

Across the OUTBACK

APRIL 2010

PRODUCED FOR OUTBACK SA

NUMBER 48

Three new Public Access Routes

David Oag, Pastoral Inspector

Three new Public Access Routes (PARs) have been established in the Gawler Ranges so that there are now 24 PARs through various parts of the rangelands. These new routes formalise tracks that the public has been accessing, in some cases, for many years and their establishment follows the completion of a 90 day public comment period.

Route 22

Route no 22 (Googs Track) runs from the northern extremity of the Yellabinnia Regional Reserve through Kychering Pastoral Lease (Wilgena) to the Transcontinental Railway where it terminates at the junction of the road along the railway.

The PAR diverts traffic away from the Malbooma Outstation and remains on the western side of the Dog Fence. While 'Googs Track' from Ceduna to Tarcoola is approximately 230 km, the PAR section of the track (ie. the section on pastoral land) is approximately 22 km.

...Continued on page 2



CONTENTS

Three new Public Access Routes 1

PASTORAL BOARD

Three new Public Access
Routes continued 2
A good start to the year 3
Flooding and public access update . . . 4

COMMUNITY NEWS

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS NRM BOARD

Spring classification and
risk assessment 6
Mound spring management 6
ID of permanent waterbodies 7
Seen any Flock Pigeons? 7
Tales in the Sand 7
Local success in controlling
Oleander in the Flinders 8
Out of the garden and out of control . . 8
Preventing weed spread 9
Will you attend our Community
NRM Forum? 9
Farewell to Frank 9
How often do dingoes
visit waterpoints? 10
Biteback in full swing 10
Dingoes, dust storms and
bathing under the stars 10
SAAL NRM news. 11

OUTBACK ROUND-UP 12

DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

Aerial kangaroo survey 14
Changing operators for your 2010
commercial harvest? 14

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND RESOURCES SA

Biosecurity – Animal Health

New mob-based recording for
sheep and goats 15
Restocking cattle on your property? . 15

OUTBACK COMMUNITY 16



PASTORAL BOARD

...Continued from front cover

Googs Track has been likened to a miniature cross between the Canning Stock Route and the Simpson Desert but it has the advantage of being close to a major town and suitable for a two or three day adventure. The trip is best done from south to north due to the hundreds of sandhills that have to be crossed, which are easier from the southern approaches.

The track was built in the mid 1970s by John (nicknamed Goog) and Jenny Denton. Goog's belief that a road from Ceduna to the railway junction at Tarcoola would be of considerable value to the district was so strong that he set out to build the road himself.

Others became influenced by his enthusiasm and offered support along the way but Goog was the driving force and his family his main helpers.

Track conditions are generally good but Department for Environment and Heritage staff request that tyre pressures be reduced to avoid track damage and closures.

Route 23

Route 23 (Nonning) allows access from Kimba through to the Iron Knob to Yardea mail road. It meets the mail road at the gymkhana ground approximately 2 km north-west of Nonning Homestead. Travellers have been accessing this through route for many years and this gazettal will formalise the public access.

Route 24

Route 24 (Secret Rocks) has been a popular picnic ground for many years along the Kimba to Whyalla road, approximately 44 km east of Kimba. There is a walking track that circumnavigates the 'rock', but vehicle access beyond the car park is restricted.

A monument to explorer Edward John Eyre has been erected at Secret Rocks. Eyre and his party camped at this site when they travelled through this area in September 1840, and Eyre called it Refuge Rocks. ■

BELOW Secret Rocks and the monument to Edward John Eyre



NATIONAL RANGELANDS MONITORING PROGRAM

The Land Management Unit with the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation is contributing to a major national program known as the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN).

TERN includes a Rangelands Reference Site Network program with one of its key objectives the development of a collaborative and long term network of new and existing ecosystem monitoring programs.

The programs will be directly linked to meeting the needs of natural resources management agencies at regional, State and national levels.

Reference sites will be established across the Australian rangelands to establish a baseline condition for assessment of rangeland ecosystem changes. The methodology used to establish these sites will inform the subsequent establishment and operation of reference sites for all Australian ecosystems.

The coordination of existing datasets, access and calibration of remote sensing data, and the establishment of a national rangelands monitoring network will also be a focus.

A key component has been the selection of repeatable and quantitative field methods for measuring the condition of rangelands vegetation across a range of vegetation

communities, as well as measuring bare ground and per cent vegetation cover to validate the remote sensing images.

Existing data on rangelands condition and ground-based site assessments will contribute to the development of the remote sensing monitoring process.

Around 1500 reference or monitoring sites will be examined across the Australian rangelands.

Key partner agencies are the Department for Environment and Heritage and the University of Adelaide with funding from the Australian Government.



A good start to the year

Chris Turner, Senior Pastoral Inspector

It is a fantastic start to the year with the majority of the pastoral areas of the State so far receiving well above average rainfall and the Cooper Creek floodwaters looking like they will reach Lake Eyre for the first time since 1990.

The regeneration of the landscape after the September 2009 dust storms, particularly in the North East district, has been spectacular with most areas experiencing prolific summer grass and shrub regeneration and full dams.

The Birdsville Track, North Flinders, Marla-Oodnadatta, Kingoonya, North West and Gawler Ranges areas are all generally in above average to good condition from a landscape and feed supply perspective.

One area missing out on the decent rain is the area north/north-west of Roxby Downs up to around William Creek. This area has received some rainfall with varied response in feed supply but not enough to be considered 'out of the woods' yet.

