

CARING FOR COUNTRY



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What's happening

AW weather stations

Check out data from the weather stations in the AW region on...
<http://aws.awnrm.sa.gov.au/>

Next AW NRM Board meeting:

27th- 28th August
Venue: tba

Alice Springs 54th Annual Show

5th July
Blatherskite Park, Len Kittle Drive,
Alice Springs

NAIDOC Week

7th- 14th July

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

4th August

International day of the World's Indigenous People, 2013

9th August

Word Adelaide

15th - 18th August
Hip hop, poetry short stories, the energy of soapbox and the tradition of yarn spinning...
<http://wordadelaide.com.au/>

From the Regional Manager



Welcome to the quarterly publication of the Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resource Management Board. The Board and DEWNR staff have been working hard over the past three months to facilitate on-ground NRM outcomes and Aboriginal employment in the region, while ensuring the Board and the region is focused and strategically placed for the future.

The Board met in the new Ceduna Natural Resources Centre in April; attended Governance training in Pt Augusta in May and; convened the first meeting of its Audit and Risk sub-committee in June. The latter provided an opportunity to review recent CFOC submissions and consider the strategic direction of potential investments. The Board also met with DEWNR's Chief Executive Allan Holmes and Group Executive Director of Partnerships and Stewardship, John Schutz, and discussed mutual understanding of the role of the Board and the Board's strategic direction. The Board's Governance training was a precursor to a four-part training schedule planned for 2013-2014, in which members will look to develop its "story" - how it works with communities to facilitate positive NRM outcomes in the region.

Other highlights of the last quarter have included: on-ground NRM work with communities such as the mulloway tagging project, the first visit to the region by the Natural Resources Committee of Parliament, Googs Lake community forum and the Reconciliation Photo Exhibition held in the Ceduna Natural Resources Centre.

Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara staff have also been busy preparing submissions for the next round of Caring for Country, which provides an exciting opportunity to deliver a strategic five year program. I am very excited to be a part of this, building on AW's previous investment in foundational outcomes, placing a greater emphasis on community driven NRM planning and a placing a greater focus on combining landscape scale traditional knowledge into the delivery of NRM. As part of this a key aspiration of the Board is to increase Anangu engagement in NRM by 20%.

Together we enthusiastically look forward to meeting this challenge.

Matt Ward
Regional Manager, Natural Resources - Alinytjara Wilurara

Where we are and what we do

The Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management Region covers the northwest quarter of South Australia. In Pitjantjatjara, *alinytjara* means 'north' and *wilurara* means 'west'. The Region spans more than a quarter of a million square kilometres, and has a population of approximately 2000 people, many of whom identify with the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Kokatha, Mirning or Wirangu peoples.

Natural Resources Management (NRM) is an approach to protecting land for the mutual benefit of people and the environment.

The AW NRM Board is the only all aboriginal NRM Board in Australia.



Title page: Sally Williams taking time to review her recordings at Yalata beach (see page for story)

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From the Presiding Member



Welcome to the mid-year edition of Caring for Country, 2013.

I am delighted to say that the AW NRM Board will shortly be welcoming a new member to our team. Mick Haynes, a recipient of the Eyre Achiever Award and the Wes Martin Award has worked in a wide variety of jobs including Acting Deputy State Manager and Ceduna's Regional Manager for ATSIC. We look forward to his knowledgeable contribution to our Board.

Having the opportunity to meet with members of other NRM Boards at the recent Governance Workshop in Pt Augusta was a constructive experience that helped us gain a broader perspective of how other Board's operate as well as clarified our legal obligations and surrounding process.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to congratulate Matthew Ward for being selected as the Natural

Resources Alinytjara Wilurara's Regional Manager, a position he has acted in with great enthusiasm and success over the past 10 months.

The Board would also like to thank the Ceduna Natural Resources Centre's staff for doing such a wonderful job of presenting (as part of the Reconciliation celebrations) a photographic exhibition of NRM project work undertaken with people from across regional communities

With funding allocations coming into view over the past month we once again look forward to further expansion of NRM in the AW region and increasing involvement of the communities that we serve.

Parry Agius
Presiding Member
Alinytjara Wilurara Natural



Celebrating Reconciliation

Reconciliation Photo Exhibition at Ceduna Natural Resource Centre

Joining with Australians across the country to celebrate Reconciliation Week 2013, Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara (NR AW) hosted an afternoon tea and photographic exhibition in recognition of the significant role that reconciliation plays in the future of our country.

The exhibition (running until the end of the June) features a collection of 'best of the best' photographs taken by Natural Resources AW and Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula (EP) staff. Travelling extensively throughout the remote lands that make up the AW region during the course of their work the photos clearly reflect the passion and dedication behind our Natural Resource teams.

Guests who braved the wet weather were richly rewarded when they browsed the broad array of photographs

showing regional landscapes, insects, birds and the collaborative work being undertaken with communities, volunteer groups and the staff of Natural Resources AW and EP.



Visitors to the exhibition took the opportunity to learn more about NRM as they mingled over afternoon tea



Marcina Coleman Richards, her niece Sue Haseldine and Ollanta Lipcer browse the exhibition, many photographs showing projects on which Sue had worked



Breakfast with "the Sapphires"

On behalf of the Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board the Presiding Member Parry Agius and members of the Natural Resources AW staff joined in the celebration of Reconciliation Week 2013 by attending a breakfast held at the Convention Centre in Adelaide. Organised by Reconciliation SA, the gathering was a great success on many levels, most importantly the sense of genuine, positive collaboration that forms the basis of true reconciliation. Of great delight to all who attended was the appearance of three of the four original members of the "Sapphires" who were, and remain, famous for their talent as performers as well as their warm and generous spirits.

