



June 2012

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



Euros, *Macropus robustus* - very silver mother with very red joey.
Photo by Pam Keil, taken at Mac and Rose Chalmers Conservation Park.

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month (except December & January) at 7:00 PM at Higher Education Building at Charles Darwin University. Visitors are welcome

**Postal Address: P.O. Box 8663
Alice Springs, Northern Territory
0871**

Web site:

<http://www.alicefieldnaturalists.org.au>

CONTENTS

Meetings...**p2** Trips/Activities...**p2**
April Speaker: Peter Latz - Historical Botany at Hermannsburg...**p3**
Joan Powling - Freshwater Algae...**p4** Impressions of Newhaven...**p5**
Mac & Rose Chalmers Conservation Park...**p6** Bush Bean...**p8**
Two Sides of a River...**p9** Alcoota Preview...**p9**
A website worth looking at.... **p10**

NEXT NEWSLETTER

The deadline for the next newsletter is **Friday 22 June 2012**. Please send your contributions to Emily Findlay robbiemily@hotmail.com or Barb Gilfedder fedders@octa4.net.au

MEETINGS.

Wed 13 June **ASFNC** Meeting, 7.00 pm at the lecture theatre in the Higher Education Building at Charles Darwin University. Speaker **Angus Duguid**: Lake Eyre basin Fish

Wed 6 June **APS** Meeting Olive Pink Botanic Garden 7.30pm. Speaker **Fiona Walsh**, CSIRO on Desert Raisin and its ecological & cultural values.

Wed 4 July **APS** Meeting Speaker - **Chris Day**, Every Day Sustainable Living, South Australia – organic gardening with permaculture principles and an update on the Flinders University permaculture garden.

Wed 11 July **ASFNC** Meeting 7.00 pm at the lecture theatre in the Higher Education Building at Charles Darwin University. Speaker - **Ken Johnson** on early naturalist HH Finlayson. Vice President Sue Fraser will chair meeting.

FIELD TRIPS / ACTIVITIES.

Sun 3 June **ASFNC** 10.00am Guided tour of Paleontology Collection in NT Museum, Strehlow Centre, Araluen - Leader Barb Gilfedder. Details see below.

June 9-11 **ASFNC** Long weekend trip to Mordor Pound - Leader Morgan Flint, Ph 89532286, morganfli@gmail.com

Sun 17 June **ASFNC** Drive to Ooraminna Rockhole – Leaders Jim and Marg Lawrence, Ph 89525049, margnjim@bigpond.com

Sat 23 June **ASFNC** Walk along South side of Heavitree Range. Meet and park 8.30am along sewage ponds entrance road. Return walk along rough trail about 8km. total. Take lunch. Leader Connie Spencer. Details see below.

5-7 July A/S Show weekend

14-15 July **ASFNC Alcoota Fossil Dig site**. Either day trip or camp Saturday night. Talks, demonstrations, chance to try your hand at digging. (See *item on page 9*) Leader Lee Ryall. Ph 0417401237 ryall.lee8@gmail.com

Sat 21 July **ASFNC** Walk from **Jim's Place, Stuart's Well** on South Stuart Highway, into the hills, then optional lunch at Jim's Place. Leader Rosalie Breen. Details see below.

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|--|
| President | Barbara Gilfedder | 8955 5452 | fedders@octa4.net.au |
| Vice-President | Sue Fraser | 8955 0675 | suefra@hotmail.com |
| Secretary | Neil Woolcock | 8955 1021 | neilwool48@gmail.com |
| Treasurer | Jill Brew | 8953 0551 | jillinalice@yahoo.com.au |
| Property Officer | Sarah White | 8955 0961 | Sarah.White@nt.gov.au |
| Public Officer | Rhonda Tomlinson | 8953 1280 | rhonda.tomlinson@bigpond.com |
| Newsletter Editor | Emily Findlay | 8953 3218 | robbiemily@hotmail.com |
| Committee Member | Rosalie Breen | 8952 3409 | rosalie.breen@email.com |
| Committee Member | Connie Spencer | 8952 4694 | constans@bigpond.net.au |

Historical Botany in Hermannsburg -- a talk by Peter Latz, write-up by Pam Keil

We're all familiar with the Witchetty Bush, a dominant shrub around Alice Springs, and many know its Latin name - *Acacia kempeana* - but how many of us know the Kempe for whom it is named? Peter Latz told stories of the people behind the names of plants in Central Australia.

