

Patron: Mr Allen A. Strom
Advisor in Conservation
Dept. of Education



Variegated Wren
LET THEM LIVE!
LASSI SE LERIN!
TASCIATILI WIVERE
AHIETE TA NA ZHSOTN.

"There is the general feeling that what belongs to everybody belongs to nobody".

G.B. Silberbauer

THOUGHTS OF THE EARTH ON EARTH DAY

We on the Blue Mountains unconsciously, perhaps, drink in the beauty which enfolds us--of sun, stars, airy clouds and distant horizons, of blue hills and ochre cliffs glowing in the sun. Yet to me personally, the superlative beauty is at my feet--the complexity of the mantle of life woven over these vast masses of sandstone. Magnified, a handful of soil becomes no more than a pile of gleaming fragments of sand, such sand as comprises our coastal beaches. Yet woven into this handful are vast masses of minute fibrous roots binding these particles together, living protoplasm, the beginning of life.

On the surfaces of the rocks minute plants--lichens mosses and liverworts--form a ceaseless uninterrupted movement of life, the very life of which we are a part, but building without man's interference the beautiful mantle of flowers, ferns, trees, which surround us in all their wealth of colour and detail.

There are few countries in the world today which can provide such areas for scientific study. But apart from any question of increases of knowledge or provision of man's material needs, here can be met man's deep need to renew his experience of nature, to which we all belong. Should the mysterious working of this fragile life pattern of earth cease to function our lives would cease with it. Man alone can reflect on these things, and experience reverence for life.

Isobel Bowden

VINCENT SERVENTY FOR KATOOMBA
EARTH DAY FILM SHOWING

Our Society has been fortunate to arrange a visit to Katoomba by Mr Vincent Serventy, on the evening of Earth Day, Friday, 22nd September. He will show his films (one of) and some of his slides, and give a short talk at St. Hilda's Church Hall, Katoomba, at 8p.m.

Mr Serventy is well-known as an author, and a producer of films seen on television, and also to conservationists as Chairman of the Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W. & President of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia. The Society hopes to interest a wide section of the community in conservation through this function.

Tickets (\$1 for adults, and 30c for children) are available from the Regional Tourist Centre at the bottom of Katoomba Street; from the Mayfair Draper's Shop in the Mall Laura; Lynette Fashions, near the pedestrian crossing on the Great Western Highway, Wentworth Falls.

If you prefer, you may send the money and a stamped envelope to the Secretary, 23 Edward Parade, Wentworth Falls, and have the tickets posted to you.

BE AT ST. ST HILDA'S KATOOMBA. 22nd SEPTEMBER.

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Prize to Nature Trail: The Nature Trail Has Won The Regional Section of the Daily Telegraph--Bank of New South Wales Earth Day Competition. This places the Trail among the finalists for the State Competition, the results of which will be announced on Earth Day.

For the Regional prize, we will receive a cheque for \$65.

Thank you to the members and friends who have worked on this project, and also to the Wentworth Falls Grammar School Boys, and the Wentworth Falls Boy Scouts for their help. The Society also appreciates the excellent photographs of one of the working bees, taken by Mr Wal Green, which he gave to the Society.

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NOW PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 3.

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Members present expressed a desire for more day meetings. The next one will be held early in the New Year.

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Linden Dam was another enjoyable outing.

In August 17 of us went to Murphy's Glen, a delightful spot & in perfect weather. Most of the party made the long & rather steep descent to Bedford Creek.

Because of the greater quantities of wildflowers on the lower Mts at this time of the year, compared with the higher levels, our Sept. outing is planned for the Warrimoo--Blaxland area.

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If so, give me a ring at W. Falls 293 and I will be pleased to let you know the date and the cost etc, when these have been worked out.

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Editor Graham Alcorn, Box 39 P.O. Blackheath.

BLUE MOUNTAIN WATTLES

From Emu Plains to Lithgow, from Richmond to Hartley, Wattles grace the bushland, especially in Spring and Summer months, with the abundant yellow-gold of their bloom. Wattle-Day and the Wattle League have passed out of fashion, but wattle is still Australia's national flower, and the hundreds of species are widely spread in every State.

Wattles are Acacias, but in the early days of settlement the pioneers formed their wattle and daub huts from the tough pliant branches of some of these plants.