Held on the 27th May, this was the 46th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum.

Beverly Briggs, Reconciliation SA's Patron Lowitja O'Donoghue, Lois Peeler and Laurel Robinson





World Indigenous Network Conference, Darwin



AW's Yasmin Wolf and Nathan Williams joined by Sandro Madonna from Yalata Land Management took the opportunity to meet with delegates from around the world

Between the 27 – 29th May, Darwin hosted one of the world's most prestigious events, the World Indigenous Network Conference. Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara's (NR AW) Nathan Williams said "it was awesome, there were so many people from around the world all with a very similar issues in their communities as we have in ours".

As representatives of NR AW, Yasmin Wolf and Nathan travelled to Darwin with Sandro Madonna (Yalata Land Management) and Mima Smart (AW NRM Board member) both from Yalata. Brian Queama, (also an AW NRM Board member), planned to join the group but unfortunately was not able to attend for family reasons.

As part of the gathering, artists from around the world were invited to paint 'magic canoe paddles of wisdom'. Mima, who has been a practicing artist for many years was delighted to be

Nathan Williams talked with Masi tribesmen Michael Lenaimado and Wilson Mancha from Kenya



offered the opportunity to paint her design on one of the iconic paddles.

"We were all very excited about meeting our international visitors and finding out just how similar or how different we are to them. The networking conference was such a huge eye opener for everyone who came" said Nathan. The conference was host to about 12 hundred people from across the globe. Nathan said "I was amazed to find that we are not really very much different to our international friends. We all have the same issues and concerns and we are looking for a better, safer and more productive ways to look after our country.

Nathan presented an AW perspective about caring for country that was well received by the international audience, many of whom share common issues



Mima Smart with the ladies from the APY Lands and the magic canoe paddle of wisdom, in her own design



(Photos courtesy of Nathan Williams)



Using new technology to tell old stories

Digital media can be a powerful tool for sharing stories and broadcasting good news. In remote communities, digital media has the potential to help convey stories across distance and time, and in doing so, improve the links between people, information and technology.

Beginning in April this year, the first *Digital Story Recording* workshop was based in Yalata Communities' new IT Hub. The workshop focussed on training young women from the community in the use of Yalata's latest digital technology "tablets", chosen as an accessible and user friendly device able to be used to build on people's skills in storytelling and story 'catching'.

This new technology was funded by DFEEST on behalf of the 'National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access'.

This is a brief diary of the days that made up the workshop written by Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara's Projects Coordinator, Ollanta Lipcer who accompanied the group.

Five short days to remember many long stories

Monday (April 8th)

We set up at the Yalata IT Hub. With the help of Nigel Aspin (former youth coordinator and mentor for Yalata Inc.), Mima Smart and the IT Centre team we went around the community inviting people to look at the tablets, see how they worked and find out about the Digital Recording project. Eight young women came to watch some related documentaries, experiment with the tablets and register for the workshop.



Yalata with elder Alice Cox sits with other elders and tell stories about her life.

Tuesday

The following day we headed out to Cheetamah Beach joined by the eight young women who would record the stories and eight mentors (the story tellers). We spent the day on the coast, learning how to use and film with the tablets, talking about the project and discussing ideas for stories that needed to be told.

Wednesday

Our group travelled to a sacred women's site. Elders Mabel Queama, Margaret May and Mima Smart told the story of



Young girls from Yalata Community quickly picked up how to use the tablets

the site while the girls recorded it. This footage is to be kept secret. At our bush lunch the girls used the tablets to record Mima talking about the importance of the last women's trip: Minyma Tjuta Tjunguringanyi Mamungari. She spoke about how important it was for the women, land and culture that gatherings such as these continue.

Thursday

Twenty of us headed out to the hill above Yalata with elder Alice Cox. The girls filmed Alice on the hill that overlooked Yalata telling stories about her life and stories from the land in Pitjantjatjara and in English.

Friday

We spent the day back at the Yalata IT Hub viewing the footage and transferring it to a central location for future use. While reviewing the footage we made notes on how we could improve the filming and audio next time, and how we might edit the footage in the future.



... and Working with Community

The tablets proved to be very easy to use with every girl and woman who picked one up being able to navigate it without difficulty. The older women were very keen to have stories recorded and were running the workshop by the second day. Using the Yalata bus they rounded up young girls and took them out to teach them how to use the tablets and tell them their stories.

The workshop proved to be an invaluable tool enabling generations to work together. This project provided a tangible means for the older women to pass on their knowledge while the younger women gained new technological skills as well as important cultural knowledge.

The workshop is part of a new partnership between Natural Resources AW, Yalata Community Inc., the Department of Further Education,



Community elder Mima Smart reviews the footage taken on the digital tablets

Employment, Science & Technology (DFEEST), Tauondi College, Oak Valley Community and Ceduna Aboriginal Arts and Culture Centre.

This project represents the first steps of an exciting new approach to capturing and sharing stories, as well as a means of reporting news about people caring for country. Next we will be deciding how to edit and share the stories, and to start using the tablets in all projects for

recording and reporting.

