May 2012

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter

Head of Taylor Waterhole - Photo by Neil Woolcock, taken on Easter Davenport Ranges trip.

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

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NEXT NEWSLETTER

The deadline for the next newsletter is **Thursday 24 May 2012**. Please send your contributions to Emily Findlay robbiemily@hotmail.com or Barb Gilfedder fedders@octa4.net.au

MEETINGS.

Wed 9 May **AFNC** Meeting, 7.00 pm at the lecture theatre in the Higher Education Building at Charles Darwin University. Speaker **Peter Latz** 'Historical botanizing at Hermannsberg'.

Wed 13 June **ASFNC** Meeting, 7.00 pm at the lecture theatre in the Higher Education Building at Charles Darwin University. Speaker **Angus Duguid** 'Lake Eyre basin Fish'

FIELD TRIPS / ACTIVITIES.

Wed 2 May **APS** walk along the **Todd River**. See the difference when Buffel Grass is under control. Meet at Snow Kenna Park, corner of Wills and Leichardt Tce., 5pm. Walk will take about an hour. Contact: Connie Spencer 8952 4694

5-7 May **ASFNC Mac and Rose Chalmers Reserve** on MacDonald Downs Station. 650km round trip. Camping weekend. Lovely views, plants and walks. Take everything. Campground has longdrop toilets only. Leader: Pam Keil 89550496, pamelakeil@yahoo.com

Mac & Rose Chalmers Reserve

Sat 19 May **APS** Tenille Durber has organized an APS and Friends of Olive Pink Botanic Garden planting workshop, bird attracting species at OPBG at 10.00am

26-27 May **ASFNC Duck Swamp on Henbury Station**.
Drive to and explore an interesting wetland in the desert. Overnight camp / no facilities. 350 round trip. High clearance 4WD needed. Leader Barb Gilfedder.

Sun 3 June **ASFNC** A guided tour of the Palaeontology collection at the **NT Natural History Museum** with Adam Yates at 10am. Leader Barb Gilfedder

9-11 June **ASFNC Mordor Pound.** Leader Morgan Flint. morganlfli@gmail.com

14-15 July **ASFNC Alcoota Fossil Dig Site** Visitor weekend. A volunteer leader needed, please.

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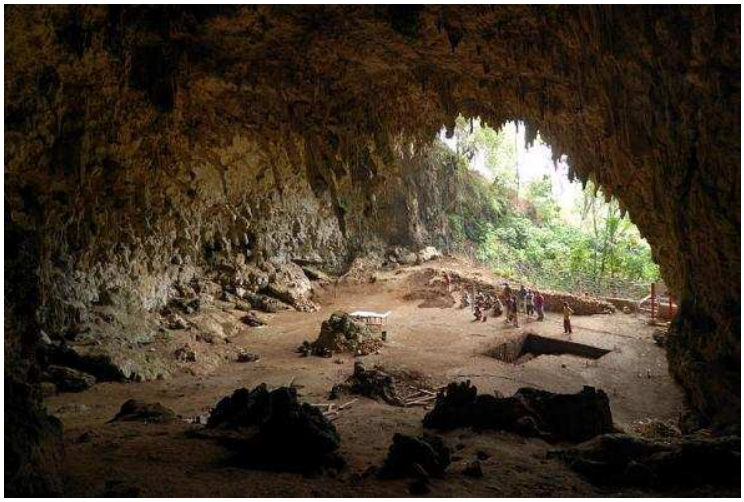
April speaker: Glenn Marshall on *Homo floresiensis.* - by Lee Ryall

On 11 April, Glenn Marshall, geologist, archaeologist and sanitation engineer, gave a talk on the unearthing of that enigmatic and intriguing species, *Homo floresiensis*. He was fascinated when he heard of the discovery, and by dint of persistence and persuasion over some years, was able to see the site for himself.

Discovery

Homo floresiensis came to light in the Liang Bua cave on Flores, a volcanically active island sitting over a hot spot in the earth's crust in the South-East of Indonesia. The volcanism was evident in the brightly coloured waters of the lakes on Kelimutu, complete with yellow sulphurous foam and pH levels down to less than 1.