It all begins with Baron Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896) a chemist and botanist who migrated to Australia in 1847. He loved to explore and never missed a plant. While there are quite a few plants named for Latz himself, Peter states that he only found new species in place the Baron had never visited - he was very thorough.

Baron von Mueller was living in Victoria, but would explore whenever he got the chance. He joined the Gregory expedition and made it with them to Lake Termination - though apparently he kept stopping for every plant along the way. When Gregory felt that he was slowing them down, he got the Baron a horse that was good at tracking and could find the camp site each night no matter how far behind the rest of the party. So the Baron collected plants throughout the day, and spent the night cataloguing them by firelight.



Acacia kempeana

Though the Baron himself never made it to Central Australia, he did help to fund many of the explorers and settlers who did. For his financial backing all he asked was that they bring back or send him samples of plants that they found. In return, new species often bore the names of the people who collected them. Stuart and Giles both participated in the Baron's botany scheme.

One problem with relying on explorers, as Latz points out, is that they may not be as precise as a botanist might hope about writing down exactly where they had found a plant... He gives the example of trying to find the type location for

Hakea grammatophylla, which Stuart had collected supposedly from Central Mount Stuart. When Latz looked for it there, he couldn't find it anywhere and could not believe that it had gone extinct - but on the next hill to the West, Mt Leichhardt, he found it in abundance. Most likely, Stuart had visited the two hills on the same day, collected the plant, and then tried to remember later where exactly he had found it when he was ready to package it up for the Baron.



Actinotus schwartzii

The missionaries - Pastors A.H. Kempe (blacksmith) and W.F. Schwartz (baker) - were known to the Baron, who helped to fund their mission and also provided them with plenty of seed from around the world with which to plant a hardy desert garden. In return, they sent him plant samples from the area - collected with the help of their Aboriginal neighbours.

Because the missionaries translated a hymn into Arrernte and played the flute and violin as they sang it - a method of teaching well known to the Aboriginal people-- they quickly took to the missionaries. When they later brought their wives to the mission, the Aboriginal people were relieved to see that there were white women as well. So the missionaries got along well with the locals, and were given many specimens - both plant and animal - to send back to the Baron.

Under Kempe and Schwartz the town continued to thrive, with gardens of vegetables and plenty of sheep and cattle. Hermannsburg was the place to go if you needed a doctor or church. And the plants continued to be sent to the Baron. Kempe co-authored a paper with the Baron on the plants of Central Australia and had several new species - including the Witchetty Bush - named for him.

When those missionaries left Central Australia, Hermannsburg began a slow decline. They were eventually replaced by Pastor Carl Strehlow and then by Albrecht. By this time, however, the Baron had died. Strehlow was more of a linguist than a naturalist, though he did have some interest in natural history. He



Harnieria kempeana

sent specimens back to Germany for identification - and plants continued to be discovered and named. But no one had quite the influence of Baron von Mueller.

Now, this being a talk by Peter Latz, there is plenty more I could say, but space is running short... The story of the naming of plants was interspersed with the history of the area and many side stories of conflict, resolution, and exploration... To get the full richness of the Latz narrative, I'm going to have to recommend that we all buy his new book when it comes out just before Christmas, which will delve much more deeply into these stories than I can hope to do in this short newsletter article - which only touches on the glimpse that Peter gave us in his hour of story telling.

