

Mailing Label

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WHYALLA CONSERVATION PARK PO BOX 805 WHYALLA SA 5600

WORKING BEE MAY 8TH 9.00 am

Meet at the grid at the South West entry to the park.

We will be working on the western boundary fence.

Bring gloves and large pliers or small bolt cutters if you have them. There will be plenty of wire to cut.



BIN
On weekends, members of the Friends group volunteer to visit the park and record any offences, as well as checking the toilet and emptying the bins.

ROSTER

This months volunteers are:

- May 1st Deans
- May 8th Prenzel
- May 15th Prenzel
- May 22nd Poyner/Sharp/Smith
- May 29th Garretts
- June 6th Carters

CALENDAR

May 8th	Working Bee
May 9th	Mother's Day Walk
May 27th	Committee Meeting
June 12th	Working Bee

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Friends Of Whyalla Conservation
Park
PO Box 805 WHYALLA SA 5600

Myall Post



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President's Message



This month sees the departure of one of our newest members of the committee, Hans Sipsma.

Hans is a keen conservationist who came to us from the United Kingdom. He is a long distance sailor who has traveled a lot of the world in his yacht and is also a very competent artist.

He has demonstrated his artistic talents by creating the portrait of Wild Dog Hill that was given to Alvin and Pam Charlesworth on the occasion of their life membership of the group.

I thank Hans for his work for the group and wish him and his partner Jean well, as they become permanent residents of Australia. Unfortunately for the group, they will be based in Perth and not in Whyalla.

Our former ranger, Shirley Meyer is also leaving the district and will be taking up a posting at Wilpena. We wish her well in this new job.

A reminder for members is that our AGM will be on Saturday June 19th.

Clint Garrett



JOIN US FOR THE WALK TO TRIG HILL

On Mother's Day, the Friends Group will be running a family walk to Trig Hill. This hill lies about 1 km North North-east of Wild Dog Hill and is actually higher than Wild Dog Hill. This is why surveyors have set up a trig station on the top of the hill. There are good views to be had over the surrounding country from this location.

We have organised similar walks on Father's Day and Mother's Day for some years. It is an opportunity for families to share time together and to learn about our environment.

At the conclusion of the walk, there will be afternoon tea at the car-park. We ask participants to contribute a gold coin.

The walk will start from the Wild Dog Hill Car-park at 2.00 pm.

During the 2003 walk we were lucky enough to get rained on quite significantly. In some ways it would be nice for that to happen again as the countryside is in great need of a soaking rain. If we are rained on, the afternoon tea will be at 71 Jenkins Avenue.

8th MAY
WORKING
BEE

MEET AT SOUTH WEST GRID
AT 9.00 AM DETAILS ON PAGE 4

\$2000+ RESULT FROM MEMBER'S EFFORTS

This article was held over from the April newsletter due to a lack of space.

There is a lot of work from many members that goes in to the success of the plant sale. Peter Lang and Clint began the process back in spring of 2003 by propagating the plants. Potting soil was brought in from Adelaide by David and Denise in November for our first potting day.

Many members helped with several potting days to pot the baby plants into 125 mm pots.

Here are some of our members working on one of those potting sessions.



Potting sessions are completed by mid summer and Ella takes on the daily task of watering the plants to make sure that they survive the heat. This is a time consuming task and on the hottest day has to be done several times in the heat of the day. She has been assisted with watering, pruning and fertilizing by David and Denise.

As we get closer to the day of the sale, David organises labeling of the plants. The text of the labels has to be accurate. Printing and laminating of labels has to match the number and species of plants that we have. This is a complex task and we are fortunate that David does this so thoroughly. Meanwhile Denise organizes equipment and permissions so that we have these in place on the day of the sale. Lance watches over the finances to make sure that our bills are paid and that we have the money that we need on the day.

Packing night is another big event in the Plant Sale process. Many members help by getting the right label on the right plant and then into trailers to take them to the sale.

Sale Day – Saturday morning starts early (6.30 am), with the setting up of the sales area and the unpacking and laying out of the plants. At 8.30 the combined efforts of our members comes to fruition with the start of the sale. For the next 2 hours we help the public to choose the plants that they want and give advice on what is most suitable in a given situation.

Then after the mad rush of the sale, there is the clean up and looking after the remaining plants until they are sold. It is a great effort from many people that makes it happen.

BIRDS OF THE PARK

RED-CAPPED ROBIN

This is our smallest and brightest robin. Male birds have a conspicuous bright red forehead and breast, remainder of its under-parts are white, and the rest of the bird is black except for the white wing stripe. The female is much duller being a basically grey-brown bird. If you can get close-up to a female bird, you can notice a very dull rust-red forehead and buff-white wing stripe.

Red Capped Robins are widespread across the southern two-thirds of Australia. They frequent lightly timbered drier areas such as found in our park. They are found singly or in pairs, or in family parties after breeding.

They feed on a wide range of insects and other invertebrates, using the perch and pounce method from any suitable vantage point a metre or so above the ground. Apart from the colour of the male, they are easily noticed anyway, as they are rarely still with their flicking, darting movements. Breeding season is from mid-winter to mid-summer.

The nest is a tiny compact cup of bark strips, grass, and cobwebs often adorned with lichen and is usually placed in a tree fork. The clutch is of 2 or 3 eggs, which vary in colour over a range of pale blue-green-grey blotched with purple-brown. As with most birds of comparable size incubation is of 2 weeks and 2 more to fledging.

Ella Smith

The Red-capped Robin is reasonably secure in areas such as ours because the vegetation is still relatively intact. However in much of the rest of its range it is a declining species. This is particularly the case in New South Wales. Where 70% of the habitat has been cleared. Red-capped robins are not yet listed as a threatened species, however the records show that they are a seriously declining species.

