

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club

September 2008 Newsletter



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Web site : www.geocities.com/alicenats

REMINDERS FOR NEXT MEETING

Gate Opener: Bob Read **Supper:** Rhondda Tomlinson

Note Taker: Sarah Wilson

MEETINGS

10th September, Michelle Walker will speak about her trip to South Korea as a part of the Australia Korea Young Leaders Exchange Program

October 8th, Jocelyn Davies on Mongolia, where meat is for men and grass is for animals.

12th November, Chris Palmer will speak about Inland and Desert Sand-skippers, two of our more elusive butterflies.

TRIPS / ACTIVITIES

September 13 and 14. Overnight car-based trip to Painted Canyon, off Plenty Highway. 4WD needed unless you are prepared to walk the last section. Leader Bob Read.

September 20. Sustainability and Desert Garden Fair, Olive Pink Botanic Garden. Contact Colleen O'Malley 8952 2154, email: curatoropbg@internode.on.net or visit www.opbg.com.au.

October 11. Mt Undoolya, Rosalie Schultz to lead.

October 25 and 26. Old Hamilton Downs, if sufficient interest.

November 8. Sewage Ponds.



TRIP REPORT

A Wander in the Larapinta Hills

Saturday 12 July, 2008

By Connie Spencer

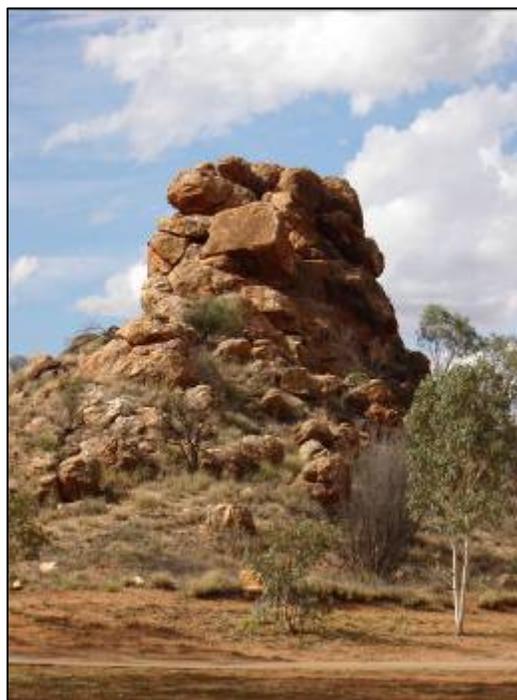
I was the leader of this walk by default as Barb was in dispose with a broken shoulder. I did a little reconnaissance walk the day before so that it would look as if I knew where I was going. As it turned out Margaret Lawrence joined Rosalie B, Bob and myself and Margaret could wander in these hills with her eyes shut and still get home!

We met at the base of “Dog Rock” on Larapinta Drive near the Scout Hall and climbed up the hills on a well used track taking us along the hill tops behind Diorama Close and Taylor Street. Although it was and still is very dry the Long-leaved Corkwood (*Hakea lorea*) was in full flower. We continued on through a gate, upward and across to the top of Tmara Mara Circuit. At this point, we headed north along a four wheel drive track forever upwards to a good vantage point. In the distance we could see more tracks and pondered on where they might lead, vowing to follow them one day.



We proceeded onward, changing our course to easterly down an extremely eroded track and then cross-country to a dry rockhole, passing flowering Native Fuchsia (*Eremophila latrobei*) and a uniquely shaped Corkwood (a landmark to me) on the way.

Margaret left us here whilst Bob, Rosalie and I continued to an old car dump before heading along a creek line below a large water tank on the hill above us. Bob spied Weebills and Inland Thornbills in the shrubbery and there was a stunning Umbrella Bush (*Acacia ligulata*) with deep orange/yellow coloured globular flowers.



A 6 km, 2 hour walk turned into a 3 hour walk but that's par for the course for Field Nats! Thanks Bob, Rosalie and Margaret for joining me.

