



March 2018

## Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



This photo of Black-winged Stilts and a lovely view was taken at Alice Springs Sewage Ponds last November, on a Field Naturalists excursion. Taken by Johannes Ammerschlaeger, he submitted it to the ABC Weather pics and it was shown on January 5<sup>th</sup>. A nice introduction to this month's speaker - Pam Keil, who will talk about migratory waders – see page 2.

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.

### CONTENTS

*Meetings, Trips/Activities/Contacts... p2;*  
*Newhaven Highlights – Barb Giffedder...p3*  
*Botanical/bird drive Santa Teresa Road...p7:*  
*A few interesting sightings...p9;*  
*OPBG Garden Design Master-plan...p9*

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## NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be April 2018.

The deadline for the next newsletter will be 23 March 2018

Please send your contributions to Barb Gilfedder - [bjfedders@gmail.com](mailto:bjfedders@gmail.com)

**It is essential that you contact leaders if you intend going on any field trips.**

- Sun 4 Mar** **Planning Meeting**, at 33 Battarbee Street at 2.00pm. Committee Members please attend if possible. All Members are very welcome. Come along with ideas for speakers and trips or activities. If unable to attend please pass on any ideas to a Committee member.
- Sun 11 Mar** **Breakfast at the other side of Ellery Big Hole.** Swim or float across keeping your breakfast, camera, etc. dry. Some lilos available. Essential you contact leader, Colleen O'Malley as trip will be cancelled if temperatures too high. Meet Flynn's Grave at 7.00am. [shrikestar8@gmail.com](mailto:shrikestar8@gmail.com)
- Wed 14 Mar** **General Meeting** at the lecture theatre in CDU higher education building at 7.00pm. Speaker: **Pam Keil**. "Identifying Migratory Waders and their migratory habits". ALL WELCOME. Presentation followed by light supper, tea and coffee and then a short general meeting. Finishes at 9.00pm.
- Sun 18 Mar** Proposed **Bird Count at sewage ponds** jointly with Central Australian Birdlife. **TO BE CONFIRMED.** Contact Pam Keil [pamelakeil@yahoo.com](mailto:pamelakeil@yahoo.com)
- Wed 11 Apr** **General Meeting** at the lecture theatre in CDU higher education building at 7.00pm. ALL WELCOME. "Exploring frogs through the Australian Museum Frog ID app" Jen Kreusser, Community Engagement Ranger in Parks and Wildlife will be introducing Dr Jodi Rowley of Sydney Museum who will talk via Skype. Presentation followed by light supper, tea and coffee and then a short general meeting. Finishes at 9.00pm.

### AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY ALICE SPRINGS

Contact: [apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au](mailto:apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au)

- Wed 7 Mar** **APS AS Meeting** at Olive Pink Botanic Garden Visitors Centre at 7.30pm. Annual General Meeting, followed by presentation by **Karlee Foster, Alice Springs Desert Park** about recent developments with the **Millennium Seed Bank project germination trials**. Tea, coffee and light refreshments served after the presentation, so stay on for a chat. All welcome!

### OLIVE PINK BOTANIC GARDEN

[curator@opbg.com.au](mailto:curator@opbg.com.au)

- Sat 17 March** **Launch of OPBG The People's Garden – A Garden Design Master-Plan** at 6.00pm by Julie Marcus, author of The Indomitable Miss Pink. RSVP to curator. See page 9.



### Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Committee Members:-

President	Barbara Gilfedder	8955 5452	Committee Member	Pamela Keil	8955 0496
Vice-President	Lee Ryall	0417 401 237	Committee Member	Robin Grey-Gardner	8952 2207
Secretary	Anne Pye	0438 388 012	<b>Some other Club Responsibilities:-</b>		
Treasurer	Neil Woolcock	8955 1021	Newsletter	Barbara Gilfedder	
Property Officer	Rosalie Breen	8952 3409	Website	Pamela Keil	
Public Officer	Anne Pye	0438 388 012	Minutes Secretary	Connie Spencer	0429 966 592
			Facebook organiser	Colleen O'Malley	

**Newhaven Highlights** February talk, photos and write-up by Barb Gilfedder.



The journey to Newhaven is an important part of the event.



