

Across the OUTBACK

JUNE 2010

PRODUCED FOR OUTBACK SA

NUMBER 49

The Cooper crosses the Track

This edition of *Across The Outback* was being prepared shortly after news that Cooper Creek, swollen from floodwaters, has reached the Birdsville Track.

It has been 20 years since this last occurred and, taken in the nick of time, our front page photo shows Reece Pedler kayaking down the Track.

Reece is normally identified in this publication as the SA Arid Lands NRM Board's Community Fauna Recovery Officer – and you can read his latest adventures with tracks and scats and his pursuit of Plains Wanderers inside.

The summer rains and the bounty of life that it brings to the region again provide a backdrop to many of the articles in this edition.

Fish, for example, are firmly on the menu with PIRSA reminding anglers of the rules for fishing and the SAAL NRM Board releasing a new fish identification brochure.

The Pastoral Board is fresh from its successful forum with pastoralists in Port Augusta while the Department for Environment and Heritage are bracing themselves for the inevitable increase in visitors to the region.

Another gem is the poem by Karen Durbidge of The Peake Station reproduced for your pleasure on the back page.

Happy reading! ■

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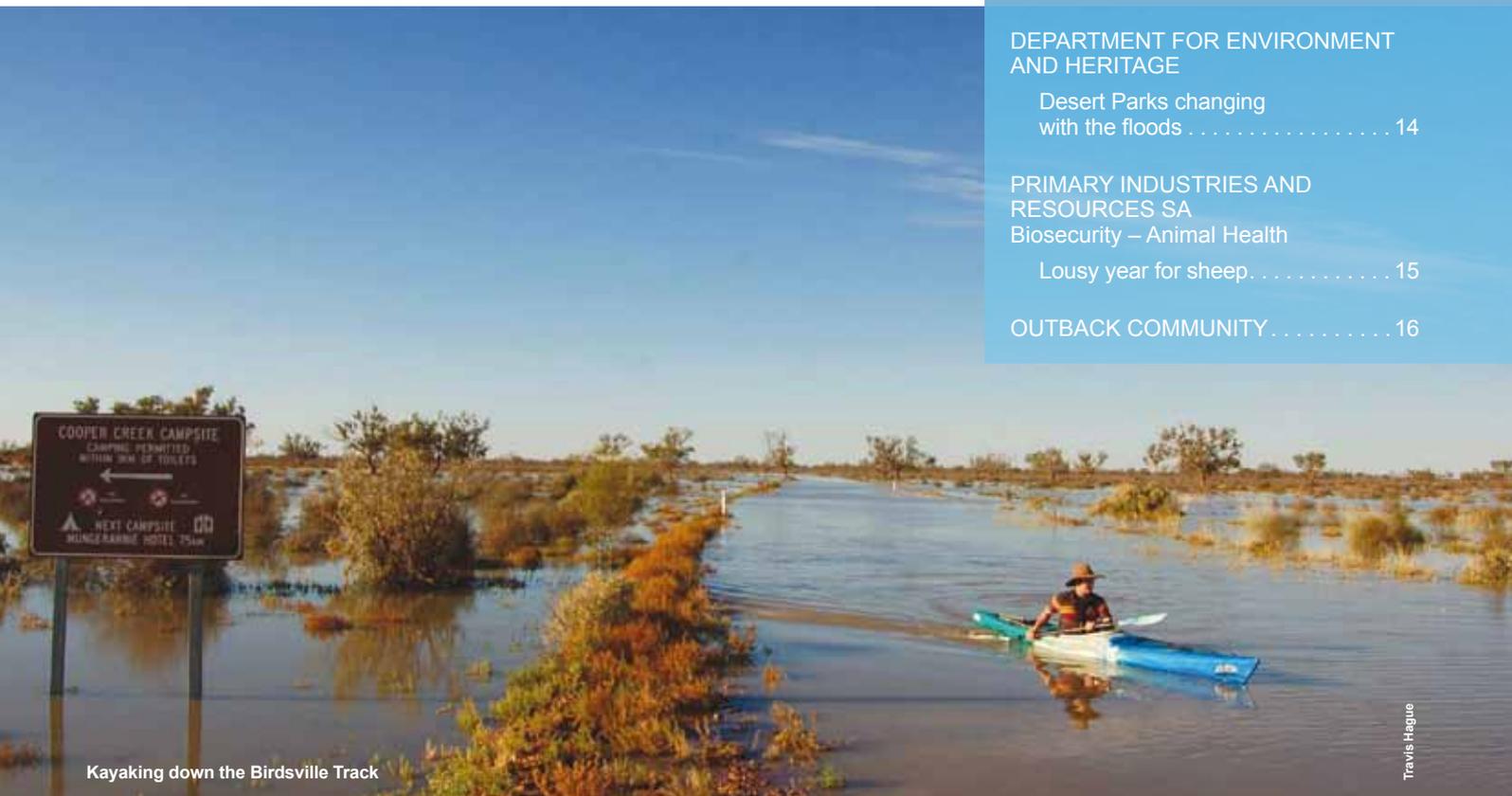
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Kayaking down the Birdsville Track

Travis Haglue



Successful forum at Port Augusta

The management of exotic breeds of sheep, including dorpers and damaras, was one of the key topics of discussion at an open forum for pastoralists held by the Pastoral Board at the Port Augusta Golf Club on 8 April.

The forum was a great success with approximately 30 pastoralists attending from the Flinders Ranges, Gawler Ranges and as far afield as Oodnadatta.

It provided a great opportunity for pastoralists to raise and discuss issues of concern directly with Board members, staff and other lessees.

There was considerable discussion over the management of exotic breeds of sheep and the issue of preventing them from breaching property boundaries.

This is an important issue as a growing number of lessees are running dorpers because they have a higher meat value and require less labour and therefore have lower management costs.

