



Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc. THE TNC NEWSLETTER

Number 15 - December 2014



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is indebted to the Wheatbelt NRM
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The TNC Newsletter*

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Above photograph courtesy Keep Australia Beautiful WA



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Michalie Foley

AUGUST IS the month that I took over from Desrae as club president.

At my first meeting the presentation was given by Greg Warburton. Greg's delightful talk was on one of Australia's feral animals, the donkey. Greg gave a great history of the donkey and its usefulness to humankind throughout time. The highlight was of Greg telling of the epic walk conducted by himself and wife, Vicki, from Kununurra to Warnum (Turkey Creek) via the Purnululu (Bungle Bungles) with the assistance of 4 donkeys. It was great to see some of the scenery of the Kimberleys and how the donkeys were used in such an adventure.

Also in August the TNC hosted Birdlife Australia (WA) for a workshop on the endangered Carnaby Cockatoo. The members and public were treated to a great talk by Jess Lee on the behaviour and breeding habits of the Carnaby as well as why they are in need of protection. It was interesting to learn that these birds are creatures of habit and will generally go to the same nesting site to breed as well as the same tree to roost at night. With the clearing of bushland in the Wheatbelt where they breed and the clearing of bushland on the coast where the cockies feed these birds need help. Jess's talk was followed by a field trip to try and locate roosting trees for the Carnaby cockatoos just out of Toodyay. Unfortunately no cockies were sited but there was evidence of them being around on the honkey nuts we found on the ground. The Carnaby cockatoo eats the seed out of the Marri nut and leaves a distinctive beak mark on the nut. Back in town TNC members put on a fantastic dinner that was enjoyed by all. The following day started with a bird watching walk to the John Masters Bird Hide. Bird lifer, Rod Smith, then gave a talk on the identification and calls of some of the birds found locally in the Toodyay area. It was a great weekend.

September was the month for our biannual Adopt-a-Spot litter pickup. This time, instead of picking up along the main road next to Morangup Nature Reserve, we concentrated our efforts along Black Swamp Road and a section of Morangup Drive. TNC members were joined by members of the Morangup Progress Association and together we picked up around 40 bags of rubbish and assorted metal and tyres; truly astonishing for a 2.5km stretch of road. After the pickup participants braved the hottest September day on record to have a wander through Morangup Nature Reserve followed by lunch at TNC member, Sharon Richards's, house. It was a fantastic and productive day and great to have extra helping hands.

October was Toodyay Agricultural Show month. The TNC once again took part of the Environment Matters tent. It was great to showcase the Club and talk to members of the public. Thanks to Beth and Bethan for putting together some great banners that explained what the TNC is all about - they looked fantastic. Also thanks to Brian and Robyn for bringing the native animals, which is always a draw card for the punters.

During October the TNC was invited by Bauxite Alumina Joint Venture (BAJV) to inspect the area that they propose to mine. It was a good opportunity to see what they have in mind for the Toodyay area and open the dialogue between the mining company and the Club members. At this stage the mine will be on private farm land. However, this land contains remnant bushland as well as important paddock trees. Members got to meet the environmental consultants from Outback Ecology that were engaged by BAJV to undertake the flora and fauna surveys of the area. It was great to learn how these surveys are conducted and that understanding how the proposed mine will affect the ecosystem is just as important to these people as it is to us. The TNC will have the prospect to be apart of the Community Reference Group (CRG) for the mine and I think it will be a great opportunity to make sure that the mining company understands its environmental responsibilities.

November wraps up the Toodyay Naturalist' Club activities for 2015. The year ended with a lovely celebration picnic at the John Masters Bird Hide on the edge Red Banks Pool in the Avon River. A great evening was had by all at the Hide that was built by the TNC last year. It was a great opportunity to get together and chat amongst the members and enjoy this great facility. Of course it wouldn't be a naturalist club outing without a spot of bird watching and while relaxing on the river bank Spoonbills, Cormorants and ducks were spotted.

I would like to thank everyone who made 2014 a fantastic year from our guest speakers, visitors and especially our members. 2015 is shaping up to be a great year as well and planning is currently underway.

p.s. Very best wishes from all the Club Members to Michalie and Sacha on their forthcoming marriage on 20 December.

