



## ASNSW Taralga Sanctuary Field Trip 3rd October 2015



The ASNSW trip to Taralga Sanctuary followed a presentation given by John Stafford on '[Softbills in a Mixed Collection](#)' at our March meeting earlier in the year. It had originally been planned for August/September, but a cold and very stormy winter, which included heavier than usual snow falls in Taralga, delayed the trip until early October. It was a wait well worth it however and we were finally on our way!



Graeme Phipps and Paul Henry picked up the bus in Parramatta and met everyone in the car park beside our meeting room in the Ermington Community Centre. With Graeme driving, we left Ermington at 8.15am with 16 passengers and picked up an additional 8 at Campbelltown, giving a full complement of 24.



The drive down was longer than we anticipated although this was broken up by conversations with those on board the bus and Paul also distributed a copy of our latest ASNSW magazine which included a transcript of John Stafford's informative presentation at our March meeting; a taste of things to come!

We finally arrived at Taralga Sanctuary at about 11:30am and met up with a further 16 people waiting for us to start the tour of the Sanctuary. All up we had 40 people attend the day.

John Stafford and his wife Tracy were there to meet us and give a brief outline of what we could expect.



## Introduction by John Stafford

Before you go for a walk (I'll come for a walk and try and explain things to you) but you will notice that we have a fair bit of collateral damage here (and I did explain to the guys), we had a massive wind and snow storm here only a couple of months ago. It basically trashed the place so we have been rebuilding. We have a guy here who has been working full time at the moment to help rebuild.

You will see a lot of things that are just half down and I must apologise because it doesn't make it quite the event that it should be. You will also see that a lot of the birds are doubled up and a bit crowded in some situations, simply because we ran out of aviary space. It has been a bit traumatic; we haven't been able to set up for breeding this year because all we have been doing is building. You will see a whole lot of things were you may think "what the heck", you know; but it is what it is. I didn't want to put the event off because the guys have been planning this for a while and so we have tidied up as best we can.

There are no worries about where you go, just watch for different places that I have tried to mark where we have a postholes and things that have dug. I have put some stakes in the ground so you don't walk into them. Just watch where you are walking and other than that, have a look around and as I said, our apologies things are a little bit overrun and not quite what they should be. I'll be around and about and if you want to ask me any questions please feel free.

You can go wherever you want to. We have pheasants over on one side, we've got basically softbills in the front aviaries and a few parrots, we've got a holding area that we use for a breeding aviary, through the middle of the area there are more parrots and a few other species, on the dam there is a few water fowl that basically fly free. Some of them are pinioned, some of them like the grass whistlers – they breed here and they just free fly around the place. The swans and the mountain ducks, they just hang about. Right down the back there are some kookaburras, some Curlews and some tawny frogmouths and things like that.

## Reply by Graeme Phipps

There are a few clubs here today and it doesn't matter what club you belong to; let's take the opportunity to forge new friendships. I particularly want to let you all know about my five "captive animal" students that are here. They are doing husbandry manuals on Channel-billed cuckoos and species like that so we have got to go to where the Channel-billed cuckoos are. Please take the trouble to network and talk to everybody because the amount of skills that we have here, you just couldn't buy them. I hope you all enjoy the day hugely.

So while everyone did an inspection of the property Paul and Tracy (John's wife) organised lunch. We had a great BBQ lunch on the lawn outside the old farm house, which was largely organised by Paul Henry and Tracy on behalf of the Society. We chatted with each other over lunch, making new friends throughout the course of the day.



## The Day's Events

The photos speak for themselves – although these are just a few quick snaps taken by one of our members (there are more in our 'ASNSW Day Trip to Taralga Sanctuary' on our Facebook page); there were lots more taken by others that were there.

We were limited in time, due to lunch and leaving time, everyone only had about 1 to 1½ hours for the tour, but I'm sure this was sufficient for most people.

All up I think John had over 140 species of birds to take care of which must be a dawn to dark job. I don't envy the amount of work this takes especially as there was so much repair work still being done after the winter storm damage.

At the end of the day, in response to a special request Graeme drove us up the road a bit for a closer look at the wind farms that stand on the hill behind the Taralga Sanctuary.

Then after picking everyone else up who would be travelling home on the bus and thanking and saying goodbye to John and Tracy, Graeme also stopped in the little township of Taralga for those who wanted a few extra photos, we set off for home.

The trip down had seemed longer than expected and it seemed even longer on the way back. However, for some it was time for a quick nap and for others a time to share their impressions of the trip and exchange a glimpse of the photos they had taken. We had a toilet and coffee break at Sutton Forest and this held us up for a bit longer than we anticipated. We arrived back at the Ermington club rooms about 7:15pm.

We would like to thank Paul for all his hard work behind the scenes to organise this field trip, Graeme for driving us all safely there and back and John and Tracy for opening Taralga Sanctuary to the Avicultural Society NSW members and friends. All in all it was a great day out!



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