Lessees discussed the good management practices for ensuring that the exotic breeds are controlled and confined to the property.

These included controlling grazing pressure and feed supply in response to rangeland condition, rather than the condition of the sheep, and the removal of any lead ewes to assist the flock to become territorial.

Another comment was that good fences make good neighbours, regardless of the type of livestock that are run.

Lessees running merinos and those running exotic breeds will need to learn to co-exist as the exotic breeds are here to stay, one lessee remarked.

Other issues discussed at the forum included lease assessments, lease inspections, drought and Exceptional Circumstances funding, kangaroo management, and the effect on property values of government-assisted purchases of leases for conservation purposes.

The forum concluded with a barbeque dinner, enabling pastoralists to mix socially and with Board and staff members. ■

IMAGE

L-R Michael McBride, Presiding Member of the Pastoral Board, with David Henderson, Gordon Lillecrapp and Megan Henderson



TWO BOARDS MEET

The Pastoral Board and the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board met in Port Augusta on 6 April to discuss a range of common issues and policies.

The two boards have at least one joint meeting per year to maintain a close working relationship, develop consistent approaches and policies to NRM issues in the region, and to share information on key projects.

A range of issues of mutual concern were discussed including the management of feral goats, the Arid Lands Information System, Public Access Routes, waterpoint planning, lease assessments and inspections, the development of the SAAL Regional NRM Plan, and recovery from the drought.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES HELP EXTENDED

The Australian Government has extended Exceptional Circumstances (EC) assistance in SA's Central North East region (including the towns of Port Augusta and Whyalla) and North West Rangelands (including the town of Woomera) until 15 June 2011.

Acting on recommendations of the independent National Rural Advisory Council the government also extended EC assistance in three Qld regions but only until 15 December 2010.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/ec



Good rains, green grass and rabbits on the rise

Greg Mutze, Research Officer

With very good pasture conditions now across most of northern South Australia, many of us are holding our breath and waiting to see how much RHD (calicivirus) will keep rabbits in check.

For the past few years, rabbit numbers have been creeping up. There seems little doubt now that the impact of RHD on rabbits is diminishing but so far their recovery has been patchy.

Rising rabbit numbers have been of concern but population peaks have generally been localised and collapsed when they were beginning to look like the pre-RHD situation.

There has been widespread recovery of palatable shrubs since RHD arrived.

This season might be a great chance for them to grow beyond the size that rabbits can easily kill – or it could see resurgent rabbit populations wipe out many of the gains.

The Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre is importing new strains of RHD virus from Europe during the next 3 years to test against RHD-resistant Australian rabbits. If any of them are particularly effective, they will then seek approval to release them in the wild.

We are linking in with that research by studying the genetic diversity of RHD virus in Australia. There is not much point releasing new viruses if it turns out we already have the same virus circulating in wild rabbits!

How you can help

We need to obtain livers from rabbits that have recently died of RHD to extract the virus.

If you see evidence of an outbreak, throw a fresh rabbit carcass into a plastic bag, toss it in the dog-meat freezer and give us a call. We have samples from the Flinders Ranges and one from Bulgunnia (many thanks to Shane Miller) but no idea what is out there beyond that.

Further information 8303 9505 ■

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 Baulderstone (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



An RHD (calicivirus) casualty

To keep rabbit numbers low pastoralists should destroy warrens to reduce available harbour for rabbits. This is best done under dry conditions to ensure an effective collapse of the warren structure. Pastoralists located in the Arid Lands NRM region who are concerned about rabbits on their properties can contact the SAAL NRM Board's Pest Management Officer 8648 5977 to discuss available management options



Rule refresher for outback fishing

With water flowing into SA's Lake Eyre Basin for the first time in many years, PIRSA Fisheries has issued a timely reminder to outback residents of the rules that apply to fishing in the region.

Golden Perch, Grunters and Cooper Creek Catfish are three important native species that are popular targets for recreational fishers across inland waters.

Fishers need to remember that size, bag and boat limits apply to these particular fish and are designed to protect the sustainability of our fish stocks.

It is also important that fishers do not introduce foreign species or bait like Carp and Yabbies into the Lake Eyre Basin.

These foreign species could have a disastrous effect on what is a rare and unique natural ecosystem.

PIRSA Fisheries Officers have noticed an unfortunate trend in the use of non-compliant 'Opera House' style yabby pots throughout inland waterways.

Fishers should ensure that any 'Opera House' pots have no more than two entrance funnels and each entrance funnel must also have a rigid ring which does not exceed 7.5cm in diameter.

If you see anyone fishing illegally, report them to the Fishwatch Hotline 1800 065 522 where you can choose to remain anonymous.

Mobile fishing anyone?

It is also timely to let fishers know about some of the new initiatives available to help keep anglers up-to-date with the latest fishing rules and regulations.

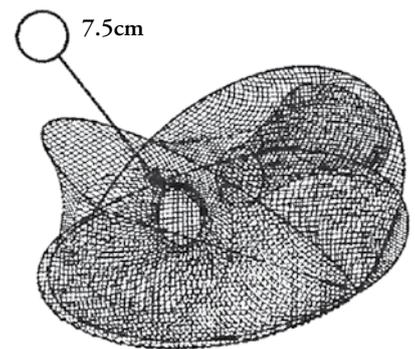
Along with the trusty Recreational Fishing Guide booklets, PIRSA Fisheries recently launched the SMSFish service.

Simply send a text message to the SMSFish number with the species name you are targeting to receive an immediate return message with the minimum legal size, bag and boat limit, along with any information on closed seasons that relate to that particular species.