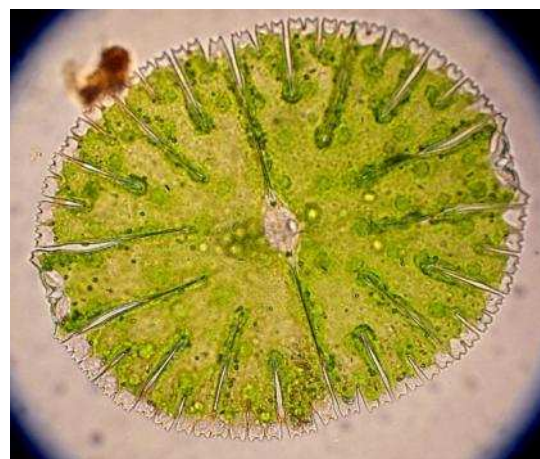
.....

Freshwater Algae of the Arid Zone - talk by Joan Powling, write-up by Pam Keil

Joan Powling, a longtime friend of Rosalie Breen, was recently in town to conduct aquatic surveys with the Parks Biodiversity group and agreed to give a talk on algae. We had a good turnout and a fun time learning about the wide variety of freshwater species that thrive across the arid regions of Australia.

Whenever we've been at a pool of water, we may have seen Rosalie take out her net and sample jar and wondered what she was finding. Joan gave us a glimpse of the beautiful and unexpected things that we can discover in a jar of water, if we only take the time to look through a hand lens or microscope.

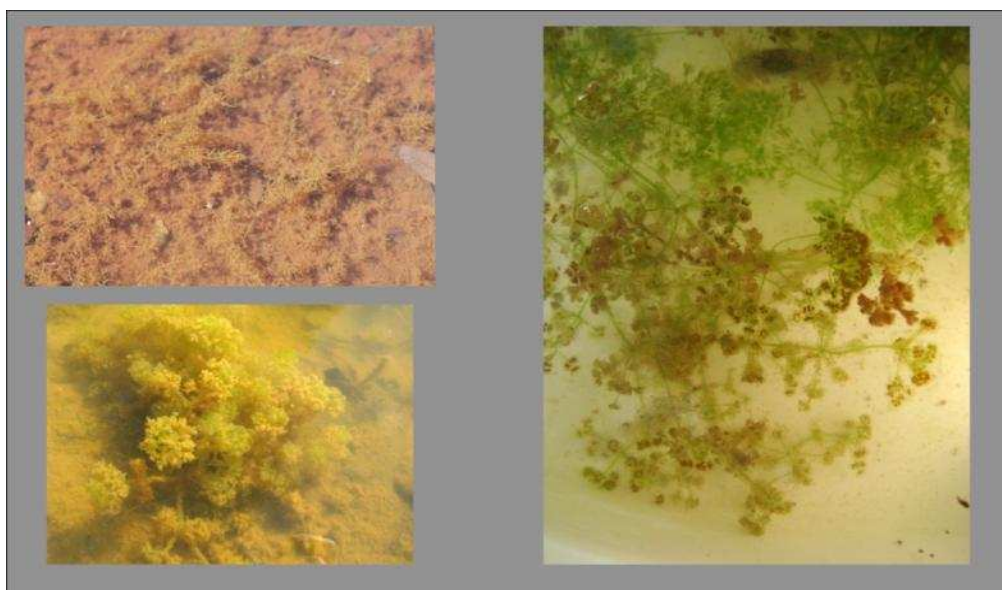
Joan's favourite algae are a group called the Desmids, which are single-celled algae. They are bright green (unlike diatoms) and come in a wide variety of shapes, with bumps, spikes and branches. She is particularly fond of a UFO-shaped desmid that occurs in many habitats across the arid zone, which she nominates as the "aquatic algae emblem of the arid zone."



A desmid the "aquatic algae emblem of the arid zone."

