



September 2016

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



Macgregoria racemigera, Desert Snow, littered the ground in two places that were visited during the Newhaven Sanctuary trip, delighting all the plant people. See more photos on pages 6-9. Photo: Barb Gilfedder.

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
Presidents Report 2015- 2016 ...p3
Xmas at HDYC ...p4: Camp on Mt Giles...p5
Newhaven trip...p6-9

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

Web site:

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

Email: contact@alicefieldnaturalists.org.au

NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be October 2016.
The deadline for the next newsletter will be 23 September.
Please send your contributions to Barb Gilfedder: bjfedders@gmail.com

- Sun 4 Sept** **ASFNC PLANNING MEETING** at Gilfedder's House, 33 Battarbee Street, off Larapinta Drive. I hope all Committee Members are able to come. All members are welcome. Please bring ideas for trips and speakers.
- Wed 14 Sept** **Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club GENERAL MEETING** at the Lecture Theatre in Higher Education Building at CDU at 7.00pm. **Speaker – Doug McDougall** "Highlights of Hawaiian Wilderness" Doug will show pictures and talk about a recent trip to Hawaii, including a tour with Humpback Whales, a trip to Volcano National Park and the summit of the Big island.
- Remember to bring cash to pay for your **Membership renewal** if you have not already paid. Also **Central Australian Flora Brochures #1 and #2** will be on sale to members for \$4 each. Correct change appreciated.
- Sat-Sun 17-18 Sept** Lake Lewis drive. Drive to Tilmouth on Saturday, dinner and camp at Tilmouth Roadhouse, morning drive to Napperby Lakes with Bill Low at 9am; contact Barb Gilfedder
- Wed 12 Oct** **Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club GENERAL MEETING** at the Lecture Theatre in Higher Education Building at CDU at 7.00pm. Speaker to be announced.

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY ALICE SPRINGS

Contact: apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au

- Wed 7 Sept** **APS AS Meeting** at Olive Pink Botanic at 7.30pm.
Speaker: **Bec Duncum** "Flowers of Fitzgerald River National Park".
- 26-30 Sept** **Alice Springs - Australasian Systematic Botany Society Conference.** Check their website for details <http://www.asbs.org.au>

BIRDLIFE CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

Contact: birdlifeca@gmail.com

- Sun 4 Sept** **Social Birding**, 7:30 am at Sewage Ponds. Participants will need to do induction online first and be prepared to sign an indemnity form at the site.
- Wed 28 Sept** Birdlife Central Australia **Meeting** 7.00pm in Meeting Room at Alice Springs Desert Park.
- Sat-Sun 29-30 Oct** - National **BirdLife 24-hour Twitchathon**. Contact Pamelakeil@yahoo.com for details.

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Committee Members

President	Barbara Gilfedder	8955 5452	Public Officer	Rhondda Tomlinson	8953 1280
Vice-President	Lee Ryall	8953 6394	Property Officer	Rosalie Breen	8952 3409
Secretary	Pamela Keil	8955 0496.	Committee Member	Pauline Walsh	0416 094 910
Treasurer	Neil Woolcock	8955 1021	Committee Member	Robin Grey-Gardner	8952 2207
Website	Pamela Keil	8955 0496	Newsletter	Pamela Keil / Barbara Gilfedder	

Please note a few changes to the Committee. Thank you to all Committee Members who were on the Committee in the 2015-16 year, for your service. Congratulations to all who were elected for the 2016-2017 year. A big welcome to all new Committee Members!

It is the time of year to pay Membership subscriptions. If you have not renewed yours yet, please bring cash or cheque to the meeting, post to ASFNC, PO Box 8663 or pay direct into the club account at Westpac NSB# 035-303, Account # 100981. Reference with your name please, so we know who has paid. Membership form in last month's newsletter, if needed. Thank you!



President's Report 2016

Membership numbers this financial year have stayed about the same with some members moving interstate but others filling their positions. I am particularly pleased to welcome several younger enthusiastic Members to our group.

The first *Central Australia Flora Brochure – forbs and small shrubs*, put together by Jenny Purdie, Bec Duncum and myself, has proved a popular publication both locals and tourists. The money to produce it was put forward by our Club, the Australian Plants Society Alice Springs and Jenny Purdie. Our loan of \$2500 has now been reimbursed. We then lent a smaller amount of funds, \$1300, for the production of the second *Central Australia Flora Brochure – trees, larger shrubs, grasses and sedges*. This was launched last Sunday and the loan should be repaid over the coming year. Our reoccurring main Club expense appears to be insurance. Our newsletter is now mostly sent out by email so costs are low and we are extremely lucky that the Charles Darwin University continue to let us use this excellent venue at no charge.

