

FRIENDS of the GREAT VICTORIA DESERT PARKS

Newsletter Number 44 November, 2013.

SURVEY REPORT – 2013

Elizabeth Lloyd Bird Survey Coordinator

This year we had a wonderful survey in the GVD.

As a result of more rain, the wildflowers were spectacular, the insects were buzzing and the birds numerous with many of them nesting.

We were very happy to welcome more people to our birdwatching group and so we were able to add even more species to the bird list. This year we had 51 species which is a record, almost double the number in previous years. We spent some fun times just sitting by the pond at Maralinga, sitting on a ridge overlooking the Nullarbor Plain and many hours walking around the desert.

This year we had to go out earlier because the weather was hot and the birds were up earlier. Everyone enjoyed all the Budgerigars flying over all the time and the Cockatiels feeding in the tree above our camp. and the masses of Masked Woodswallows nesting in almost every tree. Pied Honey-eaters were calling at many places we stopped.

Special birds

Scarlet-chested Parrot
Blue Bonnet
Major Mitchells Cockatoo
Slender-billed Thornbill
Black-eared Cuckoo
Inland Dotterel with young
Crimson and Orange Chats
and unusually 5 species of raptors.

Birds nesting

Masked Woodswallow
Dusky Woodswallow
White-browed Woodswallow
Budgerigar
Collared Sparrowhawk
Brown Falcon {one down a well}
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
Inland Dotterel with young

Go to page 7 to see the full Bird List.

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Photo above: juvenile Orange Chat (*Ethianura aurifrons*) on Emu airfield and below our enthusiastic 'birdos'. Photos Jan Forrest.

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A highlight of the 2013 survey trip was the spectacular wildflowers on the sand dunes. Photo: J.Morton

President: Kevin O'Connor 0430 498 177 fikev@internode.on.net

Secretary: Judy Morton

Treasurer: Peter Facy peterfacy@adam.com.au

Membership fees are \$25 annually, due on 1st January each year.

Newsletter Editor: Jan Forrest OAM jan_forrest@bigpond.com Articles may be posted to Editor, Friends of the Great Victoria Desert, C/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, ADELAIDE, 5000

Meetings: three meetings are held annually in Royal Lifesaving Society, 175 Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Cowandilla SA 5033. Off road parking is available behind the building.

Webmaster: Brian Morton judymorton@bigpond.com.au

Field Trip Logistics: Neil Matthews ntandsm@bigpond.net.au

Our book: 'Field Guide to Shrubs and Trees of the Great Victoria Desert' may be obtained from Peter Facy see email address above.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT GREAT VICTORIA DESERT TRIP 2013

The September trip this year was immensely successful. Stand out characteristics for me are:

- efficient planning ,a workable logistical framework and effective resource management
- strong clear leadership ensuring that our stated objectives of data collection and enjoying ourselves were easily met
- having highly skilled group leaders whose knowledge and expertise ensured that data was collected and recorded in an orderly scientific manner. Group leaders were only too willing to share their skills and tutor those interested in expanding their knowledge base
- having the opportunity of working with Nathan Williams a field officer with the AWNRM. Based at Yalata
- the high social interaction among all members of the group . I believe the newcomers were made welcome and amicably integrated into the team. Stories, skills and experiences were freely shared both in the field and around the campfire. Who can forget TC cooking potatoes in beer cans.
- meeting up with Ollie Lipcer, the Community Programs Coordinator, and her AWNRM team at Ceduna at the end of the trip. This occasion allowed us firstly, to meet these very supportive people, and secondly, to be introduced to environmentally keen community members who wish to work with us in the future.

The trip officially began at Glendambo, where we all camped on the Sunday night and shared a fine meal together in the motel.

We had received a permit from the Australian Rail Track Corporation to travel from Tarcoola to Immarna siding on the road running alongside the east west rail line. For many of us, travelling on this road was a first: it was in much better condition than the Anne Beadell track.

We camped at Immarna for a couple of nights and carried out our surveys in a variety of locations including one which had been burnt, but was now springing into life. So luxuriant was the growth that one of our group commented. "It is as if the plants are on steroids."

These days were very hot. Just a tad over 40. But this did not deter the flies, who assembled in their thousands to watch us crawling up a sand dune looking for specimens. We also had the privilege of working with Nathan Williams who showed us a number of Malleefowl nests (unfortunately disused) and explained the workings of a "cat assassin " trap.

He also downloaded photos from a movement camera on to his laptop. There was clear evidence of Camel, kangaroo, foxes, malleefowl and T.C.

He also showed us some bush tucker- a plant useful as a water supply. *Thysanotus* sp.

Nathan was relaxed and related easily to our group. He was informative and prepared to share his skills and expertise with us. His presence was a real highlight of the trip.

We then moved on to Maralinga Village and based ourselves there. Robin Matthews, the manager made us all welcome in his inimitable style and proved to be a great raconteur around the campfire at night.

About half the group took the opportunity to accompany Robin on a guided tour of the atomic bomb test sites. What a mine of information that man is!



All of us knew something of Maralinga's atomic test history, but Robin's tour really opened our minds to the scale and the local destruction of these tests.

Robin provided accommodation for those who wanted to upgrade to a Donga. We even had access to TV. Although on Saturday night there was not much to watch. It was either a Port Adelaide game or the Federal election. Some sensible people chose to watch neither.

Any trip in the desert is not without mechanical troubles. Jo and Jan won the competition for punctures- They actually had three in one day!

