



FRIENDS OF THE COORONG

NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2018



Orchid survey in Messent CP

We have received a request for volunteers to help with an orchid survey in Messent Conservation Park on **Friday, September 7** (and possibly Saturday, September 8).

Members of the Native Orchid Society of SA (NOSSA) will be searching for rare Metallic sun orchids (*Thelymitra epipactoides*) and Cheeseman spiral-leaved sun orchids (*Thelymitra matthewsii*) following a burn in Messent CP last year.

Fire is an important ecological factor in Australian ecosystems. The response of orchids to fire is diverse, ranging from being killed by fire, to being totally dependent upon fire to flower. This survey will document the range of orchid responses encountered across the fire affected area and will help to determine the optimal management of orchid species under fire-managed regimes (prescribed burns).

You will be working with the NOSSA members and marking any finds with a GPS. There will be considerable walking involved and having your own GPS would be beneficial.

You will meet them at Messent at 9am on the Friday morning and will need a 4WD to travel to the survey site, although we could arrange for you to get a ride with someone. If you would like to stay overnight, you will need to organise your own accommodation or camping.

Please let Joanne know if you would like to help with this survey, as soon as possible.

Phone 85751200 or

Email: joanne.flavel@sa.gov.au



Final orange-bellied parrot survey for this year

The orange-bellied parrot is a small grass parrot distinguished by the orange patch on its belly. It is a migratory bird which breeds in Tasmania during the summer before travelling to the mainland coast in autumn. Winters are spent feeding in the coastal saltmarsh from Melbourne to the Coorong.

Sadly, this bird is one of Australia's most threatened species and it is estimated that there are fewer than 50 orange-bellied parrots left in the wild. Current threats to the species include habitat loss and modification, predation by cats and foxes, the spread of weeds, deaths caused by collisions with man-made structures and genetic issues caused by inbreeding due to the small populations.

In 2006, the Australian Government committed funding to a recovery plan for the parrot, including protecting their habitat, controlling predators and managing and enhancing a captive breeding program. Volunteers can provide a significant contribution to the success of this project by taking part in surveys to monitor their numbers and habitat. The final survey in the South East area for this year is planned for **Saturday and Sunday, September 8-9**.

If you can help with the surveys anywhere in the Orange-bellied parrot's range, please contact Bob Green, the Coordinator on 0407 649909.

Free accommodation is available for volunteers at Cantara Homestead. If you're keen, the survey offers a great weekend of birds, birding and some pretty impressive habitats to visit.

*Lost time is never
found again.*



Mallee fowl monitoring



The Malleefowl is one of three Australian species of mound builders (megapodes) with large and powerful feet, which it uses to build enormous egg-incubating mounds.

They are found in semi-arid to arid shrublands and low woodlands, especially those dominated by mallee and/or acacias. A sandy substrate and abundance of leaf litter is required for breeding.

Much of the best habitat for Malleefowl has already been cleared or has been modified by grazing by sheep, cattle, rabbits and goats.

The effect of fire on the species is also severe, and breeding in burnt areas is usually reduced for at least 30 years. However, the harmful effect of fire appears to be lessened if the fires are patchy.

Predation by the introduced fox is also thought to be limiting the abundance of Malleefowl and, in many areas, may be a major cause of decline.

Malleefowl are listed as vulnerable in South Australia. A Recovery Plan was formulated in 1989 to help secure the existing populations by reducing habitat loss, threats and predation.

Monitoring forms an important part of this plan to determine what actions will have the best outcomes for the bird.

Surveys of mounds will take place in October at:
Mount Boothby CP – Monday 8 & Tuesday 9
Gum Lagoon (Coola Coola) – Thursday 11 & Friday 12
Mount Scott CP – Saturday 13 & Sunday 14
Coorong NP – Monday 15

If you would like to help with these surveys, please contact Vicki Natt, South East Coordinator on 0428 673 273 or 08 87 672 285.

Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory.