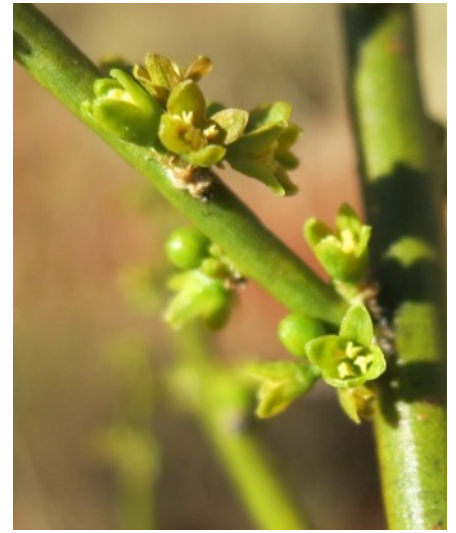
This view a cross to the ranges near Limestone Bore is always different, always beautiful. A few of the plants seen on the 'Getting there" part of the trip to Newhaven are pictured below.



*Gossypium australe*



*Eremophila maculata*



*Anthobolus leptomerioides*



*Bergia henshallii*



*Solanum orbiculatum*



*Grevillea eriostachya*



*Acacia maitlandii*



*Grevillea wickhamii*



*Acacia hilliana*





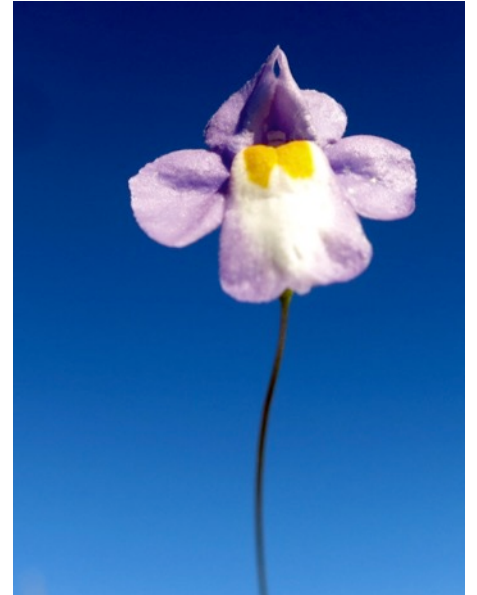
Susie's Lake, on the Lakes Circuit, is always a great place to spend some time. It is sometimes full of water, sometimes just a ring of water, and sometimes completely dry, but it will always display some interesting plants.



*Drosera indica*



*Myriocephalus rudallii*



*Mimulus gracilis*



*Wurmbea deserticola*



*Eragrostis cumingii*



*Trianthesma triquetra*



We also looked at pictures taken at other lakes on the Lake Circuit, the campground, Potato Creek Gorge, Lake Bennett, at animal surveys, and the new feral-excluding fence building and Mala enclosure. The pictures below were all taken on the Siddeley Range Tour, one of Barb's favourite areas...



*Ipomoea costata*



*Melaleuca lasiandra*



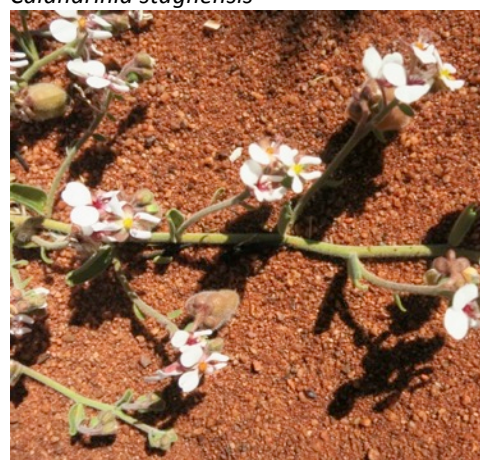
*Calandrinia stagnensis*



*Heliotropium sp.*



*Hibiscus stuartii*



*Dilpeltis stuartii*



...and here *Ptilotus macrocephalus*, *Rhodanthe floribunda* and many native grasses (no buffel).



