

FRIENDS of the GREAT VICTORIA DESERT PARKS

Newsletter Number 45 December, 2014.

TRIP REPORT, JULY and AUGUST 2014

Neil Matthews OAM

The June meeting decided that the trips for 2014 would be

1. a recce trip 8th – 17th July with Neil Matthews and Lynton Huxley accompanying Harald Ehmann (contract Ecologist for AWNRM) to facilitate planning of the proposed August trips
2. two trips of Friends of GVD Parks 18th – 29th August
 - a small group to work with Harald Ehman on marble gum and birding surveys travelling to the north and west of Oak Valley
 - a larger group travelling from Cook to Voakes Hill Corner and then west along the Anne Beadell Hwy into Western Australia

The recce trip covered 2048kms from Ceduna to Ceduna over 10 days returning. In general most time was in areas along BMR tracks to the north west of Oak Valley.

The recce trip investigated and surveyed the following:

1. Marble Gums: distribution, age, response to fires, reproductive techniques (seedlings, epicormic growth), presence of hollows, survival techniques (apposition planes), verification of trees on satellite images
2. Fires: age and complexity, distribution, intensity, correlation with satellite image.
3. Bird surveys: 34 species including elegant parrots and a scarlet-chested parrot (but no long-tailed parrots)
4. Planning for the August trip: routes and distances, camp sites, survey sites, condition of tracks for travel.

See page five for the full report.

During the trip it was a privilege to meet Traditional Owners in Ceduna and Oak Valley, and then spend two days in the bush, camping overnight and spending time around the campfire with Tommy Baker, Thomas Sandimar, Parka Hogan, Nathan Ginger and Derek Jamieson. Their knowledge of the county goes without saying and their teaching was insightful and generous. Their tracking and spotting skills were amazing.

Harald's scientific approach to all things in the desert opened new ideas and provided new data. His respectful relationship with Traditional Owners is long standing and his assistance and advice was invaluable.

Meetings and discussions were held with the following
Richard Preece, General Manager MT Lands; Richard Lebois, Cultural Adviser MT Lands; Tommy Baker, Anangu Elder; Jenny Slape,

Continued Page 3. Rishworth

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Red backed Kingfisher *Todiramphus pyrrhophgius*,
Ringneck parrot *Barnardius zonarius*, Princess
Parrot *Polytelis alexandrae* : Photos: Geoff

President: Phil Gaukroger president@fgvd.org.au

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Treasurer: Peter Facy treasurer@fgvd.org.au

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

Newsletter Editor: Jan Forrest OAM janforrest@hotmail.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 Sports SA Industry Skills Centre on Military Rd at West Beach (across the road from the West Beach Caravan park) **NEW VENUE**

Webmaster: Brian Morton secretary@fgvd.org.au

Field Trip Logistics: Neil Matthews OAM 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.



Dear Members,

2014 has gone quickly and thanks to many people – both within and outside our group, it has been another productive and enjoyable year. Our major activity has once again been the Field Trip, and this year was one where vegetation survey work took a rest and the remainder of our activities took front stage. For multiple reasons, a different method was used in planning and running the field trip. A small core of members constituted the organising committee (very ably led by Neil Matthews) and worked very closely with staff from DEWNR, AWNRM and Oak Valley Community and the Maralinga Tjarutja people. We were fortunate to assist Harald Ehmann, consultant ecologist in undertaking monitoring work for Princess Parrot and their Marble Gum habitats. It was necessary to keep group numbers smaller than in the past, and this was achieved by dividing members into two groups, doing different types of work in different areas. A Recce trip was undertaken in June with great support of DEWNR. Main trip in August – to avoid the potential for hot weather. We hoped to get to know the people of the Oak Valley Community a bit better and this was achieved.



The reports from the various groups are in this newsletter, and I thank all the people who went the extra yard to provide reports, photographs and assist in many other ways. On a personal note, Kathryn and I were very disappointed that for the second year running, we had to withdraw from the Field Trip because of serious health issues. We really miss catching up with our lovely members from interstate and country areas, but hope that in the future we will again be part of the Field Trips.

The venue for our next meeting on Feb 13th 2015 has been changed. The SLSC building at Cowandilla has been sold, so we have to move. I have therefore booked the meeting room at **Sports SA Industry Skills Centre on Military Rd at West Beach (across the road from the West Beach Caravan park)**. This venue seems to tick the boxes and cost is favourable, so we'll try it out and see what you think. I apologise to members from the Hills and Eastern Suburbs who will have to travel that little bit further.