Another area to miss out is the pastoral country north of Morgan. Erratic rainfall was recorded across this entire area with the properties closer to Burra recording reasonably heavy falls.

However, properties directly north of Morgan, while receiving their best rainfall start to the year since 1996, are still in a below average situation.

The summer rains to date have resulted in reshooting of the perennial shrubs, particularly pearl bluebush, but no appreciable grass or herb cover between the shrubs.

Until consistent autumn/winter rains are received this situation will not improve but at least the land is in far better condition than it was at end of December. ■

IMAGES

- L September 2009 dust storms arriving over the hills of Mulga View Station in the North Flinders
R The same general area in March 2010 with the vegetation response clearly evident



PASTORAL BOARD AND PROGRAM CONTACTS

The Pastoral Board of SA

Soil & Water Environs Building, Entry 4,
Waite Campus, Waite Road, Urrbrae, SA
(GPO Box 2834, Adelaide SA 5001)

General enquiries

Phone (08) 8303 9751
Fax (08) 8303 9320
Freecall 1800 678 447

Specific contacts in Adelaide and Port Augusta:

Presiding Member

Michael McBride 0427 087 966

Program Manager

Glenn Gale (08) 8303 9345

Pastoral Board matters

Glenn Gale (08) 8303 9345

Public access to pastoral lands

David Oag (08) 8648 5174

Lease assessments

Craig Boulderstone (08) 8303 9752

Lease inspections and tenure

Chris Turner (08) 8303 9755

PASTORAL BOARD 2010 MEETING DATES

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Meeting 121 | Thursday 17 June
Adelaide |
| Meeting 122 | Thursday 19 August
Adelaide |
| Meeting 123 | Wednesday 20 and
Thursday 21 October
Location to be
determined |
| Meeting 124 | Thursday 15 December
Adelaide or Pt Augusta |



Flooding and public access update

David Oag, Pastoral Inspector

Three Public Access Routes (PARs) have been temporarily closed due to flooding and flood damage and for public safety. People accessing the outback should be aware that the recent heavy rains will have caused significant damage to many roads and tracks in the outback.

Walkers Crossing PAR

Due to significant flooding in the Cooper Creek system, following widespread rainfall in Queensland, the Walkers Crossing PAR is now closed. Floodwaters have reached beyond the crossing and it is likely that this route will be closed for many weeks if not months.

Warburton K1 PAR

The rains in Queensland have also led to floodwaters heading down the Diamantina/Warburton rivers. The

Warburton K1 PAR, which provides access to the Simpson Desert Regional Reserve from the Birdsville Track, is now closed due to this water flow. In late March floodwaters in this river system were still making their way downstream from Birdsville and it is unknown when the route will re-open.

Pedirka PAR

The Pedirka PAR from Hamilton station to Witjira National Park has been closed due to flood damage and it is uncertain when it will re-open. ■

ROAD CONDITION UPDATES

Road condition reports are available and updated regularly at the following websites.

www.transport.sa.gov.au/quicklinks/northern_roads/northern.asp

www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/pdfs/PARKS_PDFS_DES_PARKS_BULLETIN.PDF

BELOW Flood damage has caused major damage for PARs and the road network including the Nappa Merrie Bridge (photo courtesy of Santos)



NEW BEGINNINGS AT BON BON

Glen Norris, Bon Bon Station Reserve Manager

Last year I moved from Bush Heritage Australia's Melbourne headquarters to the Mulga, Myall and Saltbush landscape of Bon Bon Station.

Being a country lad originally, I have not regretted this move for a moment.

Since my arrival I have mainly focussed on infrastructure repairs, maintenance and upgrades, and getting to know the property, the community, and the threats to the unique flora and fauna of Bon Bon and the Kingoonya region.

From a biodiversity perspective, threats include dogs, foxes and cats; drainage issues relating to soil conservation and erosion; bushfires; and emerging invasive plant species such as Buffel Grass.

I have witnessed good rainfall events and positive changes in vegetation structure and habitat for fauna including reptiles and birds like the Chestnut-breasted Whiteface, a species endemic to SA.

Southern Hairy-nosed Wombats are at the northern-most extent of their range and surrounding landholders say that there are a few around.

We plan to undertake a thorough fauna survey this year to complement Bush Heritage Australia's fauna inventory and that of the Gawler Bioregion.

A management planning workshop will be held in mid April to establish our priorities for Bon Bon over the next five years.

Further information

Glen Norris
Bush Heritage Australia
8672 8932

Protecting historic Witjira sites

Alan Hancox, President, Friends of the Simpson Desert Parks

Friends of the Simpson Desert Parks will spend two weeks in May/June carrying out protective works at sites in Witjira National Park where historic remains are a legacy to the early pastoralism of the area.

Bloods Creek

Bloods Creek was once an Overland Repeater Station before becoming a shop and hotel for local pastoralists and travellers. It was owned by various pastoralists before becoming part of Mt Dare Station. Later it was gazetted as part of Witjira National Park. Today, Bloods Creek consists of a windmill, water tanks and stockyard, well, building foundation remains, various *in situ* historical items, animal yards and a lone grave.

Federal

Federal was an outstation used during the pastoral era, with only the old stockyards, various *in situ* historical items plus the remains of its elaborate bottle-lined garden beds.

Bloods Creek and Federal are of cultural significance to local Aboriginal people who assisted in the pastoral industry of the area.

Interpretation of these sites will better educate visitors and hopefully through respect of history, vandalism and souveniring will decrease.

This is especially important to the Federal area where the upturned bottles making the garden beds are being pulled up, broken and driven over by unthinking visitors.