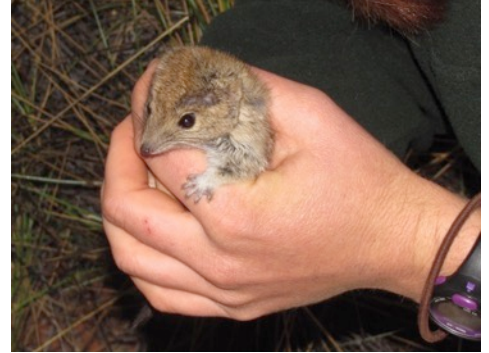
A few of the animals we have seen out at Newhaven.



Thorny Devil –  
*Moloch horridus*



\*Desert Banded Snake -  
*Simoselaps anomalus*



\*Brush-tailed Mulgara –  
*Dasyercus blythi*



Bynoes Gecko –  
*Heteronotia binoei*



\*2 Tanami Toadlets,- *Ureroleia micromeles*,  
\*1 Desert Spadefoot Frog  
*Notaden nicholli*



Pygmorph Grasshopper -  
*Monistria picta*



Mains Frog -  
*Cyclorana maini*



Shield Shrimp –  
*Triops australiensis*



Central Bearded Dragon -  
*Pogona vitticeps*

We have seen lots of interesting birds too, including the brilliantly-coloured Princess Parrots in 2012.

It is a fascinating place with always lots to see. Some of these above animals marked with an \* were trapped and then released during the annual surveys carried out on Newhaven Reserve.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy are now in the process of building fences to create feral-free enclosures to protect more of our native wildlife. What a great place to visit!



## Botanical/Bird Drive along the Santa Teresa Road - Connie's take

24 February 2018    Photos by Connie, Rosalie and Barb.

With Pam and Michael the organisers of this outing, it was more about the birds than plants. That is to be expected at this time of year, plus the fact that for the most part the country we travelled through, is a sea of the dreaded Buffel Grass. Nevertheless, our first stop was of botanical interest with a *Marsdenia australis* (Bush Banana) ([right](#)) making use of the cyclone fencing surrounding the airfield for support. *Acacia murrayana* (Colony Wattle) had healthy clumps of *Amyena preissii* (Wire-leaf Mistletoe) in it. The Mistletoe was past the flowering stage but covered with white fruit known as snotty gobbles - a favourite of the Mistletoe Bird who digests the soft sweet fruit but deposits the large seeds on the branches for more Mistletoe to grow. *Ipomoea muelleri* (Native Morning Glory) ([right](#)) was also flowering. This plant is an example of what you would miss if you didn't stop and go for a wander.



Several stops were made along the way and each time I managed to find something of botanical interest. The introduced *Citrullus colocynthis* (Bitter Paddy Melon) ([right](#)) was flowering with plenty of dry fruit along the road verge. At one point a green verge depression had us with heads down bums up trying to identify a host of native grasses, the main one being *Dactyloctenium radulens* (Button Grass). Button Grass is often the first native grass to appear after rain. Others that we were reasonably confident of were *Enneapogon avenaceus* (Native Oat-grass), *Enneapogon polyphyllus* (Woolly Oat-grass), a *Sporobolus* sp. and *Tragus australianus* (Small Burr-grass or Sock Grass). Thankfully most of us had our sock savers on!



We continued on to the end of the bitumen and a grand stand of Coolabahs along a watercourse. ([below - a beautifully graceful old Coolabah and a haven for birds.](#)) At this point Pam and Michael returned to Alice but Barb, Jim, Rosalie and I continued on some 20 km further to a dam not far off the road.







