



North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

Custodians of North Head

ABN 97093480659 P.O. Box 896, Balgowlah, NSW 2093

northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au

email northhead@fastmail.com.au

Newsletter No 163 May 2022

Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

We are open **Saturdays and Sundays between 10am and 4pm**. Please call in and see us and collect our new brochure on Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer and helping visitors to better get to know North Head and all its treasures, should contact Judy Lambert (email: twswombat@iinet.net.au or phone 0427 217 580).

Native Plant Nursery

We grow Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub plants at our Nursery for planting into degraded areas of North Head.



Working at the new frog habitat which is just along the dirt track from Bluefish carpark, Photo Jan Ritchie

If you would like to join us, there is planting, weeding and maintenance to be done, especially as weeds love all this rain which keeps on coming.

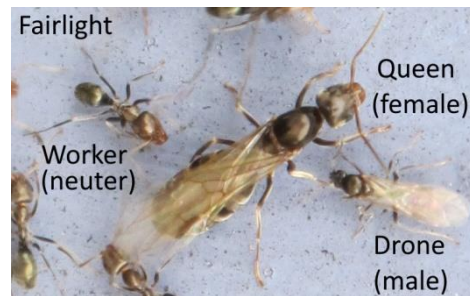
Please call in any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and noon, when we are open or email northhead@fastmail.com.au

To join you must be a member of North Head Sanctuary Foundation and be COVID vaccinated.

Formication

Peter Macinnis

My aunts would formicate whenever I used that word, which mischievous biologists know simply means *rushing about like ants*. Formication is most often seen in what the English call an ant-rise and ordinary Australians call swarming, or "flying ants".

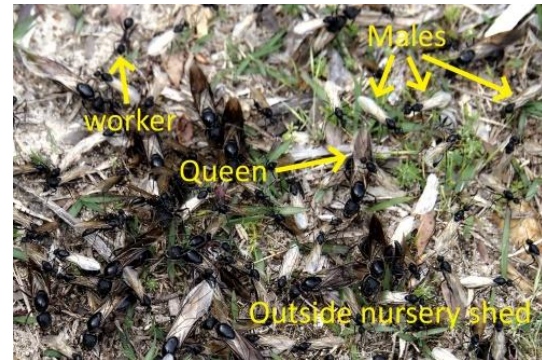


On warm and humid mornings or evenings, ants swarm.

The crowd includes worker ants, along with many winged

ants, breeding females and smaller males, setting off to establish new nests. The queen lands somewhere, usually with one or more males, and mates with one, storing the sperm that she will use for the rest of her life to fertilise her eggs.

At last count, Australia had 1300 ant species, some just 1 mm long, and 30 mm for bull ants. Warm northern Australia averages 150 ant species per hectare, while



cooler southern climates may have 75 different species in one hectare. There could be about 100



ant species on North Head, and they get there by swarming. The swarm begins with a digging-out, an opening of exits for the larger queens to emerge.

Once the openings are there, out they come. I knew that, but didn't think "swarms" when a digging-out happened near the nursery shed. Then the swarm appeared. When I see a swarm, I move in, as do the predators.

Last October, Christine and I found an ant swarm, all around us, as we sat in the warm spring sunshine on a bench at North Fort, sipping our coffee and watching some lapwing parents and their chicks. Actually, the swarm found us, as ants clambered up on our seat (and us), looking for a high point to take off from.



Most flying ants are eaten by other animals, but enough queens survive. Because I care about echidnas and know that queen ants have a lot of protein and fat, I looked but there were no echidnas.