The protective works are being carried out with Department for Environment and Heritage rangers and FOS volunteers.

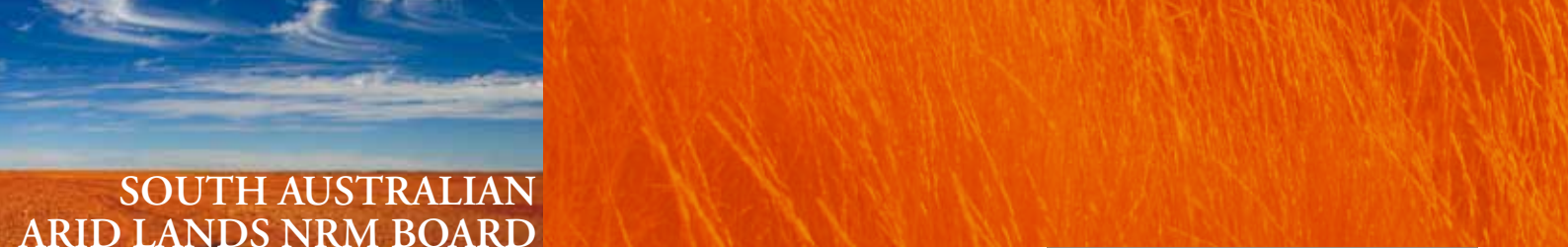
FOS membership is national and open to any interested persons
www.friendsofthesimpsondesert.com.au ■

BELOW Bottle path remains at Federal



Lorraine Hancox





Spring classification and risk assessment

Travis Gotch

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is developing a tool to classify Great Artesian Basin (GAB) Springs and quantify the level of risk to spring flow associated with proposed groundwater developments.

The GAB Springs are points of natural discharge of water from the aquifers of the GAB with evidence of discharge dating back two million years.

The permanent nature of spring discharge and considerable changes to climate during this time has meant that the springs are home to a unique flora and fauna.

However all is not equal in the GAB Springs with some springs highly species diverse and others having unique geo- or hydrogeological characteristics.

The risk of drawdown is also greater for some spring groups than for others due to the varied nature of water demands in the region.

A central tenet of the Far Northern Prescribed Wells Area Water Allocation Plan (WAP) is that no allocation of water should have a significant impact on the GAB springs discharge or the plant and animal life that they support.

For this reason, the Board is developing a system so that decisions on water allocation are based on the best available science and data.

Geomorphic, hydrogeochemical, spatial and ecological data are being incorporated into a central database/inventory which can be used to classify springs based on their geological, hydrogeological and ecological importance.

The development of this tool will ensure future water allocations are based on transparent and defensible science which will improve GAB management and provide clear guidelines for future allocation and licensing applications. ■

Items on this page report on the SAAL NRM Board's project *Allocating water and maintaining flows to artesian springs*. Due for completion in April 2012 this project is funded by the National Water Commission.

Project partners include the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, Flinders University, The University of Adelaide, and the Northern Territory Government.

Further information
NWI Water Program Manager
8204 9131

IMAGES

- L The Finke River in flood
- R McEwins Spring

MOUND SPRING MANAGEMENT

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is seeking to improve our understanding and management of the iconic Great Artesian Basin (GAB) mound springs.

Key to understanding the environmental water requirements of mound springs is finding out how much water currently enters the GAB in SA and the NT.

An important source of water to the GAB comes from the infiltration of floodwater from arid rivers like the Finke River (NT) and the Stephenson Creek and Alberga River (SA). Fortunately for the project there have been several flood events over the last 18 months.

To estimate the volume of infiltrating water geophysics techniques are being used to track the downward movement of floodwater into the GAB around the Finke River and groundwater bores are being installed next to the river.

Last November visiting experts from the University of Bern and the University of Chicago took part in a groundwater sampling program. Groundwater samples will be dated and used to estimate how long it takes water to travel from the Finke River to Dalhousie Springs. We expect this could be in the order of 100,000s of years.



ID OF PERMANENT WATERBODIES

Henry Mancini

The SAAL NRM Board has compiled an inventory of all permanent and semi-permanent water in the Queensland and South Australian sections of the Lake Eyre Basin drawing on the knowledge and observations of over 150 land owners and managers.

Over 1350 permanent and semi-permanent waterbodies were mapped across the Cooper Creek and Georgina-Diamantina catchments. Of these, about 530 were considered permanent.

The project provides an understanding of the connectivity of waterbodies at the catchment level, and includes details of their ecological and cultural significance.

An understanding of connectivity patterns and ecological factors provides a baseline to measure the health and trends of ecosystems in terms of identifying and managing key threats (eg pest animals such as cane toads, European carp and *Gambusia*), as well as understanding the impacts of mining, herbivore grazing and tourism.

The key permanent waterholes in the SA section of the Cooper Creek catchment are Cullyamurra and Tirrawarra. Cullyamurra is considered an 'ark' type critical refugia. These refuges contain an assemblage of species that is representative of aquatic biodiversity at the landscape scale.

Further information

Download a copy of the report

Identification of permanent refuge waterbodies in the Cooper Creek and Georgina-Diamantina river catchments for Queensland and South Australia
www.saalnrm.sa.gov.au

Seen any Flock Pigeons?

Reece Pedler

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is on the lookout for Flock Pigeons and we're appealing to you to report any sightings.

In decades past, Flock Pigeons have been reported in enormous flocks of many thousands that blackened the skies.

They are still seen in lower numbers during good seasons in northern South Australia and the significant recent rainfall is likely to see their return.