Thank you to Leonie Nissen (Tauondi College) and Pam Diment (Ceduna Aboriginal Arts and Culture Centre) for all their support and hard work on the workshop and to Sharokh Mckitterick (DFEEST) for organising and preparing the tablets for Yalata.

Congratulations to Debbie Queama, who won the 'Best Stories' award.

Congratualtions Priscilla, dedication shining through...

Dickie and Sarah Le Bois of Ceduna could not have been prouder of their daughter Priscilla Larkins, when on the 10th of May she was presented with the Award for Best Aboriginal Nurse/Midwife at the 13th Annual South Australian Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards. The Premier of South Australia, Mr Jay Weatherill MP presented the Award in recognition of Pricilla's outstanding efforts in providing high quality health care to the Aboriginal people of the Coober Pedy region where she is the Chief Executive Officer for Umoona Tjutagku Health Service. Amongst her many achievements she became the youngest Aboriginal CEO at 34 years of age. At the

presentation Priscilla thanked her parents for setting a good example in her early years and for providing a solid foundation for her future endeavours. She also acknowledged the support of her husband Patrick Larkins, whom she said has been her rock throughout the years.

Pricscilla began her career as an Aboriginal Health worker in Ceduna in 1996 where she worked in Ceduna Koonibba Aboriginal Health Service and in the Yalata community.

Congratulations Pricilla from all the Natural Resources AW team, you are a shining example of what can be achieved through commitment and self determination.



Priscilla speaks to the audience at the Excellence Awards as the Premier, Jay Weatherill watches on at the Adelaide Convention Centre



Googs Lake Restoration Project

Community consultation leads to strong community support



Robbie Sleep, Ceduna NRC Operations Manager, discussing the project with locals (including members of Goog's family) at the Ceduna Natural Resources Centre

A new project to restore a salt lake within Yumbarra Conservation Park attracted strong community support in the state's North West.

The project, managed by Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara and Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula, aims to restore Googs Lake to its former glory by preserving its unique

environment and exploring future management options.

Kicking off last month, staff from the Ceduna Natural Resource Centre invited the local community to provide their input into how they would like to see the area managed in the future and to share memories and experiences of the area.

'Goog' Denton lived to the south of what is now called Googs Lake at Lone Oak farmhouse during the early 70's with his wife and four children. The family, along with good mate Denis Beatie succeeded in just a few years to build a the track now known as Goog's Track.

The nickname Goog was supposedly given to him as a youngster because of his enthusiasm for collecting eggs.

"The area is full of stories and holds great cultural and historical significance to the people living in the north western regions," said Tammy Cox from Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula.

"Out of the discussions held with community members, it became apparent that there was growing concern about the degradation of the area, particularly by the unrestricted use of vehicles which has caused severe damage to fragile habitat" she said.

"The local community has shown great interest in the project and the support to date has been tremendous. The community really will play an important role in restoring the area for both their own enjoyment and for visitors to enjoy as well" said Ms Cox.

With interest re-ignited by the public meeting, a sizable workforce made up of community volunteers and Natural Resources AW and EP staff have begun undertaking work around the lake including planting, signage installation and defining campgrounds. Work commenced on the weekend 8-9 June.



Project leader Tammy Cox (left) and Ollanta Lipcer describing the restoration project area



Jimmy Perry, TK, Sean Peters and Whakarae visiting Aru Rockhole North on the Nullarbor Plain



People: NZ Rangers visit Yalata



Group photo taken at Aru Shed Tank

New Zealand Maori Rangers visit Yalata region

The development of strong cross-cultural relationships and knowledge sharing was a central theme for the New Zealand Maori Rangers who recently visited the Yalata Community in the southern Alinytjara Wilurara region.

In mid-May Maori rangers ventured on a historical cultural journey to Yalata and Ooldea, an important meeting place for the Aboriginal peoples of the region for many centuries and travelled across to the Great Australian Bight, gaining an insight into the dreaming stories linking the landscapes.

Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources' Project Officer Nathan Williams escorted the group, sharing his knowledge, both as an Anangu man and in resource management. He gives the following account of the visit:

I met the NZ rangers at the Ceduna airport and took them into town. On their first night there we had dinner with some of the Ceduna-based Rangers (from the Eyre Peninsula region) and two local elders Leonard Miller and

(left to right) Whakarae, Nathan Williams, Denis Peters and TK



Wanda Miller who did a traditional welcome to country for our NZ visitors on behalf of the Anangu of the region.

I then showed them to their accommodation, and briefly suggested that they have plenty of rest - I knew there was going to be a lot of meetings and travelling planned for the following next 3 days.

The next day, all the excitement of meeting and greeting started early. First it was the Ceduna Natural Resources Office where everyone gave a warm welcome to our visitors, talked about our similarities and what's been happening around our region. Then in the afternoon we made our way out to Yalata Community (about 250km west of Ceduna).

This was the first ranger exchange in Yalata and the community was absolutely delighted to have such a great group of people come to visit, especially when they found out that the types of issues the NZ rangers have around natural resource management were very similar to theirs.

Alessandro (Sandro) Madonna, the Yalata Land Management (YLM) Coordinator and his crew of rangers including Teddy Edwards, Adrian Brown and Brian Queama joined the group.

