



May 2010

Alice Springs Field Naturalist Club Newsletter



Golden Orb Spider (*nephila edulis*)

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month (except December & January) at 7:00 PM at Higher Education Building at Charles Darwin University. Visitors are welcome.

Look - New Meeting Venue and Start Time. Details inside.

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NEXT NEWSLETTER

The deadline for the next newsletter is **Friday 21st May**. Please send your contributions to Emily Findlay – robbiemily@hotmail.com

MEETINGS

- Wed 12 May: **Jo Van der Reijden**, Zoo-keeper at the Desert Park will be presenting at the Australian Society of Zoo Keeping Conference in Adelaide on 21st May. He will be presenting his paper - '*The Invertebrate Displays at the Desert Park, approaches taken and plans for the future*' to us before he heads to the conference.
- Wed 9 Jun: **Chris Palmer**, entomologist Parks & Wildlife Service, Central Australian insects and their adaptations to our harsh climate.

Australian Plant Society

- May 5 **Des Nelson** "Travels with George."
Des Nelson worked with the Government botanist George Chippendale in the mid 1950s and 60s and has many a tale to tell.

FIELD TRIPS / ACTIVITIES

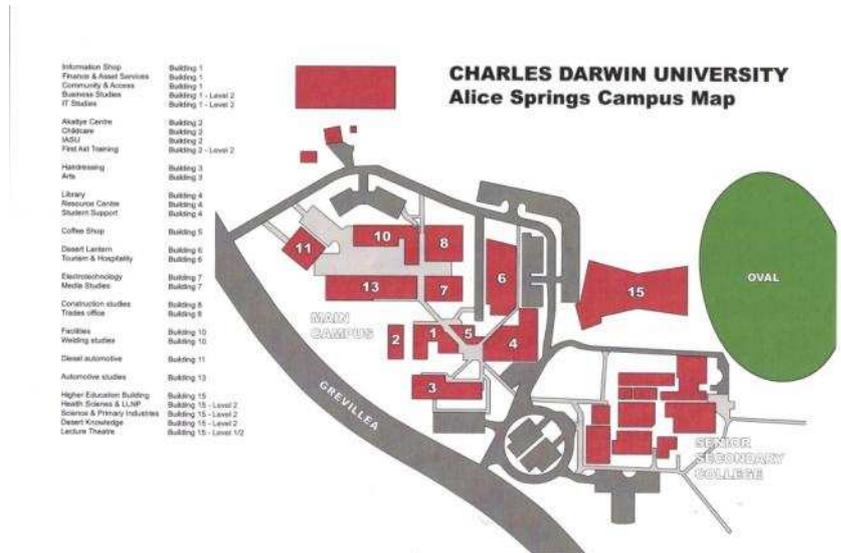
- May 1-3 **Finke 4WD Route** to Illamurta Springs and Running Waters and travelling back via Boggy Hole and Hermannsberg, although this will depend on track conditions. Limited vehicle numbers. **Leader - Jim Lawrence Ph.89 525049**
- May 9 **Upper Todd River** (Mothers' Day). Meet at Telegraph station at 8.00am. This time is dictated so as not to have to organise a key for the gate to get in earlier. Walk is a try again to visit the "gorge" area and waterholes along the river. Easy stroll, bit on rocks. Time approximately 3 hours. **Leader - Rosalie Breen Ph. 89 523409.**
- May 22-23 **Bowman's Gap**. Hike and overnight camping trip. Camp not far from Ormiston Pound. Not necessary to carry overnight pack all day. There can be a 'day only' option Ormiston Pound Walk. **Leader - Colleen O'Malley Ph. 0420 719778** (Leader needed for Pound Walk component.)
- May 13 or 20 **Rifle Range Swamp** - after work tramp through the swamp. Details later.
- June 5- 6 **Train Hills** area walks. Option of day trip or overnight camping trip. Dependent on road conditions and land owner approval. Limited vehicle numbers. **Leader - Connie Spencer Ph 89 524694**

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Change of Meeting Venue and Time

Alice Springs Field Naturalist Club will meet in future at the lecture theatre in the Higher Education Building at Charles Darwin University. To find this enter from Grevillea Drive, the entrance next to the Childcare facility, the same entrance that you would use going to the Greening Australia Nursery or the Desert Lantern Restaurant. The Higher Education Building is the large, newish brown building in the left side of the road (15 on the map). The lecture theatre is just inside the main entrance on the right.

