

# THE ABELS



## TASMANIA'S MOUNTAINS OVER 1100m HIGH

VOLUME TWO  
EDITED BY  
BILL WILKINSON

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*Southern alpine skink (Niveoscincus microlepidotus): This is one of the true alpine snow skinks that only occurs in high altitude areas (typically above the treeline). The southern snow skink is common on mountains in southern Tasmania (including Mt Wellington and the Hartz Mountains) whereas the Northern alpine skink (Niveoscincus greeni) occurs on our northern mountain tops (e.g., Central Plateau, Ben Lomond). Both alpine species can be very common in these regions and are often seen basking in rocky areas.*  
H. and A. Wapstra

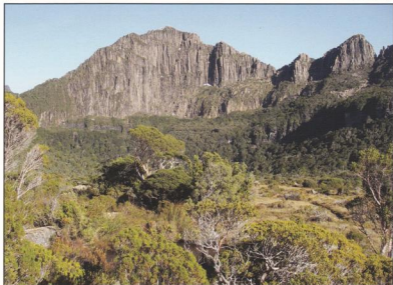
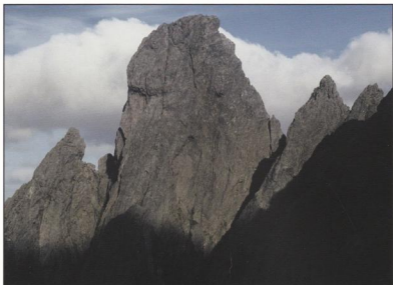


*An adult blotched bluetongue (Tiliqua nigrolutea). They are common throughout lowland Tasmania and are often found in gardens. While less common in subalpine or alpine areas, they do occur in open areas in altitudes in excess of 1000 metres above sea level.*  
N. Richardson

includes fellow alpine reptiles, particularly the white-lipped whip snakes, as well as a variety of bird species, such as currawongs, and mammal species including antechinus and quolls.

It is very complicated to detail where species may be encountered on a walk because the distribution of particular species reflects both current climatic and

habitat requirements (which in part are determined by altitude) and also historical events. A table is presented here for assistance; however, those interested in further information including additional images are directed to *Snakes and Lizards of Tasmania* by Mark Hutchinson, Roy Swain and Michael Driessen published by the School of Zoology, University of Tasmania.

*Mt Lot**P. Zund**Federation Peak**R. Romaszko*

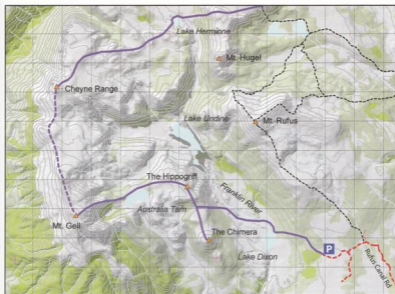
Undine shimmering below while Mts Hugel and Rufus are prominent to the north and northeast; to the south the very scrubby dome of The Chimera beckons with

the King William Range making up the horizon. To the west, Australia Tarn glimmers and the bulky mass of Mt Gell soars above extensive dolerite scree fields.

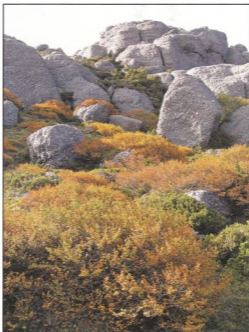


*The Hippogriff on a stormy day*

*I. Green*



*(Data courtesy of the LST)*



Autumn on the Tyndal Range with the leaves of *Nothofagus gunnii* (fagus) changing colour

I. Green

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*The view from Mt Scorpio along the Western Arthur Range to West Portal*

*B. Wilkinson*

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## THE SOUTHERN RANGE

The final five Abels in this section are located along ridges which are known unofficially as the southern range. The first two Abels, Mt La Perouse and Pindars Peak, are climbed by making use of a generally well established track. However, from Pindars Peak onwards the route to the remaining three Abels is much less clear and in some locations can be difficult to follow. It is for this reason that these more remote peaks should not be tackled by inexperienced walkers.

Given that they tower over the south coast, it is not surprising that the three main peaks were named from the sea. The name of the most imposing – the monarch of New River Lagoon was later changed to Precipitous Bluff. The early explorers may have felt that their traverse would not add much to the pool of knowledge or they eschewed the savage weather on their broad slopes. E.G. Innes and David Jones attempted to blaze a route from Lune River to Port Davey in 1881/82. They gave up in the upper Cracroft valley, although Jones later referred to the tourist potential of the south coast range.

It was not until 1901/02 that T.B. Moore managed to cut a track through to Port Davey via the range. Tyler and Haysen surveyed a less arduous route in 1906; finally, however, in 1915 at the urging of W.H. Twelvetrees, the government geologist, the Public Works Dept cut the prototype South Coast Track.

Mac Urquhart is generally credited with making the first ascent of Precipitous Bluff in the late 1920s. The Kameruka Bushwalking Club of N.S.W. had a long

association with this mountain, producing an excellent sketch map which promoted the rugged route down Limestone Creek to New River Lagoon. This was used until the late 1960s when a Launceston Walking Club party pioneered the current route.

The southern range offers a number of options for the walker and the main ones are discussed here. Mt La Perouse can be climbed as a summer's day trip by fit parties or as a 2 or 3 day visit so that the interesting features around the peak can be explored. The next peak along the range is Pindars Peak and this also can be climbed as a day trip by extremely fit walkers on long summer days. After several camping trips to the area, the editor can still recall the exhilaration of this very long day walk. However, as most walkers will be only visiting this area once it is much better to allow 3 days to climb and explore both peaks.

If the three Abels further along the range are to be climbed then at least seven days should be allowed. The return journey can follow the outward leg or alternatively a descent from Precipitous Bluff to New River Lagoon and a coastal walk to Cackle Creek can be made.

It should be noted that the Abels on the range are liable to be cloud and mist covered if the wind direction has a southerly component to it as only the immense expanse of the Southern Ocean lies to the south. In addition moisture-laden westerly and easterly airstreams can create the same conditions. However, when the winds have a mainly northerly component then the range is usually cloud free.



(Data courtesy of the LST)





Flowering *Orites revoluta*

J. McLeod

## SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAYS

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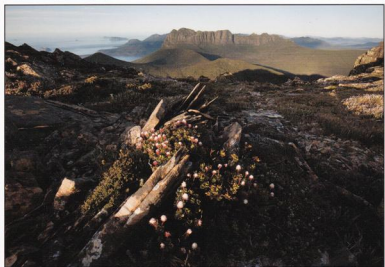


Lake Tahune below Frenchmans Cap

P. Zund

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Tasmania is world famous for its magnificent mountains and this book, the second of two volumes, is written specifically about Tasmania's finest mountains, the Abels, which are all over 1100m high.

A team of experienced bushwalkers has climbed every peak to provide a sensitive and studied portrayal of each mountain. Informative narratives describing the best routes to the summits are preceded by notes on the mountains' nomenclature and history. An attempt has been made to capture both the unique qualities of the mountains as well as the feel of being on each summit.

The book commences with ten specialised essays which enhance the reader's appreciation of Tasmania's alpine realm.

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