The SMSFish number is 0427 767 995 ■

PHOTO

The entrance funnel to an Opera House yabby trap should not exceed 7.5cm diameter



Fish are the order of the day it seems! If you are struggling to tell your Golden Perch from your Grunters, turn to page 6

Banded grunter



Golden Perch

Lucas Weaver

**PROMINENT HILL
FEATURES IN
REGIONAL MEETING**

The Far North Regional Coordination Network held its May meeting in Coober Pedy and included a trip to OZ Mineral's Prominent Hill mine site.



After a brief induction, General Manager Brian Kilgariff welcomed network members and thanked them for their keen interest in learning more about the mine operations.

A drive through the processing plant commissioned in February 2009, proved very informative with a commentary led by Senior Metallurgist Chris Treloar.

Network members heard that the copper/gold product, shipped to Darwin Port by train for export to Asia, is currently worth about \$4000 per tonne.

To give the company more transport flexibility the option of shipping from Adelaide is also being trialled.

A tour of the open pit enabled network members to appreciate the enormous scale of the mine operations.

Senior Mine Geologist John Penhall informed the group that proposed expansion includes looking at underground production concurrent with open pit mining.

After lunch and informal discussions with other OZ Minerals staff, the network members returned to Coober Pedy for their regular meeting at the District Council Chambers.

All agreed it was important for local and state government senior managers in the region to understand this significant development and to witness first hand the progress made at Prominent Hill.

The Far North Regional Co-ordination Network is the peak body responsible for co-ordinating whole-of-government activities in the region. It focuses on improved delivery of public services, optimising allocation and use of resources, and reducing duplication and overlap.

**Further information
Meredith Tothill 8648 5371**

The riddle of the Centre

Rick Moore

This year marks the 150th anniversary of John McDouall Stuart's first trip to Central Australia on his quest to cross the continent from south to north. Rick Moore, President of the John McDouall Stuart Society, relates the implications – and the celebrations.

It is only 150 years since the centre of Australia was visited by Europeans for the first time. John McDouall Stuart and his companions were attempting to cross the continent from south to north, finally doing so in 1862 on his sixth attempt.

The route they took became the route for the Overland Telegraph Line ten years later and, in World War II, the Stuart Highway.

Stuart and the pioneers that followed his route lived off the land; the land nourished their horses, cattle, sheep and goats and supplied them all – or starved them all – with water.

These European travellers were the first to record the features and characteristics of the arid lands. The country they saw was unaffected by rabbits, camels, salinity and overgrazing.

As a result of Stuart's explorations, the Northern Territory became annexed to South Australia, the Overland Telegraph connected Australia to the rest of the world, the riddle of the centre of the continent was solved, and the border with WA changed from 132° to 129° East.

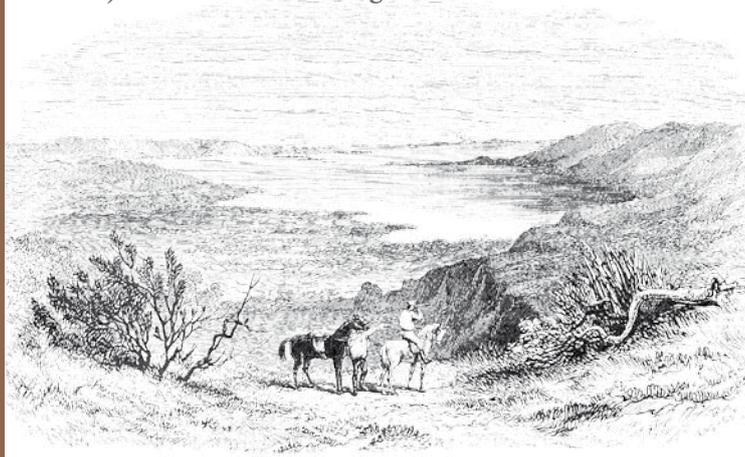
In commemoration of Stuart's discoveries the John McDouall Stuart Society is organising a special event in October to recognise the safe return of the first Europeans to know just what mysteries were in the centre of Australia – inland sea or desert?

For further information visit www.jms.thealice.com.au and www.johnmcdouallstuart.org.au ■



IMAGES

- Above** Lake Torrens
- Below** One of several engravings by George French Angas which illustrated Stuart's journals



NORTH-WEST POINT OF LAKE TORRENS

783 ABC Alice Springs has been tracing Stuart's first expedition into the Centre with William Kekwick and Benjamin Head. Listen to the weekly installments www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2010/02/23/2827689.htm

Fish out of water(holes) – new brochure for native fish

Just in time for the recent rains comes a new brochure profiling native fish in the Lake Eyre Basin and highlighting the importance of waterholes for their survival.

Developed by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board in conjunction with the South Australian Research and Development Institute, the brochure *Common native fish of the Lake Eyre Basin rivers* highlights the importance of taking care of desert waterholes in the region and profiles 20 native species of fish. Each year, the rivers in the SA section of the Lake Eyre Basin dry up into a series of disconnected pools and, during very dry seasons, or extended periods of drought, only a few pools remain as refuges for native fish species.

With the recent rain, rivers are filling again and fish are starting to recolonise newly-filled habitats and rebuild population levels.

The brochure will be of interest to the entire Arid Lands community but particularly schools, anglers, landholders and tourists.

It also profiles Gambusia or Mosquito Fish, a highly-invasive and aggressive introduced fish that presents a serious threat to native fish and frogs in the region.

The release of the new brochure is part of the Board's wider work in surveying fish populations in the SA section of the Lake Eyre Basin, and collecting information about the environment that supports them.

These surveys will provide important data to understanding the fish resources in the region and sampling of refuge waterholes is a key focus. So far the work is indicating that during drought periods native fish are surviving in permanent waterholes like Algebuckina and Cullyamurra.

These are proving crucial refuges for native fish because their healthier water supply can support more species.