The fuel line in Peter and Elizabeth's vehicle came loose and sprayed diesel everywhere. This was expertly fixed by Geoff and a small team of helpers, advisors, supervisors and blokes who thought they should look like they knew what they were doing.

It was during these repairs that we noticed that the tray camper on the back of their vehicle was edging its way backwards: had we not stopped to fix the fuel line, something much more serious could have happened.

Then of course, there is Neil's life long embarrassment of having his Toyota bogged north of Emu and having to be pulled out by a mere Mazda. Thank you Mal.

We all gathered on our final night for happy hour and to feast on fresh oysters provided by Robin our host. Everyone received an award for some stand out achievement : either for something sensible or something very silly.

It was a great trip.

We collected loads of data, took hundreds of pictures, met all our goals, had a great time , met new people, learned new skills, and teamed up with AWNRM folk in Ceduna.

Thank you to everyone who participated in making this trip a most successful one.

Finally, a special thanks to all the DEWNR officers who willingly supported us in our planning, resource acquisition, and securing our permits.

*Kevin OConnor
President,
Friends of the Great Victoria Desert*

A VISIT TO DAISY BATES 'HOME' and OOLDEA SOAK

On the journey between Immarna Rail siding and Maralinga, several adventurers braved the sand hills to visit the Ooldea Soak the previous location of the Ooldea Mission.

We also saw the remnants of Daisy Bates' house in sandhills some distance from Ooldea soak, what remains is, just a few rusty kerosene tins in the sand.

These locations are a fascinating glimpse into our history.

The following information on Ooldea soak comes from SPEAKING LAND an exhibition at the South Australian Museum.

The Trans-Australian Railway was completed in 1917. A grand post-Federation project, it united with twin ribbons of steel the two sides of the new country, Australia. It also had an enormous impact on the lives of local Aboriginal people

The railway relied on Ooldea's water. The water which replenished the soak was pumped away to supply the steam trains which stopped to take on water and the houses of the rail workers along the line. By 1926, Ooldea's water source had been exhausted and the railway pumping station closed.

With the railway came disease, the destruction of traditional bush foods, and the introduction of alcohol and prostitution. For many Aboriginal people, the line was their first contact with the non-Aboriginal world.

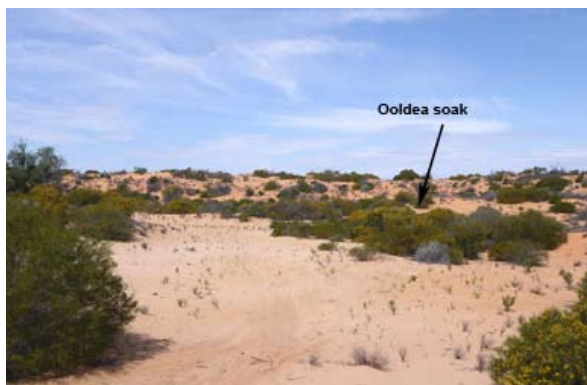
Daisy Bates set up camp at Ooldea in 1919. She provided food, clothes and simple medical care to people coming in from the spinifex country, and recorded their language and culture. She stayed until 1934.

In 1933 the United Aborigines Mission established a mission at Ooldea. The mission issued government rations, and provided medical care and some employment. The Mission worked to replace Aboriginal culture with Christianity, particularly through the separation of children into dormitories. Missionaries also collected wooden artefacts for sale in Adelaide and on the line.

Aboriginal people continued to come in to Ooldea from the north and north-west, and to travel for ceremonial and other reasons. The line itself opened up new possibilities for long-distance travel. At any one time during the 1930s and 1940s, there could be as few as 'a handful' or as many as five hundred people camped at Ooldea.

Ooldea Mission closed in 1952, and most people living there were moved to Yalata Station, which had been purchased by the Government in 1951. During the following decade visits to the soak and north were actively discouraged due to the Maralinga nuclear tests.

Yalata Reserve was administered by the Lutheran Church until 1975, when the community gained control of the land. Many people have returned to country around Ooldea and to the north with the return of their land under the Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act of 1984, and the handback of Ooldea to Aboriginal people in 1988.



Photos: Top, remains of Daisy Bates' house in the sandhills (old kero tins for walls). Track into Ooldea soak, the location of the soak. Photos Jan Forrest. Above, remains of the soak itself. Photo Val Hanson.

DAISY BATES

Val Hanson

Daisy Bates was an eccentric woman alone who lived with the Aborigines at their home. No luxuries of life she had Some thought she was rather mad.

All that is left of her dwelling place
Are rusty drums and rows of rocks out of place.
Even at the place where the Aborigines lived back then
There is nothing left for them to come back to again.

PHOTOPOINT REPORT

September 2013 Survey Trip

Neil Matthews

Aims

There are many (hundreds) of marked and nominated photopoints across the State, catalogued over many years by the various South Australian Departments of Environment. At these points, photographs are taken at set bearings, and over time provide a longitudinal record in time of changes in vegetation.

Friends of GVD Parks add to the Departmental library by creating new photopoints at each new vegetation survey plot, as well as continuing to photograph at the previously marked locations.

Method

1. Find the marked photopoints by the GPS waypoints – these points are usually marked by star dropper posts
2. Note the compass bearings and directions for the photos
3. Place a marker pole 10 metres from the photopoints at the set bearings
4. Take wide-angle photos from the marker points in the set bearings.