When we were ready to head off to the Nullarbor Head of the Bight there was so much excitement about this trip nearly half the community was there. When we arrived, the Yalata crew showed the NZ Rangers the Whale Watch Centre and

spoke about how important the whales are to the people of the region.

We spent two days on the Nullarbor Plain and almost every minute we'd get a comment from one of the NZ ranger "wow, the landscape here is the exact opposite of home"! Understandable since New Zealand has mountains that are higher than a kilometre and lush rainforests that are as old as time itself. But one phrase rings true for both "This is our Country; We need to take Care of it".

The Maori Rangers spent nearly a week with the YLM crew and Nathan on the Nullarbor Plain where many great friendships were made and special experiences were shared that will never be forgotten.

The NZ group, joined by Nathan, Sandro, Tammy Cox (EP) Yasmin Wolf (AW) and Mima Smart (Yalata elder) then travelled to Darwin to join more than 1200 delegates at the World Indigenous Network Conference on 26 May 2013.

(left to right) Visiting NZ Rangers: Whakarae, Kara Edwards, Matapura, and Denis Peters at Twin Rocks, Head of Bight





Natural Resources Committee visit to the Alinytjara Wilurara

In early May 2013, the Natural Resources Committee of South Australia made a fact finding tour of the Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) northern regions including the APY Lands. The Committee, whose central function is the protection, improvement and enhancement of the State's natural resources, is made up of ten members representing various political parties including four appointed from the House of Assembly and three from the Legislative Council.

Joined by the Committee's Executive Officer Patrick Dupont and Research Officer David Trebilcock the group's first point of call was Yulara where they met with the Natural Resources AW's Regional Manager Matthew Ward, Protected Areas and Public Lands Manager Justine Graham and Communications/Executive Officer Helen Donald and the Manager, APY Lands, Doug Humann.



The SA Natural Resources Committee and NR AW staff met with APY Executive, Umuwa

Arriving at the hills near New Well, the group met up with the WURRU RECOVERY TEAM and Indigenous Rangers to discuss the Warru project and visit the Warru compound (Pintji). After a bush lunch the next stop was the APY's administrative centre Umuwa, for a meeting with the APY Executive Board.



Establishment of the Umuwa TAFE Training Centre has enabled Aboriginal people in the region to undertake training in various skill areas. Yulara, which is within reach of the APY Lands, provides an opportunity for employment for people trained in areas of hospitality and building maintenance.



Matthew Ward presented an overview of the region and AW NRM Board, followed by an introduction to the APY by Mr Humann



Warru Dreaming Artwork developed by Anangu to provide a cultural interpretation of the project

On route to Umuwa the Committee were able to see first-hand the effect of grazing on Buffel Grass at the border of NT and the APY Lands (in SA). Cattle had clearly reduced the spread of the weed infestation which is a far greater problem on the SA side.

The Natural Resources Committee and APY Executive had productive discussions around a number of NRM issues, in particular camel management and the spread of Buffel Grass.

That evening the group had a bbq with the Board and other locals and enjoyed learning some traditional dancing to the wonderful singing of some minyma elders. Everybody, including a number of Anangu locals, slept well camped in a picturesque dry creek bed next to the glowing fires.

The NT side (left) has been grazed by cattle whereas the SA side (right) had not

The Warru Pintji surrounds the rocky outcrop where Warru are protected from predators

Warru Ranges demonstrate the radio tracking system used to locate Warru at New Well, Tomkinson Ranges





Committee Members have lunch at Indulkana School



Lunch being prepared at Indulkana School kitchen



Don Peglar talks with Peter Munkari about his early years as a stockman at Davies Bore and about his vision for future local projects



The old windmill, water tank and disused stockyards at Davies Bore



Committee members look over the stockyards

SA NR Committee membership

Presiding Member Hon Steph Key MP

Members

Mr Geoff Brock MP

Mr Don Pegler MP

Hon John Dawkins MLC

Mr Dan van Holst Pellekaan MP

Mrs Robyn Geraghty MP

Hon Russell Wortley MLC

Mr Lee Odenwalder MP

Hon Robert Brokenshire MLC
(unavailable for APY visit)

The following day the group drove to Indulkana where a visit to the local art gallery presented a great opportunity to talk with many local artists, view the outstanding artwork and see first-hand how such enterprises benefit the community as a whole.

At the Indulkana school, four young Anangu women (who recently completed their catering course) presented the committee with a delicious lunch. Bruce Macpherson (NR AW's Community Engagement Manager) then talked to the Committee about Community capacity building and plans for future work in the region. The Principal of Indulkana school also showed group members the school vegetable garden painted and cared for by the children.

The afternoon was equally as rewarding with a trip to Davies Bore where aboriginal elder, Peter Munkari discussed his vision for the yards and how it might reduce feral animal problems near Indulkana, provide Anangu employment and income for the community. To this end the Committee (many of whom have considerable backgrounds in land management) looked over the disused yards and discussed their potential.

On the way to Coober Pedy the group visited the spectacular Breakaways made even more so by the setting sun.

After spending the night in Coober Pedy the NR Committee met with the CEO of the Coober Pedy Council Phil Cameron and the leader of Antakarinja Mantu Yankunyjatjara Ian Crombie to discuss the Breakaways Co-Management Board.

The group then returned to Adelaide armed with a closer, first-hand understanding of the APY Land's rich natural resources and of the issues facing its people in caring for their country.