Brochures are available from the major tourism outlets in the region, the Board's website www.saalnm.sa.gov.au or by calling the Board's office 8648 5977 ■



Barcoo Grunter



Cooper Creek Catfish

MESQUITE, PARKINSONIA AND ATHEL PINE IN SA

Mesquite and Parkinsonia are regularly found and destroyed at various locations around the Arid Lands.

Annual and biannual control programs at these sites are required to control the regrowth of previously controlled plants and the many seedlings that germinate and grow around the parent plants.

Seeds are also spread by emus, cattle and water flows so new plants can emerge far away from parent plants.

Athel Pine, a common sight in station gardens, around watering points, ruins, and communities, has gone wild at over 20 known locations in the region and the many existing amenity plantings will continue to be a source for new wild populations.

Athel Pine spreads by seed, which are small and dispersed by wind, and vegetatively, where pieces of stem and root fragments dislodge from the parent plant and take root elsewhere.

Branch and root fragments are often dispersed downstream from flow events along arid rivers.

It is for this reason that a recent amendment to the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* specifies that Athel Pine occurring within 100 metres of drainage lines must be cleared.



Early detection of invasive weeds

With the months (and years) after good rainfall events a critical time to be on the look out for new weed occurrences, the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is keen to enlist the help of pastoralists in preventing the spread of four weed species of national significance.

Ben Shepherd

In Qld and the NT, infestations of Athel Pine, Mesquite, Parkinsonia and Prickly Acacia are major problems costing pastoralists and the government many thousands of dollars annually.

These four species are one of 20 weeds considered the worst in Australia based on their impact and the extent of their spread in other states.

With the exception of Athel Pine, SA's Arid Lands region remains relatively free of large infestations of invasive woody weeds and Mesquite, Parkinsonia and Prickly Acacia are of limited distribution.

But, given the chance, this could rapidly change.

In wet years, or when rivers flow, the extent of these small populations can rapidly expand to become large infestations which will render large tracts of grazing country useless.

The areas at risk are the more productive drainage lines, river beds,

and flood outs.

This is where you come in.

Surveys conducted by the Board have found new occurrences over the years but, given the expanse of the region, it is unlikely that all the occurrences of these weeds are known.

Pastoralists spend a lot of time on the land and have an intimate knowledge of their stations and they can be of great assistance in detecting new weed populations.

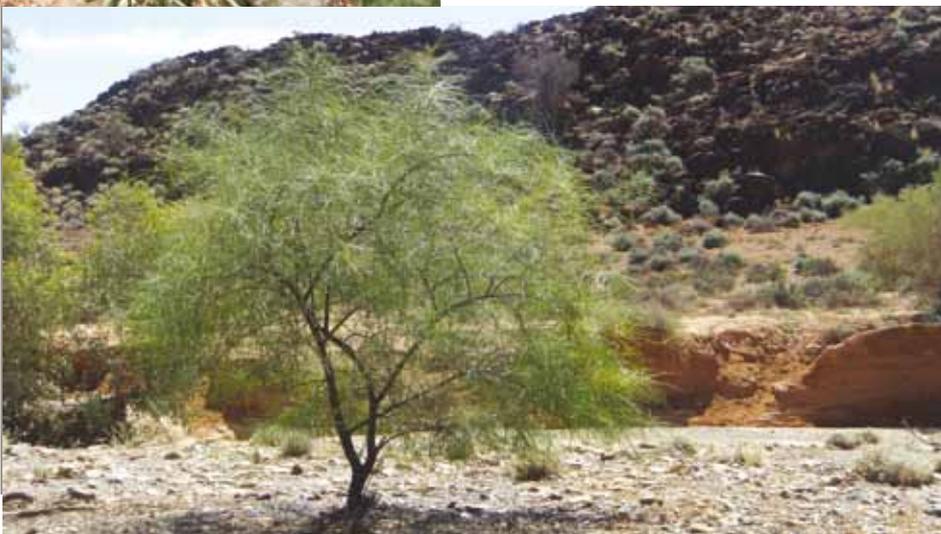
Early detection and control of weed populations before they expand into larger infestations saves significant amounts of money.

The four weed species are easy to miss if you don't know what to look out for and hard to miss when you do.

If you have spotted these weeds on your property or need assistance with identifying them contact the Board's Pest Management Officer 8648 5977 ■

IMAGES

- L Athel Pine in seed
- C Parkinsonia
- R Mesquite



Roo shooters key to finding endangered bird

Reece Pedler, Community Fauna Recovery Officer

Nocturnal workers such as roo shooters may hold the key to finding out more about a nationally endangered and poorly understood bird – and a confirmed sighting could earn them \$100 in petrol.

Superficially resembling quail, the Plains-wanderer is a ground-dwelling bird found in sparse open plains.

Within SA the Plains-wanderer is well-known from a few areas in the North East Pastoral district.

There are other scattered records across the arid zone but little is known about the Plains-wanderer's distribution or status in these areas.

This cryptic, camouflaged and clever bird is an expert at staying hidden despite living in such open country and is virtually impossible to find during the day.

At night they sleep on the ground where they are more easily encountered with a spotlight.

However, even researchers experienced with the species will attest to the improbability of finding one – to do so one must usually spend dozens of hours carefully spotlighting in open plains country. Nocturnal workers across the pastoral districts are crucial to finding out more.



Michael Todd

Many professional kangaroo shooters spend thousands of hours per year spotlighting in places where Plains-wanderers may lurk, but few other people ever go.

One of five \$100 fuel vouchers is on offer to anyone able to provide a substantiated sighting of a Plains-wanderer (photo and GPS coordinates, or detailed information leading to a confirmed record).

