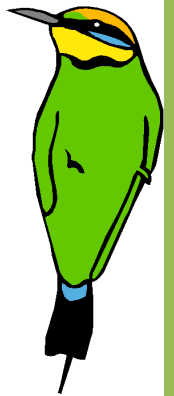


# GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

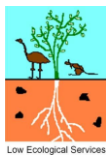
*Ptilotus sessilifolius* (Crimson Fox Tail) and *Triraphis mollis* (Purple Plume Grass)  
(left) flower and seed prolifically on a rocky slope.



## NEWSLETTER

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Low Ecological Services



POWER AND WATER CORPORATION



Alice Springs Municipality | July 2010

## Still here!



Channel-billed Cuckoos have been spotted around town several months after they would normally have left for the warmer northern tropics of Queensland, Indonesia or New Guinea. Juveniles have stayed in Alice Springs during this great rainy season, and have been photographed (left) by Michael Barritt near Lovegrove Drive. In his photograph a Crow feeds a juvenile Channel-bill it has been tricked into raising after eggs were sneakily laid in the Crow's nest by an adult Channel-bill. The adult Channel-bill Cuckoo has presumably left for the north already and has left the Crow with all the hard work. The juvenile Channel-bill is fast outgrowing the Crow. Pat Hodgens from Parks & Wildlife Services NT comments:

*It will be very interesting to see if they hang around all winter once they have independence, they surely must be nearing independence after 7 weeks... I have heard the occasional mention of young Channel Bills overwintering in Alice so it's great that we now have the evidence!*

Have you seen any Channel-billed Cuckoos around town?

## Sundews

Among one of the more unusual plants flowering at the moment is *Drosera indica*, commonly known as Sundew. *Drosera* is one of the largest genera of carnivorous plants in the world, with at least 188 species. These members of the family Droseraceae lure, capture, and digest insects using a thick, gluey substance, called mucilage, which is excreted from stalked glands covering their leaf surface. This is a form of the 'flypaper trap'. The leaves are shaped like long tentacles, which grow quickly in response to prey to aid the trapping process. The tentacles of *D. burmanii* (also found in Central Australia) can bend 180° in a minute or so! The insects caught are used to supplement the poor mineral nutrition that Sundews are able to obtain from the soil in which they grow. *Drosera* are native to tropical countries and found on most continents, but are most diverse in Australia. They are absent from the neo-tropics. The flowers are white or lilac in colour.



A Sundew leaf wraps around an insect caught by sticky mucilage.



## Workshops!

Upcoming LfW Workshop:

### Information & Trap-making for the feral Spotted Turtle-dove



With the recent rains these pests are breeding up in town. Help control the feral population by participating in a backyard trapping program. Land for Wildlife is re-running this popular workshop:

**When:** Sunday August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9 – 11am

**Where:** Bloomin' Deserts Nursery

**RSVP:** Ilse 8955 [5222/lfw@lowecol.com.au](mailto:5222/lfw@lowecol.com.au)

**Bring:** gardening/protective gloves, wire cutters, and any chicken wire/weld mesh or similar that you have lying about the yard! Materials will also be supplied at the workshop.



### Preparing to save seeds from the winter garden.

#### Seedsavers meeting with Chris Brock

Sunday August 1, 10am, 43 Madigan Street.

'For those who have not saved much seed, we will be working through winter vegetables and talking about how to best save seeds from them. We will cover hybridising, pests and assessing ripeness of seed.'

## Letters to the Editor

Watch out for this weed!

### Mexican Poppy (*Argemone Mexicana*)



Photo: Vera Messias Marques



G'day All,

You are receiving this notification because you are folk I know or suspect may be concerned or at least interested in the Mexican Poppy issue, and /or spend some time in and about the Todd, Roe and Laura Creek, etc.

This is merely a reporting, sharing and collecting information exercise.



We do not know exactly what triggers off a Mexican Poppy germination - last September I think it was, they really went off, a long time after any rain. There is also a thought that cool periods set them off. For example, last month we observed a germination in Roe Creek, but what appears to be quite localised (I hope!). At the same time, ASTC is reporting no germinations in the Todd through town.

Thanks & cheers

Rod.

*(If anybody sees Mexican Poppy - particularly first germinations, but also first flowering and first seeding - in their patch, let Land for Wildlife know so we can pass the information on to nearby residents and encourage management and vigilance! Mexican Poppy is only spread through seed, and is easy to identify as it stands out as something very dissimilar to most of our native plants. It can be easily pulled out (Ouch! Make sure you use gardening gloves!) and seeds should be burned. Mexican Poppy is a highly invasive plant introduced from Mexico, that grows in river sand. –Ed).*

Hi Rod,

Just letting you know I found some Mexican Poppy on our block in Ilparpa, which was a surprise! Nothing serious, and all plants have pulled out at juvenile stages, prior to seeding. About half a dozen plants appeared after the rain last month, in an old unused garden bed created with river sand from who-knows-where at some stage in the past 5 years.