Meetings will start at 7.00pm, still on the second Wednesday of the month, as from 12 May 2010. We need to be out of the building before 9.00pm



Cover Picture

This large spider is the Golden Orb Spider (*Nephila edulis*). It is interesting that 'edulis' means edible. She doesn't look very appetizing to me. In this photo she is very busy eating a large grasshopper. The very much smaller male is taking advantage of her preoccupation with her food and is mating with her. In this way he is much less likely to be eaten himself. Photo Barb Gilfedder

April Speaker Peter Collins - Waders, Flyways and Flagging

The information shared by Peter Collins, previously Warden at the Broome Bird Observatory was really interesting. The world of migratory birds is fascinating but also concerning because of the threats that they face.

The Roebuck Bay area near Broome was not recognized as a significant bird area until the 1960's by non-Aboriginal people. Aborigines had long been using the birds as a food source, particularly the larger birds. The sheer numbers of birds that can be found there is amazing.

The Wader Studies group was not formed until 1981. The migratory waders that visit Broome in our Summer, fly North to Siberia and some even to Alaska to breed in their Summer. This forms the East Asian Australasian Flyway.

There is still limited knowledge of the routes, stopover sites and timing of shorebird migrations. These amazing birds are generally locked into the flyways because of the wind patterns.

The Red-necked Stint weighs in at 16g and five of them could fit in your hand! These wee creatures fly as far as any of the bird migrants – from Australia to islands North of Siberia to breed. They can have three or four clutches in a season depending on how good that season is.

Bird banding began, but there was very low recovery rate of the metal bands at 0.03%.

There are social, economic and language barriers for recovery of those bands in the flyway that Australia is part of.



Photo by Mat and Cathy Gilfedder

The purpose of the bands was not fully realised in Asian countries so in most cases they were destroyed. The offering of a bounty for banded birds began but there were still problems of postage and writing. Bands are in different colours for different places e.g. Victoria – orange, Queensland – green, New Zealand – white, north-west WA – yellow, Taiwan-blue and white. Later alpha-numeric flags were introduced. These are readable with binoculars, so an individual bird can be identified. With education and distribution of binoculars, flagging brought in seventeen times more information.

The Yellow Sea in China is particularly important as a stopover point on long migration journeys, but major threats are faced because of the reclamation of the mudflats and also damming of rivers that run into the Yellow Sea. This has decreased the numbers of Great Knot reaching Australia by 20% in two years.

New ways of gaining information are being developed with tiny chips attached to the flags which record where the bird has travelled and the length of stopover times at different places. The bird has to be recaptured for this information to be downloaded and analysed by computer, but the detail gained from this method is a phenomenal.

The mystery of some species remains. For example, where does the Little Curlew go when the rains disappear? Also, the Oriental Pratincole, whose numbers were thought to be about 60 000 until 2.8 million turned up on the beach at Broome.

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Iparpa Claypans, 27 March 2010 - By Connie Spencer

It was hoped the walk would be around the Rifle Range Swamp but efforts to contact someone in authority failed and it is not the sort of place to wander around unannounced! Hence; a walk around the Iparpa Claypans. There was a slight glitch in communication and it seemed that members were unaware of the alternative that was planned. Never mind, these things happen and James Armstrong and I had a wonderful 2 – 3 hours wandering around each claypan never knowing quite how far we would have to travel in order not to get wet feet.

We pondered over what turned out to be a flock of Plumed Whistling Ducks. They were a new one to both of us with James getting a reasonable photo (see below). We also saw the Pacific Black Duck and the Black-fronted Dotterel in the same area.

After this exciting interlude we continued on and came to the Eastern side of the claypans where a track led us through a Mulga woodland which was alive with Budgies and Finches and probably heaps of other birds but those were the dominant ones. James tried in vain to get a photo of the budgies in flight but to no avail!

The track led us to a different type of plant community – an open grassland with water in the low lying area. I was amazed at the different plants, the majority of which I had no idea what they were. I have since had them identified but that's a story for another time.