Very little is known about this species, including where they disappear to during the dry times, what they eat and where and when they breed.

To report a sighting please contact our Community Fauna Recovery Officer 8648 5977 ■



Graeme Chapman

Tales in the Sand

Reece Pedler

Tales in the Sand is a new manual that aims to increase understanding of the distribution and abundance of a range of threatened and introduced animals in the arid zone by examining their tracks, scats, burrows or diggings.

Have you walked across the dunes and wondered what animal makes those strange tracks? Have you seen signs of uncommon animals like echidnas, big pythons or maybe even something more unusual?

For many of these animals, we know very little about their distribution and whether their populations are stable, declining, or even increasing.

Tales in the Sand helps its readers distinguish between the tracks of a range of species of interest. It also describes a standardised and repeatable method for recording tracks so that data gained can be used to compare different areas and examine trends over time.

The manual has been produced by Katherine Moseby, Theresa Nano and Rick Southgate, with input from a range of arid zone researchers and scientists.

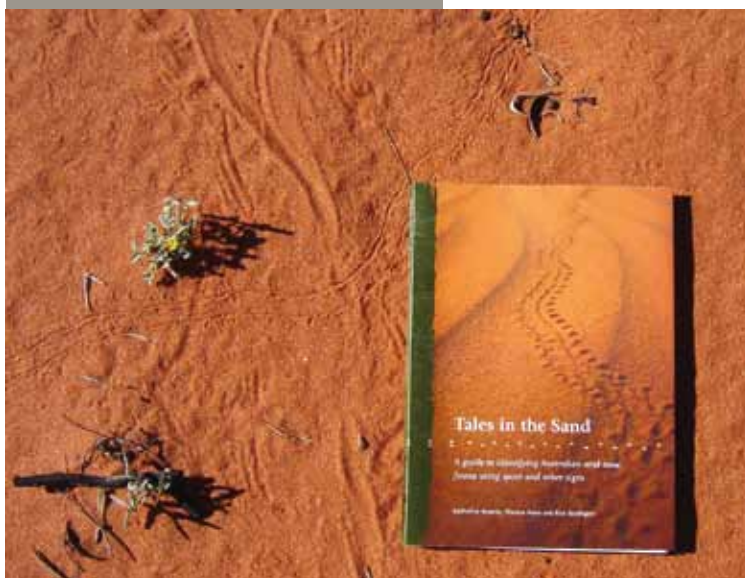
Attend a workshop!

If you are interested in learning more about tracks and the methods for recording them come along to one of the planned workshops.

The first one will be at Mungerannie on Tuesday 4 May before the Marree-Innaminka District NRM Group meeting. A session is also planned in the same week in Marree, involving students from the school.

Get your copy!

Copies of *Tales in the Sand* are available from the Board's office or contact the Board's Community Fauna Recovery Officer for more information 8648 5977 ■



Local success in controlling Oleander in the Flinders

Lorraine Edmunds

A team of dedicated landholders, contractors and volunteers joined forces to systematically remove tens of thousands of Oleander stems along a thirteen kilometre section of creek from the Blinman Pools to the mouth of Parachilna Gorge in the Flinders Ranges. With the last of the plants treated in December, this article traces the success of the project.

Five years ago, amid concerns about a local outbreak of Oleanders in Parachilna Gorge, the local Blinman-Parachilna community obtained funding to hire contractors to treat the densest Oleander stands.

Herbicide trials were undertaken to identify the most cost effective treatment. Undiluted glyphosate, applied to cut stems as a 'drill and fill' treatment, delivered the best results.

The volunteers

Progress rapidly accelerated when volunteers joined the project.

Regular visitors to Alpana Station for twenty years, an Adelaide Hills group had become very concerned about the spread of Oleanders through Parachilna Gorge.

During a men's retreat, the group decided to commit to a long-term Oleander eradication program.

From 2005, the Blackwood Church of Christ volunteers visited each autumn and spring, undertaking labour-intensive control works.

Today an annual maintenance program has been implemented and the volunteers will continue to visit each spring to ensure that Parachilna Gorge remains free of Oleanders.

The lesson

What have we learnt from the Oleander story? Prevention is better than cure!

If you live near a watercourse that has semi-permanent surface or sub-surface flows, you should be removing Oleanders as insurance against future outbreaks.

And, when faced with overwhelming challenges where human resources are in very short supply, partnerships with volunteers may well provide the answer.

Without volunteer support, the Blinman-Parachilna community could never have eradicated Oleanders from Parachilna Creek so quickly and efficiently.

Further information

The Blinman Parachilna Pest Plant Control Project is supported by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, with State and Australian Government funding through Caring for our Country.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities like this one contact the Board's Volunteer Coordinator 8648 5977 ■

BELOW Oleander plants flowering in Parachilna Gorge, North Flinders, 2005



OUT OF THE GARDEN AND OUT OF CONTROL

Providing colour throughout summer, the hardy Common Oleander (*Nerium oleander*) is a favourite ornamental across Australia and rarely does it establish as a weed. But that is just what it has done in South Australia's spectacular Flinders Ranges where controlling outbreaks can be very challenging.

Give them moisture and warmth, and Oleanders will thrive. They do well on infertile soils and, once established, become drought-tolerant. All plant material, both fresh and dried, is poisonous. Just one leaf can deliver a fatal dose to children and sheep. Despite its toxicity, accidental poisoning by Oleander is extremely rare.

Perhaps of greater concern is the plant's potential to invade watercourses and develop thickets that displace native vegetation, alter water flow, and impact upon sensitive riparian ecosystems.