TOODYAY WINS STATE TIDY TOWNS TITLE WITH A 'NEAR PERFECT' ENTRY

Beth Frayne and Kim Angus

THE TOODYAY Tidy Towns Committee (TTTC) is overjoyed to announce that on 21 November Toodyay won the State Title at the Tidy Towns State Awards with Toodyay also winning the State Category Award for Waste Management and Litter Prevention. As is normal the minor awards were the first to be announced.

TTTC member Shelley Kingston gave an inspiring speech of thanks on our first visit to the podium, acknowledging the great community effort volunteers have undertaken to earn the Waste Management and Litter Prevention Award, through the Adopt-a-Spot Program, the Toodyay Op Shop and Lions Auction recycling efforts, and the Waste Transfer Station and Tip Shop.

Quoting the Winners Book: "Toodyay has demonstrated an extraordinary level of commitment to develop innovative methods and leadership to reduce and manage litter within the community and manage waste."

As we enjoyed our luncheon at the Royal Perth Yacht Club we were honoured when the Governor, Her Excellency the Hon. Kerry Sanderson AO, came to the Toodyay table to congratulate us on our Category win, but this was not the end of our honors as, amazingly, we later stepped up to the podium to accept our Tidy Towns State Award from the Environment Minister, the Hon. Albert Jacob MLA.

TTTC Chairman Greg Warburton gave an excellent and gracious speech of thanks, acknowledging all aspects of Toodyay's commitment to the Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities philosophy.

The Minister said the community demonstrated a strong sense of place, a high level of community engagement and a 'can do' attitude, making it a positive example to the rest of Australia."

'Thank you' to all our Supporters and all the Volunteers in our town that make it such a wonderful place.

On Wednesday, 17 December, the *National Tidy Towns Judge* will be visiting Toodyay so let's pull out all the stops and **see if we can't be the 2015 National Tidy Town winner!**



Left: Beth Frayne being interviewed for television

Below: Shelley Kingston all smiles with the Sustainable Communities State Award



AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS' NETWORK GET-TOGETHER

PART ONE

by Desraé Clarke

THE TASMANIAN Field Naturalists' hosted Australia-wide visitors at the Australian Naturalists' Network (ANN) get-together October 18th till 27th at the 'The Lea' scout camp 11.5kms from Hobart.

Dr Keith Corbett, geologist and fourth generation Tasmanian, gave the opening presentation stating he believes "that to know the Island one had to understand its geology".

Tasmania is divided roughly into half with dolerite, (Jurassic Age), surrounded by older rock of granite and quartzite. Vertical columns of dolerite form many of the mountains in 'high country' of central Tasmania.

Dolerite outcrops are surrounded by 'scree', large blocks that have fallen from vertical columns, with layers of sandstone, then mudstone, beneath.

Most of the eastern half of the Island is dry sclerophyll forest with no continuous over-story. The famed Nut, in the north west of the state, is the younger volcanic Basalt.

On Sunday October 19, en route to the *Tasmanian Bushland Garden*, farmland was noted containing extensive areas of the feral plant, Gorse, brought to Tasmania in the early 1800s to form farm hedges. The 'goose beetle' has been introduced as a biocontrol.

The *Bushland Garden* resulted from the conversion of a quarry full of large rubbish to one of endemic plants, a dream of Graeme and Ingrid Roberts. 90 year old resident, Glad Dodson, purchased the 20ha of Crown and farm land in 1999 and, with the enthusiasm of a small group of volunteers, the project began.



Big machinery removed rubbish, dangerous over-hanging rocks on the dolerite face of the quarry and broke up compacted earth. Roadways were to be constructed, fencing erected to omit grazing stock, rabbits and wallabies, endemic plants planted and encouraged, a toilet block and gazebo constructed and the planned two large ponds developed. The *Tasmanian Bushland Garden* was officially opened 25 April 2010.

The gardens are divided into five areas of 1) base of dolerite bedrock, 2) sandstone and mudstone, 3) granite, 4) swamps and button grass and 5) rare plants endemic to the area.

Mount Field National Park was visited Monday October 20. The majestic Eucalyptus regens, up to 87 metres in height, is only surpassed in height by the Western Australian Karri.

Fungi of various shapes and colours were found and the very beautiful 'bridal veil' Russell Falls (Photo right) visited. While in the remote area Coach Number One was found to have a flat tyre - there was no spare tyre, no tool and no jack between the two coaches until assistance arrived from the coach company.