The next meeting is the 2015 AGM. We have had a nice stable committee and I expect this will continue. However, I will not be seeking re-election, so a new President will need to be proposed and elected. I ask you to please give this some thought. It's so much better if we have a nomination before the night.

With Best Wishes

Phil Gaukroger

President, Friends of the Great Victoria Desert Parks



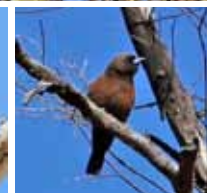
Top: Budgerigars *Melopsittacus undulatus*
Photo: Geoff Rishworth.
Above: Pair of fairy wrens *Malurus lamberti*
Photo: Sue Bland.



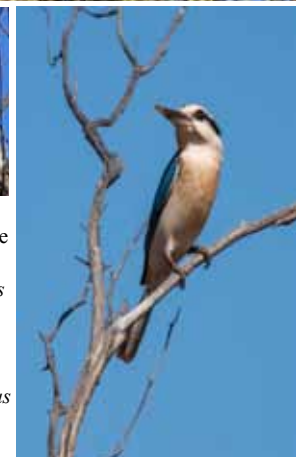
Brown Falcon *Falco berigora* Photo: Lynne Murray-Walker



Black-eared Cuckoo *Chalcites osculans* photographed at Cook railway siding. Photo: Jan Forrest



Top: Galahs *Eolophus roseicapilla* Photo: Sue Bland Above: Little woodswallow *Artamus minor* Photo: Lynne Murray-Walker. Right: Red-backed kingfisher *Todiramphus pyrrhophgius* Photo: Geoff Rishworth



2014 TRIP REPORT *Continued from Page One.*

Community Operations Manager, Oak Valley; Nat Truran, Office Community Services Manager, Oak Valley; Erin Gibson, Community Coordinator, AWNRM; Nathan Williams, Community Project Officer, AWNRM; Graeme Armstrong, Fire Management Officer, AWNRM; Lynda Marshall, Buffel Grass Coordinator, AWNRM; Saras Kumar, Manager Protected Areas & Public Lands, AWNRM.

The MT Lands Office, Traditional Owners and Oak Valley Staff were aware of our intended trip to the BMR tracks in August. The discussions during the recce trip facilitated Friends of the GVD to continue developing important collaborative relationships.

Following application, permits were kindly granted for the two August trips by the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands Council.

MT LANDS GROUP

Following a group dinner at the Ceduna Foreshore Hotel, nine vehicles led by Geoff Rishworth left Ceduna on Monday 18th August and travelled in two groups to the first camp site north of the eastern end of BMR 4. Over five days, groups were involved in marble gum surveys with Harald Ehmann and birding surveys with Clive Curson. The group then travelled to a second campsite for five days on the western end of the "Airport Rd" near BMR 6. Marble gum and birding surveys were again performed in the surrounding area. Nathan Williams (AWNRM) and Oak Valley Traditional Owners were involved in the surveys and it was great to work alongside them.



Above: Vegetation Group Photo: Sue Bland.



Above right: birding group. Photo: Johan Van Der Walt. Right: Harald Ehmann and Nathan Williams, Photo: Sue Bland.



Survey outcomes were:

1. Marble Gum surveys

- 30 permanent monitoring sites ("patches") surveyed and scored
- 30 permanent photopoints individual trees surveyed and scored

2. Bird surveys

- 29 permanent monitoring sites
- 24 surveyed and scored
- 56 separate survey events
- 14 permanent "transect" monitoring sites
- 11 surveyed and scored
- 21 separate survey events
- 68 separate bird species identified including Princess Parrots, Scarlet Chested Parrots and Mallee Fowl tracks

After 11 days of bush camping the group then travelled in two groups back to Ceduna. During the return trip 18 photopoints were photographed along the Business Rd. In addition, at the invitation of the Oak Valley Community, a small group remained in Oak Valley overnight for a presentation by the Friends of GVD group to Traditional Owners and Oak Valley Staff, followed by a BBQ in the Cultural Centre. The group felt privileged by the opportunity.

After returning to Ceduna, both the MT Lands Group and the Anne Beadell Hwy Group joined in a trip closing dinner at the Foreshore Hotel.