As usual we have had some excellent speakers at meetings. We went to Africa with Pete and Lisa Nunn with some wonderful wildlife photos and to New Zealand with Colleen and the Kakapo recovery program: Closer to home we heard about The New Nature with Tim Low, ants from Kristi Abbott, Werribee Zoo from Doug McDougall and art and ecology from Ben Beeton; Local subjects were covered by Bruce Pascoe with acacia shrubland birds, Andy Vinter and invasive cacti, Lee Ryall fossils and Lisa Nunn with wildlife in the Old Andado area. It has been good to link speakers' subject and trips as in Lee Ryall's fossils talk with the Alcoota fossil dig and the Maloney Creek fossil hunt and Lisa's Old Andado wildlife with the Old Andado trip. My thanks to all the speakers and also to the note takers and supper bringers.

We have also had some excellent Field Trips. There has certainly been a lot to learn and lots of willing, sharing, knowledgeable people to learn from. The longer trips stick in my mind – an excellent long weekend at Old Andado, thank you Neil and Leigh, closely followed by another at Newhaven, both of which attracted several of our newer enthusiastic members. I understand that the Alcoota fossil dig and the Maloney creek fossil hunt, although the first was cold and the second was damp, were well attended and very interesting, thanks to Lee Ryall. The end of year festivities at Hamilton Downs Youth Camp were enjoyable with different walks from last year, thanks to Ian and Wendy Mann. Ilparpa claypans and the Intertexta Forest were great places to go. Meg Mooney led a trip to Ellery Big Hole, Jill Brew a walk on the Woodland Trail, Rhondda a visit to Ambalindum and Arltunga and Pam Keil a drive through Owen Springs. All these and more were interspersed with almost weekly local walks for which we need to thank Connie, Rosalie and Collette as well as Cec in the first half of the period. The Committee is always open to suggestions of activities or interesting places to visit.

There have been two shorebird surveys at the sewage ponds in this period. We have always managed to attract enough counters and scribes to conduct these and counts are always followed by interesting birding discussions. We are lucky that Power and Water still allow us access to this great birding site for these counts. I am hopefully that the ponds will soon become more accessible to locals and visitors. They have been closed apart from special events since November last year.

All these speakers and most of the trips have been reported in our monthly newsletter. I frequently hear comments from people about how much they enjoy reading it and looking at the stunning photos our members take. Many past members continue their membership just to enjoy the newsletter. Well done to all the contributors!

Lastly my thanks to the Committee, who have all performed their duties efficiently and who are always willing to help and support the club and me in any way they can. Unfortunately Charissa resigned as Secretary two months ago, I am hoping that tonight we can replace her.

I look forward to another year of interesting talks, walks and trips with as many members as possible organizing and participating.

Barb Gilfedder

Top photo by Rhondda Tomlinson; Photo on Owen Springs Reserve – Barb Gilfedder





Eremophila acrida

Christmas in July at Hamilton Downs Youth Camp - 23/24 July

Nine of us made our way to HDYC with the main group consisting of Ian and Wendy Mann, Rhondda Tomlinson, Rosalie Breen and yours truly in the lead. The first bit of excitement occurred about 2km along the HDYC road. We were travelling through Mulga with an understorey of flowering Eremophilas and I just had to stop and have a look even though I knew it to be *Eremophila acrida*. Sorry, no common name that I know of. Also in the area, was Mulga Fuchsia (*Eremophila gilesii*) and Native Fuchsia (*Eremophila latrobei*) with its red flowers.

However, the exciting find was a yellow-flowered form of the same species.



Eremophila latrobei – an unusual form with yellow flowers.

We arrived at HDYC to find Neil and Leigh Woolcock and Michelle already relaxing on the verandah having had lunch and Anne Pye arriving shortly after us. What a pleasure it was to see caretakers, Ian and Lorraine back again. After unloading vehicles and selecting various forms of accommodation we gathered together for a walk. Ian was keen to show us a gully with a host of flowering plants and in particular a *Senna* with the brightest yellow flowers. We were able to identify it as *Senna glutinosa*.

The gully was a bit of a challenge for some but all made it safely down the creek. We explored further along the creek to the Macdonnell Ranges Cycads (*Macrozamia macdonnellii*) before returning to camp via a series of rock pools.

