



November 2013

## Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



*Weener Waterhole, one of the permanent waterholes in the bed of the Finke River on Henbury Station. Find out more about wonderful places like these and their protection from Angus Duguid and Pat Hodgins at Wednesday's meeting.*

**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.

**Postal Address: P.O. Box 8663  
Alice Springs, Northern Territory  
0871**

**Web site:**

<http://www.alicefieldnaturalists.org.au>

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## **NEXT NEWSLETTER**

The deadline for the next newsletter is **Friday 22 November 2013**.  
Please send your contributions to Barb Gilfedder at the email listed below  
Please send photos and text separately.

### **ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB**

**Wed 13 Nov Meeting** 7.00pm at Charles Darwin University Higher Education Building lecture theatre. Speakers: **Angus Duguid** and **Pat Hodgins** “**An update on fish distributions and drought refuges of the Finke River.**” A great follow-up to the excellent trip that six members took part in to Henbury in the middle of October. *See pictures on page 1 and 7.*

**Fri-Sat 22-23 Nov Nature walk into 8 Mile Gap** early on Saturday morning. Sunrise is at 5:40. Options include staying at Point Howard Lookout on Namatjira Drive overnight, or driving out early Saturday morning. Then lunch at Ellery Creek Big Hole, and check out the Flannel Flowers at Standley Chasm on the way home. Leader: Cec Sutton 0412 501396 [cecsutton@gmail.com](mailto:cecsutton@gmail.com)

**Sun 8 Dec Shorebird Survey** at Alice Springs Sewage Ponds. Meet at the birders' gate at 7.00am sharp. Counters and scribes ...and on-lookers welcome. Please contact Barb Gilfedder if you are able to help

#### **Fri-Sat 13-14 December End-of-year celebration. Standley Chasm - Choose your own adventure.**

Make your own way to Standley Chasm. Camp Friday night at the Standley Chasm camp ground, self-catering, Enjoy a moonlight walk into the Chasm.

On Saturday morning campers and people driving out early can enjoy a sunlight walk into Chasm or another short walk. Walk starting at 7.30am.

The main event - catered **Breakfast/Brunch at Standley Chasm Kiosk 9.00am**.  
Cost per person \$10 (Club subsidizing by \$5).

#### **BOOKINGS FOR THE MEAL ARE ESSENTIAL BY SATURDAY 7 DECEMBER.**

Ring Marg Lawrence on 89525049 or email [margnjim.asp@gmail.com](mailto:margnjim.asp@gmail.com) or call around and see her at 2 Battarbee St. If possible make your booking and pay her at Wednesday's meeting. She may be interstate for a few days after that, so if necessary contact Barb Gilfedder.

President	Barbara Gilfedder	8955 5452	<a href="mailto:bjfedders@gmailxxx.com">bjfedders@gmailxxx.com</a>
Vice-President	Lee Ryall	8953 6394	<a href="mailto:ryall.lee@gmailxxx.com">ryall.lee@gmailxxx.com</a>
Secretary	Cecily Sutton	0412 501 396	<a href="mailto:cecsutton@gmailxxx.com">cecsutton@gmailxxx.com</a>
Treasurer	Jill Brew	8953 0551	<a href="mailto:jillinalice@westnetxxx.com.au">jillinalice@westnetxxx.com.au</a>
Property Officer	Rosalie Breen	8952 3409	<a href="mailto:rosalie.breen@emailxxx.com">rosalie.breen@emailxxx.com</a>
Public Officer	Rhondda Tomlinson	8953 1280	<a href="mailto:rhondda.tomlinson@bigpondxxx.com">rhondda.tomlinson@bigpondxxx.com</a>
Committee Member	Connie Spencer	8952 4694	<a href="mailto:constans@bigpondxxx.net.au">constans@bigpondxxx.net.au</a>
Website Manager	Pam Keil	8955 0496	<a href="mailto:pamelakeil@yahooxxx.com">pamelakeil@yahooxxx.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	Pam Keil	8955 0496	<a href="mailto:pamelakeil@yahooxxx.com">pamelakeil@yahooxxx.com</a>

Please delete the xxx when emailing – their placement is an attempt to stop some spam emails.