Newhaven Trip – Easter 2010 – A compilation of personal highlights

Vicki Gordan - A highlight of Easter at Newhaven! Now that's a hard one, as they're multiple. From the peacefulness with the green and orange and pink and blue of the sunset and sunrise, Lakes Susie and Swan with their clarity, the variety of grasses flowering /seeding and seeing the animals as part of the survey like the three species of frogs and lizards and the Stripe-faced Dunnart. The absolute bonus of having people with expert knowledge on these was very special.

Connie Spencer - For an avid native plant person like me, we couldn't have picked a better time to travel to Newhaven Reserve. The stunning transformation of the countryside following good rainfall never ceases to amaze me. I'm still on cloud nine and over-whelmed at the variety of plants to be seen no matter where we stopped. I thought at one point that we wouldn't get much more than 50 km from town as the first stop had this most wondrous array of species. I'm not going to attempt to pick a highlight to write about. However, I will say that I was very impressed with the smorgasbord of grass species seen. All is not lost to Buffel Grass.



It was a botanically challenging trip! So many plants that I have either, never seen before or it has been so long that the names escape me.

Jocelyn Davies - Because of the recent rain, the track to Bird Lake, off the Lakes Drive, finished for vehicles at a small flooded claypan. We followed around its edge on foot and could see a low ridge to the north. It looked like the dune at the edge of a lake and as we walked up to its crest, flanked by large mallees (*Eucalyptus socialis*), we saw the salt lake stretching out to the distance. There were Black Swans on it, clearly, easy to pick even though they were hundreds of metres away on the water. And there were other birds, but who could tell what, with them so far away? Across the salt flat Bob and I trekked, crossing tracks of dingos - adults and pups, a bustard or two, the flapping big pads of a camel and some cats. In the distance the afternoon sun caught the cliffs behind the homestead, twenty kilometres to the north. The salt crust hardly broke under our feet, and when it did there was yellow ochre clay, and below that black ooze, the sulphide soil typical of salt lakes. Eventually we were at the edge of the water and we counted twenty swans, Grey Teal, Black-winged Stilts and a few Silver Gulls, before strolling back to the claypan and the cars.

Rosalie Breen - On the dunes above Lake Bennett were wonderful views of white shimmering salt flats all the way to the horizon. Plants again were interesting. Robust and strangling Snake Vines were covering trees, and Clerodendrum flowering white tubes and a few peeps of the red calyx and black fruit. Approaching the dune we walked across a mosaic of patterns of yellow, white, red and green as the salty water, meandering and drying out, snaked in the sand to the lake.

Jim Gilfedder - Biggest disappointment was the total lack of the Australian Bearded Swan, *Gaviana breenova*, on Swan Lake. We saw one there in 2004 but perhaps the migration pattern has changed, or global warming got to it? I did so want to shoot one again.

My best memories are of the lizards and frogs which were in the traps, things which I wouldn't see otherwise; finding how to say "Ctenotus"; and that there are NO toads in Australia, except THAT ONE from Queensland.

Meg Mooney - Summer rains mean frogs and the Centre, unlike some parts of Australia, still has lots of them. After staggering awake (me anyway) in near-darkness, we arrive at the samphire plain of the first trap site in grey pre-dawn light.

There are several parallel lines of pitfall traps. These traps usually catch lizards, some snakes and small mammals like dunnarts. This time they are catching more frogs than anything else at the sites near claypans and small lakes, nestled among paperbarks or open to the plains.

We find three different types of frogs that morning. The first is brown with a cream line down its back and a pointy snout. A Main's Burrowing Frog, *Cyclorana mainii*. These frogs can be plain or mottled, the line down the back is distinctive. They occur around Alice Springs too and their call is a kind of baa, so they're sometimes called sheep frogs. As the country dries out, these frogs fill up their bladders with water, burrow deep in the sand and enclose themselves in impervious cocoons of dead skin. They can remain like this for months or even years. Now they have broken out of their protective sacs and come up to the surface to breed.