For more information, a factsheet, or to report a sighting contact Reece Pedler on 8648 5977 ■



IMAGE

Visits have been made to roo shooters across the north to show them Plains-wanderer skins on loan from the SA Museum

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FORUM

Jess Kemp, Community Engagement Officer

Seven community members including landholders, land managers and Aboriginal representatives attended the National Landcare Forum with the support of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board and Australian Government – some of them share their experiences here.

Held at the Morphettville Race Course in Adelaide in March 2010, the forum's theme was *Landcare celebrates – 20 years of achievements and future challenges* recognising the significant contribution the community has made over 20 years.

Delegates had the opportunity to learn about the latest research developments in natural resources management and sustainable agriculture, and develop new networks and new skills.

Aboriginal representatives Judy Johnson and Dulcie Wilton enjoyed the 'welcome to country' and the closing ceremony and felt that the forum was a great way to share ideas, meet new people, build networks and get new information that could help their communities engage in Landcare and natural resources management.

Keith Slade (Moolooloo Station) felt it doesn't matter how little or much you do, it is all relevant in the big picture of landcare.

There is a very passionate group of people out there wanting to care for the country and get this message across to the whole of Australia, he said.

Cindy Mitchell (Muloorina Station) enjoyed the session on 'the Next Generation' or how to engage with generation Y.

The Australian Government provided support to the Board to assist community landcarers to attend the forum without which many of the attendees could not have attended.

Contact our Community Engagement Officers for further information or other opportunities for assistance 8648 5977



Introducing the National Rangeland NRM Alliance

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is a member of the National Rangeland NRM Alliance, a collaboration of 13 natural resources management bodies from across Australia. The group's Coordinator, Kate Forrest, provides an overview of how this group is operating at the national level.



Established in 2008, the National Rangeland NRM Alliance provides a forum for rangeland NRM bodies from WA, NT, SA, Vic, NSW and Qld to meet, share and collaborate for better outcomes.

With its member groups presiding over 80 per cent of Australia, the driving force behind the Alliance is the recognition that national issues require a national approach and that competition for funding around these issues can be counter-productive.

The Alliance works with the Australian Government and other funding bodies to get rangelands management on the national agenda and to recognise that the unique rangelands environment requires a more strategic and adaptable approach to funding for natural resources management.

The impact of feral camels in the rangelands of Australia, for example, is one issue that the Alliance helped get on the national agenda with camels recognised as a national priority in the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country 2009/2010 business plan.

A subsequent joint application received \$19 million towards a camel control program which is being managed by the Desert Knowledge CRC through Ninti One Pty Ltd.

The project will work across SA, NT and in WA to manage camel numbers through a number of initiatives.

As a member of the Alliance and a firm supporter of its aims, the SAAL NRM Board hosts the group's Coordinator Kate Forrest and General Manager John Gavin is its current Chair. ■

SAAL NRM BOARD 2010 MEETING DATES

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



WELCOME LISA STEVENS

The SAAL NRM Board is pleased to welcome Lisa Stevens to the Assistant Natural Resources Management Officer position, fresh from a sojourn overseas.

Originally from Port Augusta, Lisa moved to Adelaide where she gained a Bachelor of Environmental Studies and Honours in Physical Geography.

She then lived and worked in Wales in the UK for several years where she also enjoyed lots of travelling.

She returned to Port Augusta where she enrolled full time at TAFE studying Conservation and Land Management before gaining the position with the Board.

As the Assistant NRM Officer, Lisa will provide support to the NRM district offices and work on a wide range of projects.

TRACKS AND SCATS SHOW TALES IN THE SAND

The SA Arid Lands NRM Board recently held workshops at Dulkaninna and Marree on the Birdsville Track to showcase the power of animal tracks in increasing our understanding of arid zone critters. Katherine Moseby, co-author of the new track identification manual *Tales in the Sand*, demonstrated the methodologies for distinguishing animal tracks and new standardised methods for recording them.

The workshops were attended by over 50 people including school students and other interested locals.

Copies of *Tales in the Sand* are available to residents of the region from the Board's office or contact Reece Pedler, the Board's Community Fauna Recovery Officer, for more information 8648 5977.





DINGO UPDATE

ISSUE 10 June 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. North of the Dog Fence the Board is investigating the impacts dingoes have on beef cattle in baited and unbaited areas to determine optimum dingo management strategies. South of the Dog Fence, the Board is busy delivering the landholder-initiated Biteback program for dingo control, a critical program for protecting the region's sheep industry.

Ben Allen

UPCOMING 'DINGO' EVENTS

4-9 July 2010

**Mammal Society Conference
Canberra, ACT**

Features a special session on dingoes as top-order predators in Australian ecosystems.

www.australianmammals.org.au

3-5 August 2010

**Queensland Pest Animal Symposium
Gladstone, Qld**

Features several presentations on dingoes and their impacts on livestock production and biodiversity.

www.pestanimalsymposium.com.au

26-28 October 2010

**National Wild Dog Management
Advisory Group meeting
Port Augusta, SA**

The NWD MAG provides strategic and practical advice to agencies and stakeholders involved in wild dog management and research across Australia. This meeting will be an opportunity for the Group to become more familiar with SA's dingo/wild dog issues.

National Wild Dog Facilitator, Greg Mifsud (07 4688 1333) or the SAAL NRM Board's Dingo Project Manager Ben Allen (8648 5977)

20-23 June 2011

**15th Australasian Vertebrate Pest
Conference
Sydney, NSW**

This conference usually offers a large amount of dingo-related information, and also features a special session on managing wild dogs for biodiversity.

www.avpc.net.au

News from both sides of the Fence

In this edition we bring you an update on the dingo-related activities in the region.