Brown Fish Owl showing off his magnificent plumage and orange eyes.

## September Speaker:

## Lisa Nunn – Sri Lankan Birds and other Wildlife

### Report by Lee Ryall; Photos by Peter Nunn.

Lisa obviously had a fascinating holiday in Sri Lanka, travelling amongst wild traffic along twisty vehicle-choked roads, experiencing repeated rain events, watching actors pretending to be fishermen, visiting the well regulated national parks of Sri Lanka and looking the other way as a Leopard crossed the road in front of the car. The highlight, however, was the many brilliant Sri Lankan birds and animals she did see.

As well as having large areas of low-lying coastal plains, Sri Lanka boasts a spectacular mountain range in the central south of the island, and this combines with a varying rainfall pattern to give this small tropical island a range of habitats from the arid to the sodden. The 2500m altitude in the mountains results in temperatures 15 to 20 degrees lower than elsewhere. As a result there is an astounding variety of bird and animal life on this island which is slightly smaller than Tasmania.

Sri Lankan fauna overlaps with that of India to some extent, but the island has a high rate of endemic species - some 30 bird species out of more than 450, 18 mammals out of around 150 species and 115 reptile species from more than 200 total.

### Birds

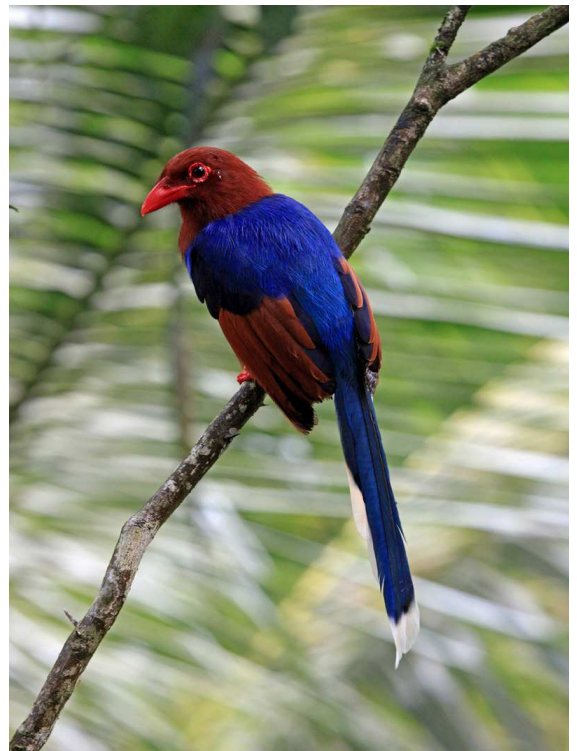
There is a dazzling array of birds, many of which appear relatively unalarmed by human presence, and were photographed with one foot drawn up into their feathers- such as the chilled out Crested Serpent Eagle or the Changeable Hawk-Eagle at rest with crop bulging. Other memorable raptor photographs showed the sleek velvety colours of the Grey-headed Fish Eagle and the gracious curves of the black eagle in flight. Owls hunt even during daylight- a Chestnut-backed Owlet and a Brown Fish Owl.

Colours abound – The tiny Sri-Lankan hanging parrots are beautifully camouflaged among the yellow-green leaves and pinkish flowers where they forage. The Scarlet Minivet shows off his eye-catching red in front of his equally stunning but yellow mate. The Painted Storks flaunt pink rumps against the brown water where they wade on tall red legs. Herons raise spidery feet out of the water, whether in the wetlands or gracious ancient palace gardens. The Yellow-eared Bulbul appears to have gleaming straws radiating out behind his ear. The Velvet-fronted Nuthatch shows off his purple front and orange beak, the fantastic beaks of the Grey and the Malabar Pied Hornbills underline their imperious stature, and only some of the kingfishers and bee-eaters are the same as those seen here. The most startling of the birds was the Sri Lankan Blue Magpie which sidled into the veranda of a mountain resort.