We are most familiar with filamentous algae. When their habitat dries out they produce airborne spores that travel long distances. In Joan's travels across the newly flooded areas around Lake Eyre and in the Pilbara, she found other types of algae that usually require a constant supply of water. Because water isn't reliable in these areas, she decided to look a little closer and learned more about Desmids.

Desmids usually reproduce through fission, they "multiply by dividing." But they discovered evidence in the drying puddles that they also produce sexual zygospores when their habitat dries out. The zygospores sit in the soil, waiting for the next big rain.



Joan's latest interest are a branching algae called Charophytes, found in many arid regions including a recent discovery on Cravens Peak. These fuzzy algae produce bright orange or red zygospores that dot the green branches. Joan would like us to help to find more of them. If you see green goop like this (photos) please collect a sample. Rosalie will tell you how to ship it to Joan. All you need to do is bring a net, jar and a hand lens.

Charophytes is about, visit: <http://www.cytographics.com/> or do a Google image search for desmids... soon we'll all want to be amateur algae hunters.

Impressions of Newhaven Trip. 26-29 April. Write-up by Dave Sutton, photos Barb Gilfedder

The weather: Beautiful Autumn weather. Just after some rain which freshened things up nicely (and put water over the road!). Somewhat windy unfortunately which made bird-watching difficult. However there was no shortage of other things to see. Read on...



Monica checking on a small mammal's sex.

The people: Thanks to Barb and Jim for putting it on. Danae and Joe (Newhaven hosts) for being friendly, informative and going out of their way to show us around. And thanks to the crew running the animal survey for allowing us to watch your work with the traps. Awesome...

The Country: "Big Sky" country with lots of variety. Sand Dunes. Dry lakes of every description (and some lakes with water in them). Mulga. Mallee. Gorges. Siddeley Range and Mount Liebig in the distance. Most of the area came out of the recent fires in quite good

condition – reportedly they had lots of "patchy" burns...



Thursday: Some sightings on the way in... Bourke's Parrots (Kunoth Bore). A pair of Australian Bustards. A group of 7 or 8 Brown Quail walking across the road. Grey Butcherbird, Willy Wagtails, Zebra Finches, Black-faced Woodswallows, Brown Falcons, Nankeen Kestrel...

Friday: 6:20am start to tag along with Joe and the animal survey crew. It was a great opportunity to get a good look at some of the marsupials and reptiles that one does not normally see. Mulgara *Dasyercus cristicauda* (what fat tails they have...), Wongai Ningai *Ningai ridei*, Desert Mouse *Pseudomys desertor*, Spinifex Hopping Mouse *Notomys alexis*, Sandy Inland Mouse *Pseudomys hermannsbergensis*, Leopard Skink *Ctenotus pantherinus*, Three-spined Rainbow Skink *Carlia tricantha*, Desert Banded Snake *Simoselaps anomalus* (found by one of the survey crew when she put her hand down a pit trap!) and Barn Owl. (No, not in a trap – it co-operatively sat on a log while we all got a good look) After leaving the survey crew we drove on around the Dunes Loop. Good stands of Blue Mallee *Eucalyptus gamophylla* and "Rattlepod" bush *Grevillea stenobotrya*. Good vegetation in swales where fire did not penetrate. Into Lake Bennett to look at an interesting hyper-saline spring, which was also an automated camel recording site. Sighting for the afternoon was probably Orange Chat which we saw there. Black-shouldered Kite. Diamond Doves. Fairy Wrens in the sandhills...

Saturday: A more leisurely start... Started with a walk down a sheltered track off the end of the airstrip, hoping that bird-watching would be better out of the wind. Not so, however we did get to see some Grey Fantails, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush and Ringneck Parrots. After that we drove around the Lakes Loop – what a variety of lakes there were. Susie's Lake: Water, Hooded Robin, Military Dragon *Ctenophorus isolepis*. surrounded by beautiful paperbarks *Melaleuca glomerata*. Lake Tecticornia named after Blackseed Samphire that wasn't there... Lake Bottleneck - large spreads of *Tecticornia verrucosa* here, Australasian Pipits at Swan Lake. Lake Bennett, a large white salt pan: Good view from sandhills with Variegated Fairy-Wrens. Very deceptive mirage looking over the salt and claypan. A couple of camel sightings...