September 2013 Achievements

A. New photopoint photos

- 2 new vegetation plot markers adjacent to the Immarna campsite
- 1 new photopoint at a recently burned out area 27kms south east of the Immarna campsite
- 1 new vegetation plot marker 580 metres south of the Maralinga main gate
- 1 new vegetation plot marker 7 kms south of Observatory Hill on the Maralinga to Emu Road

B. Established photopoint photos

- 14 photos taken at photopoints along the Maralinga to Emu Road and an offset track near Observatory Hill
- 1 photo taken at a photopoint south of Lake Maramangye

An attempt was made to locate 8 other photopoints around Lake Maramangye 20 kms north of the Anne Beadell Highway from Emu. However, due to difficult access with overgrown and absent tracks, only one photopoint was reached and further attempts were reluctantly abandoned.

Intrepid Team

There is a satisfying sense of adventure in locating isolated photopoints in remote locations, and comparing the sites to previous photos in our historical folder. It is extremely interesting to see the changes in vegetation over time and from previous visits.

The exercise was only possible with additional support, and much thanks goes to members of the team for their help, advice and companionship:

Dave and Erica Tomkins, Mal and Val Hansen, TC and Terrie Coleman, Jan Forrest and Jo Wood, Robin Goodchild and Shelagh Matthews.



INVERTEBRATE REPORT

Jan Forrest OAM

The invertebrates survey conducted in the vicinity of Immarna Railway Siding, Maralinga and Emu during September 2013 provided valuable invertebrate material for future research. The principal value of this collection is that it comes from areas seldom visited by collectors, so it is the locality records which are equally as important as the lists of species, genera and families.

METHODS

Several different methods were employed during the survey to collect invertebrate specimens. These included:

- vehicle net (a net mounted on top of the vehicle)
- three malaise traps;
- one set of micro pitfalls at Immarna siding campsite
- opportunistic hand collecting and netting;
- digging (spider and other holes);
- black light.

LOCALITIES

The locations of all invertebrates collected on the survey are noted on page 6 in Table 3.

RESULTS

All material collected has been lodged in the South Australian Museum (SAM) where pinning and labelling of the larger invertebrates material has been completed.

Due to the time required to sort, process and label material collected, at the time of writing this report it has only been possible to extract and identify the ants and spiders.

The three malaise traps erected near flowering Eucalyptus, Senna and Eremophila are yielding hundreds of specimens including native bees, wasps, flies, small beetles and even some spiders. Jo Wood is presently sorting through the malaise trap samples and so far has volunteered one day a week to do this (in excess of 50 hours so far!).

Only one micro pitfall line was set up at the Immarna campsite see list of ants from these traps on page 5 Table 1. Other specimens in these traps are yet to be sorted.

Invertebrate report continued.

Hand collecting and netting yielded a variety of grasshoppers. A significant find was one specimen of the rarely collected skipper (Family Hesperidae) butterfly *Croitana arenaria* (Inland Sand-skipper) in the malaise trap at Maralinga next to Eucalypts. Other butterflies collected include: *Nacaduba biocellata* (Double-spotted Line-blue) Family Lycaenidae, *Danaus petilia* (Lesser Wanderer) Family Nymphalidae and *Belenois java* Caper White (Family Pieridae). Several spiders were dug from burrows

A black light was run at Immarna, Maralinga and Emu Road campsites over several nights and collections of mainly small invertebrates were made including several moths, grasshoppers, flies and predacious bugs. The collection made on the evening of 3rd September was particularly productive as it was such a warm night.

Spiders collected have been sorted and identified by Nicholas Birks see Table 2 for a summary of this material (below).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all survey trip participants for collecting invertebrates, especially my passenger Jo Wood. Help from staff and volunteers at the South Australian Museum is critical for the identification of invertebrates collected during the project. I thank John Weyland and Nicholas Birks for their identifications of the ants and spiders and Mike Moore for looking at the butterfly specimens.



Table 1. SUMMARY OF FORMICIDAE (ants)

collected in micro pitfall traps at Immarna siding campsite #182. Id. John Weyland SAMuseum.

taxon	count	
<i>Camponotus gibbinotus</i>	1	
<i>Iridomyrmex</i> sp.	421	
<i>Iridomyrmex brunneus</i>	2	
<i>Iridomyrmex agilis</i>	3	
<i>Pheidole</i> sp.	1	
<i>Rhytidoponera metallica</i>	2	
<i>Tetramorium</i> sp.	2	
<i>Monomorium rothsteini</i>	1	
<i>Monomorium</i> sp.	6	3 spp.
<i>Doleromyrma</i> sp.	3	
<i>Melophorus</i> sp.	40	5 spp.



Photo: SAMuseum photo imaging unit.

Table 2 SUMMARY OF ARACHNIDS (spiders, scorpion and centipede)

Id. Nicholas Birks SAMuseum

Family	Taxa, common name	Sex	#	waypoint	comments
SPIDERS					
Sparassidae	<i>Neosparassus</i> sp. Sand Huntsman	F	1	WP191	
Sparassidae	<i>Neosparassus</i> sp. Sand Huntsman	F	1	WP191	Silk sand cover sheet
Sparassidae	huntsman	F	1	WP 201	
Araneidae	<i>Eriophora biapicata</i> Garden Orb Weaver	F	1	WP 193	
Lycosidae	Wolf Spider	F	1	WP812	unusual
Lycosidae	<i>Hogicosa bicolor</i>	F	1	WP182	
Lycosidae	Wolf Spider	M	1	WP185	
Lycosidae	Wolf Spider	F	2	WP203	
Lycosidae	Wolf Spider	F	1	WP182	unusual
Nemesiidae	<i>Aname</i> sp. 1 Wishbone spider	F	1	WP182	open top, light silk cover
Nemesiidae	<i>Aname</i> sp. 1 Wishbone spider	F	2	WP191	open top, light silk cover
Nemesiidae	<i>Aname</i> sp. 2 Wishbone spider	?	1	Wp190	small
SCORPION					
Urodacidae	<i>Urodacus armatus</i> Yellow Sand Scorpion	?	1	WP183	
CENTIPEDE					
Scolopendridae	<i>Scolopendra</i> sp. Scorpion	?	1	WP195	