Splendidly bright blue with ink-red wing patches, head and beak, it hardly seemed related to its Australian cousins.

### Reptiles

The birds have no monopoly on striking colours. It is easy to see how the venomous Green Pit Viper might remain unseen lying amongst emerald green vegetation while awaiting its prey. The Asian Water Monitor, which can grow to 2.5 m, is dark but speckled with yellow-orange stripes and spots. The Land Monitor, growing to a smaller 1.5m is patterned in a creamy yellow, which is particularly beautiful in the youngsters.



The startling Sri Lankan Blue Magpie



Hump-nosed Agamid

Other members of the lizard family include the frilled Green Forest Lizard, the Hump-nosed Agamid and the Kangaroo Lizard which looks as though it should be related to a grasshopper, as it sits on the leaf-litter poised for a (running) take-off.

The Mugger Crocodile, which can grow up to 4m, is not brightly coloured, but has a broader snout than the Australian Fresh-water Crocodile, indicating a readiness to prey on medium sized vertebrates such as deer as well as smaller animals such as turtles and tortoises. Lisa showed a photograph of a pair of Indian Star Tortoises which featured the speckled body and the unforgettable creamy 'star' markings on the shell that have made them a target for hunters.

Mammals

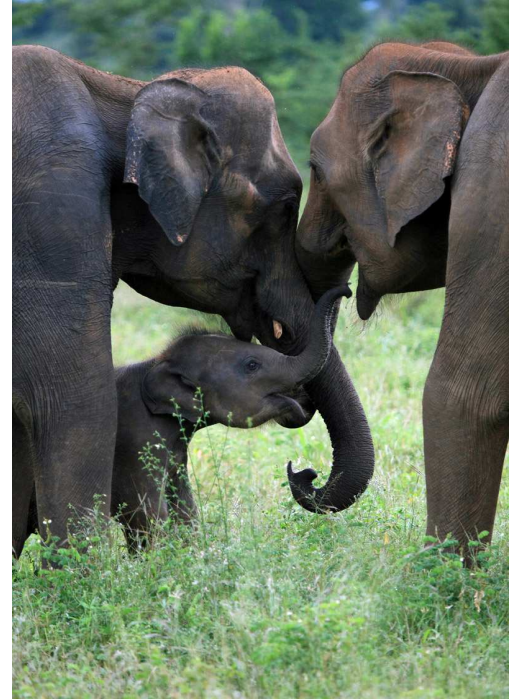
In Sri-Lanka you can to hire a boat to watch whales and sometimes dolphins and porpoises. Lisa saw Blue Whales complete with remora on their flukes.

Other big mammals also featured in the trip. There was of course the leopard that crossed the road when Lisa wasn't looking, but there were also a couple of Asian Elephants in the roadway protectively huddling around their calf. Another elephant was standing in the water, pulling up chunks of delicious greenery. Elephants are very common in the forested areas and have affected the numbers of larger trees. The lack of nocturnal tours is attributed to fear of wild elephants at night.

Several species of deer graze clearings and parklands. Ruddy Mongooses watch with twitching pink noses from amongst the trees. A yellow Giant Squirrel looking for food stuck its head right inside coconuts, getting quite grubby. Sri-Lanka is lively with monkeys and macaques - on the rock roof of the cave temple or just hanging around parklands and forests. The Purple -faced Leaf Monkey looks particularly charming with a fringe of fuzz showing off its face.

In the photos Pete and Lisa took, the scenery is intriguing- there are beautiful watery scenes, hillsides of tea bushes, ancient palaces and gardens, monumental rocks and thick, wet forests. The evening was a fascinating exposition of reasons to want to visit this tiny country.

Thank you Lisa for showing it to us.