Surface and sub-surface waters are home to a diverse community of aquatic creatures that support a complex food chain.

Like long thirsty straws, Oleanders draw up large volumes of water, diminishing the resources available to other water-dependent plants.

Oleander thickets displace native reed beds that provide habitat for birds like the Clamorous Reed Warbler.

PREVENTING WEED SPREAD

Greg Patrick

Many weeds take advantage of human and animal activities to assist them in colonising new areas – and with livestock and vehicles common vectors for weed spread there are some key measures that land managers can take to minimise weed spread in order to minimise losses to production and biodiversity.

Livestock

Weeds like Noogoora Burr and Horehound have burrs which will often attach themselves to passing stock; when stock are transported the weeds are carried to new locations. Other weeds like Mesquite have seed pods that are consumed by stock. These pass through the animal's intestinal tract and spring to life, complete with an added dose of fertiliser to give them a head start.

To prevent the dispersal of weeds by livestock it is important to monitor the animals in a holding yard or paddock for around seven days either before or on arrival at the new location. This will allow enough time for any seeds to pass through their system and to physically inspect for burrs.

The use of a holding paddock also means a smaller area to inspect for weed emergence. Any weeds that do grow can be controlled in the one location rather than over the whole property.

Landholders are also advised not to move livestock when particular weeds are fruiting or setting seed.

Vehicles

One of the most common ways for weeds to spread is via vehicles or machinery that has passed through weed infested areas.

Often encased in mud, seeds manage to collect in all manner of places, just waiting to fall off further down the track where they can start a new infestation.

The best method of preventing this is to avoid driving through weed infestations. If this is unavoidable designate a wash down point and use high pressure water or an air compressor to remove as much material as possible.

Like the holding paddock, the wash down point will provide a contained space for monitoring and controlling any weeds that might emerge.

Further information
Contact the Board's Pest
Management Officer 8648 5977



Will you attend our Community NRM Forum?

Following from last year's successful 'Arid Lands Muster', the SAAL NRM Board is seeking community interest in attending a similar event planned for this year.

Initiated by your local NRM representatives, the event would be an opportunity for the whole community to come together for a day and an evening of entertainment, information-sharing and good food.

Topics might include carbon credits in the rangelands, alternative income sources, succession planning and land information systems.

There would be plenty of opportunities to ask questions, meet people and talk to your local NRM Group members and producer groups. The day would finish with a dinner for everyone.

At this stage, and depending on community interest, the forum will be held at Woomera on Wednesday 23 June 2010. Please mark this date in your calendar today.

Register your interest now!

Contact Louise Gavin 8648 5977 ■

Farewell to Frank

The SAAL NRM Board recently bade a sad farewell to Frank Lyman, one of our NRM Officers, who left the Board to return to his work with the United Nations.

Most people would have met Frank Lyman somewhere around the region. He was often seen out and about chasing weeds and feral animals or assisting with community projects like the Great Tracks Cleanup. When he wasn't doing that he could be found having a yarn with someone or looking for discarded 'treasures' in old dumps.

Frank had previously worked for the United Nations and he's returned to assist them with the re-building of Afghanistan as part of a World Vision recovery team.

The SAAL NRM Board and staff were very sad to see Frank go. We will miss his cheeky grin and wish him well overseas.



IMAGES

R Spreading weeds on tyres

L Attendees at last year's successful Arid Lands Muster in Port Augusta





DINGO UPDATE

ISSUE 9 April 2010

The *Dingo Update* brings you the latest news from the Dingo Research Project, an initiative of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, as well as ongoing management news.

Ben Allen

How often do dingoes visit waterpoints?

New data from the SA Arid Lands NRM Board reveals that dingoes don't visit waterpoints as often as we think, suggesting that we may need to reconsider the timing of dingo control.

In the last *Dingo Update*, we showed the activity levels of several collared dingoes in the Strzelecki Desert reporting that the longest a dingo went without visiting a waterpoint was 17 days. Well, we have a new record!

Now that we have analysed all the data, the longest recorded duration without visiting a waterpoint was 22 days in July 2009 (when no alternative water sources were available) and 22 days in November/December 2008 (when a limited amount of surface water may have been available due to light rainfall).

All dingoes regularly went 3-5 days without visiting a waterpoint in all seasons (Figure 1). On average, the highest monthly waterpoint visitation rate for a dingo was 1.44 visits/day in January, and the lowest was 0.07 visits/day in June (Figure 2).

FIGURE 1
Daily waterpoint visits of one dingo in the Strzelecki Desert (gaps indicate days without visiting water)

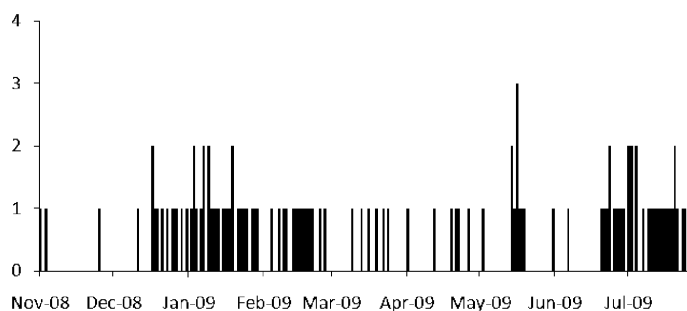
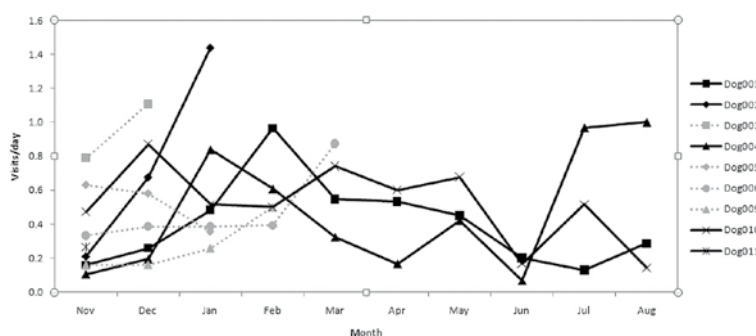


FIGURE 2
Waterpoint visitation rates of nine dingoes in the Strzelecki Desert (Nov 2008 to Aug 2009)



Since 1080 baiting in the arid zone often occurs around waterpoints, these findings may have important implications for the timing of baiting programs.