Cheers,

Ilse

## Announcements



**Congratulations** to Land for Wildlife member David Woods, who won **first** and **second** prize at the Alice Springs Show for his Eucalyptus blooms this year! David encourages all members to enter their garden blooms next year.

### Regional News: **Counting our Stilts Before they Hatch**

#### **Banded Stilts Breeding at Lake Eyre**

(From Birds Australia e-news)

After torrential rains earlier this year, the inland has experienced a veritable bonanza, with perennially dry watercourses suddenly brimming, and gradually inundating Lake Eyre, with a corresponding boon for all living things in the area. The Banded Stilts have taken advantage of the damp conditions. Flying in from who-knows-where, thousands of Stilts have congregated on low islands in Lake Eyre to breed for the first time since 2000. They were first seen there a few weeks ago and now there are many thousands of eggs being incubated — it has been estimated that 6000–7500 chicks will fledge.

The Banded Stilt is regarded as vulnerable in South Australia, so this — just the seventh breeding record in the state in the past 70 years and the first in a decade — is a significant event.

## Websites Worth A Look

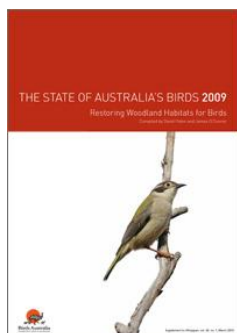
**Pallid Cuckoos in Alice:** Visit our local ethno-ornithologist Bob Gosford's blog:

<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/northern/2010/07/19/birds-of-the-week-pallid-cuckoo-more/>

Some news on **Cane Toads:**

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/cane-toads-set-up-in-sydney/story-e6freuy9-1225894627596>

## Recommended Books



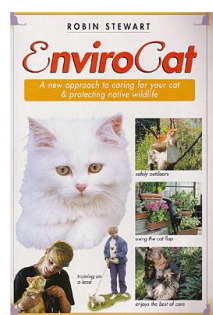
**New book: The state of Australia's birds 2009**; restoring woodland habitats for birds. Compiled by David Paton and James O'Connor, this Birds Australia's seventh *State of Australia's Birds* publication, and it's **free** at:

[www.birdsaustralia.com.au/images/stories/publications/soab/SOAB-2009.pdf](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/images/stories/publications/soab/SOAB-2009.pdf).

The report focuses on the revegetation of agricultural landscapes, primarily the wheat and sheep belts of SE and SW Australia, and will be of interest to anyone wondering about, or seeking information and advice on:

- the benefits of revegetation for birds,
- the importance of size of a revegetated area,
- or its characteristics and relation to corridors.

Previous years reports can be found at [www.birdsaustralia.com.au/soab/state-of-australias-birds.html](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/soab/state-of-australias-birds.html).



**EnviroCat** by Robin Stewart.

A new approach to caring for your cat and protecting native wildlife. The book focuses on responsible cat ownership, with instruction in training and care of kittens or cats, solving problem behaviour, and even understanding sounds and gestures.

## Calendar of Events

**Wednesday 4 August** – Australian Plants Society meeting. Andy Vinter speaks on *Buffel control and plant regeneration in Northside parks: a review of 7years of spraying efforts*. 7:30pm at Olive Pink Botanic Garden

**Sunday 8 August** – Field Naturalist walk along Bridle Path at Standley Chasm. Contact Colleen O'Malley on 0420 719778 for more details.

**13 – 15 August** – Australian Nuclear Free Alliance meeting, Alice Springs

**Sunday 22 August** – **LfW workshop: Trap-making & Information for the feral Spotted Turtle-dove**. Bloomin' Deserts Nursery, 9 -11am

**Saturday 18 September** - DesertSmart EcoFair at Olive Pink Botanic Gardens. Volunteers needed.

**9-11 November** - 4th Desert Knowledge Symposium - Alice Springs Convention Centre, see [www.desertknowledgesymposium.com](http://www.desertknowledgesymposium.com) for more information.

Take care,  
Ilse & Bill



Garden for Wildlife Coordinators

**Don't forget to check out the LfW & GfW website at [www.lowecol.com.au](http://www.lowecol.com.au), you can download membership application forms, newsletters, vegetation type species lists, and find out about upcoming workshops!**

This newsletter has been produced by  
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Ecological Services,  
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