As the sun was setting the table was laid in true Christmas fashion and a three course feast was prepared in the kitchen and what a meal it was: - Pumpkin soup (made with a pumpkin from Rosalie's garden), chicken with gravy and a whole host of veggies. Neil was especially pleased to see brussel sprouts on the menu! There were at least three desserts to choose from or have all three – one being plum pudding! All this was washed down with a good supply of "liquid grape"! As the evening wore on we retired to the campfire where many a tall tale was told especially by those who consumed more "grape"!



In the gully with the bright flowering *Senna glutinosa*.

Sunday morning arrived and after consuming a hearty breakfast we drove to the start of Stage 3 (Jay Creek to Standley Chasm) of the Larapinta Trail and walked into Fish Hole, a return distance of about 5 km. The trail is along the bed of Jay Creek and cuts through a ridge of the Chewings Range. Again, many flowering plants but the Wallflower Poison Bush (*Gastrolobium* sp.) with its bright red-orange flowers caught my attention. Many a photo was taken of the red rock walls and rock pool that is Fish Hole as we relaxed on the rocks – no one wanting to leave.



Red rocks at Fish Hole

We returned to HDYC for lunch, said our goodbyes to Ian & Lorraine and headed for home with a stop at another waterhole along the way. Unfortunately, cattle were just leaving the waterhole as we arrived so the edges were a bit churned up but nevertheless worth calling into. There was a stunning Mintbush (*Prostanthera striatiflora*) growing out the boulders on the edge of the waterhole.

All good things must come to an end and so we made our way home with memories and photos of another great Field Nats outing. Thank you to Ian and Wendy for organising the weekend. I'm all for doing it all again next year.

Report by Connie Spencer; photos by Rosalie Breen



Camp on Mt Giles, Hannah Hueneke and Rosalie Schultz - July 2016



“Flowers were amazing! APS and Field Nats brochure was brilliant, much more sensible to take up there than any book.

Flower photos clockwise from above left:-

Curry Wattle - *Acacia spondylophylla*

Mountain Hakea – *Hakea grammatophylla*

Showy Indigofera - *Indigofera basedowii*

Sticky Hop Bush - *Dodonea viscosa*

Hill Wallflower Poison - *Gastrolobium brevipes*





On the way to Newhaven – 29 July - Barb Gilfedder

Waitzia acuminata flowers droop gracefully when they are immature. When the bracts open up, the flowers stand up straight, displaying the tiny flowers within and inviting insects to come and fertilize them. Along the Tanami Road on a short stop for a cup of coffee and we found these pretty daisies under a forest of Mulga trees. What stunning flowers!

It is sometimes said that the journey is more important than the arrival. In this case the journey was very rewarding, with many stops along the way to investigate plants!

Further along the Tanami Road, an isolated *Eremophila maculata* was in full flower.

The roadsides of the Newhaven Road are almost like a planted garden, with a wide variety of species including *Newcastelia cephalantha*, another mauve one *Keraundrinia integrifolia* and the high-flying brilliant orange *Grevillea juncifolia*. *These four pictured below.*



And a favourite place, that I always have to stop at, is just North of the gap you go through in the Siddeley Range. Here the *Acacia maitlandii* with its pointy leaves and the droopy *Grevillea eriostachya* were in full flower. A colourful journey indeed.





NEWHAVEN 29 July – 1 August

Gil and Dennis O'Connor –

We really enjoyed the trip, learnt so much about identifying plants and birds. For us the knowledge shared by the group was exceptional.

From the moment we met the convoy at the Sargent St turn off, we knew we were in for a good weekend. Driving out was entertaining with Russell and Caragh alerting us to the various birds they saw (we only spied half) to Caragh and Candice trying to encourage Dennis to use the Eagle One call sign on the radio – they did achieve their goal in the end.

Our first adventure was to Potato Gorge. The Curry Wattle, *Acacia spondylophylla* and Holly Grevillea, *Grevilla wickhamii* were stunning on the way in. Climbing up the Gorge with Nerida (natural mountain goat), Candice and Caragh, was our first experience of being with people that knew a lot more than us about the flora. We thought their patience with the “oldies” asking ‘What’s this?’ was great. It really opened our eyes. We did have a chuckle when we got to the top – how were we going to get down “it all looked very different” Half way down, we sat in the cool sharing a little of our stories and Dennis gave a “Chook Talk”.

Climbing Home Hill with Connie on the first evening was a delight, especially seeing the Tobacco Bush – I hadn’t seen it in its natural state before, just cleaned dried bits out of beds, behind ears, etc.

