



September 2017

## Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



Long-leaf Corkwood, *Hakea lorea* was seen flowering beautifully on the trip to Hamilton Downs Youth Camp. "Christmas in July". Story and more photos on Page 5. Photo: Connie Spencer.

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.

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## NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be October 2017.

The deadline for the next newsletter will be 23 September 2017.

Please send your contributions to Barb Gilfedder - [bjfedders@gmail.com](mailto:bjfedders@gmail.com)

### Please contact leaders if you intend going on any field trips.

**Sun 8 Oct**      **ASFNC Planning Meeting** at Olive Pink Botanic Garden at 2.00pm. We hope all Committee Members will be able to attend. All members are welcome.

**Wed 11 Oct**      **ASFNC GENERAL MEETING** at the Lecture Theatre in Higher Education Building at CDU at 7.00pm. Speaker: **Peter Jobson, Chief Botanist at the central Australian Herbarium** will talk about and demonstrate several Botanical web sites that are useful for identifying and learning about our local native plants. **The CDU entrance 2 now has a security gate. If you drive right up to it, it should open automatically.**

**Sat 21 Oct**      **Drive to The Pinch and Hells Gate.** Leaders: Neil and Leigh Woolcock. More details in October newsletter.

### AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY ALICE SPRINGS

Contact: [apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au](mailto:apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au)

**Wed 4 Oct**      **APS AS Meeting** at Olive Pink Botanic at 7.30pm. Speaker: **Doug McDougall Alpine Flora talk.** It's starting to warm up in Alice Springs. If you feel like cooling down a little, come and join Doug McDougall on a tour of Australia's alpine areas to discover the local flora that survives in these extreme conditions. ALL WELCOME. Presentation followed by light supper, tea and coffee.

**Wed 1 Nov**      **APS AS Meeting** at Olive Pink Botanic at 7.30pm. Speaker: **Barb Gilfedder Photos from Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary.** Covering 262,000 hectares, and located near the intersection of three central Australian bioregions, Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary is one of Australia's largest non-government protected areas. ALL WELCOME. Presentation followed by light supper, tea and coffee.

**FRIENDS OF ILPARPA CLAYPANS**      [FaceBook.com/IlparpaClaypansLovers](https://www.facebook.com/IlparpaClaypansLovers)

**Email:** [ilparpaclaypanslovers@gmail.com](mailto:ilparpaclaypanslovers@gmail.com)

After many months of meetings, surveys and conversations, the Ilparpa Claypans Action Group is considering evolving into either becoming an Incorporated Association or a subgroup of Alice Springs Landcare Incorporated Association.

Please feel free to join us on Saturday 7th October at 10am -12pm to have a say on the future of the group.

Location: Gallery, Olive Pink Botanic Gardens.

On the agenda:

- A presentation on how we can work together with the Traditional Owners.
- A presentation on the option of becoming a branch of the Alice Springs Landcare group.
- A discussion on the draft constitution (if we decide to go down the path of becoming an Incorporated Association).
- An overview of future activities for the community organised at the Claypans.

Your voice is important as we all want the best for this place! Feel free to contact us with any questions!

Please let us know if you are planning on coming to the meeting. [Ilparpa Claypans Action Group](#).

### Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Committee Members:-

President	Barbara Gilfedder	8955 5452	Committee Member	Pamela Keil	8955 0496
Vice-President	Lee Ryall	8953 6394	Committee Member	Robin Grey-Gardner	8952 2207
Secretary	Anne Pye	0438 388 012	<b>Some other Club Responsibilities:-</b>		
Treasurer	Neil Woolcock	8955 1021	Newsletter	Barbara Gilfedder	
Property Officer	Rosalie Breen	8952 3409	Website	Pamela Keil	
Public Officer	Anne Pye	0438 388 012	Minutes Secretary	Connie Spencer	0429 966 592
			Facebook organiser	Colleen O'Malley	

## President's Report 2016

Membership numbers this financial year have stayed about the same with some members moving interstate but others filling their positions.