Sincere thanks are due to Harald Ehmann and Clive Curson for their friendship and for sharing their scientific knowledge.

Special thanks go to Erin Gibson (Community Coordinator, AWNRM) and Nat Truran (Community Services Officer, Oak Valley) for their help and guidance in facilitating the trip.

The Traditional Owners in Ceduna and Oak Valley were welcoming and we thank them for sharing their Land and giving us the opportunity to work alongside them.



MT Lands Group back row: Neil Matthews, Johan Van Der Walt, Flora Bain, Fred and Lynne Murray-Walker, Ralph Ohlmeyer, Dave Tomkins, Des Bain, Clive curson, Nathan Williams, Erica Tomkins, Harald Ehmann. Front row: Geoff Rishworth, Shelagh Matthews, Sue Bland, Lynton and Karen Huxley, Derek Jamieson. Photo: Geoff Rishworth.



Anne Beadell Highway group back row: Peter Facy, Ian Jackson, Glenda Ross, Gill and Brian McKay, Ian and Oriana Williams, Jo Wood (top), Paul and Diane Koch, Terrie Coleman, Maureen and Peter Buckland. Front row: Harold Ross, Trevor Coleman, Jan Forrest. Photo: Jan Forrest.



IMAGES FROM 2014 FIELD TRIP - MT LANDS GROUP

Top: Harald Ehmann; Neal Matthews, photo point sign; Grass-leaved Hakea, *Hakea francisiana*; Harald and Derek Jamieson; Derek Jamieson, Nathan Williams and Harald Ehmann. Photos Sue Bland, *Grevillea juncifolia* (yellow); *Grevillea huegelii* (red), Group, Des and Flora Bain, Dave and Erica Tomkins, Sue Bland (behind) Geoff Rishworth and Harald Ehmann. Photos: Geoff Rishworth.
Sturt's Desert Peas *Swainsona formosa*. Photo: Erica Tomkins. GVD at night. Photo: Geoff Rishworth.

FIELD TRIP REPORT AUGUST 2014**Anne Beadell Highway group.**

TRIP LEADER – Trevor Coleman (TC)

LOGISTICS OFFICER – Peter Facy

Activities to be carried out

1. Photographing existing vegetation plots (Peter Facy)
2. Reptile surveys (Ian Williams)
3. Invertebrate gathering (Jan Forrest)
4. Locate interpretive posts on the Anne Beadell Highway and check surrounding vegetation (Harold Ross)

Eight vehicles left Ceduna on Monday 18th August visiting the whales at the head of the Bight before spending the night at the Nullarbor Roadhouse; we then turned north along the Cook to Voakes Hill road visiting Kudna Rockhole and Knowles cave before continuing north past Cook to camp 200 kms from Nullarbor. The photo team consisting of Peter Facy, Ian Jackson, Brian and Gill McKay lagged behind to photograph veg sites on the way.

Next day we travelled to our campsite 18 kms south of Voakes Hill corner where we spent two nights, Ian and Jan took groups out during the day to find reptiles and invertebrates and all the veg sites to the east of Voakes Hill corner were photographed.

Our next day was a long one to camp at Serpentine Lakes for two nights, the photographing team left early to continue photos of sites along the Anne Beadell Highway and Harold and Glenda Ross found all the interpretive posts and have reported to the committee, any changes to the vegetation around them.

The free day at Serpentine was very pleasant where everyone did their own thing whether it was R & R, Reptile hunting, or bug catching out on the Lake; some of us had a pleasant lunch under the trees at the northern end of the lake. The last veg site photos were completed, a total of 71 sites were visited and photographed by Ian and I ably assisted by Brian and Gill McKay on their first Field

trip experience and passed with flying colours, Peter and Maureen Buckland also assisted on various days.

We were not permitted to leave the Cook – Voakes Hill road or refuel at Oak Valley which forced us to refuel at Ilkurlka some 170 Kms west of the border along the Anne Beadell Highway where we camped the night before refuelling in the morning.

The next day was an easy day to a pleasant campsite just north of Neale Junction where we had a final communal campfire as the next day Ian & Peter, Brian & Gill, Ian & Oriana drove south on the Connie Sue Highway and after a detour into the Breakaways continued south to Rawlinna and Haig where we encountered the WA Variety Club Bash coming north towards us from Cocklebiddy which proved to be a rather harrowing experience! We arrived back in Ceduna on Friday afternoon in time to have dinner with the MT Lands Group who had returned from the Oak Valley area.