Barb Gilfedder - We were lucky that Joe and helpers were undertaking animal surveys at Newhaven while we were there, and invited us to observe the checking of the traps in the mornings. Three kinds of traps were being used - Elliott traps like metal letterboxes, funnel traps made of a tube of shade cloth supported by a coil of wire with a funnel at each end, and pit traps - half metre lengths of plumbing pipe buried vertically in the ground. Animals were directed into the traps by a low shade cloth fence.

First was the Trilling frog, *Neobatrachus aquilonius*. These are pale brown and yellow patterned on their backs, fat, burrowing frogs and are often found in claypans after rains. I have seen them out at the Ilparpa claypans. Second was the Desert Spadefoot Toad, *Notaden nichollsi*. These are bigger and fatter, a large round frog and covered in beautiful orange and black spots on a creamy background. Again these are burrowing frogs.

Third was the Tanami Toadlet, *Uperoleia micromeles*. The first ones of these at Newhaven were only found the previous day. They are rarely seen and not much is known about them. These don't grow as big as the other two species, only about 3 cm long, are light brown with some orange spots and with a wide snout and short limbs. The large parotid glands on the back of their necks have a gold edge.



Two Trilling frogs and one Desert Spadefoot Toad

Allan Weeks - Until my visit to Newhaven I had not heard of the Mulgara marsupial and on Sunday morning I was fortunate enough to be in the group which witnessed the trapping of three Mulgaras. We watched the interesting weighing, sexing, counting teeth, general inspection, checking tail types and DNA sampling of the Mulgara but couldn't see much as to avoid being bitten Ray had to keep the animal held most of the time in a calico bag. Missing pictures of the first Mulgara I reset the camera at 1/1000th of a second to capture the second one even so there was still motion blur. My impression of why the Mulgara has survived so long is that it showed that it is capable of very sharp bursts of speed and predators like dingoes and birds of prey would be hard pressed to corner it in the one spot long enough to catch it.



Steve Sinclair - As I was driving along one of the sandy roads I noticed quite a lot of round bare patches along the sides of the road. The patches were surrounded by a ring of small plants, mainly a Parakeelya, and some had white salt patches within them. We stopped to examine them & I noticed that the soil just under the surface was quite a bit darker. Several theories were put forward by the group including

- they may have once had spinifex growing there but it had died, however there were absolutely no remnants of any vegetation in the bare patches – so maybe not
- water had lain there & killed off any vegetation but once again not a vestige of vegetation & some were on a slight slope – definitely not that guess
- “fairy rings” volunteered a Pom who explained that they are caused by fungi – a possibility.



Just then Ray from AWC drove up and solved our dilemma by telling us they are caused by an underground termite species!



Jenny Purdie - Heading out towards Mt Gurner I read in the tour notes that *Leptosema chambersii* can be seen on the Mt Gurner road so I resolved to look out for it. However about 15 km before we reached that road Connie spotted some along the side of the road and it was flowering! This is the first time I have seen it at its flowering peak – at best it usually has dried up old flowers and immature fruits! After a photo frenzy we continued on and about 5 km along the Mt Gurner road found lots of it in the middle of the road, though these plants were not quite as spectacular as the first lot. We were the last vehicle in the convoy of 3 so how come the other vehicles

in front of us had not stopped? Well, it turned out that most of the passengers were dozing but eventually we got a call on the radio to tell us that they had just spotted the Upside-down Plant!

Rosalie Breen - I really enjoyed the Potato Creek Gorge area, a pretty place with pools and reflections set in red rocks as the creek ran down to the valley. It was a place to sit and relax in the sun and look at the lush vegetation of grasses reeds and rushes, delicate sundews, their honey dew sparkling like diamonds and a few with white flowers. I collected some filamentous algae and in the clear water, diving beetles were coming up to capture air, waterboatman were rowing around, a couple of whirligigs were careering around on the surface. Waterplants were easily be seen growing at the bottom of the pool.



Robert Robinson - When we were driving back from Potato Creek Gorge, Barbara heard the strange plaintive call of the Black Honeyeater. We got out of the Hilux and we all had a grand view of the Black Honeyeater calling. I had last seen the Black Honeyeater in the early 80's in the Chiltern Ironbark Forest in NE Victoria. He was a long way off on that occasion.