The *Central Australia Flora Brochures*, put together by Jenny Purdie, Bec Duncum and myself, have proved popular publications both locals and tourists. The money to produce them was put forward partly by our Club. It has now been totally repaid and we hope to be able to loan some funds to members, Lisa and Pete Nunn to help produce a new Central Australia Bird Brochure. Our reoccurring main Club expense is insurance. The basic cost went up a little this year, plus an extra amount for excursions longer than one day. However it is still a very good price for this type of cover. Our newsletter is 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 Hawaii with Doug McDougall, on an African trip with Jenny Purdie and Steve Sinclair: Closer to home we heard about the Development of Mammalogy from Ken Johnson, where some of our weeds came from by Margaret Friedel, Fire Management on Aboriginal lands by Ben Kaethner, Will Dobbie talked about Pest Animal Management, Claire Treilibs talking about Slater's Skink and Andrew Crouch talked about Birds that visited his garden, as well as two interesting Members' nights. My thanks to all the speakers, the members who suggested and contacted them and the note takers and supper bringers at our general meetings.

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 were a weekend at Old Hamilton Downs with Wendy and Ian, a camp near Hugh Gorge with Colleen, and Jocelyn led a trip out to Ruby Gap. On our fourth attempt we managed a trip to Lake Lewis with Bill Low, Robbie Henderson talked about Spiders and set us hunting for them at Olive Pink Botanic Garden, Robyn showed us around Colibah Swamp, we had a picnic and night walk with Pam at Simpsons Gap and a very well attended Xmas adventure at Standley Chasm. All these and more were interspersed with almost weekly local walks, some on Thursday mornings and some at weekends, for which we need to thank Connie, Rosalie and Collette and Marg Lawrence. The Committee is always open to suggestions of activities or interesting places to visit.

Most of these speakers and 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 performed their duties efficiently and who are always willing to help and support the club and me in any way they can.

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

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## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE NOW!

**Please pay at the meeting or by Direct Debit.  
Subscription costs and bank details are on the membership form, right.**

**Make sure you reference your direct debit payment with your name, so we know who is paying.**

**Please fill out the Membership form if your details have changed.**

### **Alice Springs Field Naturalists Inc.**

PO Box 8663, Alice Springs. NT 0871

Please accept my subscription for membership of the Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Inc..

My details are as follows:-

Name:.....

Address:.....

Tel. (home) .....

(mobile) .....

Email .....

Newsletter is usually sent by email.

This subscription is:

A new membership ... A renewal ....

Payment enclosed: \$ .....

Family \$30, Concession \$25,

Individual \$20, Concession \$15,

Life membership - Ten times normal fee.

Westpac bank details:- BSB No. 035303

Account No.100981. Include your name as reference on the transaction.

Subscription year is 1Aug to 31July.

## Treasurer's report for the 2016 – 2017 financial year

The Financial Report, audited by Rebecca Duncum, was presented for approval at the AGM.

The club's account balance was \$2,739.07 as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (up from \$1346.23 in 2016).

The club recorded a gain for the year of \$1,392.84.

The major expenditure was \$560.00 in April 2017 for public liability insurance. This is up from \$380.00 last year as the conditions of insurance cover have changed. The basic insurance cost has increased to \$420 with an extra \$120 to cover four 'longer than one day' events.

Income for the year was \$3,087.15 of which \$1300.00 was a repayment in September 2016 from the Australian Plant Society for the second lot of plant brochures.

Membership subscriptions were \$1334.50 (up \$182 on last year).

We received 63 payments for memberships, many being family subscriptions. We have 3 life members, two of which were awarded in the past, and one was paid for. We have also awarded a new life membership to Rhondda Tomlinson at the end of the period in recognition of her services to the club. We wish her well in her new Tasmanian home.

We attracted 20 new members to the Club during the year, but some others have moved on or have not renewed.

Membership subscriptions for 2017/2018 are now due.

These subscription payments will boost the club's funds to about \$4,000.

I recommend that subscriptions for membership remain the same as last year :-

Family membership \$30. Concession \$25

Single membership \$20. Concession \$15.

A life membership can be taken out at 10 times normal fee.

The club is in a position to pay normal expenses and remain financially secure in the coming financial year.