TC took the other five vehicles west from Neale Junction and down through the Plumridge Lakes area and back to the Eyre Highway a day behind our group.

The trip, although having to travel a greater distance than usual, was a great success and completed all the objectives we set out to do and took most of us to new territory which was very enjoyable.

TC led the group well and kept us to the tight schedule we had planned; it was a credit to all that there were no major dramas with our group and all apparently enjoyed themselves.

TC was able to assist a lone traveller just south of Voakes Hill Corner in repairing his camper trailer and arranged through Erin Gibson for him to refuel at Oak Valley as a one off emergency assistance.

Peter Facy



Southern Right Whales
Eubalaena australis, Head
of the Bight. Photos: Jan
Forrest.



Cook Railway Station, Ann
Beadell Highway Photos: Jan
Forrest.

Gill McKay, Brian McKay,
Oriana Williams, TC (Trip
Leader) and Ian Williams at the
WA-SA Border. Photo: Peter
Facy.

Lunch at Serpentine Lakes,
Serpentine Lake. Photos:
Jan Forrest and camp on the
Connie Sue Highway, Photo:
Peter Facy



MANY STILL ASLEEP.....BUT DRAGONS OUT AND ABOUT - REPTILE REPORT FROM THE ANNE BEADELL TRAVELLERS.

Ian Williams

Were lizards going to be scurrying around....or perched on a vantage point waiting for the next meal to wander past. Hopefully a snake or two basking in the sun. Would it be warm enough? Had the reptiles awakened from their winter slumber?

So it was with uncertain expectations as our group departed from Ceduna on August 18, if we would observe some scaly scenery on our 2500km circuit into and across some of the GVD. Personally it was to be my first look at Mamungari CP, a destination that for many years had been on my wish list. Additionally I had never observed a Thorny Devil in the wild in S.A., despite a number of trips into Eyre Peninsula territory to look for them. I'd heard about Ilkurlka some 200km westward from the SA-WA border in the heart of the homelands of the Spinifex People....where several Western Desert Taipans had been captured, two of which were collected for Adelaide Zoo for venom testing and with breeding possibilities. The Serpentine Lakes..... what to expect? Let's go have a look....can't wait.

West of Nundroo.....lunch stop.....gobble down the sandwich...what's out and about? Soon, through the binoculars, a small shiny blackish skink perched on a mallee branch. Long way away, but click off a photo just in case. Another step forward....lizard gone. But a blurry image, and good enough to identify my first sighting of a Striped Wall Skink (*Cryptoblepharus pulcher*). My hopes were rising.

Three living and three squashed Sleepy Lizards on the Eyre today. How many are run over each year....don't want to think about it. Late afternoon whale watching at the Head of the Bight. Magnificent mammals....didn't want to leave. As we walk away a Singing Honeyeater perched atop a prickly bush...flitting here and there. First campsite....Nullarbor Roadhouse....mmm....at least an enjoyable feed together....giant hamburgers.

At last....heading north into the bush. Morning tea at Knowles Cave....then Kudna Rockhole....then Cook. Train whooshes past....long buggers...impressive...same can't be said for Cook. The great desert is getting closer. Sturt Desert Peas along the way...always beautiful....just like Sleepies...never get tired of seeing them.... iconic. Nice campsite in black oak. Went spotlighting for an hour on a nice sandhill adjacent campsite...cool evening, ground temp 12-14 deg C....no geckos observed. Next day....occasional lizards sighted scurrying across track in front of lead vehicle. Entered Mamungari CP....a dream come true. Camped some 10km further on, south of Voakes Hill Corner. Another good campsite in black oak. Walked around for an hour in late afternoon sun...no reptiles. Thursday August 21st, the first of two scheduled 'rest' days. Time for some serious searching today...a series of walks morning and afternoon...about four hours in total.....no damn reptiles sighted all day, despite air temperature in mid-high 20s



and a ground temperatures mid-afternoon of 35-42 deg C. Hopes were diminishing. The Facy-Jacko Photopoint mob were luckier as they went about their veg obs. Reported a dragon perched right on one of their markers....in fact right next to the marker disc, a young Dwarf Bearded Dragon (*Pogona minor*). Nice pictures, thanks Peter and Brian.