Wild Asian Elephants

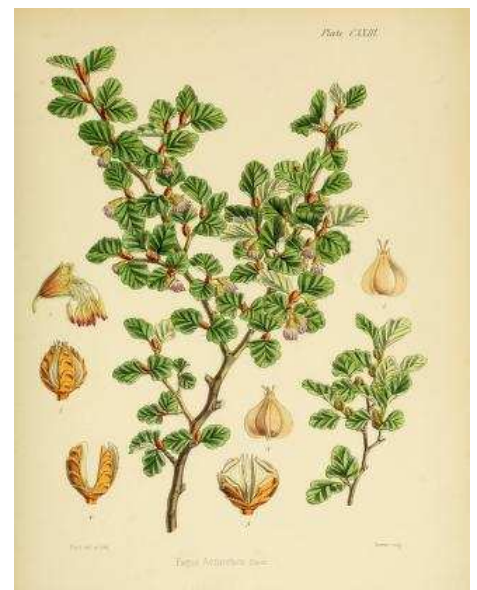
**October Speaker:**

**Peter Jobson on “Joseph Hooker Down Under: A tale of high seas adventure and profound botanical discovery”**

**Report by Jill Brew**

Peter took us from CDU lecture theatre to Antarctica, collecting botanical specimens on a voyage of exploration under sail, recycling and drying the packing papers on the rigging, bracing ourselves against endless motion to make diligent notes and draw finely detailed sketches of the specimens. We were introduced to Joseph Hooker, nineteenth century botanist and contemporary of Darwin, and to where we can find the exquisite *Flora Antarctica* (and *Flora Tasmania* and *Flora New Zealand*) he was responsible for.

Englishman Hooker was young – only 22, and just qualified in medicine – but had connections enough to get a job as assistant surgeon on the 3-masted stout “bomb” ship *Erebus*, heading with





the *Terror* to Antarctica in 1839 under renowned Arctic navigator and explorer James Ross. The southern summer arrival in Antarctica was to coincide with melting pack ice, allowing Ross closer inspection to map the coastline and to try to locate the south magnetic pole. Hooker was tasked with collecting botanical specimens largely in unexplored regions – a dream job for him.

A future director of Kew Gardens (like his father), Hooker was brought up on plants (leading to medicine, since botany was considered a branch of medicine.) Inspired as a child by pictures of distant wild anchorages in the Kerguelen Islands, from Cook's 2<sup>nd</sup> expedition of 1772, he set himself to explore (and document) widely. He carried with him on the ship a proof copy of Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*. (Later, he publicly backed Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection.)



Christmas Cove in the Kerguelen Islands, from James Clark Ross, *A Voyage of Discovery*, 1847.

The voyage “package” included 3 separate bites at Antarctica, over 4 years, with extended stays in Hobart and the Falkland Islands in between. Brushes with some trying aspects of colonial society (Hooker famously avoiding the demanding Lady Franklin in Hobart) were included.

Heading south from Britain, collecting, storing, drawing and meticulously cataloguing started early at islands on the way: at Madeira, Tenerife, and Cape Verde Islands. The loss of native species clearly correlated with human depredation. On Brazilian Trinidad and St Helena, around 20°S, where

magnetic readings were being taken, Hooker noted that most native plants had gone. In the Kerguelen Islands, at 50° S, was the native cabbage tree

[**Kerguelen's Land Cabbage**, *Pringlea antiscorbutica*] – which became a major source of vitamin C for whalers and explorers. Auckland and Campbell (52° S) Islands, further east, and south of NZ, still had intact native vegetation – the difficulty of landing points protecting the islands. Closer to Antarctica, native species became the only species found.