Neil Woolcock

Treasurer

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## Postcard from the Desert

from Cecily Sutton

Dave and I have just finished a trip across the Anne Beadell Highway. This is in the Great Victoria Desert. How diverse the vegetation and birds are. It was our first bush trip since leaving Alice Springs. There was so much more red sand than I expected and at times it seems to glow...perhaps it was the light, or my mood or in Emu.... who knows!! The variety of Eremophilas, the beauty of the Marble Gum and Ooldea mallee gum nuts as well as the early morning chorus of honeyeaters reinvigorated my spirit.



We saw 20 Mulga Parrots in Munumgari Conservation Reserve and about 50 *Swainsona formosa* in about 500 m at Emu (about 1km from Ground Zero).

There were widespread heavy rains in this area in summer and recent winter rains so there were mass wildflower displays. We only saw 19 camels in a week and this region has been destocked since the 1950s.

So, thanks to Dave for his planning and driving skills. With our 5 guide books we identified many birds and plants.

And thanks to Alice Springs Field Naturalists for education, enthusiasm and inspiration.

August Speaker Report by Anne Pye.

## “New Design Plan for Olive Pink Botanic Garden”

Ian Coleman, Curator of Olive Pink Botanic Garden (OPBG) for the past 3 years, talked about the current revision of the Garden Plan, which is part of the OPBG Master Plan. The OPBG is governed under the NT Crown Lands Act as an independent not for profit organisation governed by a Board of Trustees which was first established in 1971. The Garden was listed on the Register of the National Estate in 1995 and included on the NT Heritage Register in 2009. Its first Master Plan was developed in 2011 and the current review process was initiated in 2015.

The Department of Lands which governs the Crown Lands Act, commissioned a consultant’s report into the Future of the OPBG in 2005. The report recommended the development of a Garden Design Master Plan. As a community organisation the Garden wants to consult with the community about the development of this plan. Funding for development of a Garden Concept Design was recently received via the NTG. Clouston Associates, a landscape design consultancy from Darwin, which has already been involved with some major Alice projects including Stage 1 of the Desert Park, has been engaged. As part of preliminary consultations, Ian has already been asking the community about what they would like to see in the Garden in the future and has solicited written submissions to consider later in August - including from Field Naturalists - Connie Spencer, Colleen O’Malley, Barb Gilfedder, Margaret Friedel and others who have a strong history of involvement with the Garden. The Board Chair and Secretary as well as the Curator will consider the submissions and pass recommendations on to the Board, which, if approved, will then be put to the landscape designer. The designer will then develop a Garden Design, which will be reviewed by the Board and then put out for further community consultation, before it is finally incorporated into the Master Plan.



One of the rare plants within the garden is this Desert Grass Tree, *Xanthorrhoea thortonii*.



“... quite a lot of support for a new interpretive centre focussed on Miss Pink...”

There are a number of issues, which have been raised with different people, often expressing a wide variety of views. One of the bigger issues is the lack of adequate building space, combined with a lot of people wanting to get rid of the existing car park, which occupies so much space in the centre of the Garden, and creates so much dust from driving into it. One proposal is to erect a new building at the front entrance, which would incorporate offices and a new interpretative centre, leaving the existing offices available to be used for an expansion of the popular Café. This new building would look onto the Todd River and Annie Meyers Hill. Alternatively there has been discussion about moving the café to the front entrance – but many people like the café where it is. There has also been some discussion about developing a new car park along Tuncks Road – which would ultimately need to be agreed with the Council who are currently responsible for this strip of land adjacent to the Garden. (Rosalie Schultz at this point suggested that there should be more bike paths and pressure to get the bus to go to the Garden to reduce the dependence on cars!)

There is apparently quite a lot of support for a new interpretative centre focussed on Miss Pink, as well as a better recognition of Indigenous history in the Garden. It is likely that an Indigenous cultural walk possibly demonstrating bush foods and medicines will be developed leading up to Annie Meyers Hill, which is a Sacred Site. Consultations so far with traditional owners have indicated that custodians are happy to maintain the existing track up the Hill; and are also supportive of a “Miss Pink Centre”.