A ring of water at Susie's Lake



Climbing the waterfall at Potato Creek Gorge

Sunday: A short drive into Potato Creek Gorge. Good vegetation where fire did not penetrate. Grey-headed Honeyeaters. Some water. Dingo. We then met up with Danae and Joe who showed us a Great Desert Skink site. No skinks because they are hibernating but lots of burrow entrances and Goanna tracks where they had been investigating burrows. Then out via Siddeley Range Drive where there were good specimens of Bean Tree *Erythrina vespertilio*, Desert Poplar *Codonocarpus cotinifolius*, Snake Vine *Tinospora smilacina*, Holly Grevillea *Grevillea wickhamii* and Bush Banana *Marsdenia australis*. A dense stand of all Thryptomene *Aluta Maisonneuvii* in a fire shadow on the southern side of a sand hill.

All in all, a good trip and worth driving the distance to see it. Thanks...

Mac & Rose Chalmers Conservation Park -- a.k.a. Tower Rock -- by Pam Keil

Over the May long weekend, five intrepid explorers set out for the new EcoLink Reserve -- Mac and Rose Chalmers Conservation Park -- despite a broken vehicle and injuries...

Early Saturday morning, Marie Ryan, Dave and Cec Sutton, Michael LaFlamme and I left for the MacDonald Downs Station where the Chalmers have recently set aside a parcel of land as a new conservation reserve. The drive was gorgeous, with plenty of raptors along the road - Wedge-tailed Eagles, Nankeen Kestrels, Brown Falcons, and a couple of Spotted Harriers. Interestingly, I saw several Whistling Kites but no Black Kites until we made it to the gallery at Mt Swan.

The gallery, Utopia style artwork with several unique twists, was beautiful and Sonja Chalmers an excellent hostess. A new campground near the homestead is in development and the gallery itself is being set up as a nice B&B. Plenty of choices for where to stay, depending on the level of comfort you want. We chose to head out bush and camp at the reserve itself. Several areas had been cleared of grass for the perfect spot to lay out a tent or swag and two pit toilets surrounded by hessian were located nicely downwind from the site.



Campsite from Above

The geology of the area is related to that of Devils Marbles - with large granite outcrops eroding to a pile of boulders - but is at an earlier stage of erosion. The piles of rocks include large smooth areas to climb interspersed with areas of tumbled boulders to duck and scramble around. The short path up to the Mac and Rose gravesite is made of a nice sand perfect for capturing animal tracks. The Mulga scrub and Ghost Gums that grow between the large rock outcroppings surround the grave and form a beautiful habitat for many species of birds.

We all went for a short exploratory walk to get the lay of the land. Dave and Cec managed to make it all the way around the base of the main "Tower Rock" outcropping. Marie elected to sit by the gravesite and relax. Michael and I strolled a little way down the old track which leads between the two major outcrops, then returned back along the same track. Along the way we discovered a very silver mother Euro and her very red youngster... these were to be seen several more times throughout the trip along with a large reddish male.

After choosing our campsites and setting up, we sat down to lunch. If you don't have a table or chairs, a nice flat slab of granite makes a perfect alternative - luckily for Michael and I whose camp chairs were stuck with our truck in the shop.

In the afternoon, Michael, Dave and I set out to find some nice spots to set up the motion sensor cameras that Ecolink had provided for us to try to capture a shot of the elusive Rock Wallabies that were mentioned in the biodiversity report. Scat had been found, but no Wallabies sighted. We found a few likely places with pointed Rock Wallaby scat and returned with the whole group to set up the cameras. No luck though...