The first foray was for 5 months, as far as latitude 78° S; the ships were ground by ice but were able to get through the pack ice to the (freshly named) Ross Sea. Hooker, however, fell and was crushed between a whaleboat and ice in freezing water and developed pneumonia. He couldn't walk to it, but wrote of the active volcano Mt Erebus, “...the dark cloud of smoke, tinged with flame, rising from the volcano in a perfectly unbroken column, one side jet-black, the other giving back the colours of the sun....This was a sight so surpassing everything that can be imagined...”(1)

On the second trip, after a layover in Hobart, Sydney and New Zealand, they had more trouble with pack ice and the two ships collided while negotiating a narrow passage; they retreated through storms to the Falklands for repairs. Hooker still collected voraciously, including mosses in this area, but was anxious to get home and write up his information fully, having vastly extended the number of plant specimens collected by earlier voyages of discovery in the region. The expedition, though, was not ready to go home. There was a third visit to Antarctica, and then finally the return journey, via the Cape of Good Hope, reaching home in September 1843.

The hardships of ship voyages, even “well equipped” ones, and brushes with death did not stop him taking up further expeditions – to India, the Himalayas, Palestine and the United States. He accepted directorship of Kew Gardens, worked on development of a more systematic plant classification system with his colleague Bentham, and lived an admirable 92 years. (The ships *Erebus* and *Terror*, despite refurbishment with steam engines, perished in the Arctic in 1845.)

Hooker became a friend of Darwin; Darwin respected his judgement. They corresponded, and traded opinions. They discussed different explanations of plant distribution. Darwin favoured the rise and fall of land masses, and the dissemination of seeds over long distances, as explanation for the surprising distribution of related plant genera in distantly separate locations. Hooker rejected this from his knowledge of dispersal capability; his surmising about the breakup of a large land mass in earlier times was a precursor to the early 1960's acceptance of plate tectonics theory and pre-existence of Gondwana.

Hooker had generally found British botanist Robert Brown's mathematical theory showing a correlation between distance from the equator and drop in biodiversity to be justified. But in the landmasses of Tasmania and New Zealand the opposite was observed – increased diversity. ‘Hooker thought this anomaly was due to remnants of a large land mass biodiversity, which would account for a sudden jump [from other locations] at a similar latitude.’ (PJ)

Peter pointed out that 'One of the modern botanical examples to support the Gondwana hypothesis is the current distribution of *Nothofagus*, the Southern Beech. This genus is well represented in South America and New Zealand, with outliers in New Caledonia and the highlands of New Guinea. The more recently evolved species occur along the east coast of Australia. Interestingly, the New Guinea and New Caledonia species are more closely allied to the South America and New Zealand species than they are with those occurring in Australia.'

*Flora Antarctica: the Botany of the Antarctic voyage*, came out in three volumes, illustrated by botanical lithographer of the age, Walter Hood Fitch, based on Hooker's high quality field illustrations. The first, on the Antarctic Islands, came out in 1847. Avid local collectors sent items to Hooker to add his own collection, and *Flora New Zealand* (1855) and *Flora Tasmania* (1859) followed.

This was an absorbing talk, lighting some of history's dusty but exciting corners, showing some of the giant gritty endeavours underpinning current understanding. Thank you, Peter.

More of the illustrations from the *Flora Antarctica* can be seen at <http://archive.org/stream/botanyofantarcti0144hook#page/n0/mode/2up>

For those who would like to continue the stirring voyages of discovery, could I recommend the Patrick O'Brian novels with characters Aubrey and Maturin roaming the world by ship in the early 1800s, sometimes buffeted by icebergs in southern latitudes, surgeon Maturin single-mindedly collecting and documenting specimens at every possible point and occasionally falling into the water.

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## TANAMI TRACK – FLOWER SPOTTING – October 12

Photos by Pam Keil

**Beth Hansen**

I'm not sure I could correctly identify all the billy buttons and daisies after a day in the field with Barb, Rosalie, Judy and Pam, but that's not their fault. For a non-botanist like me, the reference sheets (directions and illustrations) were really excellent. I'll be checking them again and again with my photos. The discussion over each of the plants also helped me understand a little more each time.