Mike Driesson, Senior Zoologist Biodiversity Conservation Branch, Department of Primary Industries, Park, Water and Environment gave the evening's first presentation.

Tasmania separated from the mainland approximately 8,000 years ago and is divided into topography, vegetation, climate, etc, affecting flora and fauna. The western portion is old rock and mountainous, has a high rainfall and rainforest, alpine vegetation, high tannin content in the water (which is acidic), and button grass; the eastern portion has low rainfall, is hilly or flat land, dry eucalypt forests, heath land and clear water.

Mike enumerated the Tasmanian fauna, endangered and loss of species stating there is a severe problem with the feral cat especially the carnage on seabirds and their offspring.

Above left - Tasmanian Bushland Gardens Above right - Russell Falls, Mt Field National Park photos by Desraé Clarke

AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS' NETWORK GET-TOGETHER PART ONE (continued)

Tasmania's platypus has a similar disease to Chytrid disease of frogs; the mainland animal is unaffected. The Orange-bellied Parrot is critically endangered with a suspected 70 pairs remaining. The Eastern Ground Parrot lives in western Tasmania in the button grass. Most skinks are dark-coloured and live-bearing. Three endemic frogs are the Tasmanian Froglet, Tasmanian Tree Frog and the Moss Frog.

Endemic freshwater fish are significant with Tasmania a world-centre with a freshwater crayfish diversity of 33 species primarily in western Tasmania; all species have gained 'wildlife protection' status.

Dr Eric Woehler, Principal Research Associate, School of Zoology, University of Hobart, spoke on the status and trends of Tasmania's resident seabirds.

In 1990 Eric began voluntarily surveying shorebirds around the entire Tasmanian coastline and islands; he prefers to do his own surveying, which is in September and February, to get 'even' results. Tasmania is divided into three Natural Resource Management regions with 260 sandy beaches.

Many seabirds lay their eggs on the beach sand and those feeding in shallow waters are Plovers, Sandpipers, Snipes, Curlews, Avocets, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, Stilts, Red-capped Plovers, Fairy Terns, Hooded Plovers and Little Terns. Rising sea level is also decreasing breeding areas.

Eric gives educational talks on protection of beach nesting birds to groups including 4 x 4 enthusiasts, those using dog beaches, school children, etc.

The long term trend is that bird numbers are decreasing rapidly! The Hooded Plover has a breeding age of 7 to 10 years, the Fairy and Little Tern numbers are decreasing rapidly and the Little Tern is known to number between 2 to 10 pairs!!!!

We left 7.30am Tuesday October 21 to catch the early morning ferry to Bruny Island a major breeding area of the tiny, 32-34cm, Blue Penguin and Short-tailed Shearwater. Chicks, possibly the penguins, could be heard calling from their burrows.



Above: Pied Oystercatcher Photo: Wayne Clarke



Above: Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo Photo: Wayne Clarke

Roz Hart and Jolanda Keeble, of the WA Naturalists' Club, spoke in the evening on 'The Luxurious Flora of Western Australia.'

The President of the Stanhope Field Naturalists' Group, Victoria, described the district's lifestyle and natural attributes.

The Alice Springs Field Naturalists' Club members outlined a three year-respite period on a cattle station. Henry Station was sold in 2011 to RM Williams to be used as a 'carbon sink'; cattle were removed as were camels. The Fink River, on the station, begins in the McDonald Ranges, is 600kms in length and runs from clay pan to clay pan; it is surrounded by River Red Gums and Coolabahs harbouring Bourke's Parrots, Black Swans, Cormorants and bush birds. The property is 125kms from Alice Springs and, within that three year window, the Club members did much research including extensive water testing, macro and micro-invertebrates research.

The station is now in the hands of receivers with cattle reintroduced.

To be continued in TNC Newsletter No.16 April 2015

Environment Matters - 2014 Toodyay Agricultural Show

Bethan Lloyd

ENVIRONMENTAL groups and individuals came together to present the Environment Matters display at the Toodyay's 161st Agricultural Show.

Information was presented on how to make sure you use your recycling bin correctly by showing what should be put in the bin. Evidence suggests that many residents are still not thinking when disposing rubbish.