Liang Bua cave on Flores

The Indonesian-Australian archaeological team which discovered *Homo floresiensis* dug a pit down through strata where 20 000 year old bones and tools had already been found. Looking for evidence of earlier habitation of the cave, they went deeper, cutting through lime flowstones and in 2003, at a depth of around 6 metres, they found first a skull, and then other bones. These bones were from a hominin species subsequently given the name *Homo floresiensis.*

Lake Kelimutu

Stone tools have been found on Flores from 600 000 years ago, but those in the cave date from around 95,000 years ago, so we know that the cave was inhabited for at least that length of time. The *Homo floresiensis* bones date from about 50 000 years ago. At that time the local fauna included Stegadons- small elephant like creatures growing to about the size of a cow, which the *Homo floresiensis* hunted, flightless Storks up to 2 metres tall which may have hunted the people, Komodo Dragons and several kinds of rats, small, medium and large. The limited fauna reflects the lack of land bridges from the island to Asia, and raises the question of how early hominins arrived there. Either of the two most probable routes would have involved two difficult sea crossings.

Skeletal features

The skeletal remains of the first individual recovered (designated LB1, or Liang Bua 1) revealed a female of about 30 years of age. She would have weighed about 30 kg, and been a metre tall, with a brain volume of approximately 380cc as against modern human brains of around 1400cc. Between 8 and 14 other individuals were unearthed later, all with long arms, short legs, long flat feet and thick bones. In these features they resemble "Lucy" (*Australopithecus afarensis)* of 3.5 million years ago more than modern humans.

Skeletal remains of LB1
Homo floresiensis

LB1 reconstructed head

Despite their small brain size*, H. Floresiensis* had large deep folded frontal brain lobes. The size of some areas of the prefrontal cortex is similar to that of modern humans, and their intelligence is shown in their use of fire, co-operative hunting and tool manufacture and use similar to that of *Homo erectus.*

Controversy

The controversy that has developed around these remains centres on whether this is in fact a separate species, and where its ancestry might lie. Some researchers have suggested that the skeletons are microcephalic forms of *Homo sapiens.* Others have postulated that *Homo floresiensis* descended from *Homo erectus* (Java man, Peking man) and became smaller once on the island, as the Stegadons did. Others consider *H.floresiensis* is closer to the Australopithecines mentioned above, or to some as yet

unknown primitive hominin. Controversy also surrounds the extinction of *H. floresiensis.* Did they die out as a result of a massive volcanic eruption, or as a result of the arrival of *Homo sapiens*?

The Village

A different aspect of Glenn's talk, equally gripping, was the portrait he drew of the local villagers and their adoption of the project. They have become deeply involved, bringing not only their enthusiasm and skills but a sense of ownership with them. Seeing this, and hearing about their legends of 'small people' helped to create a sense of the continuity of hominin occupation of the island. Watching local young people roast a giant rat brought home the reality of the hunting process for *Homo floresiensis.* It is likely that *Homo floresiensis* existed contemporaneously with other species of hominin, including *Homo sapiens*. Glenn touched on legends of 'small people' from other cultures, raising the question of the possible basis of such stories.

Thank you Glenn for a stimulating evening. I am sure I was not the only person there who was envious of your trip and keen to hear more after your next expedition.

Plenty of birds at Gemtree - 24-25 March 2012 - by Barb Gilfedder

Carmel and Cameron Chalmers invited Field Nats out to **Gemtree** to look at the birds. This is a tourist spot/caravan and camp ground that I have always thought of as just for gem enthusiasts – a jump-off point to the Harts Range gem fields. It proved to be a lot more than that, and for me the highlight was definitely the three and a half kilometer nature walk.
Six of us left Alice early and were impressed with the number of raptors along the way – Brown Falcon, Whistling Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle and Black-breasted Buzzard were all identified by their underwing patterns. Magpies, Black-faced Wood-Swallows, Zebra Finches and small flocks of Budgerigars were also seen.