North of the fence

With many of the study sites under water, the recent rains in the far north meant we were not able to get to them in autumn but this has provided some excellent opportunities to see if 1080 baiting effects the way wildlife populations respond to significant rainfall events. Only time will tell, but early indications show small mammal populations to be climbing rapidly! Meanwhile, this year's calf predation results are nearly ready. With only a couple more areas still to be mustered, we'll soon find out how well 1080 baiting helped reduce calf losses last year. Building on preliminary results obtained from sandy deserts in the first year of the project, we are looking forward to more comprehensive results from stony plains systems this year. After the calf predation results are analysed, the annual *Summary of Results* will be available. Stay tuned to future *Dingo Updates*.

South of the fence

The Biteback project is progressing well.

Landholders in the North Flinders/ Marree region have now received their Local Area Plans and several have already being signed and returned.

These responses are excellent, and show just how committed landholders are at working together to reduce dingo impacts. Keep them coming!

Eight large freezers and hundreds of plastic buckets are now being strategically placed through the North Flinders, Marree, and North East districts.

These are for the storage and transport of injected 1080 baits and will help make meat baits more accessible to people throughout the year.

This would not have been possible without the support of the Department for Environment and Heritage and Heathgate Resources. ■

**Contact the Dingo Management team
for further informaton 8648 5977**



IMAGE

A juvenile dingo shelters from a dust storm inside a dried cow carcass



77% of properties engage in NRM

Statistics collected by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board reveal that over three quarters of all properties within the region have been supported in some type of on-ground NRM activity since the Board's inception in 2005.

The data collected by the Board's Community Engagement team shows that participation in NRM activities has increased across all districts with the Board working hard to improve support to our community and increase engagement in NRM activities. The Board's profile and its relevance to our regional community have also improved over time.

The increase in overall community participation can be attributed to a number of factors.

Field staff

The Board's staff, particularly its Community Engagement Officers, Aboriginal Engagement Officer and NRM Officers, provide valuable support for the community-based NRM Groups, develop community projects and initiatives, and provide technical advice.

On-ground works

The Board supports a range of on-ground works to address pest management, water resource management and land rehabilitation actions and has worked hard to secure funds that support our community to manage these issues.



Knowledge improvement

The Board has been keen to develop the skills and knowledge within our community by providing access to technical expertise, training, workshops and other activities tailored to community needs.

Publicity

The Board supports a range of publications and various media to provide the community with current news about Board activities and NRM issues including newsletters, factsheets and reports, local print media and radio, and the Board's website www.saalnrn.sa.gov.au.

For further information contact the Board's Community Engagement Manager 8648 5977 ■

REGIONAL NRM PLAN ADOPTED

Just as we go to print, the Board has received word that it's Regional NRM Plan has been adopted by the Minister for Environment and Conservation. We will have more on this in the August edition. The adoption of the Plan follows a 14-week consultation period from October 2009 to January 2010 where the public were given the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan. We would like to thank the community for their efforts in supporting the consultation process, both in terms of attending the Public Meetings held in the region in November 2009 and for providing their verbal and written feedback for the Minister's consideration along with the Plan. The consultation report is available on the Board's website www.saalnrn.sa.gov.au

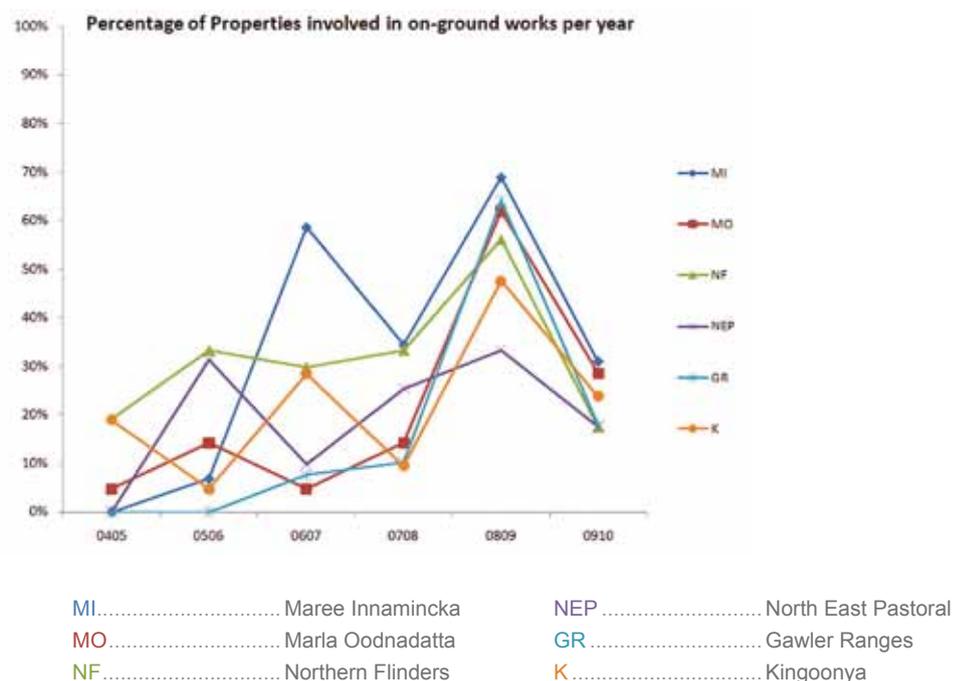
Further information 8648 5977

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

If you're after NRM Group or Board meeting details, a factsheet, report or newsletter, positions vacant, information for schools or volunteers or just the latest on NRM in the region, check out the Board's website www.saalnrn.sa.gov.au

GRAPH 1

Participation for each district since 2004/05. (Please note the data set for the 09/10 year is incomplete with some property works still requiring completion.)





Tourism – Station Stays

Flinders Ranges and Outback South Australia Tourism's work over the last month has ranged over a variety of major projects.

