the Friends were from eucalypts growing along the banks of Billys Creek.

COMMITTEE MEETING

A Committee meeting was held on 30 January 1996 and the following topics were discussed,
1996 Activities Program
Yinnar South Country Fair
Promotion of the Friends of Morwell Park
Distribution of the Newsletter

Reports were presented by the Treasurer and the Ranger. A membership application from Ed and Helen Steenbergen of Jeeralang was accepted.

NEWS FROM THE RANGER

* There are 2300 seedlings in the Propagation Centre for planting in 1996. The automatic watering system is functioning well and the seedlings are growing successfully.

* Billys Creek Development Funds have been received and will be used to construct three footbridges across Billys Creek. Construction will commence in February 1996 and the bridges will be built by labour from the Morwell River Prison and a contractor.

* .Since December 1995 half of the Ranger's weekend time has been devoted to Mt Worth State Park.

* Sighting by Rob Howell in January 1996 in the Fosters Gully section of a Wonga Pidgeon *Leucosarisa melanoleuca*. The Wonga Pidgeon is a large, predominately grey indigenous pidgeon. The deep monotonous honking call is much more likely to be heard than the sighting of the pidgeon.

PTO

SPIDERS IN MORWELL NATIONAL PARK

- Rob de Souza-Daw, Churchill

(The following is an abridged version of a report by the same title. A copy of the report which includes a species list of spiders found during the survey can be obtained from the author.)

A survey of Spides in Morvell National Park was initiated at the request of local naturalist and colleague Ken Harris. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources issued a Research Permit (934/083) for the spider survey .The Permit allowed me to search, collect and retain spiders found within the boundaries ofMorwell National Park for the year commencing 1 July 1994. During the year I visited the Park on fourteen occasions (nine during the day and five at night) for the specific purpose of finding spiders.

Spiders were collected from both sections of the Park; Fosters Gully and Billys Creek sections. The Park is located at around 38^D 22 ' S, 146^D 24 ' E and is 16 kilometres south of Morwell in the Strzelecki Ranges. It covers an area of approximately 500 hectares and ranges in altitude from approximately 120 metres to 460 metres above sea level. The vegetation includes warm temperate rain forest. dry sclerophyll forest and cleared land once used for farming. The entire Park has been subject to varying degrees of human disturbance. The area was last selectively logged in 1956 but grazing continued in parts unti1 1986. The Morwell National Park was proclaimed in 1967 and there have been several later extensions.

Previous fauna surveys within the Park have concentrated upon the vertebrate fauna. The spider survey was probably the first which emphasized invertebrate fauna. While searching for spiders numerous other invertebrates were discovered and several specimens were positively identified.¹ Other arachnids included indigenous scorpions. pseudoscorpions, harvestmen and mites.

All spiders were collected by hand. Spiders were most often found under eucalyptus or acacia bark. Others were found in webs, under fallen logs, in leaf litter , amongst grass or rocks on the edge of the creek. Several of what appeared to be funnel-web spider burrows were sighted but attempts to collect spiders by excavation were unsuccessful. A few huntsmen and wolf spiders were found at night when their eyes reflected the torchlight.

The spiders were collected alive and placed at the site of collection in glass jars. On returning home the spiders were preserved and the vials labelled. Upon completion of the survey. the specimens were submitted to David Hirst. Arachnologist at the South Australian Museum for identification.

Based upon David Hirst's advice, a detailed spider species list was prepared. Spiders are in the arachnid order ARANAE. The list placed the spiders found in their respective sub-order -the ARANEOMORPHAE (modern spiders) and the MYGALOMORPHAE (primitive spiders). The spiders were then classified in their family, followed by the scientific name and common name, if any.

The species listing of spiders revealed:-

	ARANEOMORPHAE	MYGALOMORPHAE	TOTAL
FAMILIES	22	2	24
SPECIES	68	2	70

(including tentative identifications)

The spiders were identified as: -

	ARANEOMORPHAE	MYGALOMORPHAE	TOTAL
MALE	69	-	69
FEMALE	135	2	137
JUVENILES	73	2	75
(including indeterminate)			
TOTAL	<u>277</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>281</u>

P3

The 281 spiders collected during this survey are now deposited in the South Australian Museum and the Museum of Victoria. Only 4 (or 1.5%) of the spiders collected were mygalomorphs. This relatively low proportion is probably due in part to the effect of human disturbance in the Park and because these spiders are mainly burrowing spiders are more difficult to find. The sex of the spiders were identified in the 206 adult and penultimate specimens. The relative high proportion of females 137 (or 66.5%) is probably because generally female spiders are larger and hence more likely to be found by direct searching. Juveniles totalled 75 (or 26.5%) and reflects the dates when most visits were made to the Park to collect specimens.

The survey resulted in 70 species being found in 24 families. These figures include tentative identifications and specimens which have been recognized as being from undescribed species. All spiders were collected by direct searching. Had pitfall trapping and litter sampling techniques been utilized, the number of ground dwelling species found would probably have been much greater. The varied habitats within the Park probably results in a greater diversity of spiders (and other arthropods). All spiders collected are believed to be indigenous to Australia. The finding of many species extends their known range.

The amaurobiids and desids in the Park prefer the hollows and deep grooves in mature stringybarks. Badumna longinquus (small black house spider) as well as inhabiting the stringybarks takes a liking to the treated-pine structures in the Park to construct their webs. Another spider which has adapted well to the human structures is Philoponella congregabilis (hump spider) which was commonly sighted under the permanent wooden picnic tables and seating. The Araneids frequently construct their orb webs between the wires in the Park's fencing.

Most clubionids, gnaphosids, heteropodids, lamponids and nicodamids were found under the bark of mature manna, mountain grey and blue gums. Often more than one species was found under the bark of the same tree. Many spent refuges and egg.sacs were found under the bark of eucalypts. Stiphidion facetum (crinoline spider) was the spider most commonly found under logs. They appear to have a liking for the underside of logs which have been burnt by fire. Lycosids were found under logs and amongst leaf litter and those in the genus Trochosa preferred more moist conditions. The pisaurids and tetragnathids were found along the creek banks.

The diversity of Araneae in the Park indicates there is also a diverse range of insects. Spiders are dependent upon insects. Birds, other spiders and predatory wasps are presumably the main predators of the Park's spider population.

The survey of **Spiders in Morwell National Park** adds substantially to our knowledge of the Park's invertebrate fauna. Hopefully the listing of species found in this survey will be of interest and benefit to those with an interest in arachnology. In time, others may add to the species list for **Spiders in Morwell National Park**.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for granting a Research Permit to facilitate this survey. Ken Harris, President of the Friends of Morwell National Park and Rob Howell, Ranger for Morwell National Park are thanked for providing references in support of my permit application.

I am indebted to David Hirst, Collection Manager, Arachnology South Australian Museum for his supporting reference and his time and knowledge in identifying the specimens collected. The spiders listed in this report are the identifications (provided to me) by David Hirst.

¹ See Latrobe Valley Naturalist August 1995 p.4-6 and Friends of Morwell National Park November Newsletter 1995 pp2-4.

FEbruary ACTIVITY

1:30pm

Sunday 18 February 1996

Braniffs Road, Billys Creek section

Transplanting Muttonwood.