Information and posters on the importance of protecting roadside vegetation were on loan from the Roadside Conservation Committee. The message was that if you can reduce disturbance you will prevent the incursion of weeds. This is true of bushland areas as well as road sides.

The Toodyay Seed Group had a display of native plants available under the Toodyay Tree and Understorey scheme that included some Eremophilas which are great water-wise and bird attracting plants.

Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management (WBNRM) presented displays and information on many of their projects including feral animal control, sustainable agriculture, aquatic health and biodiversity. WBNRM, along with the Save the Western Ground Parrot group, provided activities for children.

The Toodyay Friends of the River (TFOR) gave information about all their activities, past and present, and celebrated twenty years since formation.

Toodyay Naturalists' Club (TNC) members displayed their new banners for the first time. The banners were funded with a grant from WBNRM and give instant information about how the Club was formed, what members do and information on special projects. I would particularly like to thank Beth Frayne and Greg Warburton for their work and collaboration on this project which enabled the information to be ready for the printers to get the banners back in time for the Show in October. Since then they have been on display at the fundraising raffle and at the visit for the National Tidy Towns Awards judging.



Above: Our colourful new roll-up Banners were on display for the first time
[These are the proofs]

An overview of the publication, 'A century afield' A history of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club

by Desraé Clarke

PARTICIPANTS AT the Australian Naturalists' Network (ANN) get-together in Tasmania in October 2014 were each given a copy of the publication, 'A century afield' compiled by club member, Janet Fenton. The Club celebrated its centenary in September of this year. I am very grateful to the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Committee for allowing me to copy the photograph 'Field naturalists at Coles Bay in 1910,' from the book; the original photo is lodged in the State Archives.

Peter McQuillan, Centre of Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, stated in the Foreword, '*a portrait of energetic visionaries, expert naturalists, enthusiastic school children and a few eccentrics – in short, a community of diverse people united by their passion for Tasmanian nature*'.

The Club's records and wonderful photographs have been meticulously archived to provide a century of interesting data rendering it a 'must read' publication!

In the late 1800s there was an aim to learn more of the natural sciences with field naturalists clubs developing in Victoria in 1880, South Australia in 1883, New South Wales in 1901 and the Royal Australian Ornithological Union (RAOU), specifically for the study of birds, in 1901. Hobart held a week long public exhibition in 1904 which covered many aspects of science and technology.

20 year old Edmund Alfred Elliott, who worked as a clerk with the Department of Agriculture, had a passion for birds, botany and photography and enjoyed reading a friend's Victorian Naturalist. He discussed an idea of forming a field naturalist club gaining support from like-minded friends but, he was obviously the one to move the idea.

Edmund was horrified to hear of sealers committing atrocities on wildlife on Macquarie Island which urged him to call on the government entomologist at the Department, Arthur M Lea, to assist him in his idea of forming a Field Naturalists Club. A meeting was called on 15th September 1904 resulting in 30 gentlemen attending which ultimately became the Tasmanian Field Naturalist Club.

The publication contains much humour, history, botany, fauna, wonderful photos and human life stories. It is an 'easy to read' book and one that I would thoroughly recommend.

[Wayne and I have a copy each and we are quite willing to lend them 'as boomerangs']



Left: Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club excursion, in 1910.

One wonders if they took along a chef to prepare the meals.

Environmental Weeds Action Network

2014 WEEDS FORUM

by Wayne Clarke

The Environmental Weeds Action Network (EWAN) held their 2014 *Weeds Forum* on Friday 28 November 2014 at Murdoch University. The theme for the forum was '*Environmental weeds: past, present and future*'. The first conference - *Invasive Weeds and Regenerating Ecosystems* - was held at Murdoch University in July 1994.

The 1994 conference was organised by the Wildflower Society of WA together with Murdoch University, Kings Park and the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators. The organising committee was asked to continue as a sub-committee to help advance initiatives that came from the conference. The late Joanna Seabrook OAM (a board member of Greening WA) and Margo O'Byrne (EPA) then set about establishing EWAN, with the inaugural Annual General Meeting being held in December 1996. Joanna was an inspiration when it came to the environment, and without her enthusiasm there's no doubt EWAN would never have evolved.