Admiring the spectacular views at the Breakaways near Coober Pedy





Southern hairy-nosed wombats

Working on Caring for Country

The world's largest burrowing animals

Written by, and photos courtesy of Dr Elisa Sparrow, Conservation Biologist Conservation Ark - Zoos SA

The southern hairy-nosed wombat is South Australia's faunal emblem, and one of the world's largest burrowing animals. Burrows are vital for a wombat's survival; they provide them with protection from the extreme temperature and weather conditions that occur in the semi-arid environment in which they live. They are often nicknamed "the bulldozer of the bush" due to extensive digging and burrowing behaviour. Because of this, wombats often find themselves coming into conflict with many farmers on agricultural properties. Their burrows can be found under fences, in cropping paddocks, under water tanks, and as a result can cause damage to property (including expensive farming equipment falling into collapsed tunnels), which is not only a financial issue, but also a safety concern. Other complaints associated with wombats are competition for food with sheep, and the eating of cereal crops. The southern hairy nosed wombat can be found mainly in this state. The population however, is found predominantly on agricultural properties. Therefore co-existence between agriculture and wombats is



Southern hairy-nosed wombat in the north west

vital to the conservation of this species. The past 3 years Zoos SA and the University of Adelaide scientists have been working closely with DEWNR staff and landholders in the Far West and Eyre Peninsula to discuss management options that will help balance the two activities - allow farmers to make a living, whilst ensuring the long-term survival of wombats. Some of the projects included in the overarching goal of promoting co-existence are:

1. **Wombat Workshops, surveys and site visits:**

The first step was to gain a greater

understanding of the issues that surround farming and wombats. In 2011 and 2012 there were 2 comprehensive surveys distributed, a series of "Wombat Workshops" in the regional communities, and many site visits. The aim was to try and gain a better understanding of the wombat/farmer relationship. Results from this project indicated that the majority of landholders and the community don't want to see wombats become locally extinct and believe co-existence is possible, however most people agree

Southern hairy-nosed wombat at the opening to their burrow photographed at night by the motion camera





that we need to find new ways to reduce the impacts wombats can have on agriculture.

2. Estimating population size:

Knowing the number of wombat in any given population (entire species, regional, site specific) is vital to help determine best management options. We are currently developing a technique combining both satellite imagery and ground-truthing (including understanding the ecology of the species) to robustly estimate wombat numbers across their distribution.

3. Management:

We are currently trialling various non-lethal interventions (e.g. scent deterrents, one-way gates) to ultimately develop a tool-kit for landholders to assist in integrated management options for wombats on their property.

The information collected will also assist in informing government policy makers, so together we can find the best solutions and promote co-existence between wombats and agriculture. I truly believe the best way to ensure the long term conservation of this species is for all stakeholders to work together. And I am determined to continue my co-existence crusade! Stubborn like a wombat I suppose you could say.....



Please report any sightings of this weed

The roadside weed commonly known as Hairy lovegrass (*Eragrostis trichophora*), has been found in dense monocultures of millions of plants just off the road side in areas all along the Barrier Highway. At this stage it appears to be confined to the road sides and not getting into any other vegetation types. However it was dominate, to the exclusion of all other plants, in some places on the road side.



Natural Resources EP Authorised Officer Luke Nettle noted that it is growing along the Eyre Highway and into Pt Augusta and also on the way to Adelaide. It appears to be spreading rapidly so it is important that we establish, as quickly as possible, if this weed has the potential to invade native ecosystems.

‘Hairy lovegrass’ appears to behave very much like its smaller relative *Eragrostis minor* (widespread on roadside on lower Eyre Peninsula) which, as far as we are aware, grows exclusively along roadside, off the bitumen or on/by pavement etc where run off occurs but not on dirt track sides.

We have discovered a few site’s along the Eyre Highway on the Nullarbor, but expect there will be a lot more once we start looking.

Many of these plants have also been found on the highway West and East of Ceduna however with the recent rains we expect more will flourish further West. One specimen was found next to the Ceduna fruit fly stop.

Will it invade native habitat or is it strictly a roadside weed?

Undoubtedly this weed is far more wide spread in our region than we are aware of at the moment. If you find any of these plants growing in the AW or EP region, particularly if it is away from the roadsides please contact Natural Resources AW as soon as possible on 1800 776 855. It is important that we locate and destroy plants in an effort to do all we can to stop the spread.

Although the flowering spike and spikelets of this grass resemble *Eragrostis curvula* (African lovegrass), a very close relative, *Eragrostis trichophora*, grows to about 60cm high and the seed head is finer (almost smoky looking when it’s thick) where as African Lovegrass can grow to 1.5 to 2 meters high and the seed head is more distinct.

Teresa Gurney, Authorised Officer
Alinytjara Wilurara



Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara Coastal Research and Monitoring: **Mulloway**

Mulloway Recreational Fishing Survey

Co-written by Thomas Barnes (University of Adelaide PhD Student , Dr Paul Rogers (SARDI Aquatic Sciences Research Officer) and Yasmin Wolf (Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara Project Officer- Coasts)

The spectacular coastline of the Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara region extends from Yalata Beach, 200km West of Ceduna, to the Western Australian border. Characterised by powerful swells and impressive limestone cliffs, the waters provide an ideal breeding ground for marine life, including the iconic mulloway.