There has also been some discussion about the Gardens future role in ecology and conservation; for example should its collection of 600 rare species be extended? Some have suggested a greater emphasis on demonstration gardens – but this then raises the problem of current grazing by wallabies and euros and how to manage the grazing (not to mention their use of water from the irrigation system). One day just after the irrigation drippers were turned on Ian heard this “thump thump thump,” as the wallabies all turned up for what was their daily drink from the drippers!! Not only does this impact on watering regimes and plant health, but apparently the ‘pretties’ which would be used in any such gardens are obvious food favourites and pretty yummy by all evidence!! Managing the grazing also invokes the question of fencing with some people wanting to get rid of the existing fence around the Garden – notwithstanding the spates of vandalism at the café in the recent past.

The plantings within the Garden are limited to the landscape types, which already exist there; and the idea of Genus Gardens is problematic because of the variety of soil types that they invariably require within the one genus. However Ian was pleased to be able to advise that a fertigation system has recently been installed (following a successful grant application) which reduces the alkalinity of the local Mereenie-sourced tap water and which will allow more acid loving plants which are common in these parts to be grown.

Ian is hoping to use the current review of the Garden Plan and the Master Plan to develop individual projects with supporting documentation, which can be used to attract future funding from various philanthropic sources as well as the Federal Building the Regions fund. This is a model which has been used Australia-wide to develop Botanic Gardens, as and when funding becomes available for smaller and/or larger projects which all fit within the future Grand Vision for the Garden. He has already used a consultant to source a list of all possible funding sources for the OPBG available in the eastern States. He was keen to cite 4 successful Green Army funding applications which have been used as an example nationally by the Green Army incidentally promoting the Garden – and resulting in 3 audits which themselves will be useful for future funding application purposes.



**A lot of community support has been shown for weed removal on the Todd River bank adjacent to OPBG.**

By the time this article appears all written submissions will have been received but there will be further rounds of community consultation on the Future Vision for the Garden and its Design. Judging by the number of Field Naturalists bending Ian’s ear after his presentation he may already have received a few more comments and suggestions before the evening ended!

# Christmas in July at Hamilton Downs Youth Camp – 29 and 30 July 2017

By Connie Spencer

Photos by Pauline Walsh and Connie Spencer

Ian and Wendy Mann, Pauline Walsh and I set out for HDYC on a warm Saturday afternoon. This was my third Christmas in July in a row and the warmest one yet. Those of us who were at the first one will long remember how cold that one was!



Our first stop along the HDYC road was to check on a yellow flowering form of *Eremophila latrobei* (Native Fuchsia) that we found last year and had great success propagating. Not to be this year. Although still good ground cover, all was dry and the smaller shrubs shrivelled and brown. Further along the road we came to an expanse of *Eremophila duttonii* (Harlequin Fuchsia-bush) - a larger shrub coping with the dry conditions much better than the smaller plants and flowering. Our third stop was to photograph what had to be the most outstanding flowering plant for the weekend – *Hakea lorea* subsp *lorea* (Long-leaf Corkwood). At this point Marg and Jim Lawrence caught up with us and we continued on our way to our destination.



After checking in with Camp Hosts, Barry and Robyn and selecting our accommodation for the night, it was time for an afternoon hike. We followed a marked track to the top of the range to the north of the homestead. Once again, whilst trees and larger shrubs were looking happy and healthy, the smaller plants were quite dry and shrivelled. A new addition to the climb is a bench seat halfway up which we all took advantage of! At the top of the range there is a large expanse of smooth rock surface with *Callitris glaucophylla* (Native Pine) enjoying the habitat. The view across the valley to the Chewings Range is stunning.

Following our hike we settled into the evening's festivities. First, hors d'oeuvres provided by Pauline, served on the terrace whilst watching the setting sun. This was followed by a three-course meal of Christmas fare on a table decorated for the occasion. As the evening wore on we gathered around the campfire with many a tale being told before retiring for the night to our various modes of accommodation.

