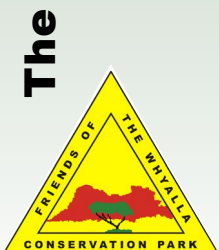




Newsletter of the
 Friends Of Whyalla Conservation Park
 PO Box 805 WHYALLA SA 5600
 Volunteers Working For Conservation

The Myall Post



Volume 13 No 3
 March 2000



President's Message

It is finally upon us, the year 2000, a great milestone in the time of man. The other lifeforms with whom we share the planet neither know nor care. They have their own rhythms, their own time. We share the planet, but not our realities. Yet each species' separate experience of life is closely interwoven with so many others.

As the species with the greatest ability to change not only our own lives but the very continued existence of others, we need to consider not only what we do, but the effect, having regard to the times of others.

We have to look no further than our own Park for interesting examples of contrasting rhythms of life very different to our own. At one extreme we have the icon of the Park, the Western Myall, with trees in the Park over 250 years old. Slow growing and with new seedlings appearing only periodically after rare very heavy summer rains, it is very vulnerable. The presence of rabbits eating the new generations of precious seedlings combined with a bushfire would denude such an area of Western Myall. Even if there were no other negative influence in the area in the foreseeable future, it would not regenerate to a similar state in our lifetime or even those of our grandchildren.

At the other extreme we have plants and

animals whose lives last less than a year and yet play important parts in the ecological mix. Ants for instance influence the survival of the Myall as it has been found that they collect and eat a large proportion of the seeds. However, they themselves as individuals do not generally live long. While the queens and workers of some species of ants are known to live for more than 15 years, most ants live for only a few months, indeed the males die after mating.

The larval stage of many insects live for only a few days, but in that time may eat a large proportion of a small plant until they themselves are eaten by a predator such as a bird. We are still ignorant of far more than we know about the interaction of species. With our ability to cause great changes

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Ella Smith & John Holds potting plants for the Plant Sale. More information on page 3.

Important Dates

Make sure that these dates are entered into your diary!

Label Cutting
Tuesday 14th March @ 7:30pm
267 Landrace Rd

Plant Labeling & Packing
Friday 17th March @ 6:30pm
267 Landrace Rd

Plant Sale
Saturday 18th March @ 6:30am
Cnr Hincks & Nicolson Ave

Committee Meeting
Thursday 23rd March @ 7:30pm
267 Landrace Rd

Working Bee &
Animal Trapping with SA Herpetology Assoc
Saturday 1st April @ TBA
Out In The Park
more details to follow soon

Bin Roster

The following individuals or families have volunteered to empty the bins and check the Park on the weekends beginning:

Friday 17th March – Prenzel

Friday 24th March – vacant

Friday 31st March – Garretts

Friday 7th April – Prenzel

Friday 14th April – vacant

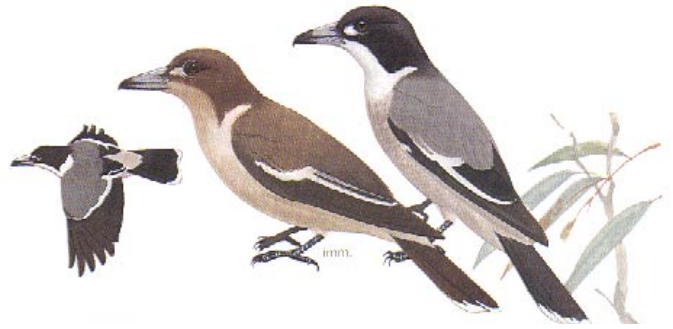
Friday 21st April (Easter) - vacant

Friday 28th March – vacant

Please remember to wear clothing which will identify you as a Friends member and NPWS volunteer if at all possible.

If you would like to volunteer for the roster, please call Denise Sharp on 8645-4442

Bird Of The Month



Grey Butcherbird

If any bird typifies the Park it is probably the Grey Butcherbird. Bold enough and audible enough, it is the bird most likely to be easily seen and / or heard by a visitor to the Park. No matter how deserted the Park at times seems to be of feathered inhabitants, the odd Grey Butcherbird always seems to be about somewhere. The adult is quite a striking bird of black, grey, and white plumage, whereas the younger birds are barely discernible as the same species in their mixture of brownish-grey. However their distinctive call (even though not as clear and concise as the well practiced adult), and the hook at the end of the bill, betrays their identity.

The bird has earned its name of butcherbird by the habit of hanging its prey in a small fork of a tree before dismembering the meal. While insects are the main food, it is not unusual to find a butcherbird with a small bird such as a sparrow, a small lizard, or a mouse, wedged in a tree fork. It hunts by sitting on a perch up to 10 metres high and then pouncing on its prey.

Established pairs hold permanent territories, which probably explains why its presence is so constant in the Park. It also explains why it is so often heard as they sing to advertise territorial boundaries.

Most nesting is in spring or early summer, the nest being a cup of twigs and grasses. The average clutch of four eggs take three and a half weeks to hatch and the young a further month to fledge. During this time the nest is defended fiercely by the parents. It is not until the second year that the young birds moult from their brownish-grey to the full adult plumage.