Photo left: *Croitana arenaria* (Inland Sand-skipper) source: http://www.sabutterflies.org.au/hesp/arenaria_ds.htm. Photos above top and above: sorting the hundreds of wasps and bees from the Malaise trap samples is taking a very long time! Above Right: Jan digs up a spider Photos: Jan Forrest (above) and Val Hanson (above right).

Table 3. SUMMARY OF LOCALITIES - INVERTEBRATE COLLECTIONS

SITE #	state	LOCATION	LATS AND LONGS	METHOD / Vegetation	DATE
180	S.AUST.	Lake Hart Glendambo	30°58'11.82"S 135°45'2.088"E		1st Sept. 2013 1st Sept. 2013
182	S.AUST.	Immarna Railway Siding camp	30°29'5.28"S 132°07'15.636"E	at light 2/9, 3/9, malaise trap <i>Senna</i> ; malaise trap <i>Pimelea/Acacia</i> ; Malaise Trap flowering <i>Eucalyptus</i> sp.; micro pitfalls; hand; water trap; on ground at night;	3-4 Sept. 2013
183	S.AUST.	Immarna Railway Siding camp on sandhills	30°29'9.132"S 132°07'6.924"E		3rd Sept. 2013
184	S.AUST.	nr Immarna Railway Siding	30°28'43.176"S 132°03'17.28"E	end vehicle net run	3rd Sept. 2013
185	S.AUST.	nr Immarna Railway Siding	30°28'46.164"S 132°03'24.372"E	start vehicle net run	3rd Sept. 2013
188	S.AUST.	near Ooldea Daisy Bates 'house'	30°27'0.828"S 131°50'1.284"E		5th Sept. 2013
190	S.AUST.	Maralinga village, firing range	30°09'44.532"S 131°33'46.8"E	netting; dug from hole;	6th Sept. 2013
191	S.AUST.	nr Maralinga gate	30°10'20.1"S 131°36'40.392"E	dug from hole	6th Sept. 2013
192	S.AUST.	nr Maralinga gate	30°11'42.252"S 131°36'15.48"E		6th Sept. 2013
193	S.AUST.	nr Maralinga gate	30°11'30.336"S 131°36'18.72"E	netted	5th Sept. 2013
195	S.AUST.	Maralinga Village	30°09'36.756"S 131°34'37.776"E	in building, at light	6th Sept. 2013
196	S.AUST.	Maralinga Village,	30°09'35.172"S 131°36'40.392"E	Malaise trap flowering <i>Eucalyptus</i>	6-12 Sept. 2012
197	S.AUST.	Maralinga Village	30°11'44.412"S 131°36'14.796"E	Malaise trap, <i>Eremophila</i> , <i>Acacia</i> , <i>Ptilotus</i>	6-12 Sept. 2012
198	S.AUST.	Maralinga Village dam	30°09'28.944"S 131°36'58.932"E		6th Sept. 2013
199	S.AUST.	Maralinga airport runway	30°10'2.748"S 131°37'31.404"E	sweeping flowering <i>Senna</i>	6-12 Sept. 2012
200	S.AUST.	Maralinga airport, Forward area	30°09'31.248"S 131°37'21.108"E	Malaise trap, flowering <i>Senna</i>	6-12 Sept. 2012
201	S.AUST.	Maralinga / Emu Rd	29°48'34.02"S 131°49'44.76"E		8th Sept. 2013
202	S.AUST.	Maralinga / Emu Rd	29°43'49.62"S 131°50'6.648"E	Vehicle Net bet. Maralinga Village and 80km N	8th Sept. 2013
203	S.AUST.	Maralinga / Emu Road camp	29°00'44.028"S 132°02'8.736"E	Vehicle Net bet 202 and 201, on ground, at light	8-11 Sept. 2013
208	S.AUST.	North Emu airstrip	28°31'23.16"S 132°11'17.52"E	Vehicle Net end	9th Sept. 2013
209	S.AUST.	Emu Airstrip	28°37'33.348"S 132°12'14.004"E	Vehicle Net start	9th Sept. 2013
211	S.AUST.	Maralinga / Emu Road	28°47'51.684"S 132°12'40.032"E		10th Sept. 2013
212	S.AUST.	Emu Field, Totem 1	28°41'54.852"S 132°22'16.284"E		11th Sept. 2013
213	S.AUST.	Maralinga, Taranaki bomb site Tielken plain	29°53'54.672"S 131°35'22.704"E	sparse bluebush plain	12th Sept. 2013
214	S.AUST.	Maralinga, Breakaway bomb site Tielken plain	29°53'34.98"S 131°36'16.74"E	sparse bluebush plain	12th Sept. 2013
215	S.AUST.	Maralinga, Lollipop balloon site Tielken plain	29°56'8.448"S 131°38'6.324"E	sparse bluebush plain	12th Sept. 2013
217	S.AUST.		30°28'22.404"S 132°01'27.012"E 28°46'32.9"S 132°12'36.5"E	little brown beetles on <i>Alyogyne pinonniana</i>	G & M Goods G & M Goods



Aname sp. 1 Wishbone spider
Photo: K.O'Connor



Neosparassis sp. Sand Huntsman burrow entrance. Photo: Jan Forrest



'Right: Priscilla' Vehicle Net Photo: Val Hanson.