The results suggest that baiting over summer may increase the number of individuals that take baits. Furthermore, a follow-up baiting a month or so later should improve the result because this is typically the time when more young dingoes are out and about. ■

BITEBACK IN FULL SWING

The SA Arid Lands NRM Board is pleased to report that the Biteback program for dingo control is getting off to a good start in the North Flinders district with almost all landholders behind this important initiative of the North Flinders NRM Group.

At the time of publication, 93% of landholders in the district have participated in the development of local plans for dingo control with each of them agreeing to participate in ongoing coordinated control programs in their area.

Beginning in April, the next step will be for each landholder to voluntarily commit to this by signing their Local Area Plan for dingo control.

Local Area Plans are not statutory declarations or officially binding agreements.

They are a positive expression of landholder commitment to help protect livestock grazing industries for themselves and the communities they help support.

The Biteback program aims to help all landholders work together to control dingoes and protect the viability of sheep grazing south of the Dog Fence.

Its success depends on landholders working together to protect farm incomes.

Biteback will be rolled out across the four NRM districts south of the Dog Fence over the next couple of years.



**CONTACT THE DINGO
MANAGEMENT TEAM FOR
FURTHER INFORMATION
8648 5977**

Dingoes, dust storms and bathing under the stars – a volunteer experience

Stephanie Wende, University of Adelaide

Stephanie Wende, a Bachelor of Environmental Studies with the University of Adelaide, recently spent some time with the SAAL NRM Board as part of its volunteer internship program. She describes her experience here.

Dingoes, dust storms and bathing under the stars are but a few of the many highlights I enjoyed during my time assisting with a scientific research project on water point biodiversity in the Arid Lands.

The project allowed me to develop academic as well as personal and professional skills in research-based natural resources management.

Working with the passionate and highly qualified staff at the Board provided motivation for learning and ensured there was never a dull moment.

The opportunity to get off the beaten track and experience South Australia's Arid Lands wildlife and landscape was truly an outback adventure.

The field work gave me an appreciation of the complexity of Arid Lands management and some of the difficulties I may face in my future career in environmental management.

Furthermore, I felt I was making a valuable contribution with the work undertaken later being put into practical use to make better environmental management decisions and to inform future research projects.

I would highly recommend volunteering for the Board. The experience has provided me opportunities to extend my scientific research skills, see some of South Australia's most beautiful arid landscapes, and make new friendships with environmentally conscious people.

Further information

To learn more about volunteer opportunities like this one contact the Board's Volunteer Coordinator 8648 5977 ■



R A happy camper – Stephanie Wende with a dingo pup

SAAL NRM NEWS

SURVEY WORKSHOPS

The SAAL NRM Board is seeking expressions of interest from land managers who would like to participate in a workshop on the use of survey equipment (dumpy levels) in the field.

Attendees will learn skills to help them plan projects such as contour furrowing, grading of tracks, land rehabilitation and other infrastructure works.

At this stage, and depending on community interest, there will be five workshops run in June with dates and venues to be confirmed.

Register your interest now!

Contact Kurt Tschirner, Senior Natural Resources Management Officer, 8648 5977

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD ATO

A new facility on the SAAL NRM Board's website puts the Arid Lands community in touch with the latest funding sources.

The Board regularly receives email updates which we collate and post on our website and update each month.

There are funding opportunities which can be used for sporting clubs, schools, and Progress Associations, or training for business and personal development.

Grants are grouped under agricultural production, business and industry, community and society, culture and heritage, education and training, and environment and nature.

If you have a project or idea in mind check out the website and see what funding opportunities may be available to you.

The Board can also assist you in meeting criteria and filling out applications.

Further information

**Community Engagement Officers
8648 5977**

www.saalnrm.sa.gov.au/NewsandEvents/CommunityNoticeBoard.aspx

SAAL NRM BOARD 2010 MEETING DATES

Meeting 31	16-17 June Coober Pedy
Meeting 32	17-18 August Port Augusta
Meeting 33	13-14 October Woomera
Meeting 34	7-8 December Port Augusta



EC drought declarations

Members of the National Rural Advisory Committee met with pastoralists throughout the Central North East and North West Region in late March to discuss the previous season and determine if the conditions are such that a recovery has been generated.

Pastoralists from the Marree region assisted with a guided tour to Muloorina.

After the committee has conducted its assessment a recommendation will be made to the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as to whether to extend the Exceptional Circumstances drought declarations.

The current expiry date is 15 June 2010 and the announcement from the Minister regarding the declaration is anticipated in mid-May.