Insects (clockwise from left) = Common Grass Blue - *Zizina labradus*. Lesser Wanderer - *Danaus petilia*. Blistered Pyrgomorphs mating - *Monistria pustulifera*. Matchstick Grasshopper - Family *Eumastacidae*; Subfamily *Morabinae*

The second night we moved the cameras and put one by a crack with a bit of water deep within. Cec and Marie had discovered this earlier in the day and Michael and I were able to find it again by following the age old rule of the bush - where there are Zebra Finches, there is water... As we were setting up the camera the second evening, the sun began to set and a flock of four Common Bronzewing sidled up over the rock to get their evening drink. We were hopeful that we'd catch something on camera...

As we were leaving, we noticed a nice bit of Dingo scat full of Echidna quills -- OUCH! Not sure how they manage that, but it suggests that there are likely Echidnas somewhere in the area. The scat was dried out, so we didn't think too much about it, but apparently the Dingos were still using that track, because the next morning when we returned to pick up the camera, we noticed that it was hanging at a drunken angle and the strap had been chewed through. Sure enough - video #105 showed the Dingo culprit. Unfortunately, most of the other videos showed nothing... Most likely the camera was getting triggered by waving grass or a quick flyby from a Zebra Finch.

So, still no evidence of Rock Wallabies, but a great trip none the less...

Days were spent exploring the rocky outcrops, lazing in the shade reading, or hunting for birds in the Mulga shrubland. There was plenty to keep us all occupied and each could choose an activity that suited. My injured knee slowed me down a bit on the climbs, but there were plenty of easy routes to take. Cec and Dave were the only ones who made it to the top of Tower Rock, but the rest of us had a great time too. Many plants survived in the cracks among the rocks and there was always somewhere new to explore.

Notable events include: The time that a flock of a dozen or so Mulga Parrots flew into the campground. The Meat Ants chewing their way through the plastic bag into the rubbish and swarming in large numbers. And the effect of moonlight on the red rocks.



People (clockwise from left) = Michael was fascinated by the boulders, especially this one which looked like the slightest touch would send it tumbling down. Pam took plenty of photos... as an excuse to rest her injured knee. Dave made it to the top of Tower Rock! Our campsite... I'm sure Marie was around here someplace - somehow she managed to avoid all the photos. Cec chose to watch the sunset from high atop the boulders near the campsite.

The nights were cool to cold, the days warm with plenty of flies, and it was a typical fall trip, except for one thing - the Supermoon. Apparently the full moon coincided with the moons closest orbit point, and we had Supermoon. You could definitely tell. It was bright enough at night to easily get around without a torch, and you could even see the colours of people's clothes and the red of the rocks. Michael took a few photos without a flash of me in our tent just to prove it could be done. We never did get around to making a campfire, but with the moon lighting the night, we had plenty of chance to explore after dinner or to crawl into a nice warm swag and watch the sky above. Beautiful.

BIRD LIST from inside the Reserve - Dave

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Willie Wagtail | Singing Honeyeater | Crested Bellbird |
| Rainbow Bee-eater (plus their cliff-side nests) | Nankeen Kestrel | Grey Shrike-thrush |
| Brown Quail | Black-faced Woodswallow | Australian Owlet-nightjar (Cec) |
| Zebra Finch | Rufous Whistler | Southern Boobook (heard) |
| Budgerigar | Crested Pigeon | Red-backed Kingfisher |
| Crow sp. | Common Bronzewing (Pam) | Rufous Songlark (Pam) |
| Mistletoebird | Diamond Dove | Brown Goshawk (Pam) |
| Australian Ringneck | Grey-crowned Babbler | Fairy Martin nests, but no birds |
| Mulga Parrot | Red-browed Pardalote | Wedge-tailed Eagle nest, but no birds (Pam) |

Additional Thoughts from members of the party:

Cecily Sutton writes: I loved the rocks. Beautiful slabs of granite and big boulders. It was exciting to wander between them, over them and on top of them. I got great satisfaction at being able to clamber up to the trig point and enjoy the view in the evening.