As for the names ... I'm still struggling with Ratstails, Grey Wrinklewort, Shepherd's Purse, Yellowtops and Supplejacks that start as a climbers and then turn into trees. I'm making even slower progress with the botanical names.



Despite Kunoth Well being quite dry, there were enough birds around on the day to keep our interest --Brown Falcon, Western Gerygone, Zebra Finches, Thornbills, Ringnecks and Mulga Parrots, Common Bronzewing and the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. However, the delight of the day for me was the sight of a little bird's full frontal!! A very ordinary looking little black and white bird was sitting on the fence near the dried up Well. And then he turned around to show off his full frontal view in red. WOW! (*Red-capped Robin. Ed.*)



**Pamela Keil**

There were also heaps of insects out. In addition to the gorgeous female katydid shown here, we also were privileged to watch a fight between a nest of termites (disturbed by the lifting of a cow pat) and some ants that thought termites would make a good dinner!

**A note from the Editor:**

To try the Drive for yourself, visit the website: [http://alicefieldnaturalists.org.au/Kunoth\\_Dam.html](http://alicefieldnaturalists.org.au/Kunoth_Dam.html)

Be sure to email Pam (email on page 2) to tell her what you find! We're trying to put together a seasonal guide, and I'm sure it's all changed by now...



## Helping with and observing a Fish Survey along the Finke on Henbury Station.



*Making the correct knot in the cod end of a Fyke net.*



*Net holes were fixed by Marg and Jill with dental floss.*



*Angus dragging a big Fyke net to shore – two smaller ones in foreground.*



*David, Michelle, Rosalie and Jill all concentrating on identifying, counting and measuring the catch*



*Marg, Jill, Max and David admiring and identifying fish in the clear water of Jake's salt spring.*



*Christopher Pinnacle from the Finke River.*

Many thanks to Wetland Scientist Angus Duguid, Leader of NT section of Lake Eyre Basin Rivers Assessment, Max Rittner, Water Advisory and Regulatory Officer, Michelle Rodrigo, Lake Eyre Basin Communications Officer all of DLRM, David Schmarr, Research Scientist with SA Inland Waters & Catchment Ecology and Pete Nunn of Alice Springs Desert Park.

Also to Marg Lawrence, Jill Brew, Rosalie and Gavan Breen and Jim Gilfedder. We all had a good time, learnt lots about fish surveys and found it very interesting. Barb Gilfedder



## Weedy Cacti around Alice Springs

Mention weed cactus and most people will think of the Common Prickly Pear (*Opuntia stricta*) that became a major weed problem in Australia by the 1920's. Less well known is the *Cylindropuntia* cacti that have been recognised (together with *Opuntia* and *Austrocylindropuntia* species) as Weeds of National Significance for their ability to invade and establish in natural areas, harm animals, and affect grazing activities.



Jumping Cholla

*Cylindropuntia* cacti are found in most mainland states (NT, WA, SA, QLD, NSW) and are now colonising the rocky hills around Alice Springs. Like other cacti they are well adapted for growth in arid areas by utilizing CAM photosynthesis allowing them to close stomata pores during the day to reduce water loss, as well as an ability to produce rapid growth after rainfall events.



Coral Cactus

*Cylindropuntia* cacti are generally long-lived shrubs with branched stems consisting of cylindrical or club-shaped segments. The segment surface is covered in tubercles (raised nodules) that produce spines covered by a papery sheath. They are distinguished from *Austrocylindropuntia* species that lack the papery sheath on the spines, and *Opuntia* species that have flattened segments known as pads.

Four *Cylindropuntia* species have been found in Alice Springs, Coral Cactus (*Cylindropuntia fulgida* var. *mamillata*), Devils Rope (*C. imbricata*), Jumping Cholla (*C. prolifera*), and Hudson Pear (*C. rosea*). Jumping Cholla was found by Conservation and land management students with Batchelor Institute, and confirmed as a new weed record for the Northern Territory. Hudson Pear was recently reported by local resident Rosalie Breen. Surveys also found an *Opuntia* species, Golden bristle cactus (*O. microdasys*), also a new record for the Northern Territory.