National Tree Day in the Coorong



(kindly submitted by Dean Millard)

A small group of members of the Friends of the Coorong went to Mark Point on National Tree Planting Day, to continue the work started there last year.

Last year's plants were doing exceptionally well and will be reinforced in time by the combination of casuarinas, eucalypts, melaleucas and other hardy local plants that were planted this year.

Chris Thompson of DEWNR organised equipment for the planting while Sam Blight, President of the Friends, provided seedlings and guards.

Despite the wet, windy weather the group enjoyed morning tea of coffee and cake before returning home.



Species planted: *Allocasuarina verticillata* (sheoak) x 10, *Melaleuca halmaturorum* (swamp paperbark) x 50, *Atriplex paludosa* (saltbush) x 30, *Oleria axillaris* (coastal daisy) x 15, *Eucalypts* (pink and blue gum) x 20 and *Tetragonia* (spinach plant) x 40.

This planting will provide a sheltered campsite for visitors. Other campsites further along the Kartoo Track remain open with an uninterrupted view of the lagoon and sand dunes.

South East Flows Restoration Project update

The construction phase of the South East Flows Restoration Project is approaching completion. A workforce of approximately 50 is completing excavation and structure works at ten locations.

Localised water diversion into the wetland, Yeulba Swamp, has commenced. Broader diversion into the Tilley Swamp Watercourse will be considered over the coming months.

To assist Tilley Swamp Watercourse restoration, structure crews are working on the northern section of the alignment and excavation crews continue to shape spoil mounds.

The installation of culverts under Cantara Road now allow water to pass freely through the water course either side of the road.

Significant progress continues on upgrading the Salt Creek outlet. This structure will improve operational flexibility for delivering water to the Southern Lagoon to assist with salinity management. On completion, water delivery to the Coorong will be increased by an additional annual median of 26.5GL.

A new regulating structure is being assembled at the northern end of the Morella Basin. It will play a significant role in the release of water into the Southern Lagoon and is the last water control structure on the flow path.

Passage for native fish movement around the structure forms part of the works. Species which will benefit from this include Congoli, Blue spot goby, Small-mouthed hardyhead, Yellow-eyed mullet, Black bream and Common galaxis.



Completed road crossing



Swooping season is at hand

Magpies building nests and singing at night means only one thing – swooping season is just around the corner.

Female magpies usually lay three to five eggs in early Spring, then sit on them for three weeks. The males defend the nests from the time the eggs are laid until the young birds are fledged. They will attack anything they consider to be a threat, from a raven or a dog to a human. They aren't being malicious, they're just defending their young.

Tips for surviving magpie season may include;

- avoid nesting sites
- travel in groups as swooping birds usually only attack individuals
- wear sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat
- if you ride a bike, walk it through the magpie territory or have a flag on the back that is higher than your head
- don't act aggressively, it will make you more of a threat
- walk, don't run
- avoid making eye contact with the bird

If you know of an area that has swooping magpies, put up a sign to warn other passers-by.

i before e, except after c
– disproved by science.



i before e, except when your
foreign neighbour, Keith
receives eight counterfeit beige sleighs from
feisty caffeinated weightlifters. Weird.

**Remember to check out the
Friends of the Coorong's
Facebook page and feel free
to share your thoughts,
experiences and photos.**



Tips for rescuing injured or orphaned wildlife



If you have found an injured or stranded native bird or animal, there are some steps you can take until you can get help from the experts:

- If you are driving, never put yourself in danger by stopping on a busy road or swerving or braking suddenly – call the police if there is a threat to public safety.
- Wear gloves – native birds and animals have sharp claws, teeth, beaks or spines and will do their best to defend themselves – they don't know you are trying to help! Larger birds and animals can be particularly dangerous – notify the appropriate authority.
- Never handle bats whether they are dead or alive, as all species can carry Australian bat lyssavirus which can be fatal to humans.
- Seek expert advice or get the injured animal to a vet or wildlife carer as quickly as possible as this will increase its chances of survival.
- If you need to transport the animal, use a suitable-sized pet carrier or a cardboard box with holes in it for ventilation and line it with something like an old towel. Make sure it can be secured – the last thing you want is a scared animal loose in your car while you're driving. If you're in the car when you come across the animal, you can improvise with something like an esky and a picnic rug. To reduce their stress, try to keep them in a darkened environment and as quiet as possible.
- Cold can kill, especially with baby animals, so wrap them gently in a towel, blanket or jumper.
- Offer water, but don't try to feed them. Native animals have very specific food requirements - if you feed them unsuitable food, you could create a stomach upset and make matters worse.
- Bear in mind that some animals or birds may not need rescuing. A baby bird on the ground may be in the process of leaving the nest; a seal may be resting on its side in the water or on the beach.

For more information:

- Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation – <http://www.amwrro.org.au>
- Fauna Rescue – <http://www.fauaresuce.org.au/>
- Native Animal Network – <https://facebook.com/nativeanimalnetwork/>
- RSPCA – <http://www.rspcasa.org.au/>

Your health and wellbeing - managing stress



Our body's reaction to stress, termed the fight-or-flight-response, evolved as a survival mechanism, helping us to quickly react in life-threatening situations. In most cases, stress is about three minutes of terror. After the stressor has disappeared, the system returns to normal.

However, during our modern lives, we can't always find the off switch.

Unremitting stress response has become more damaging than the stressor itself. Chronic, low level stress kills brain cells, adds weight and makes us age faster. It increases the risk of depression and other illnesses, physical and mental.

If you can't change your circumstances, there are ways to change your body's reaction to stress that may help manage chronic stress:

- Take time for yourself. Stop treating relaxation as something that you do when everything else has been dealt with.
- Exercise can help stop the build-up of stress by deepening your breathing and relieving muscle tension. Activities such as yoga and tai chi combine fluid movement with deep breathing and mental focus, which can induce calm.
- Schedule in social time - make sure you prioritise friends and family.
- Remember there are times when you really need the help of someone else to get through a stressful event or situation.



*Live simply Love generously
Care deeply Speak kindly*

News snippets

Walkers' Hut

The walkers' hut proposed for the Nukan Kungan Walking Trail will be located on the edge of Lake Mike, roughly half way between Sheep Rug Well and the Loop Road, near Salt Creek.

It will be a simple, three-sided structure, open on the side overlooking the lake and with a raised decking floor. To keep it low maintenance and to have minimal impact, it will most likely be constructed with a timber frame and colourbond cladding. A rain water tank will be included.

An indication of cost is being sought so that we can seek funding and make progress with the project.

Wilderness School

Students from Wilderness School regularly spend time in the Coorong and offer to do community service. They will be working with Sam Blight during spring on several different environmental projects, including helping with the walkers' hut.

Good water stone

Andrew Dawes has contacted a monument mason to make a replica Good Water stone. With Josie Lord's help, a stone has been found which is thick enough to have metal rods inserted in it so it can be securely cemented in place.



Mark Point Mill

The pump for the Mark Point mill has not been working recently. Friends of the Coorong will purchase a replacement pump which Geoff Gallasch and Shane Cunneen have offered to install.

ABC Backroads Program

The ABC will be filming in the Coorong region in early September. They have contacted quite a few locals, including our members, for ideas for stories.

New Storm Boy Movie

The new Storm Boy movie starring Geoffrey Rush and Finn Little is due for release early in 2019. You might like to check out the trailer on You Tube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWU03HFL920> There is some spectacular scenery in this movie.

Friends of Parks 31st Forum

The 31st Friends of Parks Forum will be held in the Stenhouse Bay Hall, Innes National Park from Friday 14th to Sunday 16th September, 2018.

Their theme is: Innes! Preserving our past and protecting our future. The cost will be \$125 per person to attend all sessions and enjoy the meals and entertainment provided.