As juvenile mulloway require protected habitat for many years, mulloway populations are particularly vulnerable to overfishing and habitat loss.

The mulloway population on the west coast of SA is quite unique in that there are no protective estuaries in the region, and all the life stages appear to co-inhabit the same high impact surf beaches and semi-protected lagoons.

By examining mulloway *otoliths* (tiny structures just behind the fish's brain often referred to as fish *earstones*) taken from individual specimens, researchers have established that the western mulloway populations seem to be different to those on the south eastern coasts of South Australia.



Researchers remove earstones from the fluid sacs (photo courtesy of Aude Loisier)

Ring-like markings on the earstones are counted to determine the age of the specimen. It appears that mulloway grow much faster and that there is a greater range of ages present in the western population at any given time.



Andrew Cox holds up the mulloway "Catch of the Day" (photos courtesy of Nathan Williams)



Mulloway "earstones" size comparison with \$1 coin

People who have fished in these waters since the early 1970's and 80's have put forward that the far west mulloway population may be in decline.

Due to this and increasing concern from the local Aboriginal community, Yasmin Wolf and Nathan Williams from Natural Resources Alintjara Wilurara, Dr Paul Rogers (Aquatic Science Research Officer, SARDI), Thomas Barnes (University of Adelaide PhD student) and Yalata community organisations/ volunteers teamed up to develop an *On-site Recreational Fishing Survey* and Research project on mulloway in the Yalata Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). The Survey was developed to gain insight into recreational fishing in this unique and isolated region.

This Survey has been undertaken each year since the 2009/10 season. Genetic markers have been developed at the University of Adelaide in collaboration with the South Australian museum. Data from this technique will be

combined with otolith chemistry analysis to inform the final report.

When combined, the molecular and otolith-based techniques are expected to confirm that the Yalata mulloway form a discrete population. What is not clear is the genetic difference of these populations, which will provide critical information on the history of structuring, mixing and movements of this population. This information will compliment the satellite tagging and survey data (described below) to provide management agencies with important information about our valuable mulloway resource.

Satellite Mulloway tagging survey

In February 2012/2013 and November 2012, miniature pop-up satellite tags were deployed on 8 large mulloway ranging in size from approximately 8 to 35 kilograms. The aims of this tagging study was to assess the residency, habitat use and movement patterns of mulloway while in the Great Australian Bight Marine Park, and determine how much protection is likely to be provided to this iconic fishing species by pre-existing and proposed Marine Protected Areas. This includes the new Sanctuary Zone that was recently announced in the Yalata IPA between the Coomra and Granites camping grounds by the State Government.

Another important lesson to be learnt from the satellite tagging is to estimate the post-release mortality rate of fish that are released. Funding for this project has been provided by Yalata Land Management, Department



Great Australian Bight Marine Park closes to protect whales



Tom Barnes and Paul Rogers attaching a satellite tag (photo courtesy of Aude Loisier)

of Environment, Water and Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara and the University of Adelaide with support from a Research Officer provided by SARDI Aquatic Sciences.

The recreational survey showed that approximately 60% of mulloway are released for various reasons, as such it is important to determine the survivorship following capture and release in the surf. The satellite tags are streamlined and slightly positively buoyant. They are attached to each fish by way of a small intramuscular dart, and are towed by the fish for durations of up to three months. Temperature, depth and light data is recorded which is used to estimate the location of each fish on a daily basis. After this programmed time period lapses, the tags release from the fish, float to the surface and transmit the archived data and pop-up position estimate to passing satellites. This information is then sent to a processing station in France and then back out to the researchers via the internet. The tag from one fish that was captured and released in Yalata in February 2012 popped up south of Eucla in Western Australia, approximately 400 km away at a depth of 48 m. A further five tags were deployed in February 2013 to try to further uncover the secret lives of this mysterious fish species.

The Conservation Zone and Marine Mammal Protection Zone of the Great Australian Bight Marine Park is closed until the end of October, due to the start of the southern right whale breeding season.

Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula's Great Australian Bight Marine Park Manager, Dirk Holman, said all boats, including commercial fishing vessels, were prohibited from entering these zones until Thursday 31 October.

"The Great Australian Bight Marine Park was established to protect vulnerable and endangered marine life, including the southern right whale, the Australian sea lion, and unique plants and animals living on the sea floor that don't occur anywhere else in the world," Mr Holman said.

"The Great Australian Bight region provides significant seasonal habitat for the southern right whale, with up to half of the Australian population using the area."

The park has been closed since the start of May.

"May signals the start of the southern

right whale breeding season as the mammals migrate from their summer sub-Antarctic feeding grounds to their winter breeding and nursery grounds along the southern coastline of Australia," he said.

Mr Holman said the Head of the Bight was one of the most important calving sites in Australia.

"More than 1000 whales have been recorded in the region and some whales have been observed returning to the Great Australian Bight Marine Park regularly since 1991," he said.

"Cows (pregnant whales) give birth once every three years. They nurse calves for up to one year and then have a year to recover (cows lose up to 20 tonnes during the calving season because they don't feed while in Australian waters) before returning the following winter to mate.

"Currently there are three adult whales and two calves at the Head of the Bight."

For more information contact Dirk Holman at the EP Natural Resources Centre in Port Lincoln on 8688 3110 or 0457 541 437.