Jocelyn Davies - On the drive home, through the eastern end of Newhaven, Megg and I were looking for one last swim. After a couple of detours to likely spots, which turned out to be beautiful - but dry - lakes, growing samphire, we stopped where water lay across the main road, and wandered down a narrow flooded channel. There were blue and white wrens to watch, three Pied Butcherbirds and lots of flaked silcrete gibbers, the remnants of people's tool making. Down the channel, where it opened up into a small round brown lake, there were Plumed Whistling- Ducks Hardhead, Grey Teal, Black Duck, Coots and two kinds of Grebe. We approached slowly, crawling through the water with only our heads out. Three Plumed Whistling-Ducks stayed calm, and swam a bit closer to check us out. We later joked that if we had had some branches for camouflage we might have even been able to grab one for dinner. Then the Teal took flight circling out of the clay pan and wheeling sharply round, with one Hardhead trying in vain to match



their tight pattern. The Plumed Whistling-Ducks flapped a bit and swam away. When quiet settled, the water close to us was empty except for two Pink-eared Ducks who might have decided that at last they could show themselves off now the big mobs had left for the far shore.

Megg Kelham - Favourite new flower – the upside-down plant! Favourite moment – watching Bob leaping around the sand hills at Lake Bennett trying to catch something – a grasshopper perhaps? – with a butterfly net whilst I tried to extricate myself from the mud beneath my feet. New knowledge – the ‘discovery’ that whenever I spot a clump of Desert Oaks road side I should slow down because Desert Oaks like the sandy soils that cars like to spin and bog in and I don’t like either spinning or bogging!!!

It was really lovely to see for myself the country settled in the 1930s whose history I know something about through my investigations into the records of the Stuart Town Gaol. I was really surprised by how much of a vibrant wetland it was. No wonder the first Europeans mistook its viability.

Bob Read - “There’s a Spotted Harrier”, someone said. I looked to the front and there was a bird of prey, with grey upper wing, but too small, wings too flat for a harrier, and under parts pale, not chestnut.

With mounting excitement I yelled “Stop, stop”. Scrambling out of the car I saw that there were in fact two birds, now behind us. Both had a light grey upperwing and very pale below except for the dark wing tips and some dark in the tail. I could see the yellow legs and bill, but the distance was too great to make out the yellow eye-ring. One was carrying a lizard that it was eating on the wing. This is probably why one of the birds was quite low when first seen. By the time I had got down the essential notes the birds had drifted too far away for a photo. I could have grabbed my camera first, but it was more important to get down notes of visual observations, and cameras are notorious for ambiguous results with distant birds against a bright sky. This was my second encounter with live Grey Falcons, and this time all the witnesses were looking in the right direction. It was a thrill to see two of this beautiful species.

Tyre note **Jim Gilfedder** - For those who have split-rim wheels, the flat tyre I had was due to K Mart not removing a sticker from inside the tyre. This had abraded a hole in the tube. They have replaced two tubes and a rust band and given me \$200 in lieu of a new tyre.

MPARNTWE MARVELS by Sue Fraser

On the morning of Sunday 4/4/10 my son Scott and I set off for an amble through the hills behind our home. Scott wanted to show me a bush banana vine growing on a Corkwood tree that he had been keeping an eye on for a couple of months, and the roosting spot for some bats he had discovered on a previous bushwalk.

We found 4 almost fully grown Bush Bananas (*Marsdenia australis*) on the vine, which had wrapped itself around a sturdy old Long-leafed Corkwood. Both the Bananas and the Corkwood were looking very healthy after the recent rains.



As we walked we were serenaded by a wonderful chorus of bird calls from Budgerigars, Willie Wagtails, Pt Lincoln Ringnecks, Zebra Finches, Masked Woodswallows, even a Firetail Finch - and they were only the ones I could identify. I'm sure they were all happy due to the abundance of food available, as evidenced by the swarms of grasshoppers which were disturbed as we walked. We noted the *prolific* presence of buffel grass and *lack* of wildflowers, strange we thought, in spite of all the rain. Is the buffel so dominant it is choking all other vegetation?