At the 63km mark we pulled off to view **Yambah Waterhole**, the other side of the railway line. It was full of brown water, ruffled by a surprisingly cool breeze. A dark-coloured Bearded Dragon was on the edge not looking very happy, but I think he was probably still trying to warm up for the day. A few Hardheads, Grey Teal and Australasian Grebes floated near the opposite bank. A beautifully patterned Spotted Harrier delighted us by flying through at tree-top level (the trees aren't very big). In the patch of Mulga where we parked the cars, Brown Honeyeater, Rufous Whistlers and a Willie Wagtail attracted us with their calls. Then we spotted a Grey Fantail twisting its way through the lower branches. The upright form of *Sida platycarpa* were looking very healthy, displaying large flowers, green fruits as well as prickly brown ones on the ground. *Eremophila latrobii* was flowering, the Mulga Ferns were still green from recent rain. Fungi we saw included Red Bracket Fungus *Pycnoporus coccineus,* Earth Stars *Geastrum triplex,* Small Spiny Puffballs *Lycoperdon sp.* and Stalked Puffballs *Podaxis pistillaris.*

Low Desert Roses *Gossypium bickii*

Next stop was a red sand area along the **Plenty Highway**. It had been burnt, probably earlier this year and the small Mulgas and Witchetty Bushes were just black sticks. What first caught my eye was the Low Desert Roses *Gossypium bickii* flowering magnificently on either side of the road. These were interspersed with the more lowly *Ipomoea muellerii*. As more colour drew us further from the road we were amazed at the lush growth and flowers on *Solanums*, *Sidas* and big clumps of Native Petunia, *Dipteracanthus australasicus.* The prolific flowering was amazing.

Native Petunia, *Dipteracanthus australasicus*

We stopped for lunch at a small roadside clearing. Flocks of Masked Woodswallows filled the air. Pied Butcherbird, Ringnecks, and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater were added to the list. And more raptors – Nankeen Kestrel and Black-shouldered Kite put in an appearance. Later Dave said he had seen another raptor but did not mention it until he checked his bird book while at Gemtree. He was sure the colours, shape and size matched the Grey Falcon.

Gemtree boasts a pretty dam opposite the reception building. This water attracts a range of birds coming in for drinks as well as the Farmyard Ducks. Carmel told us that a Nankeen Night Heron and a Black Swan had both been temporary residents there recently. While we were there Cameron was concerned about the handsome Darter who was diving for his fish, but nice to see the Darter.

Native grasses take over a golf green

The dam is also the start of the **Nature Walk**. This winds around the property out of sight of the camp ground but never very far away from it, and has several escape routes back to the camp for walkers who become tired. The office lends out full-colour printed guides for the walk, brimming with photos and descriptions of different habitats and particular numbered plants, views and bird information. We were advised that if we kept walking, it would take about an hour to complete, but being Field Nats, it took us 2 ½ hours. There were certainly lots of things to see and hear as we wandered through a variety of habitats. Although there were areas that Buffel had invaded , there were also areas where native grasses and shrubs dominated. I particularly liked the Mulga forest where Splendid Fairy-wrens, Thornbills, Whistlers, Robins and Bellbirds kept us searching. A little further on a Desert Poplar is labelled, but that one is dead. They only live about eight years. However another isolated one appears at the end of the airstrip. Towards the end of the walk the track goes through a small creek. *Capparis spinosa* and *Capparis mitchellii* were growing together at the base and a beautiful blue-flowering *Eremophila christophori* was higher up the bank. The birds in this area were amazing – lots of White-winged Trillers, Hooded Robins, Crimson Chats, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo and I had great views of a Crested Bellbird, a bird which I so often hear but rarely see. There is a choice of paths near the end of the walk and we chose the low road along the sandy river bed. Flocks of Budgies were keeping busy high in the stately River Gums, while a Common Bronzewing fossicked in the sand.

Desert Poplar *Codonocarpus cotinifolius*

As we came out of the creek, a pile of old logs in the shade made a welcome sitting point as we watched Cockatiels, Ringnecks, Mulga Parrots, Galahs and even a group of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos.

After dark the Boobook Owl was making his comforting call and we woke in the morning to the distinctive Spotted Nightjar's call.

Jim and I continued to the Mac and Rose Chalmers Reserve for a couple of nights and then returned via the pretty Pinnacles track.

Many thanks to our fellow campers and to Carmel and Cameron Chalmers for making us feel so welcome.

64 bird species for the trip, 51 of these were at Gemtree, marked with +. Carmel keeps a list of birds seen at Gemtree, over 100 of them, and is keen to add new sightings to it.