On the mountains there are many beautiful species. Some of those lining the roads today are garden escapes. Of these the Queensland wattle, *Acacia podalyriifolia*, near Blaxland & Warrimoo, and *A. baileyana*, the Cootamundra wattle in various parts, are outstanding. Considered as garden plants Acacias are out of favour with some because of their short life-span. However, they repay by providing very quickly a wealth of bloom

Supply Nitrogen

On poor sandy mountain soils wattles are useful in that they have the ability to supply nitrogen through root nodules and thus will be flourishing where nothing else will grow.

Acacia melanoxyloides is a fine timber tree often seen on the high mountains. A shapely tree for cultivation.

At Glenbrook near the Plant Reserve, *A. elongata* used to fill the swamps with bright gold. It still exists in the reserve.

The Sydney golden wattle is found in many parts. It has yellow-gold catkin-like flowers, and grows into a small tree.

Along Bell's Road may still be seen the abundant blossom of *A. floribunda*, a fine specimen of which grew in Katoomba hospital grounds for many years.

On the higher mountains the sunshine wattle, *A. botrycephala*, lines the winter-roads with its deep golden flowers. In other parts this species has very pale flowers and grows into a very tall shrub.

Near Lithgow *A. buxifolia* is outstanding and well worth cultivation.

Rare Species.

It would be impossible to do more than write a list if all the lovely wattles were mentioned, but in addition to these well-known species are some lovely rare and interesting plants. *A. brunioides* var. *gordonii*, a low growing shrub found at Linden and Bilpin, has exceptionally rich golden blooms. *Acacia oxycedrus* is limited to lower mountain distribution, and can be seen near the road at Faulconbridge.

In the same locality may be found one of the really tiny wattles *A. pumila*, it grows to a height of about ten inches, on the mountains, and has minute flowers in the axils of the leaves. The pods are about an inch long. A similar plant is known from the higher mountains, *A. baueri*, which has rounded phyllodes, and very tiny flowers. A dainty prickly wattle is *A. asparagoides* which has small sessile golden flowers, and grows at Bell and Blackheath.

Some wattles (those with pinnate leaves) bear true leaves, but many Mountain species have leaves which are really the modified leaf stalk. These leaves are always tough in texture and have been developed as a means of enabling the plant to exist through periods of drought. All seedlings bear true ferny leaves at first but phyllodes soon take their place on most plants. A few wattles bear true leaves and phyllodes on the one plant, as in *A. rubida*.

Nectar Glands

On the leaf stalks of the cedar wattle, and many others it is easy
...../to see

to see a small swelling. These swellings are nectaries which at times are filled with nectar and visited by ants. I have seen ants stroking the nectaries on *A. elata* but could not ascertain whether they were able to create a flow of nectar in the way they encourage aphids to provide food. On *phyllodes* the nectary may often be seen a considerable way along the margin of the leaf.

Finally *Acacia* seeds do not need hot water or fire or nicking in order to germinate but better results will be obtained in this way if full germination is needed. In nature vast numbers of seeds provide not plants but food for fauna, and wattles may remain dormant in the soil for many years.

- Isobel Bowden

SAVE THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

"Seize the day's heart before it go
Lest all your life its perfume lack.
For straining rope and loud yea-ho
The ball of sunset floats not back."

Anon.

Lovers of the Blue Mountains would be heartened to read the forthright attack on land developers from Mr R J Mulock, State Member for Nepean, in the Sydney Morning Herald of Aug. 31. "The Blue Mountains.... appear to be earmarked as the next victim of mongrelised planning", Said Mr Mulock.

Sydney's front garden--its coastline--was "a polluted and despoiled mess. The back garden with its clean air, wildflowers, mists, glorious natural panoramic views, walkways, streams, gullies and gorges must be preserved from the same fate if only for generations more capable of appreciating them than ours"

Not only private developers but also the State Government Department of Lands have already badly scarred the eastern escarpment with residential development, said Mr Mulock, and called for a freezing of development on the whole eastern escarpment, and an immediate proclamation of a TREE PRESERVATION ORDER covering the Blue Mountains Area

Mayor's Fine Stand

Two days later the Herald had 2 front page photos of the bulldozed scars and an article quoting the National Trust as viewing the whole situation with dismay.

The Blue Mountains City Council is flatly opposed to the whole set-up and the mayor, alderman Dash, has been most forthright in his statements both to the press and on television.