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very quickly, it is important we remember that our timescale is not theirs. We need to know more about our co-inhabitants.....

Ella Smith

2000 Plant Sale



The year 2000 Plant Sale is almost upon us and this is one time of the year when lots and lots of help is required!

After some initial confusion about numbers, we have finally concluded that there are around 1,580 plants to be sold this year.

Below are some key dates and times when your help is most needed.

Label Cutting
Tuesday 14th March
7:30pm
267 Landrace Rd

Plant Labeling & Packing
Friday 17th March
6:30pm
267 Landrace Rd

Plant Sale
Saturday 18th March
6:30am
Cnr Hincks & Nicolson Ave

With this newsletter you will find some posters advertising the sale. Can you please place these in prominent locations, ie work, school, local shop, your car etc.

Please remember to return after Saturday 18th and remove the posters.

As always, thanks must go to Clint & Marg Garrett who have helped to organise the sale and grown cuttings and seedlings. Thanks also to Ella for watering the growing plants, and to everyone who turned up for the potting on (especially considering that it was over 40° on the day!). The photo below shows Marg Garrett and Pam Charlesworth busy potting plants.

If you have any questions about how you can help with the sale, please don't hesitate to ring David using the numbers on the back of this newsletter.



SA Herpetology Association Visit



On Friday 31st March and Saturday 1st & Sunday 2nd April, members should pencil in their diary a visit from the Herpies. No, its not something you need to see a doctor about – members of the SA Herpetology Association (Reptile Club) will be visiting us to do some small animal trapping in the Park.

The purpose of the trip is two-fold.

1. The trip will be a scheduled Herpetology Association field trip, so that their members can gain more experience in the semi-arid areas of the state.
2. The results of the exercise will provide some valuable information on the reptiles

and small mammals of the Park, for both the Friends Group and National Parks & Wildlife SA.

If you are interested, we are looking for volunteers to help dig pitfall traps late on the Friday afternoon. Inspection of the traps will occur early Saturday morning (before it gets too hot). Members are invited to come along and see what was caught.

At this moment, we are unsure exactly what times we will be starting, so if you are interested, please call Denise Sharp using the numbers on the back of this newsletter.

Committee Report

There has been a couple of Committee meetings since the last newsletter. A few of the things that have been discussed have been:

- Work on the toilet continues. The tank has been installed and pipes fitted. Alvin Charlesworth, John Carter, Lance Dean and Vaughan Moldenhauer have been had at work on the frame which is almost complete. At the moment, we are waiting on a contractor to lay the concrete base. Once that is in place, the frame can be erected and clad.
- Members may have noticed that the cable for the traffic counter on the western boundary has been rolled up. It was interfered with during the xmas break and has been removed from the road until it can be re-fixed to the road surface. Please be especially vigilant when in the Park and report any vandalism to a committee member.
- Changes will be made to the bin roster book to make it easier to use and administer. A number and date of issue will be placed on the front, and a general comments section will be included on each page. The location of the rain gauge will be identified on the map, along with the road names.
- David Poyner will provide the committee with some prototype membership cards. It was felt that the cards would be useful in identifying Friends members to members of the public, especially when in the Park. The cards would be issued in a different colour each year to signify that membership fees had been paid.
- An initiative that was raised by this group and that was subsequently investigated by the Community Liaison Branch seems to have fallen by the wayside. The CLB were investigating the production of magnetic signs that could be placed on the doors of Friends member's cars for identification – particularly when working in the Park. We have not heard any more about this for several months.
- The group was not involved in Clean Up Australia Day this year. A decision was made at the committee meeting on 25/2/00 that due to the anticipated lack of members available on the day (March 5th) it would be better to re-schedule the activity. We are obligated by our agreement with KESAB and Transport SA under the Roadwatch program to clean up our section of road regularly. Details of when we will be doing this will appear in a future newsletter or flyer.
- John Scanlon, the CEO of DEHAA has resigned, and a replacement has not been announced yet. In the recent cabinet re-shuffle, Ian Evans has replaced Dorothy Kotz as the Minister for the Environment.

Welcome & Goodbye



I've been a little remiss – I should have welcomed some new members a while back.

On behalf of the group, I'd like to welcome Lorraine Shaw and Vera Stevenson.

I'd also say goodbye and offer the group's best wishes to one of our long standing members, Wendy Sysouphat and her family, who have moved to Adelaide.

2000 AGM

Just a quick notice to remind all members of the AGM in June, and the fact that we will need volunteers for the Committee.

Unfortunately, like many community organisations, our group is 'propped up' by a few committed individuals. It's understandable – these days there is so much demand for our time from so many directions that people are not willing to volunteer any more of themselves, and the same people just keep on going with no-one to relieve them.

However, when the same individuals consistently volunteer their time and effort, there is the very real risk of 'burn out', and the value of their contribution falls.

Please give some thought to volunteering to serve on the committee – as some of us need a well earned break! (some committee members have served for over ten years!)

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