On the eastern side of the dam there was a shady stand of *Atalaya hemiglauca* (Whitewoods) with all foliage pruned to an even height by cattle (left). The country around the dam was denuded of any ground cover but *Eremophila duttonii* (Harlequin Fuchsia-bush although Red Poverty Bush suited the shrub better this time) was well pruned and lush with new growth. *Acacia tetragonophylla* (Dead Finish) as always was green and prickly. The shrubs were decorated with *Lysiana exocarpi* (Harlequin Mistletoe). My arms bear the scratches from trying to get a close-up photo of the flowers! Rosalie and I wandered right around the edge of the dam disturbing great flocks of Zebra Finches and smaller flocks of Crested Pigeons.

*(There was also a beautiful Australian Hobby that made several hunting passes over the dam. Amazing how all the Zebra Finch chatter came to a halt when this was happening. Ed.)*

By now the temperature was telling us it was time to head for home but we still had one stop to make having passed the most floriferous shrubs of the day on the way to the dam. *Crotalaria eremaea* (Desert Rattlepod) and *Crotalaria novae-hollandiae* (New Holland Rattlepod) were in full flower on the sandy banks of the road along with *Leschenaultia divaricata* (Wirebush). *(Pictures below in that order)* Despite the name and the tangled intricate nature of this last shrub it more often than not, forms lovely symmetrical hummocks along the roadsides. Rosalie said "like stromatolites".



Thanks to Pam and Michael and to our chauffeur Jim! Yet another fine morning was spent with flora, friends and birds



### ... and from Rosalie

Last Saturday morning's outing involved driving along the Santa Teresa Road. Pam, in the lead car, stopped here and there if birds were spotted, or at a known habitat which birds frequented. There we got to see (hopefully) and learn. At the end of the bitumen strip was a perfect place with many mature Coolabahs, the stump of one providing the perfect fence post. Much twittering was heard here, even from the car, which inspired Pam to demonstrate in dance the twittering and singing of the Rufous Songlark. She can also do bird calls to ID birds, such the descending notes of the White-winged Triller. A great help to those who don't hear very well. She pointed out "a bunch of parrots, making a ruckus" across the road. The Pallid Cuckoo "sings a googaly song as he flies along". We watched two Black Kites flying above, around a nest in an old ironwood. And I learned that the Kites catch dragonflies of which there were many around. So a trip with Pam can be quite entertaining as well as informative. Thanks

*Left: Rosalie inspecting the green verge depression with abundant native grasses.*





### A few interesting sightings.

*Clockwise from top left:  
This beautiful Boobook Owl has been roosting in Bec Duncum's garden for several days, driving the Bowerbird and Honeyeaters crazy; Jenny Purdie snapped this Long-nosed Dragon at Wigley's; The Spiny-tailed Goanna found its way into Jim Gilfedder's feral pigeon trap... but didn't eat any pigeons. He was safely released; the Perentie visited Bec Duncum's backyard a few weeks ago, staying for about an hour.*

## Invitation to the Launch of the Olive Pink Botanic Garden Design Plan

The Trustees of the Garden are delighted to invite members of the Field Naturalists and their guests to attend our Garden Design Plan launch on Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> March at 6pm in the Olive Pink Botanic Garden Gallery. Julie Marcus, the author of the Indomitable Miss Pink, will be launching the Plan along with Garden Chair, Libby Prell. The Plan, prepared by Landscape Architects Clouston & Associates and incorporating key components from Geoff Miers Garden Solutions and architects Dugdale and Associates, outlines a vision for the Garden and a staged, 30-year program for the development of the Garden.

There are some very exciting concepts in the plan that will ensure the Garden makes a much greater contribution to the liveability, public amenity, tourism, and cultural life of Alice Springs. A keystone of the Plan is the central place Arrernte culture and employment will have in the future of the Garden, especially in relation to conservation and display of central Australia's superb plant species. Titled 'Olive Pink Botanic Garden – The People's Garden', the Plan was developed following a stakeholder and public consultation process. Thank you to members of the Field Naturalists, many of whom made important contributions to both plans!