Malaise trap next to *Senna* sp. near the airport.

BUG CATCHING WITH JAN

Val Hanson

Jan in little insects takes delight
Every night she attracts them to her light.
She bashes bushes with a stick
And waves a net to complete her trick.

Down on the ground
She looks around
Then digs up spiders from their hole
Keeping their trap door as a whole.

She drives with a net flowing free
That really is a sight to see.
Priscilla is the name it is given
Many miles it has driven
Catching whatever gets in its way
This gives Jan many things with which to play.

Travelling with Jan is an experience for sure
So may we have many many more.



Jo Wood wields the butterfly net Photo: Jan Forrest

FULL BIRD LIST September 2013

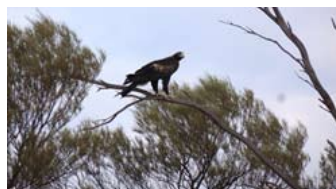
Elizabeth Lloyd Bird Survey co-ordinator

Grey Teal.	<i>Anas gracilis</i>
Whistling Kite	<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>
Collared Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter cirrhocephalus</i>
Wedge-tailed Eagle	<i>Aquila audax</i>
Brown Falcon	<i>Falco berigora</i>
Nankeen Kestrel	<i>Falco cenchroides</i>
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Limantopus limantopus</i>
Inland Dotterel	<i>Charadrius australis</i>
Galah	<i>Eolophus roseicapilla</i>
Blue Bonnet	<i>Northiella haematogaster</i>
Mulga Parrot	<i>Psephotus varius</i>
Budgerigar	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>
Pallid Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus pallidus</i>
Black-eared Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx osculans</i>
Tawney Frogmouth	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>
Australian Owlet-nightjar	<i>Aegotheles cristatus</i>
Red-backed Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus pyrrhopygia</i>
Splendid Fairy-wren	<i>Malarus splendens</i>
Striated Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>
Weebill	<i>Smicornis brevirostris</i>
Inland Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza apicalis</i>
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza uropygialis</i>
Southern Whiteface	<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	<i>Acanthagenys rufogularis</i>
Yellow-throated Miner	<i>Manorina flavigular</i>
Singing Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus virescens</i>
Pied Honeyeater	<i>Certhionix variegatus</i>
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus ornatus</i>
Grey-fronted Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus plumulus</i>
Crimson Chat	<i>Ethianura tricolor</i>
Orange Chat	<i>Ethianura aurifrons</i>
Jacky Winter	<i>Microeca fascians</i>
Hooded Robin	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>
White-browed Babbler	<i>Pomastomus superciliosus</i>
Chiming Wedgebill	<i>Psophodes occidentalis</i>
Crested Bellbird	<i>Oreoica gutturalis</i>
Grey Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>
Restless Flycatcher	<i>Miagra inquieta</i>
Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>
White-winged Triller	<i>Lalage tricolor</i>
Masked Woodswallow	<i>Artamus personatus</i>
Dusky Woodswallow	<i>Artamus cyanopterus</i>
White-browed Woodswallow	<i>Artamus superciliosus</i>
Grey Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>
Zebra Finch	<i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>
Tree Martin	<i>Hirundo nigricans</i>
Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>
Rufous Songlark	<i>Cincloramphus mathewsi</i>

BIRD SPOTTING

Val Hanson

To Elizabeth birds are a delight
Even those in full flight
She doesn't mind if they're big or small
With glasses up she looks for them all.
Noting the names on a list to keep
So that others can go and those birds seek.



Photos: Val Hanson

SALVATION JANE AT MARALINGA

Val Hansen

Mal and Ralph,
Salvation Jane did find.
Now that is a weed not too kind.
In their wisdom they thought
That to remove it all they aught.

So out to the airstrip a group went
They thought about an hour is what
would be spent.
Meanwhile 2 hours of digging passed
by. That's enough, they all did sigh

The task continued next day
There was no time to play.
The heaps grew ever big
Til they declared "another I'll not dig!!"

Heaps of rubbish Robin had left near by
Mal decided they would all make a great fire.
So 36 fires down the airstrip he lit.
Burning the Salvation Jane every little bit.

It was a task that appeared small
But that wasn't the case at all!!

Friends of Great Victoria Desert at Maralinga
September 2013

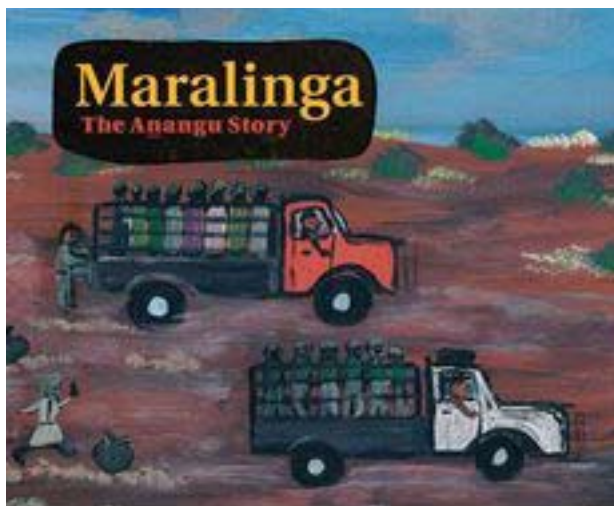


Photos: Val Hansen and Jan Forrest

MARALINGA - THE ANANGU STORY

'Maralinga - the Anangu Story is our story. We have told it for our children, our grandchildren and their children. We have told it for you.' In words and pictures Yalata and Oak Valley community members, with author Christobel Mattingley, describe what happened in the Maralinga Tjarutja lands of South Australia before the bombs and after.