Sitting around the campfire gave us the opportunity to get to know each other and built up the excitement about the next day. Sharing Melinda’s sweet potato in butter and soy, listening to Barb, Jim and Connie’s stories of their adventures and Nerida’s Bilby studies added to the experience.



Top: view of the Siddeley Range by Caragh.

Nerida, Caragh, Candice, Gil and Dennis in Potato Creek Gorge. Photo: Pauline Walsh



Wow, what a day Sunday was- great company, fantastic sharing of knowledge, brilliant scenery – simply spectacular – Everyone had something to contribute to the day including Kirrily chasing after a Military Dragon lizard and Ian’s knowledge of birds. I have to mention the “Cat” conversation that occurred – so funny! It was all a highlight.

Sunday night around the campfire was fabulous, watching Pauline do her Woks Up with Russell as the assistant chef – a very relaxing way to wind up the day. (below)

Left: Dennis’s highlight was seeing Bush bananas, *Marsdenia australis* And Gil’s Purple Handflower, *Goodenia vilmoriniae*. Photos: Gil O’Connor



A Haven New to Me

by Nerida Liddle

Out of town to Newhaven, just for one night
350k's one way, can that really be right?

Luckily the smooth road and plants all around
made pleasure to sight and the car hardly a sound.

Until Potato Creek tempted us near,
up went a cry, a shout, not a cheer.

Poor Candice's head thudded the roof
as we careered over a bump, unfriendly and aloof.

Undeterred we tackled camp hill next
some with a beer in hand, but all impressed.

Chocolate and cheer around the campfire abound
an early night for all, in bed safe and sound.

Susie's, Bottle Neck, Tecticornia and Swan Lake,
oh no, back to Susie's we are starting to bake!

Look at this, look at that, snowflake plants I do love,
did you see the dotterel, the duck and the diamond dove?

What a place to stay,
a haven, with more exploring for another day!



Bird list by Ian Archibald; photos by Caragh Heenan

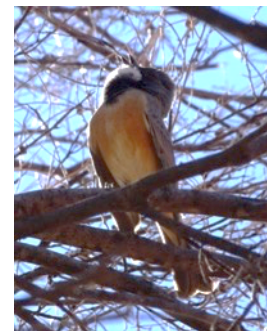
Pink-eared Duck
Grey Teal
Pacific Black Duck
Hardhead
Australasian Grebe
Hoary-headed Grebe
Common Bronzewing
Crested Pigeon
Spinifex Pigeon
Diamond Dove
White-necked Heron
White-faced Heron
Black-shouldered Kite
Black-breasted Buzzard



Brown Falcon

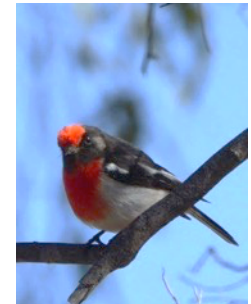
Brown Goshawk
Nankeen Kestrel
Australian Hobby
Australian Bustard
Red-capped Plover
Black-fronted Dotterel
Major Mitchell Cockatoo
Galah
Australian Ringneck
Budgerigar
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo
Pallid Cuckoo
Red-backed Kingfisher
Variegated Fairywren
White-winged Fairywren
Weebill
Western Gerygone
Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Red-browed Pardalote
Pied Honeyeater
Singing HE
Grey-headed HE
Black HE
Brown HE
White-fronted HE

Spiny-cheeked HE
Yellow-throated Miner
Crimson Chat
White-browed Babbler
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike



Rufous Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Crested Bellbird
Masked Woodswallow
Black-faced
Woodswallow
Little Woodswallow
Grey Butcherbird
Pied Butcherbird

Australian Magpie
Willie Wagtail
Little Crow
Torresian Crow
Magpie Lark



Red-capped Robin
Hooded Robin
Rufous Songlark
Brown Songlark
Spinifexbird
Fairy Martin
Mistletoebird
Zebra Finch
Australian Pipit



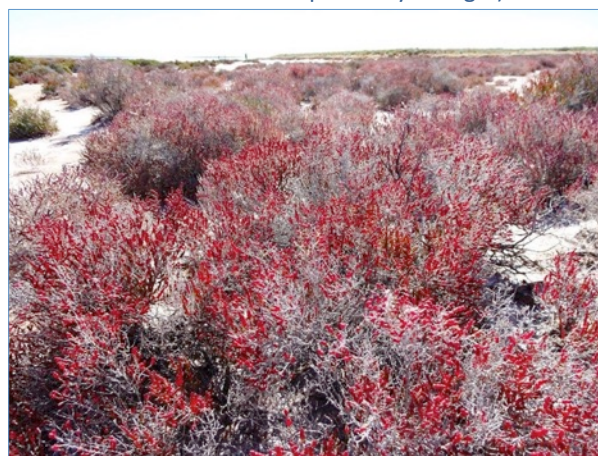
Connie Spencer - Another memorable trip to Newhaven with the many flowering plants causing great excitement. I'd hate to hazard a guess at how many times the vehicles came to a sudden stop, doors flung open and passengers bailing out to investigate a plant only to find several others to discuss and photograph. Cameras worked overtime.

