



TASMANIAN | Land | CONSERVANCY

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Issue 7

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In Memory

A donation of \$1000 has been received by an anonymous donor in memory of Paul Jay, mountaineer, conservationist and creative landscape gardener.

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Bought - Lutregala Marsh Bruny Island



Oystercatcher eggs, Lutregala Marsh. Photo: Matt Newton

Paul Pritchard, our newsletter editor visits our new permanent TLC reserve.

Fighting through a tangle of tea tree and banksia, occasionally stumbling in the large foraging holes of echidnas, we advanced along an overgrown 4 x 4 track. We knelt amidst the soft crowings of black cockatoos to examine a carpet of little yellow flowers.

Escaping from the forest and onto the marsh we marched out toward Simpson's Bay pausing to observe some curious snail tracks in a shallow pond. A white-bellied sea eagle drifted languidly overhead wingtips touching underneath every minute or two.

Walking out onto the nuclear white sand the serenity was interrupted when we disturbed a flock of masked plovers and couples of pied and sooty oystercatchers.

Crunching along a beach made up entirely of little spiral shells, all life, plant and animal, seemed to be in bloom. A group of tiny plovers moved quickly in unison; even tinier juveniles zipped down the beach from their huddled hiding place amongst the grass tufts.

Moving further along the beach we

stopped in our tracks. Matt noticed three speckled oystercatcher eggs laying conspicuously in the shoreline fringe.

It suddenly occurred to me that we shouldn't be there at all. It seemed to me that there was a delicate system at work here that would only survive so much human interference.

Retracing our steps we came across an oystercatcher egg on the beach that had obviously rolled out of a panicking parent's nest. We debated what to do and finally Jane gingerly picked it up in her shirt and placed it back with the other two eggs. That egg seemed a metaphor for the importance of keeping Lutregala as a reserve.

The Nuenonne word 'lutregala' means 'fine day' in English - Fine Day Marsh. Bruny Island is still an important place for the traditional owners of this land.

Looking out across Simpson's Bay in the corner of my eye I imagine a group of women of the South East Bay Tribe with young ones helping and learning from their mothers, harvesting bush tucker from the shore.

As we left the marsh to its quiet natural cycle we sensed that Lutregala is a special place.

'acquiring and managing Tasmanian land for biodiversity'



TLC Update



White bellied sea eagle.
Photo Dave Watts

Lutregala Marsh - An Overview

Nathan Males

Lutregala Marsh, sheltered in the head of Simpson's Bay on southern Bruny Island is an outstanding example of a coastal salt marsh and saline grassland.

These are rare natural values and for this reason the site is listed on the register of the National Estate. The property also adjoins the Bruny Island Neck Game Reserve adding to the area of land protected.

The 42 ha site has incredible diversity. Slight changes in altitude and salinity provide conditions for twelve different vegetation communities. This diversity combined with very little human disturbance makes the site a hotspot for birds - particularly raptors. In the space of a few minutes on our first visit we recorded a pair of Wedge tailed eagles and 2 Swamp harriers hunting in the grasslands.

Lutregala Marsh is also known as an important site for invertebrates

specialised for saline conditions. The diversity of conditions leads to a varied population of crustaceans and molluscs.

The site was originally purchased by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust in the late 1980s. In recent times, having made a decision to no longer own or manage land, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust decided to seek a buyer who would continue the conservation of the site.

Concerned that such an important site should remain in community ownership having once been purchased for conservation, we agreed to purchase the property from the Tasmanian Conservation Trust for its original purchase price.

Thanks to a number of generous donations this transaction has now taken place and the reserve will continue to be owned and managed solely for conservation in perpetuity.

Thinking big in the USA

Nathan Males

Part of the award I received last year from the Vodafone Australia Foundation allowed me to travel overseas to learn from similar organisations.

October saw me flying to the United States to participate in a conference of Land Trusts and to visit projects being run by organisations similar to the TLC.

America has thousands of organisations like ours, each tackling issues as diverse as establishing inner city parks through to attempting to reconstruct millions of acres of wild prairies.

Like similar organisations in the US, our long term aim is to ensure that biodiversity is protected. I learned that many American land trusts have begun using a big picture strategic planning process called 'Beginning with Habitat' to direct their work.

In one example, the Nature Conservancy had used this approach to identify an area of prairie - key habitat for black footed ferrets (America's most endangered mammal).

The ferrets need big areas of prairie dog towns, in which the little herbivores create lawns of several hundred acres. Cattle ranchers don't appreciate losing these acres so they often poison the prairie dogs. Taking all this into account the Conservancy purchased a big ranch in order to trade cattle grazing rights for allowing prairie dogs to flourish on surrounding ranches.

We are now discussing our own 'Beginning with Habitat' approach. Our plan will analyse the occurrences of threatened species and ecosystems throughout Tasmania, combine this with where existing protected areas can be enhanced and connected, and ultimately identify the most important landscapes to focus our attention. This more focussed approach will help us to actively work in our landscapes of highest biodiversity.