Alderman Dash has gone further and complained of the activities of developers in bulldozing blocks bare in the Upper Mountains. Council was seeking to establish a TREE PRESERVATION ORDER on all the mountain escarpments, the Mayor said.

In line with our quatrain we suggest that readers should write to both Mr Mulock, M.L.A and the Mayor Alderman I.D. Dash, congratulating them on their splendid stand and promising full support.

- Editor.

A SPINY ANT EATER

Queen Elizabeth Lookout, Echo Point, would be one of the busiest in the State, yet recently, there, was a survivor from primeval times, an echidna, the Australian Spiny Anteater. with some difficulty we prised it from under the root where it sought to escape the attention of the visitors; showed it round, then put it in the bush. It proceeded at once to dig itself out of sight.

Apparently these astonishing egg-laying mammals are not uncommon in the Upper Mountains, as one was seen 2 or 3 times at Leura Cascades earlier in the year

....Rangers....

* * * *****

PROPOSALS TO CONTROL BUSHFIRES

As promised in our last issue we publish below Sections B&C of the findings of the Conference organised by our Society following the disastrous bushfires of the summer 1968-9. Our September meeting is on bushfires. Come along with your ideas.

B. SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRE CONTROL.

1. Use of Canadian type tanker-planes to attack fires quickly as soon as spotted. Fires do not as a rule gain impetus too quickly for use of such methods in this area. They might also be used at changes of wind & temperature, which usually occur.
2. Well-organised spotting is essential. Spotting points should be sufficient in number and manned "around the clock" when danger high.
3. Council, WaterBoard, Forestry, B.M. National Park officers or employees, or private citizens, who find fire burning without obvious control, should be permitted to extinguish such without prior reference to local Fire-Control Authorities. (N.B. That this was not considered permissible and was the prime cause of the beginning of the most disastrous fires on the Blue Mountains in the early summer of 1968-9).
4. A high-class mobile commando-type force needs to be in operation, to be transferable quickly from point to point, and able to spread along the fire-front.
5. In the villages, far more preparedness is needed. This often where a true "fuel build-up" exists (e.g. House Rubbish, strewn fire-wood & scrap timber and the like).
6. Penalties should be severe enough to deter from starting fires or contravening fire regulations. Police should be urged to treat such offences as similar to robbery and homicide. In two cases in the Blue Mountains area in 1968, where reliable witnesses made statements and were prepared to give evidence in the event of prosecutions, no action was taken to prosecute.
7. Wardens in an N.E.S.--type organisation could be very useful in emergencies. Selected personnel could be well acquainted with peculiar needs of residents (e.g. aged, infirm, absent occupiers, children of working parents). Such wardens could be drawn from residents not capable of active fire-fighting.
8. Mopping up. In Wentworth Falls in 1956, houses burned down after brigades had moved on from the locality. Essential patrolling of roads and property (carried out in many cases after the fires of November, 1968) could also often be carried out by personnel drawn from those not sufficiently strong and vigorous for fire-fighting.
9. Where "pre-suppression" burn is considered indispensable---not merely adopted for its facility and cheapness---it is essential that all personnel be thoroughly acquainted with its principles and practices and that it be carried out under thoroughly responsible supervision.

C. EDUCATION.

1. Education of new residents is essential. And even old residents are forgetful of fundamental precautions.
2. Education is needed not only on fire prevention and precautions and on emergency measures, but also of the public and of fire-personnel at virtually all levels on the effects of fire on biological communities (including, and relating to, man), on tree and plant regeneration, and regarding the growth of exotics that themselves often create a new type of fire-hazard.
3. In this connection, the use of the word "fuel" in relation to certain layers of vegetation is deplored. Its widespread use in press and other mass communication media has led to a surprisingly widely-held belief that the bushland may well, should, and must, be burnt.
4. Such bodies as a State Planning Authority and local government planning authorities should have the best advice available to prevent unnecessary intrusion of building development into areas of rugged bushland.

This Society stresses that the bushfire problem involving, as it does, a number of States, calls for Commonwealth action and perhaps even for Commonwealth control.

More about Vincent Serventy at St Hilda's on 22 instant: Tickets can also be obtained at the "HAZELBROOK PHARMACY" HAZELBROOK.

INVITATION TO BIRD LOVERS

Any bird lovers on holiday on the North Coast should visit the garden of Mr Bert Newman, of Spencer Street. Iluka. There you will almost certainly see one of the most beautiful birds in Australia, the male Regent Bower Bird. They live in the nearby rain forest and come to feed on the sultana cake, soaked bread and honey water which Mr Newman Provides.