We awoke to a bit of cloud cover, hence a warmish morning of 11 degrees and an awesome sunrise. After breakfasting by the campfire it was time for another hike. We headed west on a faint vehicle track. The good previous summer season produced a great crop of *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass) and other grasses including the baddie (from our point of view) Buffel grass. The track took us past a disused weather station looking like a Tardis but sadly lying on its side now. From there we headed into the creek and ambled along the sandy creek bed amongst the River Gums, past a large rock slab bank with several *Macrozamia macdonnellii* (Cycads) and a little further on a large *Cynanchum vimiale* (Caustic Vine). From this point on, although only a short distance to the homestead, the terrain of large boulders to negotiate and rocks to hop to and from was a good exercise in maintaining balance. Fortunately we all managed to remain upright and made it safely back to camp to partake in a scrumptious lunch of leftovers.



Unfortunately, all good times must come to an end and so we packed up, said our goodbyes to Barry and Robyn and headed for home with great memories of another Christmas in July at HDYC.



## **Budgies and other birds** by Don Hadden

Llane and I have been out at Papunya. There have been huge flocks of Budgerigars out here so they must have had a good breeding season. I am attaching some photos. Perhaps your Field Nats would like to see a picture or two of the flocks.

The Australian Hobbies have been active and a solitary Peregrine Falcon has picked up a budgie or two. A Brown Goshawk has had a crack too and a Black Falcon rocketed through the flocks once or twice. The budgies come about 7.15am and most have drunk by 9.30.

I had 4 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers for a week or so but they have moved on. A solitary Red-kneed Dotterel stayed about 2 weeks but it too has gone. Other birds stay just 24 or 48 hours like a Black-winged Stilt and 10 Hardheads. There are 100 Grey Teal permanently here and 17 grebes all in winter plumage but a mixture of Australasian and Hoary-headed. Elsewhere there is a pair of White-backed Swallows nesting in a bank near the airstrip.

**Thanks Don!**

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**and to cool you off, a photo of snow taken from Bob and Leonie Read's house near Sheffield, Tasmania**  
by Rhondda Tomlinson.

**Thanks Rhondda!**





Photos from Lake Lewis trip – 16 July - Barb Gilfedder



*Eremophila duttonii*, Harlequin Fuschia



*Eriachne ciliaris*



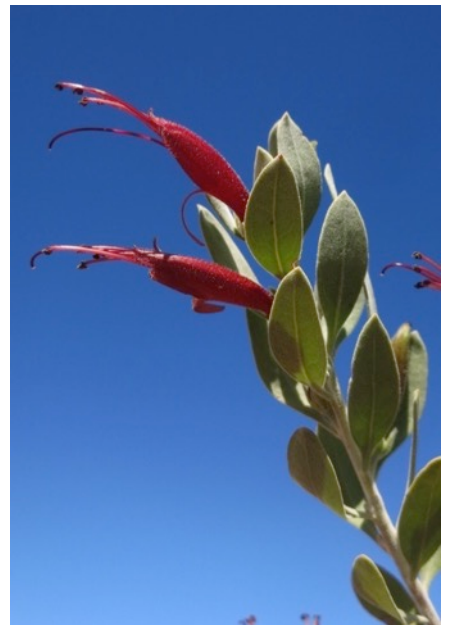
*Hakea macrocarpa*



*Sclerolaena* sp.



*Tecticornia verrucosa*



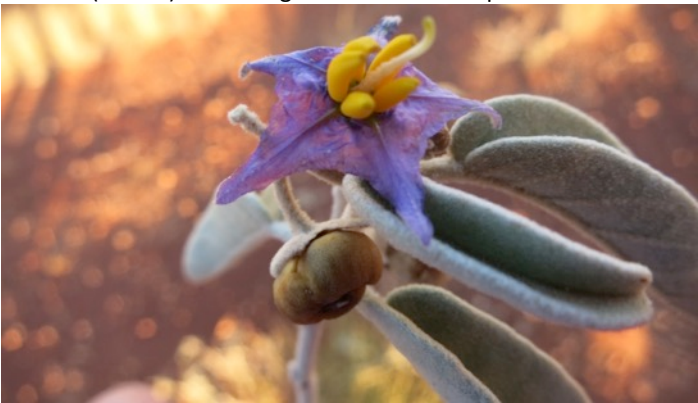
*Eremophila glabra*



Black Samphire, *Tecticornia halocnemoides* in the foreground.



Bill Low (centre) discussing the different samphires.