Next morning....soon turning westward onto Anne Beadell. Wildflowers...plentiful and very colourful. Stunning dark pink flowers on Grass-leaved Hakeas and yellow-orange flower spikes on Honeysuckle Grevilleas. Not very good at botany...but thankful help from Glenda, Harold and others soon improves my knowledge. Good mob on our trip....all getting on well under the first-class leadership of TC. Travelled 190 km along AB through the park today. Yippee, around 1530 whilst stopped for something, can't remember what, Dianne spotted a dragon amongst spinifex next to the track. Dark black markings on the side of body, neck and head....a male Military Dragon (*Ctenophorus isolepis*), no doubt horny and



looking for a female. It's that time of the year! Shortly we're at our campsite just east of Serpentine Lakes. Soon more little dragons scurrying around the spinifex at campsite. Female

Military Dragons....no males around. Perhaps females feeding up before breeding.

Saturday 23rd August, marked our second and last 'rest' day, a chance for everyone to go exploring and find whatever they hoped to find....love these days. I was in the middle of a shave at about 0930 when I heard a voice shout out.... 'Ian, quick, come up here...lizard' (or something to that effect). I grabbed my camera and raced



off up the sandy rise as fast as I could. Upon arrival I find Paul behind a bush, having finished doing up his strides and pointing excitedly at a.....yes.....yes.... a Thorny Devil (*Moloch horridus*). A Thorny Devil in Mamungari.... it doesn't get better... well at least for me. But that's not it....soon after Paul spots another one, only a few metres from the first sighting....this one yellow-coloured in distinct contrast to the brown and black colour

of the first one. These amazing (and they are that) lizards amongst other interesting physiology can change colour quite quickly, but at this time of day change from the darker colour to the lighter colour as they warm up. Many pictures later and with most of the group having a chance to check them out, daily activities reverted 'each to his own'. No guesses what I and my very patient and helpful wife did for the rest of the day. And productive it was.....soon a female Central Netted Dragon (*Ctenophorus nuchalis*), a young male Crested Dragon (*Ctenophorus cristatus*), a small grey dragon with two whitish stripes going part way down its back ...identity of which I wasn't sure. Later confirmed to be a juvenile Long-nosed Dragon (*Gowidon longirostris*). Also more female Military Dragons around campsite. Searched perimeter around a small salt lake over the hill from campsite, hoping to see a Claypan Dragon (*Ctenophorus salinarum*). Searched hard, but no luck. During their trip with others along the bigger salt lakes, Paul and Dianne came across a Western Bluetongue (*Tiliqua occipitalis*), a close relative of the Eastern Bluetongue (*T. scincoides*) very familiar to many of us. It was a good day....the dragons are out and about. No small skinks out and about yet.

The newsletter editor (doing a great job, Jan) is going to ask me to make this article shorter if I don't conclude soon. So to cut a great trip shorter. Next day, crossed the Serpentine, departed Mamungari and S.A., still heading due west....and what a huge improvement in track quality in W.A....missing the corrugations....not! Stubborn camel wanting to run a marathon on the track ahead of us...poor old fella must have been bugged. Observed several more Thorny Devils sitting on track...had to stop, take pics, move them to safety and head off towards our campsite 20km east of Ilkurlka. Another male Military Dragon when we stopped for water at a tank. Monday 25th August...arrived at Ilkurlka 'roadhouse' nice and early and most replenished vehicles with 'liquid gold'. Good look around, no reptiles observed....a chat to the volunteer Managers, Elisa and Gunter and several hours later we departed. Late morning, most undertook a side trip to see a plane wreck... no guesses what the herpers did...but only one female Military Dragon observed. Camped just north of Neale Corner Junction. In late afternoon sun, the Desert (Marble) gums were beautiful, as they had been along the way. Next morning the group split into two, some heading off to Plumridge Lakes, and others heading due south along the Connie Sue. We were in latter group, stopping to visit the Breakaways before continuing along the first class 'business' road. Mid-afternoon we forked off the good road and onto the 'rough and tumble' remainder of Connie Sue. Campsite in a barren, treeless plain of saltbush, grasses and dirt some 40 km north of Rawlinna. Brian and Gill's 4WD had been dropping oil, so this was checked out. Nice fire that night and next morning Brian found a South Coast Gecko (*Diplodactylus calcicolus*) under his fire tin. Nice find, but South Coast Stone Gecko....mmm....a long way from the south coast. Next day, Rawlinna then westwards along railway line to Haig. Nullarbor Bearded Dragons (*Pogona nullarbor*) and lots of Sleepies sighted. Then headed south, don't ask about the Variety Bash cars heading north. Arrived late afternoon back at the Eyre Highway east of Cocklebidy. Two more campsites along the Eyre and 700km later we arrived back at Ceduna, in time for the group dinner that night.