Numbers will be limited to 150. Registration forms are available:

<http://www.friendsofparckssa.org.au/fop-forum>



Gift Ideas

Gift certificates - \$10

Call of the Coorong DVD - \$10

Books:

A Diverse Land - A History of the Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong (by Rob Linn) - \$15

Tales of the Coorong \$8, More Tales of the Coorong - \$10, Tales of the Lakes and Coorong - \$12, Anniversary packs of all 3 Tales books - \$25 (by Leta Padman)

Murder, Mishap and Misfortune – a select history of the Coorong - \$20, The Coorong Gazetteer - \$25, A Cartographical History of the Coorong (by Peter Doolette)

Sale - 25% off Clothing

Polo shirts were \$26, now \$19.50

T shirts were \$14, now \$10.50

Windcheaters were \$30, now \$22.50

All are printed with our logo – various sizes and colours available. Current stocks only.

Contact Joanne (85751200 - Mondays to Wednesdays or joanne.flavel@sa.gov.au) if you wish to purchase any of our merchandise.

Mallee emu-wrens return to SA



The future of the nationally endangered Mallee emu-wren looks a little brighter after 40 of these birds were recently brought back to SA.

Widespread land clearing and frequent fires have caused the bird to decline to a point where it survived in only four locations across southern Australia. Catastrophic wildfires in 2014 then caused the extinction of the species in SA.

These tiny birds seldom fly far and are heavily reliant on spinifex for shelter and breeding. The first re-introduction by the Threatened Mallee Bird Conservation Action Plan team was a long and challenging process, completed in April 2018. More than 1500 hours were spent in the field capturing family groups, transferring them from Victoria to Ngarkat Conservation Park in SA and then undertaking post-release monitoring.

Reduce your plastic use



While plastic has many valuable uses, we've become over-reliant on single-use or disposable plastic – with lasting environmental consequences.

Ways you can reduce your plastic use:

- use reusable bottles instead of disposable plastic bottles
- use your own reusable cup instead of takeaway coffee cups
- separate soft plastic items (any that can easily be scrunched into a ball or broken by hand) from other recycling and drop them off at participating supermarkets
- remember your reusable bags when you head to the supermarket
- avoid buying fruit and vegetables that are packaged in plastic
- use reusable food storage containers
- say no to straws and disposable cutlery

All the money in the world can't buy you back good health.



Dates for your diary



Friday 7 September – orchid survey, Messent CP

Saturday 8 – Sunday 9 September - Orange-bellied parrot survey

Friday 14 – Sunday 16 September – Friends of Parks Forum at Stenhouse Bay

Monday 8 – Tuesday 9 October – Malleefowl mound survey, Mount Boothby CP

Thursday 11 – Friday 12 October – Malleefowl mound survey, Gum Lagoon CP

Saturday 13 – Sunday 14 October – Malleefowl mound survey, Mount Scott CP

Monday 15 October – Malleefowl mound survey, Coorong NP

Sunday 3 March, 2019 – Clean Up Australia Day

Sunday 28 July, 2019 – National Tree Day



Tips for your green organics bin

- Only organic matter goes in the green bin – if it doesn't grow, it doesn't go.
- No dirt, rocks or bricks in the green bin. Small quantities of these can go in your waste bin. Take larger amounts to your local waste transfer station.
- No garden hose, tools or plastic plant pots in the green bin. Plastic pots can go in your recycling bin.
- Don't put your garden waste in a plastic bag – place it directly into the green bin.

These green organics are professionally processed into compost-based products such as mulches, soil conditioners, garden soils, top dressing soils and potting mixes.

Using organic matter to make mulch and compost for your garden will help to:

- hold water, reduce leaching loss and improve the soil
- create biologically healthy soils that use less water, less fertiliser and fewer pesticides – mulches can save more than 30% of irrigation water
- lower extreme soil temperatures in summer thereby alleviating plant stress by insulating the soil.