The adult male Regent Bower Bird is velvet black and brilliant golden yellow, with an orange red spot in the centre of his forehead. We saw eleven of these magnificent creatures feeding almost at our feet. They perch on Bert Newman's arms and take food from his hands!

Other interesting birds come to his garden: Blue Faced Honey Eaters, green, black & white with brilliant sky blue eye patch, Spangled Drongoes comedians and mimics, Lewin Honey Eaters, and our own Satin Bower Bird.

Their habitat, the unique Iluka rain forest, was saved from destruction by the efforts of the local citizens. Led by surveyor Mr Eric Beach, they waged a vigorous State-wide Campaign against the rapacious rutilic mining interests. Imagine a rain forest growing on sandhills, right to the ocean beach.

G. Alcorn.

THE REDBREASTED ROBINS

In the Upper Mountains we have three of the five species of red breasted robins.

The Rose Robin lives in the rain forest gullies and is not often seen. The male bird is soft grey with a vivid rose pink breast, a little gem. The female is grey-brown, faint pink breast.

The Scarlet Robin and the Flame Robin live on the dry open sclerophyll ridges and are familiar birds in parks and gardens. The species could be confused, but the red is different, as the names imply. Also the Scarlet Robin has a black head, back & throat, whereas the back of the Flame Robin is grey-black and the flame colour of the breast continues right up to the chin. The female Flame Robin is a plain grey-brown bird. The female Scarlet Robin has a pink wash on the breast.

The Flame Robin is migratory, coming from the low country to the high mountains to breed in the Spring. They are arriving now, pairs taking up breeding territories. They prefer lightly timbered rocky places. The Scarlet Robin takes up similar territories but generally more heavily timbered.

Breeding Territory Fight

On thursday August 31 st. at Minne Ha Ha Falls Reserve, we witnessed a fight over a breeding territory between a pair of each species. What was surprising was that the female Flame Robin attacked the male scarlet and vice versa. One aerial combat, female S.R. versus male F.R. breast to breast, wings flapping finished with both contestants on the ground. Then the female Scarlet Robin flew to a branch and gave the call usually given by the male!

The whole contest was extraordinary, not only for the female versus opposite male attacks, but also the contending species. Usually fights for breeding territories are between pairs or males, of the same species.
-Graham Alcorn.

Bungle or Practical Joke?

We have received a phone message, not confirmed in writing, that the Nature Trail has not won the regional Earth Day prize after all.

Our President has issued a statement emphatically denying the rumour that we were disqualified because of a positive swab.

DONT FORGET SERVENTY, ST HILDA'S. FRIDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER. BE THERE

This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in September 2020 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

Katoomba District Wildlife Conservation Society Newsletter No 10

September 1972 Price 10 cents.

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Rare Species.

It would be impossible to do more than write a list if all the lovely wattles were mentioned, but in addition to these well-known species are some lovely rare and interesting plants. *Acacia brunioides var gordonii*, a low growing shrub found at Linden and Bilpin, has exceptionally rich golden blooms. *Acacia oxycedrus* is limited to lower mountain distribution, and can be seen near the road at Faulconbridge.

In the same locality may be found one of the really tiny wattles *Acacia pumila*, it grows to a height of about ten inches, on the mountains and has minute flowers in the axils of the leaves. The pods are about an inch long. A similar plant is known from the higher mountains, *Acacia baueri*, which has rounded phyllodes, and very tiny flowers. A dainty prickly wattle is *Acacia asparagoides* which has small sessile golden flowers, and grows at Bell and Blackheath.

Some wattles (those with pinnate leaves) bear true leaves, but many Mountains species have leaves which are really the modified leaf stalk. These leaves are always tough in texture and have been developed as a means of enabling the plant to exist through periods of drought. All seedlings bear true ferny leaves at first but phyllodes soon take their place on most plants. A few wattles bear true leaves and phyllodes on the one plant, as in *Acacia rubida*.

Nectar Glands

On the leaf stalks of the cedar wattle, and many others it is easy to see a small swelling. These swellings are nectaries which at times are filled with nectar and visited by ants. I have seen ants stroking the nectaries on *Acacia elata* but could not ascertain whether they were able to create a flow of nectar in the way they encourage aphids to provide food. On phyllodes the nectary may often be seen a considerable way along the margin of the leaf.