We followed the creekbed north west of Albrecht Drive for a time, and came across a strange spider in a web with an almost tear drop shaped abdomen. About 200 metres further on we came to a place where the creek had been dammed by a culvert and a weir shaped structure. It was within the pipe, through which water was able to flow when the creek runs, that the bats had chosen as their daytime roosting spot. Scott had climbed through the pipe previously, but I did not relish the thought of bats flying around my head in a confined space, so I was content to observe them from a distance of about 4 metres.

The day was beginning to warm up at this point, so we began to wander back home along one of the many dirt tracks that criss-cross the hills and valleys opposite the John Flynn Grave site. It was there, within a couple of hundred metres of home we found the most gorgeous Thorny Devil. A dream come true for me, as in all my 42 years in the Alice I had never seen a Thorny Devil in its natural environment. I was euphoric, and the amazing little creature obligingly posed for many photos before I placed it carefully off the track, away from the danger of passing trail bike riders. I could now cross "wild sighting of *Moloch horridus*" off my bucket list. What a happy end to a perfect morning stroll!



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Sewage Ponds Bird list – Field Naturalists visit – April 18, 2010. Barb Gilfedder

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Black Kite | Crested Pigeon | Little Corella |
| Little Crow | Magpie Lark | Willy Wagtail |
| Australasian Pipit | Rufous Songlark | Masked lapwing |
| Red-kneed Dotterel | Black-fronted Dotterel | Black-tailed Godwit |
| Common Sandpiper | Wood Sandpiper | Common Greenshank |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | Black Swan | Hardhead |
| Pacific Black Duck | Australian Grey Teal | Pink-eared Duck |
| White-faced Heron | Royal Spoonbill | Yellow-billed Spoonbill |
| Australian White Ibis | Black-winged Stilt | Red-necked Avocet |
| Eurasian Coot | Little Black Cormorant | Freckled Duck |

Alice Springs Natural History Museum

This is a place where Field Nats have enjoyed several interesting excursions. Last week a few of us met with Michael Cawthorne, Deputy Director of the Museum and Art Galleries NT. He is Director of the Strehlow Research Centre and Natural History Museum in Alice Springs which are considered a gallery of the Darwin Museum. He assured us that there is no longer any intention to move the Alice Springs Museum or to split it up in any way. He is keen to work on a number of ways to promote it. An education officer would be ideal to develop resources and support school visits, but these positions seem to no longer exist. Michael would like to hold community education sessions and Field Nats could provide some publicity for them through e-mail networks and our newsletter. A planned fossil dig at Alcoota this year is scheduled for July and Bird Week may be other excellent opportunities to promote the museum. Community involvement in museums benefits everyone and Field Nats can support this.

SIGHTINGS

Great Crested Grebe	March 2010	Red bank Waterhole, Owen Springs	Eric Dunnachie Parks and Wildlife Ranger
Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, Budgerigars, Cockatiels	April 2010	Hugh River	Margaret Lawrence
2 Grey Falcons	3 April 2010	Newhaven	Bob Read (See write-up)
Peaceful Dove on nest (even sitting under sprinklers)	13 April 2010	Shade house at Desert Park Nursery	Connie Spencer (photo)
Channel-billed Cuckoos	April 2010	Alice Springs area	Bev Gray, Bob Gosford, Marilyn Hall
2 Freckled Ducks, 2 Little Black Cormorants	18 April 2010	Alice Springs Sewage Ponds	Barb Gilfedder and rest of Field Nats group
Turtle	April 2010	Todd River	Seen by an aboriginal man, reported by Wendy McTaggart (possibly escaped from Golf course ponds)
Tanami Toadlets, Trilling Frog, Mains Frogs, Desert Spadefoot Toads	4 April	Newhaven Trapped during survey	Field Nats Group (see write-up)
Mulgara	4 April	Newhaven Trapped during survey	Field Nats Group (See write-up)
Major Mitchell Cockatoos	April	Ilparpa Roadside	Jude Mapleson (photo)
Ctenotus Skinks (<i>Ctenotus pantherinus</i> and <i>leonhardii</i>) Two-toed Lerista (<i>Lerista bipes</i>)	4 April	Newhaven Trapped during survey	Field Nats Group



ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED
Minutes of General Meeting held at Olive Pink Botanic Garden
Wednesday 14 April 2010

Open: President, Barb Gilfedder declared the meeting open at 9.00pm.