The event will also be a celebration of the extraordinary contribution of Libby Prell, outgoing Chair, whose vision and drive has helped transform the Garden and was central to the development of both of the Garden's guiding documents, the Masterplan and the Garden Design Plan. We are excited to be welcoming incoming Chair, Fran Kilgariff AM, who will be guiding the Garden through the early stages of implementation of the Design Plan. We do hope to see you on the 17<sup>th</sup> if at all possible. Refreshments are provided.

PS: Thank you to the NT Government who funded the development of the Garden Design Plan!





**ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED**  
**Minutes of the general meeting held at the Higher Education Building**  
**Charles Darwin University – Wednesday 14 February 2018**

**Open:** The President, Barbara Gilfedder declared the meeting open at 8:30 pm following a presentation by Barb on many visits to Newhaven Reserve. Thank you to Michael Laflamme and Pam Keil for supper.

**Present:** 29 members, 3 visitors and 4 apologies as per attendance book.

**Minutes:** The Minutes of the November 2017 general meeting as printed in the newsletter were accepted by the meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Balance of all funds (including petty cash) end October 2017		\$3,783.08
<i>Activity November 2017, December 2017 and January 2018</i>		
<b>Income</b>		
Membership	\$35.00	
Attorney General	40.00	
Tangentyere Council (proceeds of photos bird cards, donated by Mat and Cathy Gilfedder)	375.00	
Bank interest	<u>.96</u>	450.96
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Barb Gilfedder (Website-AUHost)	39.99	<u>39.99</u>
(Petty Cash \$30.15)		
<b>Total of all funds (including petty cash) end January 2018</b>		<u><u>\$4,194.05</u></u>

**Correspondence In/Out:**

- Emma Bleasel re Earth Hour Australia 24 March 2018 – discuss at the planning meeting 4 March 2018
- Bec Duncum re Heritage Market at the Telegraph Station Sunday 20 May 2018.  
Meeting agreed to share a stall with Australian Plants Society Alice Springs Inc.
- Australian Natural History Medallion – call for nominations and confirmation of contact details. No nomination to be made - Pass to Anne for contacts.
- Requests for birding and local information. Pam Keil has responded or passed on requests.
- Rosalie Breen has sent thank you cards to Mat and Cathy Gilfedder and to Andrew Crouch
- Mandy Webb has asked ASFNC for ideas of a suitable organisation to donate the late Iain Campbell's bird magazines.  
Suggestions: doctor's surgeries for magazines. NT Archives may be interested in his notebooks.

**Past Events:**

- Sat 18 Nov – Trephina night walk with Pam Keil – Pam to submit report for newsletter.
- Sat 2 December - end of year shared breakfast at the Simpsons Gap picnic area.

**Future Events:**

- Sat 24 Feb 2018 Botanical/ bird drive with Pam Keil. Contact Pam for details.
- Sun 4 Mar 2018 Planning Meeting 2pm 33 Battarbee Street (Barb's house).
- Sun 11 Mar 2018 Breakfast of the far side of Ellery Big Hole. Swim or float across keeping your breakfast, camera, etc. dry. Some lilos available. Leader: Colleen O'Malley. Meet Flynn's Grave at 7am. Important to contact Colleen as outing will be cancelled if weather is too hot.
- Sun 18 Mar 2018 Bird Count (proposed)
- Sat 24 Mar OPBG Native Plant sale
- Rosalie Schultz is negotiating with Jen Kreusser Parks and Wildlife to discuss the new Frog app at April meeting.

**Next Meeting:** 14 March 2018 – Speaker: Pam Keil on Identifying Migratory Waders and their habits

- Scribe - Rosalie Schultz    Supper – Jill Brew

**Sightings:**

- Barb – flock of Black-tailed Native-hens at a dam on the Ernest Giles Road.
- Jocelyn – 30-35 Hardheads, 35 plus Little Cormorants, Great Egrets, Nankeen Night Herons, Ballions Crake, Pink Cockatoos and a Black Falcon at Boggy Hole.
- Neil – Bourkes Parrots at Papunya.

**Close:** The meeting was closed 9:00 pm.