Birdlist for the trip

Australian Darter +
Australasian Grebe
Grey Teal
Hardhead
Little Button-quail +
Brown Quail +
Black-shouldered Kite
Spotted Harrier +
Black Kite +
Black-breasted Buzzard
Whistling Kite
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Nankeen Kestrel
Brown Falcon +
Grey Falcon
Hobby
Southern Boobook (heard) +
Spotted Nightjar (heard) +
Diamond Dove +
Crested Pigeon +
Common Bronzewing +
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo +
Galah +
Australian Ringneck +
Mulga Parrot +
Cockatiel +
Budgerigar +
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo +
Rainbow Bee-eater +
Masked Woodswallow +
Black-faced Woodswallow +
Western Bowerbird +
Spendid Fairy-wren +
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill +
Yellow-rumped Thornbill +
Inland Thornbill +
Striated Pardelote +
Red-browed Pardelote +
Singing Honeyeater +
White-plumed Honeyeater +
Grey-fronted Honeyeater
Grey-headed Honeyeater
Yellow-throated Miner +
Crimson Chat +
Pied Honeyeater +
Brown Honeyeater +
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater +
White-browed Babbler +
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike +
White-winged Triller +
Rufous Whistler +
Grey Shrike-thrush +
Crested Bellbird +
Pied Butcherbird +
Australian Magpie +
Torresian Crow +
Little Crow +
Willie Wagtail +
Magpie Lark +
Grey Fantail
Hooded Robin +
Australasian Pipit +
Mistletoebird +
Zebra Finch +

My impressions of a very enjoyable weekend at Gemtree.

by Rhondda Tomlinson.

The whole weekend was very enjoyable from our stops along the way to Gemtree, from the birds, dragon, plants and the flooded dam near the railway line. As an added bonus we had a camp oven meal with other guests from the caravan park and joined in a game of paddy melon bowls. Bev Dawson and I even had a go at fossicking and did manage to find some cutable stones.

Looking back through my photos I was quite taken by the varying ants' nests that we came across. Not sure if the ants are of different species or if they just use different architectural styles.




…and by Cec Sutton

I loved the roadside stop on one of the flood plains. There were so many beautiful wildflowers.
The nature walk around the campground was enjoyable and the booklet provided really made it an educational experience.
I was impressed by the airstrip half way along the walk. It was covered in yellow wildflowers.
The highlight was a dead tree with twelve White-winged Trillers perched in the branches…and of course all those Budgies

Choose your own adventure: Visit to Neutral Junction Station & Davenport Ranges National Park

by Rosalie Schultz

John Stevenson, and Leigh and Neil Woolcock drove up from Alice Springs, while Tim Metcalf, Jane Kemble, Nick Tyllis and I drove down from Tennant Creek to meet at Barrow Creek Roadhouse on Good Friday 2012. Our first "choose your own" was a brief deviation from the route to inspect the Telegraph Station and beyond at Barrow Creek. The Telegraph Station is one of 12 telegraph stations that first connected Australia's cities with the world via the telegraph line from Adelaide to Darwin in the late 1800s. Also it was one of many sites of conflict between the local indigenous Alyawarr people and the European stationmasters and staff. The buildings were in use until the 1950s and remain in attractive condition. They closely resemble the Telegraph Station at Alice Springs in construction and condition so not worth the 2 ½ hour drive just to visit.


Beantree Waterhole: Neil Woolcock

I couldn't resist climbing the hill behind the station to view the contours of the vast landscape. I enjoyed seeing a Mistletoebird enjoying shade and fruit in a fig tree (*Ficus brachypoda*).

Our next stop was the homestead at Neutral Junction Station. We chatted with the owners about our plans, and bought refreshments and I bought a shirt as I had forgotten to bring an extra one! The property owners were very happy for us to stay on their property and directed us a number of waterholes.

The first waterhole was Beantree Waterhole. First glimpse of this magnificent body of water and we all agreed that we had reached our first campsite.