Southern right whale and calf viewed from the cliff edge (photo courtesy of Dirk Holman)



Rockhole recovery in Yumbarra Conservation Park and Yellabinna Regional Reserve

Written by, and photography courtesy of Paul Gregory AW Project Officer (Community)

In mid April, a group of 17 volunteers from West Mallee Protection Group and Kokatha Mula, led by Sue Haseldine completed a seven day field trip visiting several sites within the Yumbarra Conservation Park and Yellabinna Regional Reserve that are both culturally and ecologically significant (rockholes and salt lakes).

Supported by AW staff, monitoring and assessments were carried out at 7 rock-holes and 2 salt lakes with a total of 14 volunteers over the 7 days, including 2 volunteers from Poland. A number of the rockholes were cleaned and track maintenance was also carried out.



Ochre Turner cleaning the bottom of the rockhole



On the first day after trip preparations were finalised the group set out from Sue Haseldine's farm toward Narla Rockhole on Yellabinna Regional Reserve via Yumbarra and Pureba Conservation Parks along the dog fence.



Trilling frog tadpole found in catchment area

The track from Pureba Conservation Park heading north along the dog fence proved to be tough going with a number of large sand dunes hampering attempts to reach Narla Rockhole by night fall, so camp was set up 25 kilometre south of Narla for the night.

The next morning we travelled the remaining 25 kilometres toward Narla arriving in time for lunch. After lunch Sue cleared Narla rockhole and everyone headed to the site where the

Wedge-tail eagle (captured on motion sensor camera)

motion sensor camera had been set up the week before.

Eager to see what had been captured on the camera the volunteers gathered around to view the pictures. A number



Skeletal remains cleaned out of rockhole

volunteers then assisted in carrying out the water testing and assessment of Narla rockhole. A bird survey was also undertaken.

The discovery of trilling frog larval (tadpoles), aquatic plants, unidentified invertebrates (water bugs) and small crustacean called Ostracods in most of the water catchment areas on Narla, created excitement amongst the volunteers as these are all indicators of a healthy ecosystem.

Volunteers clearing debris from the tracks





Native insects help maintain the park's eco balance



Wedgetail eagle coming in to land (captured on motion sensor camera)



Abundant insect life flourishing in the Parks

One concern though was the numerous stressed and dead shrubs, mainly *Acacia ligulata*, growing on shallow soils on and around the rockhole. This was most probably the result of an 8 month dry spell beginning in July 2012.

The next day it was off the Minya Narla (Lois) rockhole to carry out water testing, rockhole assessment and cleaning out one of the main pits that contain a rotted camel carcass.

After Sue had cleared the rock-hole the first task was to check the motion sensor camera. The camera captured numerous native bird and animal species, which was cause for some excitement. This was dampened somewhat however by further images of a number of feral cats that had also been accessing the rock-hole, one captured taking a Bronzed-winged Pigeon.

Then it was down to work cleaning out the rockhole and removing the camel remains. Other smaller pits and

shallow pans contained aquatic plant life with one containing numerous small tadpoles and trilling frog's eggs.

The following day we departed for Dinah and Minya Dinah rockholes were the volunteer group spent two days. For cultural reasons the cleaning of the two rockholes was carried out by women only with the men only assisting in the transporting of the heavy pump and rockhole cleaning equipment to each site.

Minya Dinah also contained the rotted carcass of a dead camel and the water's edge was littered with numerous camel scats. Dinah didn't contain any animal bones but small transparent red worms were discovered in the silt at the bottom of the pit.

The highlight of the day, when checking the motion sensor camera pictures, was a Wedged-tailed Eagle posing in front of the camera.

Caring for our country with community

Next it was off to Inla and Minya Inla were the group spend the last 2 days, which included a day trip to Yumbarra rock-hole and Paint Lake. This time it was the men's turn to clean the rock-hole at Inla which contained numerous sticks, rocks and animal bones. In all 8 skulls were discovered including dingo/dog, kangaroo and an emu skull. This rock-hole was only cleaned 6 months before by the WMPG volunteers.

On the last day, the volunteers carried out track maintenance on the track between Inla and Paint Lake stopping briefly at Yumbarra rock-hole to make a quick assessment.

L to R: Ochre Turner, Dennis Hocking, Elisa Binell with Dennis Hocking Jnr, Aaron Binnel, Joe Tucker, Kim, Tristan Wakefield, Sheena Haseldine, Keith Haseldine, Sue Haseldine, Jayden Wakefield, Jill Woodlands, Włodzimierz Galecki and Krzysztof Kurek



Major Mitchell Cockatoos visiting the rockhole



Tri-state Fire Project

Written by and photos courtesy of Joe Stelmann

Controlled burning, north west of Umutju

The tri-state fire project that supports traditional and contemporary fire management including the reinstatement of traditional patch burning in the corner country of South Australia and the Northern Territory and adjacent Western Australia IPA of Ngaanyatjarra has been very successful. With a no borders approach, the project which was funded by Federal Governments; *Caring for Country* initiative commenced in mid 2012 and involved the Central Land Council communities of Mutijulu, Docker River, in the Northern Territory, Ngaanyatjarra Council communities of Black Stone, Warburton in Western Australia and APY communities of Kalka, Pipalyatjara and Watarru in the APY Lands of South Australia. The Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Regional staff supported the development of the projects initial funding application and the acquisition of project equipment for APY Land Management once the project commenced.