A population of Coral Cactus in the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve and Spencer Valley area (Eastside) has been known about for some years. Other known locations include Lackman Terrace and Teppa Hill (Northside), Anzac Hill, and on the old Stuart Highway about 10km north of town. Jumping Cholla and Hudson Pear has been found around upper Burke St and Kurrajong Drive (Eastside). Small populations of Devils Rope is present in Davidson Park (Eastside) and near the Alice Springs hospital. It is likely that these cacti will be found at more sites around Alice Springs as community awareness and reporting increases.

Coral Cactus is recognised by its blue-green colour and segments that become noticeably distorted on older plants. The spines vary in length (to 2cm but often shorter), with a white or tan coloured sheath. Jumping Cholla is grey-green, with more numerous spines (to 2cm) with a straw to dark-brown coloured sheath. The egg-shaped fruits can grow to form chains. Devils Rope is bright green, with narrow segments and elongated tubercles giving it a rope-like appearance. The spines are long (to 3cm) with an off-white coloured sheath. Hudson Pear is similar in appearance to Devils Rope, but is usually more compact in size, and the more densely packed spines give it a distinctive halo appearance when backlit.





These cacti primarily reproduce by segments that fall off the parent plant and take root and form new plants. Segments can be as small as a pea or up to 20cm long, and are extremely hardy and known to survive after 3 years of storage in sealed containers. Hooked or barb spines enable segments to attach to passing dogs, kangaroos, or people increasing its ability to spread from the parent plant. Coral Cactus is proving to be very effective at spreading this way due to its ability to produce numerous segments from a young age.

Reproduction by seed is not common. Coral Cactus does not appear to be producing flowers, fruits or seed. Jumping Cholla and Hudson Pear are flowering, but are reported to be sterile. Devils Rope is also flowering, and producing fruits with seed that have been reported to produce viable seed.



These cacti have probably been introduced to Alice Springs as garden plants. Any plants located near bushland areas, or unwanted plants that are dumped into the bush, are likely to spread further and establish new colonies. It is important that these plants are not propagated or planted in gardens as this increases the risk of spread throughout the region. Cacti gardeners are encouraged to find species that do not spread so easily.

There are generally two treatment options available to control these cacti, to physically remove them, or to treat them with herbicide. Treatment works undertaken so far have provided insight into how these methods are best employed.

A chemical treatment trial conducted at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station has shown that plants can take a long time to perish (12 months or more), and it requires thorough application as any missed portions of the plant continue to grow and produce segments. Therefore, multiple applications over a period of 2-3 years or longer may be required to complete treatment effectively. A second trial has just been commenced in order to improve the success rate of this treatment method.



Manual removal can provide a quicker and more effective control method that is suitable for smaller infestations. Significantly, it can offer a lower risk of regrowth provided all material is collected and not inadvertently spread during transport to landfill for burial. With gloves, buckets and tongs Alice Springs Landcare volunteers have been applying this method to remove Coral cactus from Spencer Valley and Cavenagh Crescent. So far approximately 800kg of cactus has been removed during 128 volunteers hours of weeding. More field days are planned to continue this work.





Andy Vinter with Rosalie Breen showing off another captured escapee.

To make the most of these efforts a cactus control work plan has been developed with the aim of eradicating these weeds from Alice Springs and its surrounds. Early detection and treatment is critical if any weed eradication program is to be successful. Investing effort during the early stages of weed establishment is time and money well spent when compared to treating weeds that are well established and widespread. This means allocating resources even before the weed is perceived as being a big problem. Given the ability of these cacti to establish and spread locally, and the fact that Alice Springs could provide a hub for further expansion throughout the region, the time to act on these weeds is now.