Lapwings have good eyesight, and one of them

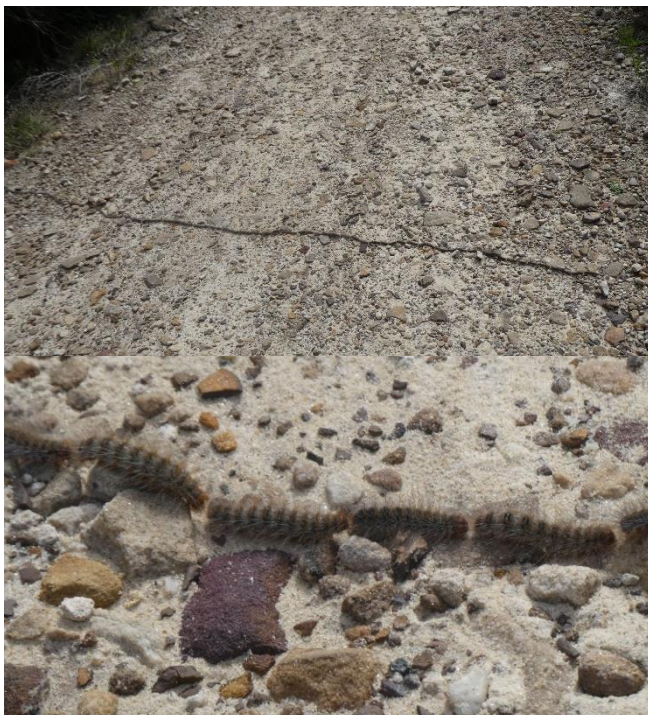
came striding over, showing none of their usual distrust of humans. I stood back and he or she moved in for a feed. After a swarm, orb weavers' webs will be festooned with



dead drones (above), so ants are important in the food web.

And remember, without ants to clean up all the dead animals, the bush would stink!

Follow the Leader



Photos by Alan Ventress

These Caterpillars, *Ochrogaster lunifer*, are grey and hairy with a brown head. They are famous for walking in processions, nose to tail and leave a silk thread behind. For further information see <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/noto/lunifer.html>

Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW : 1883 - 1930), Monday 18 February 1884, page 5

"ARRIVAL OF THE STIRLINGSHIRE WITH IMMIGRANTS.

The Stirlingshire, a powerful iron clipper ship, belonging to Messrs. Thomas Law and Company's Shireline, from Glasgow, with immigrants, hove in sight off the heads on Saturday afternoon, having made a splendid passage of 77 days from port to port. The steam tug Commodore was soon along-side, and shortly before 9 o'clock the ship entered Port Jackson and anchored off Watson's Bay. Early yesterday morning she was towed into the bay and boarded by Dr Sibey, the assistant health officer, for the health report. Finding that measles and diarrhoea had been prevalent during the voyage, and that a number of deaths had taken place therefrom, he, in conjunction with Dr Mackellar, the health officer, who also visited the ship, decided to send the ship to quarantine for a few days, in order to allow of her being fumigated and the passengers' effects, &c., washed. The vessel will accordingly be towed over to the quarantine ground this morning. At present there is no serious sickness, and all the passengers look hearty and well. The Stirlingshire has on board 116 single men, 37 single women, 144 married couples, 106 children, and 13 infants, making a total of 416 souls. During the voyage twenty-three children of tender years, from six months to two years of age, died: twenty-one from measles and diarrhoea, and two from other causes. One of the ship's company, was also carried off—Henry Harry, the cook, succumbing at the early part of the passage from blood-poisoning, brought on through burns. There were four births. Measles broke out shortly after leaving home but owing to the strict sanitary arrangements enforced by the doctor and matron, the disease was soon stamped out. The immigrants have been under the medical superintendence of Dr Arthur Roberts; and Miss Chicken, the matron, who has had considerable experience in the conveyance of immigrants to this port, has had charge of the single women. The latter have nearly all come out to join their friends and relations. The ship has been favoured with very fine weather and only for two days during wet weather had the passengers to seek refuge below. Captain Alexander, who has command, has succeeded in accomplishing a very smart passage, and was warmly congratulated by those on board."

At Quarantine, a case of scarlet fever was found, and a young boy Adam Kerr aged three died on 3 March 1884 and was buried in the Third Cemetery.