Combined with ideas for better fundraising and ways for working in partnership with businesses and governments, the trip has provided TLC with a wealth of useful information and possibilities to protect our own land for biodiversity.



Revolving Fund Conservation Land For Sale

Still seeking a buyer for Dorothy Reeves Reserve



Jim Mulcahy on the attractions of the property.

With the sale of the Cygnet Forest Reserve shortly after our last newsletter, the only Revolving Fund property we have for sale on mainland Tasmania is the Dorothy Reeves Reserve at Port Sorell.

As someone who has been fortunate enough to visit the Dorothy Reeves Reserve on several occasions I'm surprised that it hasn't been snapped up by an orchid enthusiast looking to retire to a beautiful part of Tasmania (I know you're out there). Not only is this 20ha bush block packed with orchids (35 species) and threatened species (7 species), but the block is on the outskirts of Port Sorell, which means:

- at the end of a long hot afternoon trying to get the perfect macro shot of an endangered orchid, you are only a few minutes from a beautiful beach and a refreshing swim;
- at the end of a long hot week trying to get the perfect macro shot of an endangered orchid, you are only 20 minutes from great walks in the Nawrantapu National Park to get the blood flowing again;
- if you are unfortunate enough to be bitten by something while trying to get the perfect macro shot of an endangered orchid, you are only a few minutes from medical attention; and
- although you may not be able to hunt, gather and farm on the block, you are only a few minutes from great fishing, good restaurants and the usual range of supermarket shopping.

Are you sold yet? Do I have a future in Real Estate? Call us at the office if you want to know more about the block and tell all your friends, especially the orchid enthusiasts.

In other revolving fund news, we are hoping to revolve not one, but two properties on King Island in the coming year. Neither property has been purchased yet, but if you are interested in acquiring a large bush reserve on King Island, let us know and we can give you an overview of the properties under consideration.



Beard orchid, Dorothy Reeves Reserve.



Nathan Males was lucky enough to release 10 Black footed ferrets into a reserve in Montana. The species was reduced to 7 individuals but captive breeding has now returned 5000 to the wild.
Photo: Nathan Males



Species Focus

Tasmania's threatened flora emerge

It has been an excellent spring for those flora species that tend not to emerge every year. We have had a relatively dry winter and a wet warm spring and the 'wet soak' species have come up in relatively large numbers.

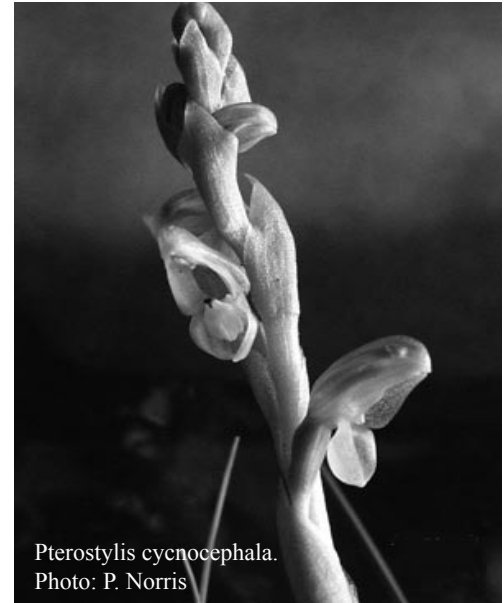
As a result, observations have resulted in an extension of the known range of some of these species. Many are listed as threatened on the Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 as their habitats are restricted and threatened.

These species tend to benefit from

some disturbance (eg grazing and fire) that creates bare patches suitable for recruitment and that lessens competition from larger, more vigorous species.

Most potential habitat is on private land and the ephemeral nature of the species has resulted in substantial loss of potential habitat so it is important that populations are recorded when they are found.

Information on Tasmania's threatened species can be found at <http://www.gisparks.tas.gov.au/ThreatenedFloraCD/>. If you think you have found a new population of a threatened flora species, please contact DPIWE on 62338759.



Pterostylis cynocephala.
Photo: P. Norris



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Important Diary Dates 2006

Long Point celebrations!

Now that Long Point has been purchased we are at last planning some celebrations and an exhibition opening. Please join us at the TLC office on Thursday 2nd February from 6pm onwards for drinks, photos, etc.

A Long Point official launch and open day will be held at Long Point Reserve Saturday 4th February 11am – 4pm.

Gorse control at Long Point volunteer field trips

You can also join these weeding bees for a great working day/weekend out at Long Point Reserve. Transport and tools are provided by Conservation Volunteers Australia.

January 7, January 21, February 11-12, March 25, April 29, May 20

Contact Steve Bailey at Conservation Volunteers Australia to book a place. 03 6231 1779



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