In summary, a really good trip, well-organised and then well led by TC. The Photopoint vegies collected lots of data. Priscilla did well. Importantly, everyone got on well

together and enjoyed themselves. Despite being quiet earlier on in the trip, we got to see some nice reptiles in the second week. A bit early in the season for full on reptile activity... small skinks and geckos apparently not out and about. But Thorny Devils in Mamungari....what more could a herpetologist want.



Photos: Dwarf Bearded Dragon, Peter Facy.
All others Ian Williams

WATTLES OF THE GREAT VICTORIA DESERT*Bill Dowling*

The GVD is home to many wattle (*Acacia*) plants. Here are three of the prettiest and most interesting, photographed on field trips over the last decade.

Spinebush, *Acacia nyssophylla*

This is a prolific flowerer. Like most GVD wattles, it's at its best after rain. It can be found throughout the desert and beyond, extending to the Perth area in the west and just sneaking into Victoria and NSW in the east. The common name "spinebush" is apt.

**Maitland's wattle, *Acacia maitlandii***

This one is not so prickly. You will find it in the more northerly parts of the GVD. It was named for Maitland Brown, the plant hunter who collected the first specimen for western science.



The flower heads are held singly on long stalks, making it easy to identify.

Western myall, *Acacia papryocarpa*

The Western myall is the grand old wattle of the GVD. It's a stately tree and individuals can be up to 1000 years old.



This group is near the Emu bomb site along the Anne Beadell Highway.



This large specimen sits within a few metres of the WA – SA border, along the Tjuntjuntjara Track.

WE MIGHT CALL IT A PYGMY BUT

Ian Williams

During the FGVD trips in August one group travelled westward along the Anne Beadell 'highway', stopping at Ilkurlka in W.A. to refuel. Aside from having to fork out \$3.00 per litre for fuel, one of the highlights was meeting Elisa Bell and Gunter May, the acting Managers at this isolated 'roadhouse' in the middle of the GVD.

It's a small world! Several months later I met up with Elisa and Gunter again, this time at Birdlife Australia's Gluepot Reserve, north of Waikerie in S.A. Gunter and Elisa were undertaking several months duties as Rangers at Gluepot and I was visiting as an A/Ranger. Surprise, surprise (not surprise).....we talked about some of the reptiles that she had observed during their visits to Ilkurlka.

One of Elisa's experiences was such lucky and rare one that it should be shared.

The Pygmy Desert Monitor (*Varanus eremius*) is difficult to find in the wild, being rarely observed. It has a total length of about 45cm of which about 30cm is tail. It is a reddish to orange brown colour with small white-yellow and black spots and flecks on the body, with a tail striped with four dark coloured lines. A distinctive and beautifully coloured goanna. Its range is throughout central Australia extending westwards to the coast, in mostly sandy deserts in association with spinifex. It is totally terrestrial, a burrowing species with a diet comprising mostly large insects, spiders, scorpions and small lizards.

The Military Dragon (*Ctenophorus isolepis*), on the other hand, is commonly observed throughout its range in the arid western two-thirds of Australia. It has a similar but broader distribution than the Desert Monitor. It has a total length of about 20cm of which about 13cm is tail. Also terrestrial, living usually, but not always amongst spinifex, the Military Dragon is usually observed darting around and between spinifex clumps searching for insects, mainly ants, to eat. It was the most common lizard that my group observed in a spinifex habitat during our trip.

Out and about one fine late September morning at Ilkurlka, Elisa was strolling amongst spinifex when she noticed a disturbance. Further investigation revealed a Pygmy Desert Monitor tussling with a Military Dragon. Soon the little goanna had the dragon in its mouth. During the ensuing ten minutes Elisa witnessed the dragon gradually disappear inside the goanna, while pressing her camera shutter frequently to capture the event.

From time to time we see wildlife docs on tellie or footage on YouTube of amazing swallowing feats. Elisa witnessed a goanna swallowing a dragon about half its size. Its body, without tail (or snout-vent length

as scientists record) would be about 15cm long and it managed to consume a dragon even longer. That's very impressive.