Present: 20 people were present at the talk as per attendance book, 15 stayed on for the meeting

Apologies: Sarah White, Rhondda Tomlinson, Jim Lawrence, Shirley Goodman.

Minutes of previous Meeting:

As usual minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated as part of the newsletter. Minutes on the March meeting were moved for acceptance by Barb Gilfedder and seconded by Bev Dawson. Accepted.

Matters Arising:

Two articles chosen by Barb from April newsletter to send to Dave Richards for aliceonline website – not whole newsletter - Meg Mooney's write-up on Bradshaw Walk and Barb's small piece on native snails.

Correspondence In:

Western Australian Naturalists Club	The Naturalist News – April
NT Field Naturalist Club	Nature Territory –April
Accident and Health Insurance Certificate valid until April 2011	
Stuart Traynor	Info on JM Stuart celebrations this week
Natacha Issler	re Membership

Correspondence Out:

Thank you letters to March speaker
Thank you letter to Jo and Danae at Newhaven
Newsletter articles to Dave Richards for aliceonline website.

Treasurer's Report:

Insurance premium and post box renewal have been paid – Report next month

General Business:

1. Planning meeting to be held on Sun 18th April at OPBG at 2.00 pm. All members welcome to attend.
2. Michael Cawthorne at the Natural History Museum at Araluen is keen to meet with some of our representatives. Suggested Thursday or Friday afternoon next week – 22,23 April, Barb and Rosalie going, probably 2.00pm on 22nd April. Other interested members please let Barb know.

Previous Outings/Trips- Reports

1. Ilparpa Swamp – only Connie Spencer and James Armstrong attended – Connie has had several rare plants identified that she collected. Vicki Gordon had been unable to gain access for a walk in Rifle range Swamp but passed on details so we may be able to arrange walk there in the future.
2. Newhaven Reserve- Easter weekend. Twenty people attended. Very green, lots of birds, water in the waterholes, many plants flowering. (Barb had put on slide show of her photos during the supper break)

Future Outings/Trips

1. Sewage Ponds Sunday 18 April 7.30 am. Leader Barb Gilfedder. Please be on time as gate locked.
2. Birthday waterhole – Long weekend starting 24 April. Leader Rosalie Breen. No interest shown yet. Discuss and possibly substitute at planning meeting.

Sightings:

Eric Dunnachie – P&W Ranger reported Great Crested Grebe at Red bank Waterhole, Owen Springs.
Margaret Lawrence – Black Cockatoos, Budgies, and Cockatiels at Hugh River
Bob Read – two Grey Falcons at Newhaven (with other witnesses)
Bev Grey - Channel-billed Cuckoos still around, Marilyn Hall and Bob Gosford agreed.
(Bob Gosford offered to present a talk on Channel-billed Cuckoos)
Connie Spencer – Peaceful Dove sitting on two eggs in very flimsy nest in shade house at Desert Park - even sitting there while sprinklers on it.
Wendy MacTaggart – turtle found in Todd by Aboriginal man – probably feral escaped from golf course ponds.
Barb Gilfedder – Tanami Toadlets trapped at Newhaven, rare and little known species.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 12 May 2010

Note taker: Wendy MacTaggart

Supper: Margaret Lawrence

Gate: Barb Gilfedder/ Connie Spencer

Meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED
Minutes of Committee/Planning Meeting held at Olive Pink Botanic Garden
on Sunday 18 April 2010, 2.00pm

Present: Barb Gilfedder, Rosalie Breen, Mark Carter, Connie Spencer, Sue Fraser, Colleen O'Malley, Meg Mooney, Shirley Goodman

Apologies: Rhondda Tomlinson, Sarah White, Josie Petrick, Meg Kelham, Vicki Gordon, Emily Findlay

General Business:

Future Trips. - All trips subject to approval from land-owners

April 25-27. A camp at **Birthday Waterhole** with various walk options.

So far leader Rosalie Breen has received limited response, it really needs two vehicles to be viable. May need to be cancelled.