To contain the spread of *Cylindropuntia* cacti it is vital that the location of all plants are recorded. People are encouraged to report new sightings and provide location details and a photograph. The availability of smartphone apps gives everyone walking in the bush the opportunity to record survey tracks and take GPS waypoint locations and photographs of any cacti found. Priority areas to be surveyed include north of the end of Burke St, and north and east of Kurrajong Drive.

To report cacti send information including location details (GPS waypoints), photos, and tracks of the search area to [andrew.vinter@batchelor.edu.au](mailto:andrew.vinter@batchelor.edu.au).

To find out about future cactus control field days check details on the Alice Springs Landcare website.

For more information on weed cacti visit the websites of these organisations:

Australian Invasive Cacti Network

Weeds Australia

NT Government Department of Land Resource Management

Alice Springs Landcare

Andy Vinter

Lecturer in Conservation and land management,  
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education,  
and Alice Springs Landcare committee member.





**ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED**  
**Minutes of general meeting at Higher Education Building,**  
**Charles Darwin University - Wednesday 9 October 2013**  
Following presentation by Peter Jobson on Botanist, Joseph Hooker,  
Thanks to Barb Gilfedder for supper and Jill Brew for notetaking.

Meeting opened at 8.35pm

**Present:** 22 Members, 6 visitors and 4 apologies as per attendance book.

**Previous minutes** – accepted.

**Business arising from the minutes:** Nil

**Correspondence in:**

- Several enquiries re membership.

**Correspondence out:**

- Thank you card to Lisa Nunn, last month's speaker.
- E-mail thank you and copy of last newsletter to Paul and Lesley Hartwig of Henbury Station

**Treasurer's Report:**

Balance at 9/10/13                      \$3535.38  
Subs \$285 interest \$2.72  
Debits: Nil

**General Business:**

- Barb has been in touch with Ray Prunty at Standley Chasm to arrange our end-of-year function at the kiosk on Saturday 14 December. He will provide a breakfast of sausage, bacon, scrambled egg, fruit and coffee for \$15 a head. The meeting agreed to subsidise the meal so it would only cost members \$10. Margaret Lawrence volunteered to take numbers and money for this event. It is necessary to book and pay in advance. Details will be advertised in the November newsletter.

**Past Activities:**

- Pam Keil, Barb Gilfedder and Michael Laflamme entered the Bird Festival twitchathon as the Mad Natters team. They had a dream run, seeing a total of 92 birds, a first place total. Kunoth Well was a particularly good ticking spot with Common Bronzewing, Peregrine Falcon, Mulga Parrot, Bourkes Parrot, Grey Honeyeater, Red-capped Robin, Hooded Robin, Major Mitchell Cockatoo, Inland Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Slaty-backed Thornbill as well as many common birds all seen close by.

**Future activities:**

- Sat 12 October - Tanami Track Trek looking for birds and plants – Barb Gilfedder. Interest from Pam and Michael, Beth Hansen and Rosalie Breen. Will contact barb when plans confirmed.
- Thursday 17 to Sat 19 October, accompanying and helping Angus Duguid with a fish survey at several waterholes on Henbury Station. Contact Barb Gilfedder. Interest from Barb and Jim, Jim and Marg Lawrence, Rosalie Breen and Jill Brew.
- Sat 2 November – Rainbow Valley Claypan walk. Contact Barb Gilfedder

**Sightings:**

- Ian and Wendy Mann – Collared Sparrowhawk in their garden.
- Margaret Lawrence – Spinifex pigeons in the Hills at the end of Tmara Mara Circuit.
- Alex Hinchliffe - a snake or long tail disappearing under a rock at the Desert Park. After much discussion, suggestions and use of I-pod app it was decided that it was probably a Western Brown Snake which sometimes has banded colouration.

**Next meeting:** November 13.

Speakers: Angus Duguid and Pat Hodgins " An update on fish distributions and drought refuges of the Finke River."

Scribes: Lee Ryall (or Pam Keil if Lee away)

Supper: Vicki Gordan

Meeting closed 9pm