Sad for the dragon but the goanna would not have had to eat for a good while.

Thankyou to Elisa for sharing your pictures.



Photos: Elisa Bell

Editor's note: Those not familiar with the rediscovery of the Pygmy Blue Tongue lizard Tiliqua adelaidensis in 1992 may have been mystified at the title of this article. Thought to be extinct, a specimen of the pygmy blue tongue lizard was extracted from the stomach of a snake, during a routine check of roadkills on a DEWNR survey. After extensive research and field work the species survives well in the Mid north area of South Australia living in abandoned spider holes.

INVERTEBRATE COLLECTIONS REPORT FROM FIELD TRIP 2014

Jan Forrest, Hon Assoc. SAMuseum

This year we concentrated on making collections of mainly wasps and bees by using the vehicle net 'Priscilla' mounted on top of the vehicle. This method has proved extremely efficient on past trips and this year was no exception.

It is expected that several new species of native bees are included in the material collected however it will take several years before these can be worked on by specialists as the fauna is not well known and there are only a few taxonomists in the world working on Australian native bees.

The value making these type of collections in remote areas cannot be underestimated as it is only by looking at a wide range of localities can specialists begin to ascertain the relationships between different groups.

In addition to the bees and wasps, a number of spiders were also collected and on a salt lake some beautifully preserved scorpions and a centipede. All the material collected is presently being processed at the SAMuseum.

Thanks go to my passenger Jo Wood for her help in keeping track of the locality waypoints and for preparing the labels back at the Museum.



Jan and Jo check the 'Priscilla' wasp and bee collections on the Anne Beadell Highway. Photo: Oriana Williams above salt lake collections: Photo: Jan Forrest.

ZAP YOUR WEEDS - FREE AP FOR WEED CONTROL

From: SA Weed Control. More information from:
pir.sa.gov.au/weedcontrol

The free Weed Control app provides essential information about the control of weeds declared in South Australia under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004.

The weed control app includes:

- control recommendations for over 100 declared plant species
- chemical and non-chemical treatments
- information on the safe use of herbicides
- colour photographs of each species for identification.

The Weed control app provides information from the Weed Control Handbook for Declared Plants in South Australia.

In addition app users can:

- record the location of weeds
- keep a personal log of control activities
- phone or email regional Natural Resource officers
- send photos and text of high risk weeds.

The app will be updated annually as chemical uses and plant declarations change.



The SA Weed Control app is produced by Biosecurity SA in partnership with the eight Natural Resource Management regions.

Download FREE app from Google Play (for Android devices) or iTunes App Store (for Apple devices.. coming soon)



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Natural History Society of South Australia

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Birds of the Fleurieu

2015 CALENDAR

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ONLY
\$10



The focus of the 2015 calendar is on the Hooded Plover
– a small endangered beach-nesting bird which
needs our help if it is going to survive as a species.

All proceeds from this calendar support habitat
restoration projects and the protection of endangered
and vulnerable wildlife on the Fleurieu Peninsula.



More Vegetation > More Habitat > More Biodiversity > More Birds

Orders & Enquiries
for the 2015 Calendar & Greeting Cards

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THE SA BRANCH OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION INVITES YOU TO THE MULTI-FAITH CELEBRATION ON AUSTRALIA DAY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.

NOW AT **BONYTHON HALL** ON NORTH TERRACE

RSVP: NOT REQUIRED

PARKING: ENTER AT GATE 23 FOR UNDERGROUND PARKING AT THE UNIVERSITY. COST OF PARKING IS AT THE NORMAL DAILY RATE.

SPIDER POSTERS NOW AVAILABLE

see article previous newsletter

Entitled “*Spiders and their allies of the Adelaide Region*” these two posters have been produced by David Hirst and Jan Forrest on behalf of Butterfly Conservation SA and feature 63 species of spiders, 2 harvestmen (a group closely aligned to spiders), 4 scorpions, 3 millipedes and 1 centipede. Assistance was also given by Nicholas Birks, Ashley Borgheest and Ariel Printing.

These spider posters are now available for purchase from the SAMuseum shop at retail prices or you may like to order directly from Butterfly Conservation SA for the member price of \$10 per set plus postage of \$12.

There are still some moth posters “*Moths of the Adelaide Region*” for the same price and a limited number of “*Threatened species - the Bilby*” and “*Bats of SE South Australia*” kindly provided by Nicholas Birks. The latter are available for \$5.00 each.