Emily Gap to Heavitree Gap along the Range

Saturday 26 July, 2008

By Rosalie Breen

We had Nick Tyllis as our Sherpa guide who showed us the best way to scramble up from Emily Gap and also led us to the flagged trail down off the range at the end. Thank you Nick, you were invaluable. The views from the top were spectacular - a living map of Alice and surrounds spread below us. To the north east



we picked out Mt Undoolya, Mt Benstead, points above Trepfina and parts of Georgina Range around Mordor Pound which we visited last year. Emily Creek and flats crept towards the north and then further the golf course estate, power station and tanks, and of geological interest the curving ribs of the Sadadeen gneiss of the small hills below. Further along, Euro Ridge to Simpson's Gap and Mt Conway. We watched planes far away at the airport and picked out Yirrara College, the jail, the white domes of Pine Gap (which we probably shouldn't have looked at), Ilparpa Range and valley and Temple Bar Gap, and the blue of the sewage ponds.



East and west was the undulating rocky ridge-top of the range. Surprisingly on the top were many big trees. Native pine predominated earlier; then there were coolibah types, *Eucalyptus intertexta* and areas of different



mallees, *Eucalyptus trivalvus*, mallee red gum *Eucalyptus gillenii* and closer to the end blue mallee (*Eucalyptus gamophylla*). There were beautiful specimens of big and old bloodwoods, native orange, an "orchard" area with native plum and the native apricot with its orange wooden seed pods, spearwood, two species of corkwood, as well as sennas and lots of



Eremophila freelingii at early flowering stage. There was even a grove of mulga (with biggish leaves). Spinifex was always present especially on the slopes. Closer to the ground, germinated after the rain of a month or two ago were small plants of pepper cress (*Lepidium spp*), pink geranium (*Erodium spp*) and occasional single plants of yellow-top daisy (*Othonna gregorii*). Overall the high areas appeared less dry than the lands below.



As we were climbing up from Emily a wedgetail sailed around and over us declaring it was his territory. In places we saw white droppings on the ground indicating lookout points for the birds of prey. Wood swallows flew around and honeyeaters were spotted in amongst the bushes.



The range is composed of quartzite, the rocks tilted to form spines of rocks with steep cliffs on the north side; from the edge you often looked straight down to the valley floor (always very carefully), although Neville somehow seemed to be often on the high horizon or close to the edge with his camera or binoculars. Mostly the quartzite was stained red and formed from sand deposits, but some patches of gravel gave a conglomerate type rock, and sometimes it was the white and smoother quartzite typical of around Mt Gillen. We found ripple marks to indicate the rocks origin

as depositions in an inland sea. There were lots of examples of slickened sides where the fractured rocks had moved across each during earth movements, heat and pressure forming a polished veneer. In some places there were flat red sandy platforms on the south side where the trees and shrubs grew around the edges and were gathering places for the euros; we saw quite a few of them as we walked along.



The walking along was quite undulating. There are five high points. The power lines go across the range at the lowest point. After that it was a climb up again. We thought "This is it" (Mt Johns), as it appeared to be highest, but we had to continue to the next peak to find the cairn of Mt Johns and then be allowed to have lunch. Because we had dawdled so much lunch was at 2 o'clock. Checking the map later the cairn is at 788m while the previous peak is indeed higher at 802m.

After lunch we kept on the ridge until the next low area (where there is a loose rock pile on the right) and then dropped off to the south through the rocks and spinifex, gradually moving down and west till we found the flagged trail which leads quite steeply down the ridge towards the caravan parks. Tracks, now over dolomite rocks, led to the backyard of the tavern, through a gate where we finished at about 4 o'clock.



A great day, with fantastic views, entertaining company and expert guiding. Heather with her pedometer decided the walk was around twelve kilometers. We ended the day with a drink and a pool game in the pub, the excuse being – waiting for the drivers to retrieve the car from Emily Gap. ‘We’, were Nick, Connie, Gavan, Rosalie and visitors Jenny, and Heather and Neville. It also completed a trilogy of walks between Emily and Heavitree Gaps. We have explored the valleys on the south and north side, and now this day along the top.

WEBSITE TO VISIT

Birds in Backyards

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

Birds in Backyards is a research, education and conservation program focusing on the birds that live where people live. Get involved by becoming a member and taking part in our online surveys. Learn about how you can create bird-friendly spaces in your garden and local community. Find out more about Australian birds and their habitats.

BOOK REVIEW

New: “Larapinta Trail”

Authors John Chapman and Monica Chapman

Review by Rosalie Breen

If you want to know about the Larapinta Trail you can ask our president Bob Read who has just completed a solo walk from Sonder to Alice Springs in 18 days - Congratulations!