The project utilised a combination of on-ground and aerial burning to reinstate a fire regime which more closely resembles that applied by Anangu for thousands of years. This has significantly reduced the

destructive impacts associated with broadacre wildfires by reducing fuel loads and breaking up fuel continuity across the greater landscape so as to produce a diversity of vegetation types, structures and age classes. At a local level, controlled burns were used to protect fire-sensitive natural communities and species and in accordance with species-specific requirements.

The how, when and where to burn priorities were decided on by the areas traditional owners (TO's) during field meetings held across the project area. Due to the limited opportunities that some traditional owners have to visit their homelands, the project offered opportunities for these people to visit and undertake active land management on their country for the first time in many years.

This projects funding ends on June 30th this year, but due to the program's success and the enthusiasm by TO's to continue the projects activities, further funding applications have been submitted. Funding for IPA land management activities will also be used to continue to support the good results that have been achieved so far.

Tri-state fire project planning meeting held at Walytjatjata in the Mann Rangers, NT



Traditional Owner Frank Young, APY Fire Manager, Steve Murphy and Regional Ranger Gary Lewis



Joe Stelmann discussing the project with the group with the assistance of an interpreter

Joe's making tracks

Alinytjara Wilurara's highly regarded Fire Management Officer, Joe Stelmann, has left AW for a six week stint in Flood Risk Assessment before leaving DEWNR to pursue a life "just chilling out".

After working for the SA Government in a range of environmental management related positions for over 40 years, he'll be strapping on his cleats



along with his wife Stephanie Williams and riding toward the horizon to see what adventures lie beyond.

Joe's stints in Parks and Wildlife/ DENR/DEHAA/DEH/DENR/DEWNR have encompassed work across the state, including Leigh Creek, Brookfield Conservation Park, Lameroo, Venus Bay, Flinders Ranges, as well as venturing into the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Joe formed many friendships across the state in the course of his work. He was instrumental in the development of innovative public and private partnerships and, as a highly valued member of the AW team since January 2009, delivered AW's highly comprehensive Fire Management Plan.

He also began AW's support for on-ground fire management activities in the region. One key protection burn he implemented, following the large rains of early 2012, prevented a wildfire destroying the Warru fence - a significant piece of biodiversity and physical infrastructure the state had invested in.

Joe will also be remembered in the AW region as the "Wati Waru"... despite his best intentions to drive around a work vehicle with the words "Fire Man" on the side, many women ended up chasing down the vehicle with words that also translated to "Hot Man"!

Very best wishes to Joe and Steff for the next fun-filled phase of your lives, you will be greatly missed by your colleagues and hope you continue to enjoy your well-earned outdoor and travel pursuits.



Tips for Distance Drivers

The Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) region covers nearly a third of South Australia with long distances between locations where fuel is available and help may be at hand. To help keep the people of the region safe here are some tips that might prove useful.

How far can you go on a tank?

It is important to know how far you can travel on the supply of fuel in your vehicle. While manufacturers indicate fuel consumption rates, by the time we fit out our vehicles, load them and allow for varying driving styles and terrain, the advertised consumption rates may be wildly inaccurate. For example a vehicle that advertises a return of 10Lts / 100 kilometres unloaded on a bitumen road may fall up to 15 Lts /100 fully loaded on dirt. In this example, the total distance for a 90 litre tank changes from 900kms to 600kms, a long walk if you miscalculate!

1. Filling the tank until full

Ever noticed when filling your diesel vehicle that the nozzle clicks off before the tank is full? Diesel can become 'frothy' similar to pouring beer into a glass. This causes the trigger to stop the flow of fuel, but the tank is full of froth not fuel. Sometimes this can mean that your tank is 10-20% below the full level. When filling, take time for the froth to subside and then top up the tank. Be sure to have your vehicle level, or if the driveway slopes, make sure the filler is on the high side, to allow any air locks to escape. If the fuel filler is below the top of the fuel tank as they sometimes are with aftermarket long range tanks, air locks can prevent you from filling the tank completely.

To Summarise:

- Check and follow the safety instructions on the pump
- Ensure the car is level or sloping way from the filler cap
- Fill diesel tanks slowly
- Wait for the froth to dissipate and then top up

2. Using the correct fuel

You may think "I would never put petrol in a diesel vehicle", but the RAA routinely comes to the rescue of people filling with incorrect fuel. Putting petrol in a diesel engine is far more serious than the other way round.

The RAA recommends that if you have put petrol into a diesel car or diesel into a petrol car you should not start up the car. Push the car away from the pumps and call the RAA to drain the tank.

Petrol in a diesel engine can cause serious damage if you start the engine. You can in fact get away with a little diesel going into a petrol car, but it will make it run rough and lack power, so keep topping up with petrol if you have done this and can't get the RAA to assist.

For more detail on dealing with the wrong fuel in your car see: <http://www.motoring.com.au/advice/2012/mis-fuelling-mayhem-32059>

Safety note: Cooler autumn weather will result in your car tyres losing pressure.....so check them this week!

Courtesy of David Oag and Peter Newman, Bush and Bitumen, DEWNR SAAL Region

Parry Agius
Presiding Member



Rose Lester
Board Member, APY



Mima Smart
Board Member, Yalata



Sydney Chamberlain
Board Member, Far West



Brian Queama
Board Member, Maralinga Tjarutja



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