Green plants in shady spots, and the Ghost Gums contrasted superbly with the red rock.

An interesting pale Euro and its joey with reddish fur were sitting on top of a rock, absorbing the warmth of the morning sun. A small waterhole, hidden deep between the rocks, had its presence revealed by dozens of Zebra Finches fluttering around to get an evening drink.

Michael LaFlamme writes: Devils Marbles, Cubed

Over millennia in our very old continent, plants have evolved specialized adaptations to desert microhabitats. The Tower Rock geology provides an amazing combination of those characteristics: aspect, boulder size and temperature, rock microtopography and slope, water flow patterns and rockholes, soil types and soil moisture. We would expect to see a mosaic of varied microhabitats and a flora diversity hotspot. If you are a lazy botanist who wants to see hundreds of different plants in one locale, you will not be disappointed! You can get a copy of the species list that others began and add ones they missed, such as *Ficus brachypoda*. If you are also a photographer who enjoys the way that light changes the colour of rock, illuminates *Corymbia aparrerinja*, or causes *Eremophila freelingii* to seem otherworldly, you will want to spend more time here. And finally, if you are a connoisseur of fine dunnies, you will find relief from your hikes in the breezy shade of the two hessian structures here.



Photos clockwise from left – *Stemodia viscosa*, *Tephrosia supina*, *Isotoma petraea*, *Wedelia stirlingii*.

.....

Bush Bean, Native Bean, Mulga Bean or “Elongated Bush Banana” by Barb Gilfedder

In the May 2012 newsletter, there was a photo attached to the Davenport Ranges trip write-up taken by Nick Tyllis and captioned “Elongated Bush Banana”. I thought it slightly strange at the time but did not research it then.

This month Dave Sutton had on his species list for Mac and Rose Chalmers Reserve “Native Bean”.

I tracked it down, asking the experts, and I think they were looking at the same species, *Rhyncharrhena linearis*. It is included in Peter Latz’s, book “Bushfires and Bushtucker”. And if you search the web you can find photos of it on <http://florabase.dec.wa.gov.au>

Latz tells us that it is a twining climber with thin leaves and delicate pink brown flowers. The green bean-like pods can be up to 20cm long...the whole plant, except the woody stems, is eaten and is similar to Bush Banana, *Marsdenia australis*.

.....

Two sides of a river - APS walk with Connie Spencer, May 2, 2012 - by Barb Gilfedder

The Todd River runs through the centre of Alice Springs, with Leichhardt Terrace on one side of it and Sturt Terrace on the other. Connie often walks in this area between the Wills Terrace causeway and the Stott Terrace Bridge and wanted to show others the contrast between the two sides of the river.

First we walked along the Leichhardt Terrace side. The big old gums are beautiful and even Striated Pardalotes were singing along, but the ground was exclusively covered with very healthy Buffel Grass and Couch Grass.



We walked across the sand near the bridge and were immediately greeted by a large stand of Tall Yellowtop *Senecio magnificus*, some flowers and lots more to come, and above those Plum Bush, *Santalum lanceolatum*.



A little further and a colony of Native Passionfruit, *Capparis spinosa* snuggled around another old gum tree, Silky Glycine *Glycine canescens* healthily clung to the base of another and an old Fork-leafed Corkwood, *Hakea divaricata* was flowering.

From here the river path borders a grass mown park, but the bank is still wild and native. In places Bluebells *Wahlenbergia* sp. and Small yellow buttons *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* carpet the spaces between shrubs.

Almost at the Wills Terrace causeway and a few Bush Hibiscus *Radyera farragei* were starting to flower.

It was a real eye-opener to see what a stretch of river bank can look like when one person spends the time to remove or spray the Buffel and Couch. It is not a garden, not watered, or tended like a garden would be. It is just a small area where native plants have been allowed to flourish on their own, without aggressive competition. Thank you Connie for sharing it with us.