Nick and I were keen for an afternoon walk so we headed off along the track to our next waterhole, Head of Taylor Waterhole, said to be 9km away *(Ed – see front cover image)*. We were distracted by a creek crossing and the ranges, and never reached Head of Taylor Waterhole. Highlights of the walk were the Bean trees (*Erythrina vespertilio*), some superb specimens stretching their distinctive leaves high and broad. We collected some of the unbreakable beans to show off and discuss. Other highlights were a Pallid Cuckoo, and succulent Snake Vines (*Tinospora smilacina*) climbing high up Grevilleas – entangled with Bush Banana with unusual enlongated fruit – refreshments on the way.

Elongated Bush Banana: Nick Tyllis

Birds at the Beantree Waterhole included Whistling Kites, Australasian Darters, Red-backed Kingfisher, Major Mitchell Cockatoo....It was wonderful to watch the full moon rise above the waterhole. We heard Southern Boobook Owl but didn't see it.

Day 2 was Easter Saturday and after a lazy start we drove the 9km rough four wheel drive track to Head of Taylor Waterhole. I regretted that I was unaware how rough it was, and unsuitable for the Neil and Leigh's vehicle. We didn't know the state of other roads and they wanted to make most use of their time so our adventures parted Head of Taylor Waterhole. Leigh and Neil took off on the long northern route to Whistleduck Creek via Bonney Creek while the rest of us enjoyed the afternoon at Head of Taylor Waterhole.

Another afternoon stroll on the ridges above the water. Interesting here was the density of the Curry Wattle (*Acacia spondylophylla*) that you could enjoy the aroma even as you wandered over the plains. The silvery leaves and phyllodes of so many trees – Silver Wattle (*Acacia holosericea*), Silver Cassia (S*enna artemisioides nothossp. filifolia*), Silver-leaf Grevillea (*Grevillea refracta*), and Ghost Gum (*Corymbia aparrerinja)*.

Day 3 Easter Sunday began for me, in our depleted party, with some special eggs that Nick had made – dehydrated eggs! Rehydrated and cooked up on our camp stove in the Taylor Creek water - very nice and satisfying after my early morning swim in Taylor Creek.

Birdlife at Taylor Creek not yet remarked included Little Pied Cormorants, Willie Wagtails, Pied Butcherbird, Zebra and Painted Finches, Magpie Larks, and a wonderful view of a pair of White-necked Herons plus a bespeckled juvenile peering down to our campsite.

We set off early anticipating a long and difficult drive to Old Police Station Waterhole, which among my Tennant Creek colleagues is the main attraction of Davenport Ranges Park. We crossed a number of creeks and enjoyed Errolola Rock hole along the way, 6 hours driving in all. The arrival was somewhat of an anti-climax, as we were greeted by a dozen other vehicles and one crusty young man swearing at us for raising some dust as we entered the campsite. However we were pleased to catch up with Leigh and Neil again so our adventures re-connected.

Old Police Station Waterhole: Neil Woolcock

It was hot in the afternoon sun but we wanted to complete the tourist trail by inspecting the Old Police Station and Homestead ruins around the back of the waterhole.

Tim, Jane, Nick and I were keen to camp away from the bustle and generators of the other campers so we set up camp further downstream.

I enjoyed an extended evening swim, doing a lap of the part of the waterhole which is deep enough to swim, I estimate to be around 1km long. Others enjoyed paddling John's kayak and just hanging out.

Day 4 was Easter Monday and our routes again separated, as Tim, Jane, Nick and I wanted to enjoy Whistleduck Creek on our way back to Tennant Creek, while Leigh, Neil and John were heading the lengthy way to Alice Springs. I began the journey out on foot, and was greeted by an Australian Bustard walking up the road, then lifting itself up heavily to fly away.

Whistleduck Creek is my highlight, as there was an extended series of waterholes still full of clear cool water. We walked upstream for nearly 4 hours, along billabongs and over ridges until we reached a rock hole. After a frolic and swim in the water it was time to turn back.

Budgerigars were a feature every day, and Woodswallows swooping over the car. There seemed to be hundreds of Woodswallows in flocks of dozens (I think that masked Woodswallows are the ones in such large groups).

For future reference, the Whistleduck Creek has 16 campsites, and numbers 3 and 4 have the best water frontage. Also, the drive back to Tennant Creek from Whistleduck Creek was 3 ½ hours. A great weekend, refreshing and new, we look forward to choosing our next adventure to the Davenports.