Finally *Acacia* seeds do not need hot water or fire or nicking in order to germinate but better results will be obtained in this way if full germination is needed. In nature vast numbers of seeds provide not plants but food for fauna, and wattles may remain dormant in the soil for many years.

Isobel Bowden.

SAVE THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.

“Seize the day’s heart before it go
Lest all your life its perfume lack.
For straining rope and loud yea-ho
The ball of sunset floats not back.”

Anon.

Lovers of the Blue Mountains would be heartened to read the forth right attack on land developers from Mr R J Mulock, State Member for Nepean, in the Sydney Morning Herald of August 31. “The Blue Mountains appear to be earmarked as the next victim of mongrelised planning”, Said Mr Mulock.

Sydney’s front garden its coastline was “a polluted and despoiled mess. The back garden with its clean air, wildflowers, mists, glorious natural panoramic views, walkways, streams, gullies and gorges must be preserved from the same fate if only for generation more capable of appreciating them than ours”.

Not only private developers but also the State Government Department of Lands have already badly scarred the eastern escarpment with residential development, said Mr Mulock, and called for a freezing of development on the whole eastern escarpment, and an immediate proclamation of a TREE PRESERVATION ORDER covering the Blue Mountains Area.

Mayor’s Fine Stand

Two days later the Herald had 2 front page photos of the bulldozed scars and an article quoting the National Trust s viewing the whole situation with dismay.

The Blue Mountains City Council is flatly opposed to the whole set up and the mayor, alderman Dash, has been most forthright in his statements both to the press and on television.

Alderman Dash has gone further and complained of the activities of developers in bulldozing blocks bare in the Upper Mountains. Council was seeking to establish a TREE PRESERVATION ORDER on all the mountains escarpments, the Mayor said.

In line with our quatrain we suggestion that readers should write to both Mr Mulock MLA and the Mayor Alderman I D Dash, congratulating them on their splendid stand and promising full support.

Editor.

A SPINY ANT EATER

Queen Elizabeth Lookout, Echo Point, would be one of the busiest in the State, yet recently there was a survivor from primeval times, an echidna, the Australian Spiny Anteater. Wwith some difficulty we prised it from under the root where it sought to escape the attention of the visitors; showed it round, then put it in the bush. It proceeded at once to dig itself out of sight.

Apparently these astonishing egg laying mammals are not uncommon in the Upper Mountains, as one was seen 2 or 3 times at Leura Cascades earlier in the year....Rangers...

PROPOSALS TO CONTROL BUSHFIRES

As promised in our last issue we publish below Sections B and C of the findings of the Conference organised by our Society following the disastrous bushfires of the summer 1968-9. Our September meeting is on bushfires. Come along with your ideas.

B. SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRE CONTROL.

1. Use of Canadian type tankers planes to attack fires quickly as soon as spotted. Fires do not as a rule gain impetus too quickly for use of such methods in this area. They might also be used at changes of wind and temperature, which usually occur.
2. Well organised spotting is essential. Spotting points should be sufficient in number and manned "around the clock" when danger high.
3. Council, Waterboard, Forestry, BM National Park officers or employees, or private citizens, who find fire burning without obvious control, should be permitted to extinguish such without prior reference to local Fire-Control Authorities. (N.B. That this was not considered permissible and was the prime cause of the beginning of the most disastrous fires on the Blue Mountains in the early summer of 1968-9).
4. A high class mobile commando type force needs to be in operation, to be transferable quickly from point to point, and able to spread along the fire front.
5. In the villages, far more preparedness is needed. This often where a true "fuel build-up" exists (eg. House Rubbish, strewn fire-wood and scrap timber and the like).
6. Penalties should be severe enough to deter from starting fires or contravening fire regulations. Police should be urged to treat such offences as similar to robbery and homicide. In two cases in the Blue Mountains area in 1968, where reliable witnesses made statements and were prepared to give evidence in the event of prosecutions, no action was taken to prosecute.
7. Wardens in an NES – type organisation could be very useful in emergencies. Selected personnel could be well acquainted with peculiar needs of residents (eg. Aged, infirm, absent occupiers, children of working parents). Such wardens could be drawn from residents not capable of active fire-fighting.
8. Mopping up. In Wentworth Falls in 1956, houses burned down after brigades had moved on from the locality. Essential patrolling of roads and property carried out in many cases after the fires of November, 1968) could also often be carried out by personnel drawn from those not sufficiently strong and vigorous for fire-fighting.
9. Where "pre-suppression" burn is considered indispensable – not merely adopted for its facility and cheapness – it is essential that all personnel be thoroughly acquainted with its principles and practices and that it be carried out under thoroughly responsible supervision.