The book is published by Allen and Unwin and available on their website. It is a picture book filled with photographs backgrounded with aboriginal art. The text is readable and informative and sees the arrival of white people from an Anangu perspectives.



Photos: Jan Forrest. At Totem 1 the site of the first atomic bomb explosion, marker, close inspection of the rocks reveal many are glazed, Elizabeth get some help to fix a leaking fuel line.

FRIENDS OF THE GREAT VICTORIA DESERT VEGETATION REPORT Sept 2013

Judy Morton co-ordinator Vegetation surveys

As is the usual experience on our desert trips we were all thrilled to see the enormous variety of plants which we are becoming familiar with over the years. The fields of wildflowers were breathtaking.

The general appearance and condition of the vegetation was much better than when we were last in The Maralinga region in 2010. For example one of the photopoint sites along the Emu Track had a lush covering of spear grass and daisies not seen in 2010.

Maralinga rainfall records are not complete for the last 4 years but Nullarbor (140 k away) had 400mm in 2010, 397 in 2011, 135 in 2012 and 240 so far this year so Maralinga probably had similar amounts. The average is 220mm so we can probably attribute the health of the vegetation to this. In areas which were recovering from recent and not so recent bushfires we saw for ourselves how native plants respond to the combination of fire and rainfall with a flush of new and wonderful plants.

Some general observations can be made about the 3 layers of vegetation we identify in the surveys:-

TREES

Of the 7 species of mallee eucalypts not many were in flower but many had recently formed fruits and there was lots of soft new growth particularly in the eucalypts recovering from fires.

The black oaks (*Casuarina pauper*) widespread in the low poorly drained areas were thriving. Bullock Bush and Quandong trees were usually healthy and some fruit was found on the Quondongs which is always exciting.

SHRUBS

Many Acacias, Sennas, and Eremophilas were in flower and seed pods were plentiful on the Acacias and Sennas. The Western myalls (*Acacia papyrocarpa*) just south of Emu were in flower making them not just attractive for their distinctive shape but also the yellow colour of the flowers.



We saw at least 10 species of Eremophila beating the Eucalypts easily-always so attractive and an iconic plant of our region.

Eremophilas can be pollinated by insects and birds. Insect pollinated flowers are blue, purple or lilac and the stamens are inside the tube. Bird pollinated flowers are the reds, orange, yellow and green flowers with protruding stamens. Hop bushes (*Dodonea* sp.) were putting on lots of new growth but flowers



Photos: top *Acacia papyrocarpa* below *Eremophila alternifolia*-named by Robert Brown, father of Australian botany who travelled with Matthew Flinders.

and fruits (These are the distinctive feature of hopbushes) were not apparent.

We found a small patch of tall *Grevillea juncifolia* in full and glorious flower between Observation Hill & Emu Of the many Chenopods (saltbush family) we were only reasonably confident in our identification of the bluebushes



Photo: *Maireana georgii*

(*Maireana* sp.) They have distinctive winged fruits which are used to identify them and of course they can be very attractive with their translucent pastel coloured wings.

Other chenopods were largely in growing phase so were hard to identify

UNDERSTOREY

The annuals which are part of the understorey were the really WOW plants as I mentioned at the beginning. As well as great swathes of spear grass there were Daisies (17 genera at least) as well as parakeelya (*Calandrinia* sp.) and mulla mulla (*Psilotum* sp.) (5 species).

Solanums (plants from the potato or tomato family) were plentiful but usually very young plants. Goodenias and swainsonas were also in flower and we saw the desert pea in many spots but no huge patches.

We didn't see any mistletoe on this trip in contrast to 2010 when we had several species on the plots.

Four survey sites were completed: two at Immarna (one of the railway sidings on the East\West railway line), one plot near Maralinga village and one along the track between Maralinga and Emu. All were new plots.

The surveys at Immarna were done in somewhat stressful conditions as the temp rose to the high 30s and more on both days. Apparently the sand dune on one side and the raised track of the railway on the other side of our camp adjacent to the survey sites formed a heat trap.



Photo: Plot 1 was on the NE side of a sandune.

Forty four species were collected and pressed on Plot 1 including *Bosseia walkerii*, a spectacular member of the pea family in flower.

The vegetation was OPEN MALLEE as determined by *Eucalyptus concinna* (GVD mallee) in the tree layer.



Photo *Bossea walkerii*, unusual member of the pea family and *Eucalyptus concinna*, a Great Victoria Desert exclusive.



Photos: *Calandrinia polyandra*, *Eucalyptus pimpiniana*, *Senna pleurocarpa* and *Thysanotus exiliflorus*.



Plot 2 was the swale below the sanddune.

Forty eight species were recorded on Plot 2. including 20 not seen in Plot 1. A highlight here was a single specimen of *Cratystylus conocephala*, a daisy bush that looks like a blue bush.

The vegetation was OPEN LOW MALLEE with some black oaks (*Casuarina pauper*) protruding above the dominant shrubs. Black oaks are often found in swales in mallee country.