My pick for this trip was the Desert Snow (*Macgregoria racemigera*) in the Stackhousiaceae family. When first seen from a distance this plant looks as if someone has emptied a box of tissues but up close a very different story. The genus name is after a 19th century politician, J. Macgregor and the species name refers to the flowers bearing racemes. It is an interesting genus in that it is monotypic meaning "containing only one species" and endemic to Australia. It occurs in Qld, NSW, WA & NT in arid and semi-arid regions. ([Desert Snow is pictured on the front cover](#))



My second pick is *Diplopeltis stuartii* in the Sapindaceae family with no common name that I know of ([photo above of the whole plant and close-up of flowers](#)). The genus name is from the Greek *diploos* meaning double and *pelte* meaning a small shield; referring to the conspicuous gland in the flower and the species name after John McDouall Stuart a 19th century explorer. *Dodonaeas*, Hopbushes are also in the Sapindaceae family although relationship between the two genera is not obvious. *Diplopeltis stuartii* is a trailing perennial herb. It is found in sand or gravelly soils from Wittenoom in the west to near the Qld border in the NT.

I can't not mention Susie's Lake with its carpet of green and beautiful old Inland Teatrees (*Melaleuca glomerata*) and Lake Bennett with its colourful samphires. ([Photos below Suzie's Lake by Connie and Lake Bennett samphires by Caragh.](#))



Caragh Heenan - My favourite parts of the trip were the new plants and the birds that were hanging around camp. Saw my first ever Variegated Fairywren so that was exciting. Thanks again for organising the trip, it was great!



ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED
Minutes of the general meeting held at the Higher Education Building Charles Darwin University – Wednesday 10 August 2016 at 7.30pm

August meeting following the 2016 AGM. Meeting was followed by Members' night, show and tell.
Thank you to Wendy and Ian Mann for supper.

Present: 13 Members and 1 Visitor

Apologies: Caragh Heenan, Rhondda Tomlinson, Sue O'Callaghan, Jim and Margaret Lawrence, Rosalie Breen

Minutes of previous meeting were on back of last newsletter – accepted by meeting.

Business arising

- Sewage Ponds – Martin O'Neill now ready to induct people and give them keys for sewage ponds. Rosalie, Colleen, Lee, Barb, and Sharlene will go on a "super" induction course, to be held at the sewage ponds, probably this Saturday. Martin would also like to know if any of those people are willing to go on a list held at the Tourism Central Australia office as possible escorts for tourists.
- Ecofair – Caragh agreed to set up membership forms and a poster at the Land for Wildlife stall.
- Launch of Central Australia Flora Brochure #2 was on 28 August. ASFNC to buy 20 copies for club to use as gifts.
- Annual membership fees due.

Treasurer's Report.

Balance of all funds end of June	\$ 1,346.23
<u>Income received</u>	
Membership	\$75.00
Hamilton Downs refund	\$100.00
Bank interest	\$ 0.00
Withdrawals	\$0.00
(Petty cash balance end July \$4.60)	
Total of all funds end July	\$ 1521.23

Correspondence in/out

- Email exchange with Martin O'Neill regarding sewage ponds (see above).
- Brochures available for Red Centre Bird Festival (Pam Keil), Bike Film Fest, and Solar Vision panel discussion (Neil Woolcock)

Future Activities/Trips

- 4 September – Planning Meeting, Gilfedder's house. 2:00pm
- 17-18 Sept – Lake Lewis drive (possibly); Drive to Tilmouth on Saturday, dinner and camp at Tilmouth Roadhouse, morning drive in at to Napperby Lakes with Bill Low at 9am; contact Barb Gilfedder

Next meeting – 14 September, 7.00pm, Speaker- Doug McDougall, highlights of the Hawaiian wilderness.

Scribe – Volunteer Needed; Supper – Volunteer Needed

Meeting finished 8.00pm