C. EDUCATION.

1. Education of new residents is essential. And even old residents are forgetful of fundamental precautions.
2. Education is needed not only on fire prevention and precautions and on emergency measures, but also of the public and of fire – personnel at virtually all levels on the effects of fire on biological communities (including, and relating to, man), on tree and plant regeneration, and regarding the growth of exotics that themselves often create a new type of fire-hazard.
3. In this connection, the use of the word “fuel” in relation to certain layers of vegetation is deplored. Its widespread use in press and other mass communication media has led to a surprisingly widely held belief that the bushland may well, should, and must, be burnt.
4. Such bodies as a State Planning Authority and local government planning authorities should have the best advice available to prevent unnecessary intrusion of building development into areas of rugged bushland.

This Society stresses that the bushfire problem involving, as it does, a number of States, calls for Commonwealth action and perhaps even for Commonwealth control.

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More about Vincentrventy at St Hilda’s on 22 instant: Tickets can also be obtained at the “Hazelbrook Pharmacy” Hazelbrook.

INVITATION TO BIRD LOVERS

Any bird lovers on holiday on the North Coast should visit the garden of Mr Bert Newman, of Spencer Street Iluka. There you will almost certainly see one of the most beautiful birds in Australia, the male Regent Bower Bird. They live in the nearby rain forest and come to feed on the sultana cake, soaked bread and honey water which Mr Newman provides.

The adult male Regent Bower Bird is velvet black and brilliant golden yellow, with an orange red spot in the centre of his forehead. We saw eleven of these magnificent creatures feeding almost at our feet. They perch on Bert Newman’s arms and take food from his hands!

Other interesting birds come to his garden: Blue Faced Honey Eaters, green, black and white with brilliant sky blue eye patch, Spangled Drongoes comedians and mimics, Lewin Honey Eaters, and our own Satin Bower Bird.

Their habitat, the unique Iluka rain forest, was saved from destruction by the efforts of the local citizens. Led by surveyor Mr Eric Beach, they waged a vigorous State-wide Campaign against the rapacious rutilite mining interests. Imagine a rain forest growing on sandhills, right to the ocean beach.

Graham Alcorn.

THE REDBREASTED ROBINS

In the upper Mountains we have three of the five species of red breasted robins.

The Rose Robin lives in the rain forest gullies and is not often seen. The male bird is soft-grey with a vivid breast, a little gem. The female is grey-brown, faint pink breast.

The Scarlet Robin and the Flame Robin live on the dry open sclerophyll ridges and are familiar birds in parks and gardens. The species could be confused, but the red is different, as the names imply. Also the Scarlet Robin has a black head, back and throat, whereas the back of the Flame Robin is grey-black and the flame colour of the breast continues right up to the chin. The female Flame Robin is a plain grey-brown bird. The female Scarlet Robin has a pink wash on the breast.

The Flame Robin is migratory, coming from the low country to the high mountains to breed in the Spring. They are arriving now, pairs taking up breeding territories. They prefer lightly timbered rocky places. The Scarlet Robin takes up similar territories but generally more heavily timbered.

BREEDING TERRITORY FIGHT

On Thursday August 31st at Mini Ha Ha Falls Reserve, we witnessed a fight over a breeding territory between a pair of each species. What was surprising was that the female Flame Robin attacked the male scarlet and vice versa. One aerial combat, female SR versus male FR breast to breast, wings flapping finishes with both contestants on the ground. Then the female Scarlet Robin flew to a branch and gave the call usually given by the male!

The whole contest was extraordinary, not only for the female versus opposite male attacks, but also the contending species. Usually fights for breeding territories are between pairs or males, of the same species.

Graham Alcorn

Bungle or Practical Joke?

We have received a phone message, not confirmed in writing, that the Nature Trail has not won the regional Earth Day prize after all. Our President has issued a statement emphatically denying the rumour that we were disqualified because of a positive swab.

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DON'T FORGET SERVENTY, ST HILDA'S. FRIDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER. BE THERE.