May 1-3 **Jim Lawrence** has agreed to lead a trip to Illamurta Springs and Running Waters travelling out via Henbury Craters and back via Boggy Hole and Hermannsberg, although this will depend on track conditions.

May 9 (Mothers' Day) walk along the Upper Todd River. Leader **Rosalie Breen**. Time approximately 3 hours.

May 22-23 Hike and overnight camping trip to Bowman's Gap. There can be a 'day only' option Ormiston Pound Walk. Leader -**Colleen O'Malley**

May 13 or 20 Rifle Range Swamp- after work visit. **Barb Gilfedder** to follow up

June 5- 6 Trip to Train Hills area. Option of day or overnight trip. Trip dependent on road conditions. Leader - **Connie Spencer**

June 12-14 Something in the James Range area. Need to ask Bob Read for more information on possible trips in that area.

June 19-20 Trip to Mallee Fowl Site accessed near southern end of Owen Springs. Colleen will talk about this at the next (May) meeting. There may be an overnight camping option depending on permission. Leader -**Colleen O'Malley**.

July 11 Day walk at the back of the Mt Gillen Range. Leader - **Connie Spencer**.

August 8 Day walk from Standley Chasm to Bridle Path lookout and back. (Part of Larapinta Trail). Leader - **Colleen O'Malley**

August 14-15 Overnight trip to Mica Village ruins, off Garden Road. leader **Meg Mooney**

Mark Carter offered to lead a trip to Kunoth Bore – date to be confirmed.

Meetings:

May 9 - Ashley Sparrow, June 9 - Chris Palmer

It is hoped that Mike Green, geologist will give a talk followed by a field trip at a date to be confirmed.

Mark Carter indicated that his friend Mick Green may be willing to give a talk on his speciality which is the Ring Ouzel, a bird that migrates between North Africa and Europe.

Meeting Venue and Time

There have been some problems regarding our current meeting venue at OPBG.

Lighting to the car park is not adequate and people have tripped.

Keys and doors do not work reliably

It is a hassle moving furniture and chairs from the storeroom for every meeting.

Kitchen too far from meeting room with hazardous trek in the dark

Kitchen dirty and untidy

Barb has made enquiries about alternative venues:

1. Senior Citizens Rooms, \$10 per hour, clean kitchen, no projector, need to pick up and drop off keys, car

parking reasonably secure for 10 cars

2. Andy McNeil Room , \$24 for 2 hrs, clean kitchen, no projector, need to pick up and drop off keys, car parking near Todd Street.

3. CDU lecture-theatre, free, projector, screen, kitchenette, boiling and cold water dispensers, no keys needed, own cups supplies necessary, but must be out by 9pm.

The meeting favoured the CDU option.

There will need to be some changes to meeting times and procedure. Meetings to commence at 7pm.

Business meeting can be modified and take place immediately after the guest presentation.

People can then adjourn to foyer or outside area for a modest (biscuit) supper.

Need to pack up at 8.45pm to be out of building by 9.00pm

Sue Fraser offered to purchase 25 cups, tea/coffee/biscuit and sugar containers and a storage box to facilitate the new refreshment arrangements

The next (May) meeting will be at the new venue.

Barb to book CDU lecture-theatre for rest of year, also explain to Curator and OPBG board reasons for move and return keys. The meeting agreed to make a donation of \$200 to OPBG.

ASFNC Website

At this stage a Google search for 'Alice Springs Field Naturalist Club' does not give a direct link to our site. Meg Kelham sent Barb some information about how to fix this problem. Colleen O'Malley offered to follow this up when her internet access is sorted out and Barb will forward the information to her.

Life Membership by Subscription

At the last meeting it was suggested that the club offer a single payment life membership option, Advantages are that people would not have to renew membership every year and it would save the treasurer following up unfinancial members. A fee structure of ten times the cost of current annual membership was suggested. No need to change constitution for this.

This will a business item for the 2010 AGM for the membership to vote on.

Larapinta Trail Foundation

Mark Carter told the meeting about plans for an NGO to continue looking after the Larapinta Trail. He thought that this may be of interest to ASFNC members. Barb suggested that Mark put something about this in writing so that it could be circulated in the newsletter.

Meeting closed: 3.40 pm.