Further information

Liz Connell, PIRSA Northern Drought Coordinator, 0488 145 124 ■



MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL RURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND PASTORALISTS

Rear Ian Fergusson (NRAC), John Gavin (SAAL NRM), Peter Litchfield (Mundowdna), John McGovern (DAFF), Kevin Mitchell (Muloorina), Georgie Somerset (NRAC)

Front Shane and Debbie Oldfield (Clayton), Kevin Dawe (Farina), George Morphet (Callana)

Locust numbers increase

The recent widespread rain has brought recordings of locusts across a number of areas of SA including the Far North.



Recent reports have been of both adults and hoppers, the latter as a result of eggs laid by earlier fly-ins.

Subsequent adult populations will occur in early to mid-April and these may be supplemented by further fly-ins from western NSW and south-west QLD.

Please report any suspected sightings of locusts (both adults and hoppers) to PIRSA: 1300 666 010 (local call cost).

Further information

www.pir.sa.gov.au ■

GOT YOUR SENIORS CARD?

The South Australian Seniors Card program offers Government concessions and valuable business discounts for a wide range of everyday services.

The annual Seniors Card directory, *Your Lifestyle Guide*, lists a range of benefits, discounts and services available to Seniors Card holders. The directory is distributed to all Seniors Card holders each December and is available online at www.sa.gov.au/seniorscard.

To be eligible for a Seniors Card, applicants must be at least 60 years of age, a permanent resident of South Australia, and work no more than 20 hours per week.

Further information
1800 819 961

NEW AUTHORITY TO REPLACE OACDT

Legislation passed by Parliament in late 2009 signals a new era in the governance and administration of the outback. A new management authority, the Outback Communities Authority, will replace the Outback Areas Community Development Trust giving communities more say in how the outback is managed.

The Trust will conduct community information sessions on the new legislation during April/May at various locations across the outback. Invitations will be sent to all outback residents shortly.

Nominations for membership of the new Authority will be sought soon with advertisements in local newspapers and information on the Trust's website.

Further information
1800 640 542



Outback tourism

Flinders Ranges and Outback South Australia Tourism (FROSAT) is working with other agencies to develop some key projects for the region.

They include a pastoral tourism cluster or network with its first practical effort a Station Stays briefing document for journalists covering at least 20 properties. We're also busy helping the Outback tourism industry to gear up for another busy year around Lake Eyre and are working on a review of regional air tourism issues. Other large-scale projects include looking at how the Explorer Way to Alice Springs can be better developed and marketed and further developing the Flinders Ranges National Landscape program.

Further information

Peter Cahalan, Regional Tourism Manager, 0402 890 096 ■

BELOW Scenic flight over Wilpena Pound (photo courtesy of SATC)



Outback Calendar

YUNTA PICNIC RACES & GYMKHANA

1 May

OODNADATTA RACES & GYMKHANA

16 May

MARREE PICNIC RACES AND GYMKHANA

12-14 June

MARREE CAMEL CUP

3 July

These are a selection of events extracted from the *Calendar of Events* administered by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board available at www.saalnrn.sa.gov.au

If you would like to receive notification when the *Calendar of Events* is updated please send an email to jenny.barker@sa.gov.au ■

ARE YOU ON THE ACROSS THE OUTBACK MAILING LIST?

Across The Outback is a free publication that is issued to over 1000 individuals or organisations with a stake or interest in the Arid Lands region.

If you would like to join the mailing list or update your details please contact the editor jenny.barker@sa.gov.au.

Please include your name, mailing address and email address (to receive electronic notification).

CALL FOR CONTENT

Across The Outback June edition

Content due by COB Friday 28 May. Contact the Editor (details on back page) for further information.

THIS SPACE COULD BE YOURS!

Across The Outback remains committed to reporting on government activities in the region in the single publication and we welcome contributions from other agencies. We'd also like to hear from non-government organisations, Progress Associations or Friends groups operating in the area. Tell us what you're doing to support your community and if we have space we'll try to accommodate you.

Further information

Contact the editor jenny.barker@sa.gov.au or 8463 3354. A fee per article may apply.



Aerial kangaroo survey

Tom Gerschwitz

Planning is underway for this year's aerial kangaroo survey which is conducted to survey kangaroo populations in the SA pastoral zone and parts of the agricultural zone.

Occurring in late June to early July, the survey will cover an area in excess of 207,000 square kilometres and be conducted using standard methodology developed for the aerial survey of kangaroos.

These surveys have been conducted annually since 1978 and provide DEH with information regarding the trends of kangaroo populations across the landscape.

During this time, a Cessna 185 will be chartered to allow Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) staff to conduct the survey.

How it works

Parallel east/west transects, 28km apart are flown at a height of 76m above the ground at a speed of 185km per hour.

Two trained observers seated in the rear count kangaroos on the ground in 5km unit lengths that are 200m wide

(as defined by streamers attached to the wing strut) on each side of the aircraft.

Observers count red kangaroos, western grey kangaroos, euros, emus, and goats, as well as noting other large species of interest, such as camels or donkeys.

The observers' tallies are later added and corrected for visibility bias using correction factors to obtain regional density estimates for each kangaroo species. These population estimates are used to set commercial quotas for the following year.

Landholders who use aircraft in managing their properties and who would like to be notified of the approximate date and location of transects being flown should contact DEH to assist both parties in planning their respective operations.

Further information

Contact the Operations Manager,
Kangaroo Management 8648 5319 ■

CHANGING OPERATORS FOR YOUR 2010 COMMERCIAL HARVEST?

The 2010 sustainable commercial harvest of kangaroos is underway with field processors operating where it is economical to harvest.

Applications for Commercial Kangaroo Harvesting Authorities are available at: www.environment.sa.gov.au/biodiversity/faunapermits/application.html under 'Application Forms'.