If you want to read about it and enjoy some fabulous photos, the recent bushwalking guide book “Larapinta Trail” by John and Monica Chapman is now available from Lone Dingo and other bookshops. It has very comprehensive track notes for traveling in both directions, with maps, gradings, times, elevation and other campsite information, as well as natural history about vegetation, geology etc. Tips on gear, safety and trip planning are also useful. Another good point is the suggestions for day or multiple-day walks on various sections. Their reconnoitering trip was obviously done during a wet period, so the availability of water in some locations should be heeded with caution.

For those who want to trek or those who can only dream, I recommend it. A good companion to the parks and Wildlife guide folder.

Copy DEADLINE for articles for the next newsletter 26 September. Thanks, Ed.

ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Olive Pink Botanic Garden
Wednesday 13 August 2008

Open: The President Bob Read declared the AGM open at 7.40pm welcoming all present.

Present: As per attendance book. 11 members.

Apologies: Ian Archibald, Leonie Read, Barb Gilfedder and Michelle Walker

Minutes of Previous AGM:

Distributed and read. Rhondda Tomlinson moved that the minutes be accepted. Liz Carpenter seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Presented and read by Sarah Wilson (copy on file). Moved by Jenny Purdie and seconded Rosalie Breen that the report be accepted. Motion carried.

President's Report: Bob Read presented the President's Report (copy on file).

Election of Officers: Jenny Purdie appointed to chair the election of officers. All positions declared vacant.

President: Connie Spencer nominated Bob Read. Rhondda Tomlinson seconded. Accepted unanimously.

Vice President: Bob Read nominated Sue Fraser. Seconded Connie Spencer. All in favour.

Secretary: Rosalie nominated Shirley Goodman. Seconded Connie Spencer. All in favour.

Treasurer: Bob Read nominated Rosalie Breen. Seconded by Rhondda Tomlinson. All in favour.

Property Officer: Connie Spencer nominated Sarah Wilson. Seconded by Rosalie Schultz. All in favour.

Public Officer: Liz Carpenter nominated Rhondda Tomlinson. Seconded Shirley Goodman. All in favour.

Membership Fees:

Moved by Sarah Wilson that membership fees for the year 2008/2009 remain the same as last year. All in favour.

Single membership	\$25	Single concession	\$20
Family membership	\$30	Family concession	\$25

Close: There being no further business, The President declared the AGM closed at 7.55pm.

ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED
Minutes of General Meeting held at Olive Pink Botanic Garden
Wednesday 13 August 2008

OPEN:

President, Bob Read - 7.40 pm

PRESENT:

As per attendance book. 11 members

APOLOGIES:

Ian Archibald, Leonie Read, Barb Gilfedder, Michelle Walker

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Connie moved that the minutes of the previous meeting (Wednesday 9 July 2008) be accepted as a true and correct record. Seconded Rosalie. All in favour.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Bank statement tabled showing a balance of \$2,661.85 credit.

CORRESPONDENCE - IN:

- The Naturalist News - Western Australian Naturalists Club Inc.
- Letter from Austcover P/L
- NT Field Naturalists Club Inc. – Nature Territory Newsletter
- Westpac Bank statement
- Membership subscription from Pete Collins
- Membership subscription from Portia Peterkin
- Four letters to individual members

CORRESPONDENCE – OUT:

Thank you letter to Peter Nunn

GENERAL BUSINESS:

- Members brought along various items of interest to be perused: rocks and minerals, items to be viewed under the microscope, Field Naturalist trip books and photos of members trips projected on to the screen.

OUTINGS:

- Currently four takers for the Count Point trip this coming weekend

SIGHTINGS:

- Liz saw a common sandpiper and orange and crimson chats at the sewage ponds.
- Bob saw golden backed honey eaters at Ormiston Gorge and the Finke River Trail head.
- Connie and Jenny saw broilgas, a dingo and heard chiming wedgebills in an area NE of Alice.
- Rosalie Breen saw a peregrine falcon “up close” on Spencer Hill.

Gate Opener for September: Bob Read **Supper for September:** Rhondda Tomlinson

Note taker for September: Sarah Wilson

Meeting Closed: 8.15 pm

Next meeting: September 10, 2008