Plot 3 at Maralinga (200m before the main gate) was also mallee vegetation with the added feature of a bushfire which occurred 8 years ago resulting in a huge range of plants as often occurs if good rains occur subsequently.

It was in an area near a mallee fowl nest shown to us by Nathan Williams the mallee fowl officer from Ceduna (AWNRM).



Plot 3. 300m before main gate at Maralinga

We recorded 55 species on Plot 3 including 27 not seen previously. Highlights were: parakeelya (*Calandrinia polyandra*), a particular spectacular species. *Eucalyptus pimpiniana*, a species of eucalypt very localised to the Maralinga region, also *E. youngiana* and *E. canescens*, two other species with very big tough leaves like some of the WA Eucalypts), *Senna pleurocarpa*, a more unusual species



to the common *Senna artemesioides* we saw everywhere and *Thysanotus exiliflorus* the fringe lily which has edible tubers eaten by aborigines (personal communication N. Williams).

The last plot near our campsite 6K south of Observation Hill was shrubland with Acacias and Dodoneas. Though here were tall mulgas and black oaks in the surrounding area. Photopoint photo There were daisies in this plot but most had already gone to seed. We recorded 48sp with 25 not previously seen. Interestingly there were no *Triodia* sp. here.



Plot 4 Acacias and Dodoneas

We pressed 116 specimens for the herbarium with representatives of 25 flowering families and as always look forward to their verification of our i.ds. We had a few mysteries but feel we are improving as the years go by and having 3 heads really helps. It also makes the task very good



Thanks to
Graham and
Marree Goods,
Judy Morton
and other team
members for
vegetation
photos.

Photo: *Rutidosia
helichrysoides*

fun! The cheerful and patient assistance of collectors, book carriers and scribes is invaluable.

The site and physical descriptions were done with no fuss by Geoff Rishworth assisted by TC, Mal Hansen. We attempt to photograph every specimen prior to collecting and special thanks to them (Maree Goods, Lynne Murray Walker and Erica Tomkins) as it is quite demanding jumping up and down to get a good shot especially when it's hot.

I would also like to mention the visit to an area off the Immarmar to Ooldea track which had been burnt in the previous 12 months and after the rain was bursting with regrowth (plants on steroids Maree said). Here we recorded and photographed as many as we could and the list will be submitted to Ollie Lipcer (Community Officer AWNRM).

We have not seen weeds in alarming quantities apart from Buffel grass near the northern gate at Maralinga. The Colemans and the Hansens spent time clearing some of these as well as a large patch of Salvation Jane at Maralinga airport. The outbreak of Buffel grass will be reported to Chris Brodie, the weeds officer at the herbarium as there is a great deal of concern about the spread of this plant.

We are improving our methods year by year and look forward to applying what we have learnt in the future.

VEGETATION PLOT

Val Hanson

Survey on the vegetation plot was in full swing
Everyone was doing their own thing.

Fiona and Judy pondering over names of every plant
Marie with magnifying glass at angles even on the slant.
Then taking a cutting, - or the whole thing,
While Terrie the numbered bags would bring.

Each plant numbered and all very varying.
Carried by Val round that plot
Now that's not all, no it's not.

Barbara trying her best to spell the name right
Understanding the botanic name making her uptight!
Photos were taken and catalogued

Descriptions pondered as that ground we trod.
Meanwhile Kevin used Marie's camera grand
He was besotted with the features of this brand.
Snapping photos here and there

He was doing this with great care.
Fiona a very rare species found
It even had a flower near the ground.
She wanted a photo of it to treasure.

Kevin to the rescue - it was his pleasure
But, in his haste with the new camera to play
His big foot got in the way.....

The poor plant was squashed flat
That really was the end of that!!!

Friends of Great Victoria Desert Maralinga Sept 2013



Photos: Jan Forrest

NEW LOGO FOR FRIENDS OF PARKS INC.

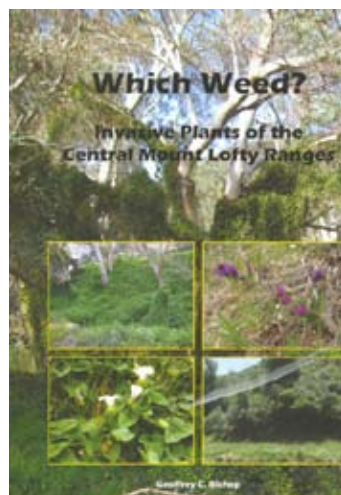
President of Friends of Parks David Mitchell recently announced that the Friends of Parks Board has approved a new logo as shown below.

He advised that feedback from Friends groups has been overwhelmingly positive albeit with a few groups and individuals questioning the need to change while others wanted more design options. David commented that he believes that the Board have come up with something fresh, bright and easily recognisable to take FOP forward into 2014 and beyond.

This logo does not replace or in any way devalue own member group logos or insignia which he feels sure will continue to be worn with pride.



The Board has started work on a marketing plan for Friends of Parks with a small working party and seeks contributions from members. Contact: dm_mitchell@bigpond.com.

WHICH WEED?**Invasive weeds of the South Mt. Lofty Ranges**

Just released, a pictorial guide to the invasive plants (weeds, if you like) of the Adelaide Hills. Biologist Geoffrey Bishop discusses some 195 plant species that have invaded the Adelaide Hills and are now seen as weeds in our gardens, bushland, roadsides and on agricultural properties. Some are widespread in occurrence whilst others are confined to specific parts of the Adelaide Hills or in particular environments, such as watercourses and other

damp sites.