The Flinders Ranges National Landscape program has gained momentum again after a lull late in 2009 and new stakeholders are coming on board. The pastoral tourism network – Station Stays SA – has held a second meeting convened by Desert Knowledge Australia and FROSAT is focusing some of its marketing on this key component of outback tourism. Issues relating to Lake Eyre tourism – particularly road closures – have involved liaison with other agencies. ■

Rain on the Rangelands

Register now for the Australian Rangeland Society's *Rain on the Rangelands* conference being held in Bourke, NSW.

No coastal talk or tree-planting sessions here, just informative and interactive discussions about the management of outback Australia and what it means to grazing enterprises, conservation and the many other land uses. The conference will offer a mix of science and general interest information through field tours, oral presentations and poster sessions. Over 100 poster and paper proposals have been received. Another highlight for the 2010 conference is the allocation of an entire day to landholder presentations.

Register now at www.austrangesoc.com.au/site/ ■

17 NOMINATIONS FOR NEW OUTBACK AUTHORITY

Seventeen nominations, including 11 from outback residents, were received in May for membership of the soon to be established Outback Communities Authority (OCA).

This strong interest will ensure that the Minister for State/Local Government Relations can easily meet the requirement for at least four of the seven members to be outback residents.

The new Authority will replace the Outback Areas Community Development Trust in July.

Members of the outback community will have the opportunity to influence the OCA's work, ensuring services and infrastructure demands are assessed and prioritised fairly.

Further information
1800 640 542 or www.oacdt.sa.gov.au

HEALTH CHANGES

The Rural Community Counsellor position for the Port Augusta and the Far North region will no longer operate after 30 June 2010. The 'Men In Communities' Program and a new 'Women In Communities' Program will continue and two Rural Community Counsellors will still be located in the Riverland.

Emotional or financial support is available from your Local Community Health Service or GP or via the following:

Centacare 8641 2379

Rural Financial Counsellor
John White 0419 825 440

Centrelink
Robert Holtham 0428 681 856

Flinders & Far North Division of
General Practice 8642 3166

Family Relationship Advice Line
1800 050 321

Drought Assistance Hotline
13 23 16

NATIVE VEGETATION COUNCIL GRANTS AVAILABLE

The Native Vegetation Council (NVC) invites applications for funding of projects under its Significant Environmental Benefit Grants.

Funding is available for biodiversity projects that will assist in the large scale conservation, restoration and management of native vegetation across Natural Resources Management (NRM) Regions at a landscape scale.

The NVC will consider applications that develop partnerships that look at conservation enhancement and landscape management.

Projects should address NVC priorities and be consistent with strategies and priorities identified in Regional NRM Plans.

Closing date for applications
30 June 2010

Further information
8303 9725

Are you a pensioner?

Do you hold a Health Care Card from Centrelink (including a low income health care card)?

Do you have a State Seniors Card or a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card?

You may be eligible for a state government concession to help with energy costs, your water and sewerage costs, your emergency services levy and council rates. You may also receive cheaper travel on public transport.

Eligibility provisions vary slightly for each type of concession.

To find out more visit the Concessions Finder at www.sa.gov.au/concessions or telephone the Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 ■

Planning underway for spring locust response

A Hawker/Orroroo Community Reference Group has been formed to help drive a spring assault on locusts.

The group chaired by Malcolm Byerlee includes representatives from PIRSA, SAFF, local government, NRM, pastoralists, and industry (cropping, kangaroo, and apiary).

PIRSA Biosecurity is well advanced in its planning. Chemicals are currently being sourced for a Spring aerial bombardment and extensive planning is underway to ensure appropriate staffing and resources.

Joint action by landholders and local government will also be vital for the response as large scale aerial spraying can only be undertaken in open country.

Further information www.pir.sa.gov.au/locusts ■

Driver's licence renewal

Did you know you can now renew your driver's licence online? Simply visit www.ezyreg.sa.gov.au.

This new service is a fantastic option for drivers who want to save time and make renewing their licence a quick and easy process.

Motorists need to have a new licence photograph taken every 10 years, but if your renewal is within this 10 year period you can now complete the transaction online.

Your licence will be produced using the last eligible photo stored in the licensing system, reducing the need to visit special photo point locations.

This convenient new service builds on the existing online services available on EZYReg, including vehicle registration renewals. ■

Outback Calendar

MARREE CAMEL CUP

3 July

COOBER PEDY RACES

7-9 August

ROXBY DOWNS HORSE RACE CUP

14 August

FRIENDS OF PARKS FORUM

20-23 August

INNAMINCKA RACES

28 August

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.saalnrm.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 (details on back page).

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

CALL FOR CONTENT

Across The Outback
August edition

Content due by COB Friday 23 July.
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. A fee per article may apply.

Further information
Contact the Editor
(details on back page)

Desert Parks changing with the floods

Tony Magor, District Ranger – Desert Parks

With floodwaters damaging visitor sites at Innamincka and Coongie Lakes, and an expected increase in visitors to Lake Eyre in 2010, it will be another busy year for Department for Environment and Heritage staff in the Desert Parks district.

Flowing rivers and an outback green from summer rains are a great sight after many dry years. This is so for pastoralists but also local businesses with the rain bringing increased visitors.

Increased visitors also have implications for park management.

In 2009, water entering Lake Eyre brought with it a public fascination during drought with people visiting by road and air to witness the event.

Some visitors enjoyed the experience, others were disappointed.

The public perception was that Lake Eyre was almost full with a lot of birdlife on the lake.

However, Lake Eyre reached about 60 per cent surface coverage which does not equal volume.

The bird colonies that were sought by

visitors were congregated in the tributaries north of Lake Eyre, not at vantage points of the lake.

Although this was a short-lived event, Parks staff shifted their usual focus with increased frequency of patrols, and spending July at William Creek.

In 2010, water is again flowing in to Lake Eyre from the Warburton Creek.