Desert Raisin, *Solanum centrale*



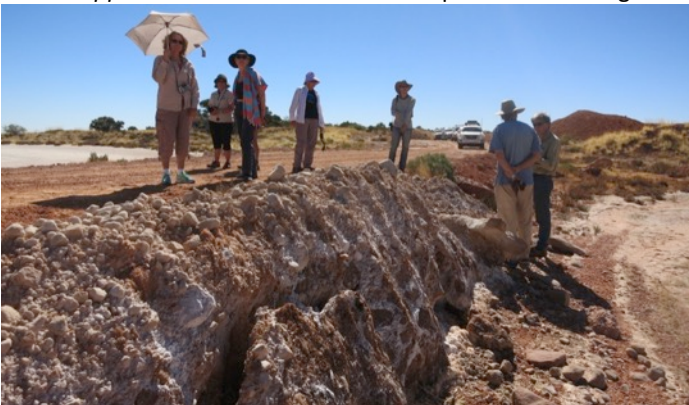
Sleepy Hollow Yacht Club for lunch under Whitewood shade



Dried *Ruppia tuberosa* strands and Ostrapod shells on edge.



Salt crystals at the causeway



The causeway



A lovely stand of Bloodwoods and Whitewoods



**ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED**  
**Minutes of the general meeting held at the Higher Education Building**  
**Charles Darwin University – Wednesday 9 August 2017**

**Open:** Barbara Gilfedder opened the general meeting at 8:30 pm, following the AGM and presentation by Ian Coleman on Olive Pink Botanic Garden design plan. Thank you to scribe Anne Pye and Margaret Lawrence for supper.

**Present:** 20 members and 6 apologies as per attendance book.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the July 2017 general meeting were sent to members. Accepted by the meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Balance of all funds (including petty cash) end June 2017		\$2,739.07
Income for July 2017		
Membership		45.00
Expenditure for July 2017		
APS for <i>Australian Plants</i> mags to sell to Members	\$50.00	
Barb Gilfedder for magnets	31.98	
Change of Public Officer fee	40.00	
Total expenditure		121.98
(Petty Cash	10.15)	
Total of all funds (including petty cash) end July 2017		<u>\$2,662.09</u>

Report accepted by the meeting.

**Correspondence In/Out:**

- **Letter from Dept of Primary Industry Dept** in answer to a letter written to Colleen O'Malley re possible closure of AZRI Library. Decision to close library has been reconsidered and essential service will continue.
- **Land for Wildlife** requesting our participation in their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations 23 Sep 2017. Action: Barb to inform LfW that many key ASFNC members will be away, however, she will send request to the membership for a response. Also point out to LfW that the suggested date is in the middle of the Red Centre Bird Festival.

**Past Events:**

- 16 July – Lake Lewis day trip with Bill Low
- 23 July – Ormiston Pound walk with Doug McDougall cancelled due to insufficient interest although several people indicated their intention to attend after cancellation.
- 29 and 30 July – Christmas in July at Hamilton Downs Youth Camp. Leaders: Ian and Wendy Mann. 6 participants. Ian has suggested that if the event is held in the future a minimum number be set for it to go ahead.
- 5-7 August – Ruby Gap Nature Park trip lead by Jocelyn Davies.

**Future Events:**

- 13 August – Eco Fair. ASFNC not participating this year.
- 19/20 August - Serpentine Chalet camp and walk. Leader: Colleen O'Malley.
- 27 August - Australian Plants Society Todd River Bank Walk, looking at sites where Buffel grass has been removed.
- 3 September - Parks and Wildlife walk at Trepina Gorge Nature Park with Susie Armes
- 9/10 September - Molly's Bash at Old Andado
- Neil Woolcock will lead a drive/walk to The Pinch in October.
- Barb has emailed Jayne Brim-Box re day to Santa Teresa Salt Springs sometime in October.

**Newsletter:** Contributions for the September newsletter to be sent to Pam Keil.

**Next Meeting: 13 September** – Andrew Crouch, by popular request, will continue his talk about central Australian Birds. Scribe Colleen O'Malley. Supper – volunteer required.  
Neil Woolcock to chair the meeting in the absence of Barb Gilfedder and Lee Ryall.

**Close:** The meeting was closed at 9 pm.