Reptiles
Military dragon and Long-nosed Water Dragon

Fish
5 distinct species were identified (but not named) in the waterhole at the end of the Whistleduck Creek Walk, while the signage reports that seven species have been identified.

Ed – Rosalie has a list of plants they noted on this trip, if you'd like a copy of it, please contact Rosalie. Rosalie.Schultz@anyinginyi.com.au

More about *Macrozamia macdonnellii*

by Rosalie Breen

Last month we visited a group of Cycads in the Telegraph Station. Not where you would expect them, as they prefer steep rocky sheltered gorges, safe from frosts or fire, with available water and good drainage. Here they are more exposed but situated below a granite rock slope where water runoff would gather.

Cycads first appeared on earth some 270 million years ago, and flourished with the dinosaurs in Cretaceous and Jurassic eras. They then declined after the extinction of dinosaurs 65 million years ago. The present day Cycads were considered as survivors. But latest DNA evidence indicates that the species evolved recently, only 10 million years ago in the late Miocene in a second wave of evolution in response to the then climate change. Everything from the dinosaur period became extinct. So they shouldn't be regarded as "living fossils" anymore. (But I still find them fascinating)

Cycads belong to the plant order Gymnospermae or conifers which means they are seed plants with no flowers, their reproductive parts are found in cones. The family is *Zamiaceae.* These have separate male and female plants, each bearing male or female cones. They are very long lived with slow population turnover.

Various species grow in the Top End of the NT, but only one occurs in Central Australia, and it is endemic to Central Australia - the MacDonnell Ranges Cycad, *Macrozamia macdonnellii* . Locally, populations are found in Palm Valley, Standley Chasm, Hamilton Downs, Hugh Gorge and Giles Springs. They look like a palm with blue-green leaves with a keel. The ends of the fronds are quite spiky. Above ground coral like roots host a cyanobacterium or blue green alga which fixes nitrogen from the air to provide nutrients for the plant.

Male cone of Macrozamia macdonnellii

The male cone of *Macrozamia macdonnellii* , long and narrow, up to 30 cm long consisting of a spiral of woody plates, is home for the thrip - *Cycadothrips albrechti* . These shelter, feed, and complete their life cycle in the cone, and act as the sole pollinator, not the wind as you might expect for conifers. In the late afternoon these tiny animals fly in waves of thousands to the female cone, drawn by an odour given off by the female just at the time when the reproductive parts are receptive and gaps in the cones open so the thrips can enter. Each thrip carries an average of 15 pollen grains, so with the large numbers of insects in the mass flight, pollination of all the ovules is ensured. The female cone is quite large 40 x 25 cm and not produced every year. The seeds, as they develop, are egg shaped, around 8 x 5 cm, white with a red covering, the sarcotesta , which the Black-footed Rock-wallabies like to eat. I have seen lots of the white seeds under the Cycads in other places. They look like new potatoes. The Wallabies are the main distributors of the seeds, though not very efficient. Probably other small mammals were too in earlier times. Now-extinct megafaunal species would have had this role originally.

On a sad note, this population of *Macrozamia macdonnellii* is too small and fragmented, the plants are all males and probably clonal, meaning they are virtually all the one plant, with little genetic variation. So with no females to produce seeds and not enough males to sustain their thrip population, this group will not be viable and will very gradually decline.

Female cone showing ripe seeds

Thanks to Catherine Nano for information and permission to use photos.

References

Nano,C and Pavey, C.R.(2008)National Recovery Plan for the MacDonnell Ranges cycad, Macrozamia macdonnellii. *Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport, Northern Territory*.

Mound,L.A. and Terry,I (2001) Thrips pollination of the Centralian Cycad, *Macrozamia Macdonnellii* (Cycadales). *International Journal of Plant Sciences* **162:** 147-154

Weule, Genelle. *Cycads not so ancient after all.* News in Science, (ABC Science) (2011)

Stalked puffball **by Barb Gilfedder**

Podaxis pistillaris

I have been looking out for this fungus since the rain earlier this year. I finally found some rather dried specimens at Yambah waterhole, and then found these nice fresh ones on the same trip beside the MacDonald Downs Road off the Plenty Highway. It is about 10 cm high. At maturity the shaggy cap can be lifted off to reveal a mass of black spores. It is one of only three fungi described in Peter Latz's "Bushfires and Bushtucker" book. *"This puffball is used for decorative purposes throughout the area. Holding it by the stalk, the cap is removed and the spores are brushed onto the body.*

It appears to be mainly used by children in play…They sometimes use it to draw patterns or pictures on hard ground or to imitate ritual leg slashing carried out by adults during mortuary ceremonies. The Northern Walpiri are also reputed to use the spores from this fungus as a fly repellent."