This time Cooper Creek water may arrive as a result of floodwaters from Longreach and surrounds plus good local Innamincka rain.

Floodwaters have put visitor site redevelopments at Innamincka and Coongie Lakes on hold with staff now assessing and repairing damage.

With water still in the soil, most camping and visitor areas will take some time to dry out before repairs can be undertaken and sites re-opened.

Coongie Lakes may be inaccessible for the rest of the year. ■

IMAGES

Floodwaters at Innamincka. These photos are taken at the Burke's Grave turn-off out to Cullyamurra – the Cooper Creek rose another metre than the level shown in the photo on the right



Lake Eyre



LICE CONTROL

PIRSA Biosecurity-Animal Health staff inspect meat and off-shears markets, targeting pens of sheep showing signs of rubbing and tugging in the wool or biting, and placard all lice detections.

Presenting lousy sheep at the saleyards is an offence under the *Livestock Act 2007*.

It attracts an expiation of \$345 as the close penning of sheep at saleyards creates a prime opportunity for lice to spread.

Many producers have expressed frustration at trying to control lice within their mob.

Lice are not the problem of individual properties; it is shared between neighbours and districts with control and eradication impossible if neighbours don't share the same priority.

Infestation occurs for a variety of reasons including purchase of lousy sheep, staying animals, ineffective treatment application, failure to rotate treatment type and chemical, failure to treat due to low wool prices, split shearings, poor musters and, more recently, chemical resistance.

SA's Lice Control Program is run by PIRSA Biosecurity-Animal Health and supported by the Sheep Industry Fund.

Further information

www.liceboss.com.au or Trent Scholz,
PIRSA Port Augusta office, 8648 5160

LICE DETECTION KITS

Lice detection kits are one of the newest innovations available for confirming the presence of sheep lice through the sampling of comb and cutter grease at shearing.

Further information 02 4640 6433

Lousy year for sheep

Kym Hebberman, Animal Health Officer

Sheep lice numbers are rampant. Detections at saleyards are up and there has been an increase in reports from stock agents and producers with first time infestations or re-infestations after treatment. So what can you do?

There are three important factors to consider to limit the introduction or spread of sheep lice.

Sheep behaviour

- Observe sheep behaviour for rubbing and biting. Inspect any animals with evidence of rubbing or wool in their mouth or on fences, even if grass seeds, burrs or a wool break are suspected. If glasses are required for reading, they will also be required to see a louse of 1-2mm in length.

On-farm biosecurity

- Isolate all introduced lambs, off-shears ewes, rams etc until you're certain they are lice-free (up to 4 months for bare-shorn sheep). Don't assume cross-bred sheep (including wool shedding breeds) are lice-free.
- Sheep Health Statements are very important documents. Demand lice history and treatment details in order to make the correct treatment decisions.
- Prevent your stock straying and potentially being thrown back over the fence by the neighbour without you first inspecting it. Allowing lousy sheep to stray is an offence with an expiation fee of \$345.
- Ensure fencelines are adequate to prevent stock straying onto your property and always inspect stray sheep. Should sheep stray onto your property contact an Animal Health Officer.
- Ensure thorough musters at shearing and treating, including pets, rams and stock intended for personal consumption. Lice are often carried over on these animals and present re-infestation risks.
- Avoid split shearings and ensure good shed hygiene. Lice have survived for up to 16 days on fibres in shearing sheds and up to 10 days on shearers' moccasins.

Treatment

- Always apply chemicals according to the label.
- Alternate treatment types (backliner/plunge/shower dips) and alternate lice chemicals as you would with crop chemicals.
- Synthetic pyrethroids are not recommended due to resistance and isolated cases of Insect Growth Regulator resistance have been confirmed.
- No product guarantees 100 per cent control in long wool.
- Be informed about when neighbours are shearing and treating.
- Be aware of lice carry-over in lambs after treating ewes. Seek advice from your re-seller on the limited treatment options available for ewes and lambs. ■





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



IMAGE

Trilling Frogs have emerged from below the surface with the recent rains

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.

Karen Durbidge (The Peake Station) wrote this poem four years ago, shortly after she'd seen footage on the news of farmers having to shoot their stock.

She says: 'We were feeling the drought terribly back then too but just managed to be able to hang on long enough and then the good rains started.'

Thanks for sharing the poem with the rest of us Karen.

Enjoy.

Waiting for the rains

Karen Durbidge – The Peake Station

Dry and dusty paddocks
Parched soil and bare plains.
Stock dying constantly,
Still waiting for the rains.

Husbands' getting nervous,
Wives sharing their pains.
Depression setting in right now,
Still waiting for the rains.

Crows are circling high above,
Driving cattle insane.
Picking out their eyeballs,
Still waiting for the rains.

Everyone's de stocking now,
In come the road trains.
Despair is part of life now,
Still waiting for the rains.

Skeletal stock now walk around,
Dry heat is now their bane.
Staying close to water troughs,
Still waiting for the rains.

Shooting stock is essential now,
But the men try to refrain.
A little bit of hope left,
Still waiting for the rains.

Some tough old men aren't coping now,
They feel they're going insane.
But somehow they keep going,
Still waiting for the rains.

We're at the end of our tethers now,
Years of hard work down the drain.
"When's it all gunna end?" we ask,
Still waiting for the rains.

Thunder clouds are brewing now,
All hope has come back again.
Heads are tilted sky bound,
Still waiting for the rains.

Large drops are starting to fall now,
Thunder louder than freight trains.
We wonder if our prayers will be answered,
Still waiting for the rains.

Torrential down pour is happening,
Excitement showing we're sane.
Dams are filling up so fast,
Still waiting for the rains.

Paddocks are now flooded,
There's water in dams and drains.
We now breath a sigh of relief,
We're no longer waiting for the rains!!!