Kangaroo Management Program (KMP) staff have recently received a number of enquiries from landholders seeking to add field processors to operate on their properties or change their meat processor.

DEH encourages landholders to discuss any changes with their existing field processor and meat processor prior to implementing changes.

Adding a field processor

Adding a field processor can be simply done by faxing a note to KMP staff on 8648 5301, stating who you wish to add to operate on your property. A copy should also be sent to the meat processor so they can adjust their tag nominations.

Changing meat processors

DEH requires a form to be completed by landholders who wish to change meat processors.

This is to help the transition from one meat processor to another, especially where tags have been purchased and may be in the field.

Forms are available by contacting Kangaroo Management Program staff on 8648 5318.





RESTOCKING CATTLE ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Before farmers take advantage of the recent rain and start restocking, they must first make sure that they have a *Beef Only* or a Market Assurance Program (MAP) certificate.

Most of the northern pastoral region is located in the Bovine Johne's disease (BJD) protected zone. This means that stock brought into the region must satisfy the requirements of the *Beef Only* category or MAP.

Beef Only is a herd category to help assure cattle buyers that there is a very low risk of BJD in beef herds and that they have had no contact with dairy cattle.

The beef cattle industry and state animal health authorities have agreed that cattle from herds that qualify as *Beef Only* represent a low risk of BJD. They also agreed that herds that qualify as *Beef Only* can trade into BJD protected zones of NSW, Qld and SA, without herds having to be tested.

Insist that all cattle are accompanied by a MAP certificate or a *Beef Only* certificate where appropriate, including cattle coming back from agistment.

This will allow you to trade cattle to other BJD protected zones in Australia.

Further information

Copies of the *National Animal Health Statement for Johne's Disease Status of Beef Cattle*, which contains the *Beef Only* declaration, can be found at www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au or by contacting Trent Scholz at the PIRSA office in Port Augusta 8648 5160

New mob-based recording for sheep and goats

Sheep and goat producers will soon be able to record the movement of their animals using a faster and more reliable system of tracing livestock.

From 1 July 2010 all movements of sheep and goats to a property with a different Property Identification Code (PIC) will need to be logged on the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) database by the purchaser of the animals.

This includes sheep and goats purchased through private sales and animals sent for agistment.

This system differs from cattle NLIS in that the movement of mobs of animals rather than individual animals are to be recorded on the national NLIS database.

These changes will help protect the sheep and goat industries from the effects of an emergency animal disease or food safety issue. Current movement documentation requirements including the use of Sheep Health Statements and National Vendor Declaration (or similar) will remain the same.

The changes to the NLIS-Sheep and Goats are necessary to increase the speed and accuracy of the current system without the need for electronic identification.

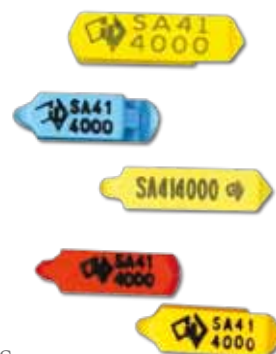
Concerns have been raised by export markets over the ability of the NLIS-Sheep and Goats to quickly and accurately trace animals in an emergency event.

The changes to the system will enable faster and more reliable tracing of sheep and goats with minimal costs to producers.

While these changes are new for producers, recording movements on the NLIS database has already been occurring for saleyards and abattoirs for some time.

Mob based movements allows groups of animals to be traced electronically and quickly with the only cost to producers a few minutes to fill in an easy online form.

Producers can set up a free NLIS database account at www.nlis.mla.com.au. For more information call the PIRSA Biosecurity NLIS helpline 1800 654 688 or the PIRSA office in Port Augusta 8648 5160 ■





Government
of South Australia

Across the Outback is prepared and edited by Jenny Barker (SAAL NRM Board). It is published every second month for the Outback SA Government and Community Alliances.

It is currently jointly funded by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (on behalf of the Pastoral Board); Primary Industries and Resources SA at Port Augusta and the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Please contact jenny.barker@sa.gov.au or 8463 3354



Jenny Barker

Summer rains bring regeneration

The rains over the summer of 2009/2010, although patchy, have been the most widespread in a long time. Here, Jessica Kemp from Dulkaninna Station off the Birdsville Track talks about the implications.

For the last 13 years or so, the rainfall patterns in the far north have been unusual and the summer rains that sustain the country were not received.

When the rain did come during this time, it came in sporadic storms and only fell in very isolated areas. Consequently, the whole region was de-stocking and over 100,000 head of cattle were sold.

The rains at the end of 2008 were again irregular and isolated, and only a few properties received them. However, with no follow up rains, those properties, the country and cattle numbers could not recover.

The rainfall events of 09/10 have left producers relieved that after an extended period without summer rains it can still rain and the country will recover as well if not better than before.

Most importantly there have been good follow-up rains in many areas and with stock levels so low the country has been given a chance to regenerate and plants to set seed.

However there is a cautionary note.

When income has been below cost for over 10 years, businesses won't be able to recover on one summer rain event and producers will be unable to fully restock. If the country doesn't receive rainfall next summer it will mean we are back to square one. ■

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!

Anything goes just as long as it exemplifies our unique region, its landscape, wildlife and, of course, its characters. Perhaps you captured a few snaps at the local gymkhana? Maybe you've caught an unusual creature on camera? Or maybe you were just in the right place at the right time...

Whether you're a budding photographer or just got lucky with a particular shot, please send your photos to jenny.barker@sa.gov.au. Clearly indicate what (or who) is shown in the photo and the photographer's name.