Twenty years on, the *Weeds Forum* was held at the same venue, attracting a large audience of community and agency weed managers. Mike Griffiths (from Wheatbelt NRM, our newsletter sponsor) opened proceedings and Margo O'Byrne gave an historical background on EWAN. She then summarised how Joanna has pioneered direct seeding on farms, and with the Main Roads Department revegetation program.

Bronwyn Keighery concentrated on *bare patches*, and on how too frequent fires provide a haven for weeds (particularly grassy weeds).

Greg Keighery gave some staggering figures on weeds; 18,146 world-wide (50% of the plants in Hawaii are now introduced), with 2,739 in Australia (600 of which are native plants outside their range); 1,240 in Western Australia (677 of which are environmental weeds with 94 semi-naturalised), 196 grassy weeds, 115 daisies, 53 in the Iris family (bulbous). There are very few woody weeds in WA, with most of them from the eastern states. There have been 105 weeds introduced in the last 10 years, and succulents are a growing issue. Crofton weed, one of the world's worst 10 weeds, has now been found in Australia.

Other speakers included Bob Dixon (Kings Park), Dorothy Redreau (Land for Wildlife), Kelly Passeretto (DPaW), Kate Brown (DPaW), Gillian Stack (Roadside Conservation Committee), Peter Day (EWAN), Jon Dodd (DAFWA), Mary Gray (Urban Bushland Council), Judy Fisher (International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN) and Penny Hussey (Land for Wildlife).

Meanwhile, a critical issue for the future is - who will ultimately take responsibility for Environmental Weeds? Agencies to date are hand-balling the issue, while the weeds proliferate.

A new *Australian Weeds Strategy* draft is to be launched soon. This will have a community led focus. The *State Biosecurity Strategy* was released on the 4th December, for public comment (until March). These documents need careful reading, and input from community groups will be invaluable.

There are a number of weeds creeping into Australia, some listed in the IUCN Top 100 alien species in the world.

Weeds we need to be on the lookout for

The IUCN Top 100 include: Kahili Ginger (*Hedychium gardnerianum*) and Strawberry Guava (*Psidium cattleianum*); a number are already in Toodyay (Tamarisk, Giant Reed and Lantana). Ones that are potentially invasive, but not on the IUCN List are Banana Poka a.k.a. Banana passionfruit (*Passiflora tarminiana* - pig dispersed), Airplant (*Bryophyllum pinnatum* - grows from broken leaves, toxic to humans and livestock), European Holly (*Ilex aquifolium* - bird dispersed, suckers), Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata* - suppresses mycorrhizal fungi), the daisy Golden Crownbeard (*Verbesina encelioides* - clogs agricultural machinery), Coffee Bush (*Breynia longifolia* - a native from the east)

The quote of the Day: *If the environment was a sporting organisation it would receive untold funding.*

This was an outstanding Forum, well organized by EWAN, and with excellent presenters. It was a wonderful opportunity to network with other weedy people (and catch up with old friends).

[Having considerable interest in weeds and their control, and seeking weed strategies that could be used by the Avon River Management Authority, I attended the second Annual General Meeting of EWAN in February 1997, and both Desraé and I have been involved with EWAN over the years since.]

Reintroduction of the Western Quoll to the Flinders Ranges National Park South Australia

From the Idnya e-Newsletter (Edition 1) Katherine Moseby, Ecological Horizons

A SMALL carnivorous marsupial, the Western Quoll, was once found across 80% of the Australian continent but currently reduced to the south-west of Western Australia. It is being 'trial' released into the South Australian Flinders Ranges National Park following an absence from the area of 150 years; the last sighting was in the 1880s.

The Western Quoll has great cultural significance for the Adnyamathanha people of the Flinders Ranges National Park where it is known as 'Idnya' and is a totem and an integral part of their dreaming.

During May 2014 forty one animals, comprising 21 females and 20 males, were released in the National Park; this was the beginning of a partnership between the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered species (FAME)), the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) and the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW of WA). Keith Morris and Brent Johnson of DPaW have been heavily involved in the reintroduction of Western Quoll in several Western Australian areas including the Cape Arid National Park and the Julimar Conservation Park, Toodyay.

DEWNR had made significant efforts to reduce the number of predators, such as cats and foxes, prior to the release and also herbivores, such as goats, to protect the habitat in the Flinders Ranges needed for the quoll's long term survival. Cat control is continuing in the form of shooting and cage trapping and the use of baiting.