Website update **from Pam Keil**

Hi Field Nats,
I have been busy updating the website. If you log on you'll notice I've updated the homepage and all of the main pages so that the top banner is the same for all of them. I've also made a note to say that the page is still under construction and that photos and more up-to-date information will be coming soon. I've suggested that visitors to the site check the newsletters in the meantime.

I have updated the layout a lot... Hopefully it's more readable now. Unfortunately, this involved removing some of the photos that were on there. I plan to update it more in the future, and add photos instead of removing them. Right now I just wanted it to look nice and clean, visitors to the site can still browse through the newsletters if they want to see cool photos of the things we do.

I didn't update the text much, though I did update the Highlights on the "About the Club" page to reflect things done in 2011. That's probably all I'll have a chance to do for a while.

I'd like to get all of you involved in coming up with places and blurbs for the "Places to Visit" page - and photographs - so I can jazz it up a bit.

Any other suggestions or inputs are also very helpful! And if anyone is interested in helping me tackle Bob's amazing bird info and bring it up to date...

Let me know what you all think.

Thanks, Pam Tel: 89550496 or pamelakeil@yahoo.com

ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED
Minutes of general meeting at Higher Education Building, Charles Darwin University
Wednesday 11 April, 2012.

Present: Members, visitors and apologies as per attendance book.

Thank you to note taker Lee Ryall and supper Barb Gilfedder

Previous minutes – accepted.

Business arising from the minutes:

- Chris Watson stated bird hides at Sewage Ponds are a work in progress.
- Jill Brew is still away so no update on Bendigo Bank queries.

Correspondence in:

- Heritage week information, Pam Keil
- Liability Insurance Certificate of Currency
- NT Nature newsletter. Article on frogs. (Barb wrote to stop sending as available on internet)
- WA Naturalists (not available on internet).

Correspondence out:

- Letter to Andrew and Jane Hayes re the Mordor Pound trip in June. Definitely on.
- Card to Andrew Bridges for his talk on the Territory Eco-Link
- Emailed a thank you to Cameron and Carmel Chalmers re the Gemtree visit.
  Barb will send them next newsletter with article about Gemtree trip.

Treasurer's Report:

No Treasurer's report.

Recent Activities/Trips:

24 & 25 March - Gemtree trip. 8 people went. Identified over 50 species of birds in less than a day. Bird list to Gemtree

Easter - Davenport Ranges – Rosalie Schultz and Nick Tyllis arranged trip. Seven people went visiting Barrow Creek Telegraph Station, Bean Tree water hole on Neutral Junction Station, Whistleduck Creek and Old Police Station Waterhole on Frew River. Called into Epenarra Station and were advised that camping is available there beside a large water hole.

Also at Easter	Small group excursion to check out Duck Swamp on Henbury Station,

Future activities:

22 April	Shorebird Survey count - Barb
24 April	Jane Powling Expert on Algae to provide power point presentation.
26- 29 April	Newhaven – Barb. Suggestion that if people only have weekend free they could camp Friday night at Tilmouth Well and spend most of weekend at Newhaven
5 & 6 May	Mac and Rose Chalmers Reserve – Pam Keil and Chris Watson
19 May	Workshop at OPBG : Friends of Olive Pink and APS.
26 & 27 May	Duck Swamp overnight camp. High clearance 4 wheel drive - Barb
9-11 June	Mordor Pound – Morgan Flint
14 & 15 July	Alcoota Dig Site Visitor weekend - Lectures, demonstrations. ASFNC Leader needed. Michael Cawthorne asked Field Nats to visit to NT Museum exhibits prior to that. Suggestion - Sunday 3 June, 10am. Agreed.

Next meeting: 9 May. Speaker: Peter Latz. Historical botanising at Hermannsberg

Note taker: Pam Keil Supper : Connie Spencer