Alcoota Excursion- weekend of the 14-15 July - by Lee Ryall

The Alcoota dig open weekend looks fascinating- a chance to get acquainted with 8 million year old bones and the beasts that wore them- Australia's 'megafauna'. This is a great opportunity to watch, and even assist in the extraction of these fantastic creatures from the desert sand. Once proud roamers of the countryside such as *Dromornis* (a 500kg bird) and *Plaiseodon* (a cow sized wombat) are now reduced to jigsaw puzzle pieces of bone which require delicate and time-consuming techniques to re-assemble. The trip to the central Australian museum at Araluen on 3 June will give everyone some idea of what is involved.

The proposed itinerary covers a range of interests:

- Adam Yates, the museum palaeontologist will give a guided geology walk and tour of the fossil sites, as well as a presentation on Saturday evening 'Alcoota and the Changing Face of Australia's Biosphere'.
- Peter Latz will be conducting a guided plant walk.
- Ian Archibald will offer a guided bird walk.

Anyone wishing to excavate will be inducted in techniques and procedures, and there will be plenty of opportunity to have a go.

We will head out early on Saturday morning. Accommodation on Saturday night is bush camping with some bush style facilities. Activities will be spread across the weekend (and possibly repeated at different times), but there is also the option of heading back to Alice on Saturday evening. It would be helpful to have an indication of numbers ahead of time, so if you are able to let me know whether you're interested, please contact me on 0417401237 or at ryall.lee8@gmail.com



Field Nats went out to Alcoota some years ago and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. This looks likely to be just as memorable an occasion

A Website worth looking at from Pam Keil

Scientific justification that what we're doing does matter!

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=how-biodiversity-keeps-earth-alive>

.....

ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED

Minutes of general meeting at Higher Education Building, Charles Darwin University
Wednesday 9th May, 2012.

Present: Members, visitors and apologies as per attendance book.

Previous minutes – accepted.

Business arising from the minutes - Nil

Correspondence in:

- Email from Glenn Marshall thanking us for the thank you card for talk in April
- NT Nature newsletter.
- WA Naturalists
- Pam Keil re reporting observed fauna.

There is now a website :- NT fauna observations where you can report what wildlife you see. Pam suggested ASFNC registration for club trips. Individuals also welcome to do their own. <http://ntfaunaobs.nt.gov.au/>

Action : Barb to register the club name.

Correspondence out:

- Card to Andrew Bridges for his talk on the Territory Eco-Link
- Thankyou to Joan Powling for her talk on algae.

Treasurer's Report:

Closing balance at 31st March 2012 : \$2701.62

Main outgoing for the month : \$350 for insurance.

General business

None

Activities/Trips:

22 April Shorebird count - 10 attended
24 April Interesting talk with pictures on Central Australian algae
26 - 29 April Newhaven - only 4 people but excellent trip.
2 May APS walk along Todd River – amazing what happens when Couch and Buffel are cleared.
5-7 May Mac and Rose Chalmers Reserve – only 5 people, again excellent trip

Future activities:

19 May Planting Workshop at OPBG, organised by Friends of Olive Pink and APS.
26 - 27 May Duck Swamp overnight camp. High clearance 4 wheel drive, limited number
3 June, 10:00am NT Museum of Natural History - Paleontology collection
9 -11 June Mordor Pound – leader Morgan Flint
14 - 15 July Alcoota dig with talks and demonstrations. Lee Ryall volunteered to lead.

We need some more activities for June, July and August, short walks particularly.

Barb to organise a Planning Meeting soon.

Next monthly meeting – June 13, Speaker: Angus Duguid – Fish of the Lake Eyre basin

Note-taker _____

Supper : Marg Lawrence

(Planning meeting went ahead on Sunday 20 May with a good attendance and lots of ideas. Many thanks to all who attended. Barb)