37 Western Australian Idnya were flown in a light aircraft in May to the Range to be released after dark with four captive-bred Alice Springs Desert Park animals released a little later in the month; all but four of the 41 animals were fitted with radio collars. The local Adnyamathanha Elders conducted a 'welcome to country' ceremony before their release.

Most Western Quolls stayed within a few kilometres of their release sites. However, one female travelled over 15 kilometres and another moved 5km climbing over the Heysen Range. Both were recaptured and returned to their release areas where rabbit warrens, rock crevices, holes under rock slabs and hollow logs are used as shelter sites.

Idnya were recaptured one month after release for health and collar checks. Nearly all had increased in weight and female pouches were beginning to become active. There were recordings of first pouch young with six females averaging 6 young each of 17mm long and only a week or so old. Female Idnya come into oestrus between May and July with a gestation period of around 18 days. The young are kept in the pouch for about 60 days after which they are deposited in a nest. Idnya are weaned at around 170 days so, between November and January, young Idnya will start to emerge from their dens and disperse across the Flinders Ranges National Park.

Adele Thomasz, Murdoch University, is taking scat and blood samples to investigate parasites present in the Idnya both pre and post release. University of Adelaide PhD candidate, Mel Jensen, has been collecting information on animal behaviour, monitoring their use of artificial den sites and assisting with identification of Idnya caught on cameras by using their unique spot patterns.

Of the 41 Idnya released 12 animals (7 females and 5 males) have been lost with 10 due to cat predation. One of the predated radio-collared females left seven denned young in a tree hollow. The young were successfully rescued and are being raised by Zoos S.A. staff and will be re-released into the wild around 6 months of age.

Although cat predation events have reduced the Idnya numbers there have been encouraging signs in the project. The animals appear in good condition with weight gain from finding suitable food and there is a presence of pouch young in nearly all females.

Importantly, this is a 'trial' release and all information obtained will be used to guide future reintroductions.

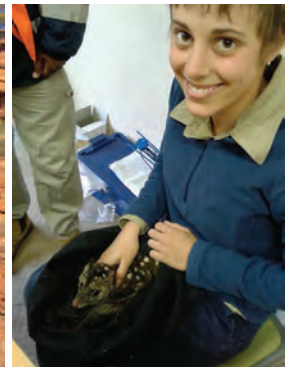
Notes taken from the Report by Ecological Horizons Pty. Ltd.

If you would like to follow this exciting project and to receive these regular e-updates please email

SAAridlands@sa.gov.au with the subject 'Quoll update' and you will be added, or phone (08) 8648 5300



Above: Idnya within release pen - Photo Ecological Horizons Right: Tina Schroeder radio tracking quolls- Photo B Parkhurst



Above right: Volunteer Charlotte Mills giving a quoll a health check- Photo M Jensen

PHOTOGRAPHER'S PAGES



Left: *Banksia menziesii* in the Dawn Atwell Reserve Photo Desraé Clarke

Right: *Verticordia nitens* in Mavis Jefferys Nature Reserve. This is flowering magnificently at present (December).
Photos by Wayne Clarke



Bird baths a premium at present...
Left: Sharon Richards caught these two juvenile New Holland Honeyeaters cooling off; and
Below: Wayne Clarke snapped this Brown Goshawk also cooling off



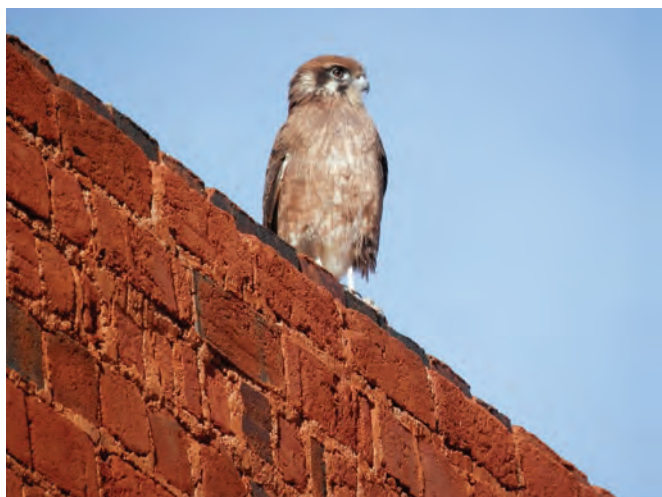
DID YOU KNOW...