As the spider and moth posters were funded by a grant from the Adelaide and Mt. Lofty NRM Board a limited number are being made available to schools **free of charge** (schools only pay postage of \$12).

A schools order form / invoice is available to download from the butterfly gardening website www.butterflygardening.net.au or contact BCSA Secretary Jan Forrest for a form janforrest@hotmail.com

Posters will only be dispatched on receipt of payment and could take up to three weeks to be received.

STILL FOR SALE

2 Genuine Akubra hats **Mens** ‘Stockman’ size 56
Ladies ‘Down Under’ size 53
 Contact: Editor Jan Forrest 82978230

FRIENDS OF VULKATHUNHA-GAMMON RANGES NATIONAL PARK EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

In 2001 the Conservation Council of SA called for expressions of interest to form a Friends of Gammon Ranges National Park. A Friends group was set up, but after a year or so interest faded and the group has been in limbo ever since. Recently the Friends received a substantial bequest and the group is hoping to re-ignite interest so that the bequest can be wisely used in the Park.



In October I met with the District Ranger (Lindsay Brown) and Adnyamathana Senior Ranger (Arthur Coulthard) at Balcanoonna to discuss possible uses for the bequest. Several proposals were outlined. It was agreed that the Friends group should reform to assist the Park Management in whatever project was decided.

It is hoped that a meeting of interested persons can attend a public meeting in Adelaide in February 2015 at a date and venue to be confirmed. If you are interested and would like to attend and hear more then please record your expression of interest by contacting me by email prior to 31st December 2014.

If there is sufficient interest shown I will arrange a venue and date and get back to you with that information.

Graeme Oats – gdoats@bigpond.net.au

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).

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: Common Brown *Heteronympha merope*

The first public talk will be on **Tuesday 3rd March at 6.30** when Dan Duval from SA Seed Conservation Centre based at the Botanic Gardens will provide a fascinating insight to the SA Seedbank project.

Make a note in your 2015 diary NOW

Other speakers this year will include:

- Darren Ray from the weather bureau in April - weather patterns
 - Andrew Winkler - Torrens Island conservation park and history of the quarantine station.
 - David Paton - Birds of the Adelaide region
 - Mark Pharaoh - the Mawson Collection
 - Steve Walker - Frogs of the Adelaide region
- to our regular visitors - we hope that noise from the zumba dancing has now been resolved with the installation of sound proof doors.

NEW HOME FOR THE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

As many of you know, Conservation SA is about to turn the old Central Bus Station in Franklin Street into a nurturing and bustling space connecting nature, creativity and community in the heart of Adelaide.

In particular, they have grand dreams of turning the car park out the back, and the grounds at the front and sides of the building, into an oasis. Think: veggie gardens, nature spaces, community art, places for people to meet and relax and kids to play, bike repair, even a pizza oven or some chooks and bees.



The building is old and run down. They are determined to use the most sustainable products as possible and would also love to install a community kitchen that could be used by everyone, transforming food waste from the Central Market into nutritious meals.

If you are interested in turning this (above left) into possibly this (above right) and help make the dream a reality you can contact the State Executive Officer Craig Wilkins with ideas and offers of financial support.

\$30 will buy garden hand tools

\$120 will buy an outdoor bench

\$450 will buy a raised garden bed

\$1000 will buy a community kitchen fridge

NATIVE GARDEN TRAIL

Did you know that there is a Native Garden Trail in Adelaide suburbs, primarily public parks and gardens. The map and information can be downloaded from: www.environment.sa.gov.au/files/dd9bf1cc.../sustainable-nativetrail.pdf



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE

DIARY DATES

MEETINGS

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting will be at 7:30 pm on Friday 13th February. Meetings are held at the Sports SA Industry Skills Centre on Military Rd at West Beach (across the road from the West Beach Caravan park). 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>.

2015 MEETING DATES

Further meetings during 2015 will be determined/announced at the next meeting (usually held in June and November). Check out the website for full details.

2015 FIELD TRIP: to be discussed at the next general meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Phil Gaukroger	President	president@fgvd.org.au
Judy Morton	Secretary	secretary@fgvd.org.au
Peter Facy	Treasurer	treasurer@fgvd.org.au
Jan Forrest OAM	Editor	janforrest@hotmail.com

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>