This full-colour 118 page book will appeal to gardeners, community group members, bushcarers – in fact, anyone with an interest in knowing which plants are weeds and

WHICH WEED ORDER FORM

Please send me copies of Which Weed? Invasive Plants of the Central Mount Lofty Ranges @ \$20.00 each plus postage and packing.

1 copy \$10.50 (metropolitan area) / \$11.50 (country zone – postcodes 5200-5749)

2 copies \$10.50 / \$12.30

5 copies \$11.20 / \$14.75

Please send the completed form and cheque to the Adelaide Hills Natural Resource Centre,
1 Crescent Drive, Norton Summit SA 5136 or pay direct to Banks SA account 036349940
BSB 105-141 and email your order to valhunt@ahnrc.org

Name: books @\$20.00 each \$

Address: Postage \$

Email: Cheque/postal order for \$

Telephone: Date of Order:

MALLEE FOWL

Val Hansen

Out west, near the train line,
The camp site was fine,
But the weather was hot,
Too hot to be in the vegetation plot.

So we drove to Yellabinnia Park, not far
At least it was cool in the car.
To see a Mallee Fowl nest our desire,
But sadly it had been destroyed by fire.

A motion camera taking many a photo
Showed the digging of cat, fox and dingo,
But the Mallee Fowl had fled,
I am sure, leaving his nest with much dread.

Ranger Nathan, arrived to check the camera fine,
Leaving it set in the hope of the Mallee Fowl
returning in due time.



Left: Nathan Williams checks cameras Photo: Jan Forrest. Photos above and below Val Hansen, checking camera and nest.



Butterfly Conservation South Australia Inc.

presents

a PUBLIC TALKS PROGRAM

On the first Tuesday of the month March to
November at 6.15pm for a prompt 6.30pm start.

At the Clarence Park Community Centre
72-74 East Avenue, Black Forest.

Bus route W91/W90: stop 10.

Noarlunga Train service: Clarence Park Station.

Glenelg Tram: Forestville stop 4, 9min walk south.

Entry by donation (minimum of \$2).

Please bring supper to share, tea/coffee will be supplied.

Meetings should conclude by 8.30pm.

At the start of each meeting a ten minute
presentation on a 'Butterfly of the Month'
will be given by a BCSA committee member.

Photo Robert H Fisher: Wood White *Delias aganippe*

PUBLIC TALKS PROGRAM 2014

4th March: "Our Outer Harbor Pelicans"

Conservation Ecologist Dr. Greg Johnston will provide a fascinating insight into the bizarre family life of pelicans and how research and community involvement is helping to conserve these wonderful birds in the Outer Harbor area.

1st April: "Moths - stories from the past"

Dr. Peter McQuillan from the University of Tasmania will provide stories on the eccentricities of past moth collectors and entomologists whose collections and research have provided baseline information now used in present-day research.

6th May: "The secret lives of sea anemones"

Not just simple flowers of the sea, this talk will give you an insight into the lives of sea anemones. Some species can swim, mimic other objects, form symbioses with other organisms or are fatally toxic! Presented by Dr. Andrea Crowther from the SAMuseum.

3th June: "A Revegetation blueprint"

Member David Keane will draw on 40 years experience rehabilitating mine sites and quarries to outline ecological principles necessary for a successful vegetation rehabilitation outcome. This talk will be of interest to all involved in revegetation projects.

1st July: "Jewel beetles and plants"

Dr Peter Lang is a botanist with the State Herbarium, but also has an interest in Buprestid or Jewel beetles and their association with plants. Visitors will be enthralled by Peter's amazing images of these colourful beetles.

5th Aug "The wild life of wildlife - procreation oddities"

The need to breed has created many opportunities for evolution to enhance sexual "apparatus" and behaviour in the animal kingdom. Join us for a brief tour of the bizarre kinds of equipment and rituals that have led to the marvellous array of biological diversity on the planet. This talk by Professor Steve Donnellan will commence at **7.00pm** following a short BCSA AGM at **6.30pm**.

2nd Sept:

Speaker to be advised

This talk will be preceded by the "Launch of the new BCSA Spider and other Arachnids posters".

7th Oct: "Weeds and wildlife"

We know that wildlife sometimes use weeds as habitat – but does it really matter? Jasmin Packer, University of Adelaide, will reveal why weeds are sometimes critical habitat.

4th Nov: "

Speaker to be advised

In the case of an advertised speaker not being available, a speaker of similar interest will replace that advertised.

FOR SALE

Genuine Akubra hats
Mens 'Stockman' size 56
Ladies 'Down Under' size 53
Contact: Editor Jan Forrest 82978230

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE

DIARY DATES

MEETINGS

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting will be at 7:30 pm on Friday 14th February. Meetings are held at the Royal Lifesaving Society, 175 Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Cowandilla SA 5033. Off road parking is available behind the building. All members and prospective members are welcome. The agenda will be available before the meeting in the member's area of the website <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fgvd/index.htm>.

2014 MEETING DATES

Further meetings during 2014 will be Friday 13th June and Friday 14th November. Check out the website for full details.

2014 FIELD TRIP:

to be discussed at the next general meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kevin O'Connor	President	0430 498 177
Judy Morton	Secretary	08 8556 2308
Peter Facy	Treasurer	
Jan Forrest	OAM Editor	08 8297 8230

WEB LINKS

DEH information on Mamungari Conservation Park:
<http://www.parks.sa.gov.au/mamungari/index.htm>

Friends of Great Victoria Desert:
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fgvd/index.htm>