... that on the Global Invasive Species Database, the World's top one hundred species lists *Acacia mearnsii* (Black Wattle) first (A for Acacia). Also listed are *Arundo donax* (Giant Reed that grows along our river), *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (the chytrid fungus that is killing our frogs), *Cyprinus carpio* (European Carp), *Felis catus* (feral cat), *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (a New South Wales paperbark), *Mus musculus* (the good old House Mouse), *Opuntia stricta* (Prckly Pear - grows around Toodyay), *Oryctolagus cuniculus* (rabbit), *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (Jarrah dieback), *Pinus pinaster* (the Maritime Pine), *Plasmodium relictum* (avian malaria), *Sus scrofa* (feral pig), *Sturnus vulgaris* (common starling), *Tamarix ramosissima* (Tamarix), and *Vulpes vulpes* (the fox). And - wait for it - also a well known local inhabitant, an Aussie - *Trichosurus vilpecula* - our brushtail possum .

PHOTOGRAPHER'S PAGES

Right: A very unusual find in Rugged Hills was this Mutton Bird. (or Shearwater), a seabird, way off track - and still alive when found. It shows how the storms recently have not only impacted on us humans. These birds usually nest in burrows along beaches.

Photo courtesy Des Munn



Above: Australian Nankeen Kestrel at Kookynie.

Photo Beth Frayne



Above: Red-spotted Jezebel on young sandalwood tree.

Photo by Katherine Fletcher



Above: The above scorpion is a Urodacus which used to be novaehollandiae. It might still be that species but I know that species has been divided into at least two. It is quite widespread in the hills and usually lives in a burrow under a log or rock. It is the biggest scorpion in the region. Photograph by Peter Schneider and information kindly provided by our Patron John Dell



Above: A Brown Goshawk about to take flight. This was a parent of the Goshawk on the opposite page. In the November Toodyay Herald a photograph of the bird in the bird bath opposite appears whilst still a nestling

Photo above by Georgina Steytler

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

National Landcare Conference September 2014 by Greg Warburton

The National Landcare Conference held in Melbourne 16th to 19th September was a celebration of '25 years of Landcare in Australia' with an emphasis on the future. As a Finalist in the Individual Landcarer of the Year category, I was privileged to attend the Conference and represent Western Australia.

The first day of the Conference was a field trip and it was hard to make a choice from the 13 different excursions on offer. Vicki and I joined a trip that took us south east of Melbourne through the Strzelecki Ranges and onto Phillip Island visiting a number of Landcare sites. Highlight for me was the amazing work Paul Spiers has done to revegetate degraded creek lines on his property. Through extensive weed control and revegetation over many years Paul has come close to re-establishing the magnificent forest that was originally there.

Back at the Conference a succession of expert speakers informed and inspired including Dr Stefan Hajkowitz, Principal Scientist at CSIRO Futures, who spoke of global 'mega trends'. His subject dealt with the significant shift in environmental, economic and social conditions that will play out over the coming decades.

Many of the sessions ran concurrently so it was impossible to attend everything that appealed but, none the less, we came away informed on important land care issues and new ideas. The Awards Dinner was a gala affair at the magnificent Melbourne Exhibition Hall. Honoured guests included former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, who's Government launched Landcare all those years ago.

Highlight of the evening for us was that three of the major awards went to Western Australian winners! Community Group Award Rolybushcare, Coastcare Award - Tangaroa Blue Foundation and Young Landcare Leader Award to Perth Natural Resource Management's, Kate Sputore. They are all to be congratulated for their exceptional contribution to the landcare movement.

On the last day the Federal Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt, addressed the Conference Delegates of 650 people. He sought to assure the audience that the future of Landcare under the current government was secure. The Minister fielded a barrage of pointed questions from the attentive audience. He opportunistically launched the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants 2014-15 and promoted the 20,000,000 Tree Program and the Green Army.

Attending the National Landcare Conference was informative and, networking with such a large number of passionate Land carers, truly inspiring. I was proud to talk about the work our community has achieved in Landcare in our part of the world. After the conference we took some time to take in the sights and, of course, restaurants of Melbourne.

Photo above Paul Spiers, Phillip Island



THE TOODYAY NATURALISTS' CLUB INC.

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