



May 2018

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



Dusky Grasswren in wonderful light, taken mid-afternoon at Simpsons Gap. This side of the gorge was in the shade, but the immense red rocky cliff behind the camera was in full sun and was acting as a reflector. Grasswrens are such awesome little birds, and seeing them here made our day. Mat 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.

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NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be June 2018.

The deadline for the next newsletter will be 23 May 2018

Please send your contributions to Barb Gilfedder - bjfedders@gmail.com

ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

The three day **Tower Rock bush camping trip** has been **postponed** until we can find a leader.

Wed 9 May **General Meeting** at the lecture theatre in CDU higher education building at 7.00pm. **Dr Adam Yates**, Curator of Earth Sciences at the Museum of Central Australia will give a talk **“Alcoota in context: A walk through time”**. ALL WELCOME.

Sat 12 May **Walk in the hills off Kurrajong Drive to a “secret garden”**. This garden is a patch of hillside cleared of Buffel Grass by Henry and Sue and it is always a delight to see what native gems have emerged. Although a short walk, it is on a hillside so mind your step. We can continue on further for those who wish a longer walk. Meet 8:45 am opposite 102 Kurrajong Drive. – Connie Spencer 0429 966 592– combined **APS** and **ASFNC** walk.

Sun 20 May **Heritage Market at Old Telegraph Station 9.30 am to 1 pm**. Celebrate the people, places and heritage of the Alice Springs Community. Bring along family and friends to a great day out. Browse the stalls and enjoy a bite and sip a fresh coffee in the historic atmosphere of the old Telegraph Station. – **joint stall with APS AS**

Sat 9 June - Mon 11 June **Camping Trip with Jim Lawrence** Running Waters and the Finke River. High clearance 4wd, Members only and limited number of vehicles, 350km. Contact Jim Lawrence on 0428823631 or jim.lawrence.asp@gmail.com

Wed 13 June **General Meeting** at the lecture theatre in CDU higher education building at 7.00pm. **Caragh Heenan and Candice Appleby**, of Land for Wildlife Central Australia, will present some images of their trip to **South America** in February 2018. From the granite-peaks and grasslands of Patagonia, to the wet and wild of the Galapagos... and all that Iguazu, Rio, the Amazon and Machu Picchu have to offer in between. They will take you on a visual trip with them through some of the fauna and botanical highlights of 5 weeks abroad.'

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY ALICE SPRINGS

Contact: apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au

Wed 2 May **APS AS Meeting** at Olive Pink Botanic Garden Visitors Centre at 7.30pm. **Bec Duncum** will be taking us on a virtual walk through the **Blue Mountains** near Katoomba to see the **flora in bloom during the Summer**.

Wed 6 June **APS AS Meeting** at Olive Pink Botanic Garden Visitors Centre at 7.30pm. **Ian Coleman, Curator at OPBG** on the Olive Pink Botanic Garden new irrigation water saving system.

OLIVE PINK BOTANIC GARDEN

curator@opbg.com.au

Sat 5 May **Launch of Book – Olive Pink: artist, activist and gardener - at 5.30pm.** (See page 9)

BIRDLIFE CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

Contact: birdlifeca@gmail.com .

Wed 23 May Birdlife Central Australia **Annual General Meeting** 7.00pm in Meeting Room at Alice Springs Desert Park.

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Committee Members:-

President	Barbara Gilfedder	8955 5452	Committee Member	Pamela Keil	8955 0496
Vice-President	Lee Ryall	0417 401 237	Committee Member	Robyn Grey-Gardner	8952 2207
Secretary	Anne Pye	0438 388 012	Some other Club Responsibilities:-		
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	

The FrogID app

Speaker at April 2018 meeting.

Introduced by Jennifer Kreuzer – Community Engagement Ranger,
Parks and Wildlife

Speaker: **Dr Jodi Rowley,**

Curator of Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Biology

Australian Museum and UNSW – by Skype

Report by Rosalie Schultz



Australia's first National Frog Count is the FrogID app, launched 10 November 2017.

It contains a field guide to frogs, with photos and calls.

The exciting element is the opportunity for recording frogs. These are linked to your GPS location and uploaded to experts to listen to and identify.

Jodi has listened to 10 000 calls in 6 months!

One of biggest challenges in frog conservation is lack of knowledge. There are no official reportings of frogs over vast areas of central Australia. Frogs respond to rain, so it is difficult for the small numbers of frog experts to consistently and systematically document where they are. Therefore there is a great opportunity for citizen science (people power) to build the science of Australia's frogs.

Frogs can be identified by their call. This makes it possible for frog experts to identify them remotely, accurately and verifiably. Automatic identification by machine is very difficult. One individual frog can make many different sounds, and within a species there may be considerable variation. Also a recording may include multiple different frogs.

Frogs want to be heard so when there is a chorus of multiple calls, they are distinguished by different sound frequencies, and they will call at different moments. Many different frog experts are used to identify calls, and electronic sound analysis can also assist.

Why Frog ID?

The frog scientists responsible for the Frog ID app plan to build a library of frog calls. This will assist in documenting frog distributions, and our understanding of breeding habits and hotspots.

The app will also enable us to:

- track the spread of cane toads,
- investigate impact of climate change
- rediscover missing species
- identify new populations of threatened species
- discover new species

FrogID since its launch in November 2017

44000 downloads by 12000 different users

- 17 000 recordings submitted
- 22 000 frogs identified
- 140 species recorded, including 8 threatened species
- a recording of 11 different frogs during one segment

FrogID in NT

NT is home to 51 species of frog but many are poorly known, and more are still being discovered. The most recent new frog was the **Ratcheting Toadlet** discovered 2014.

So far there are 2 200 submissions to FrogID from NT, with 33 species of frog (66% of the total). Three of the nine frogs in central Australia have been recorded on the app. Territorians are leading in using the app and recording frogs.

Spencers Burrowing Frog is of great interest as there may be more than one species. NT Spencers Burrowing Frogs sound quite different from WA Spencers Burrowing Frogs. Therefore they may be different species.

Tips for recording frogs

Get as close as you can to the calling frog

Stop moving

Hold the phone away from your body, towards the calling

Wait for the frog to really get going (later at night)

Record for 20 seconds

Keep trying – make another recording

Learn your crickets!

Survey tips

Act immediately upon rain.

Repeat, repeat, repeat – daily.

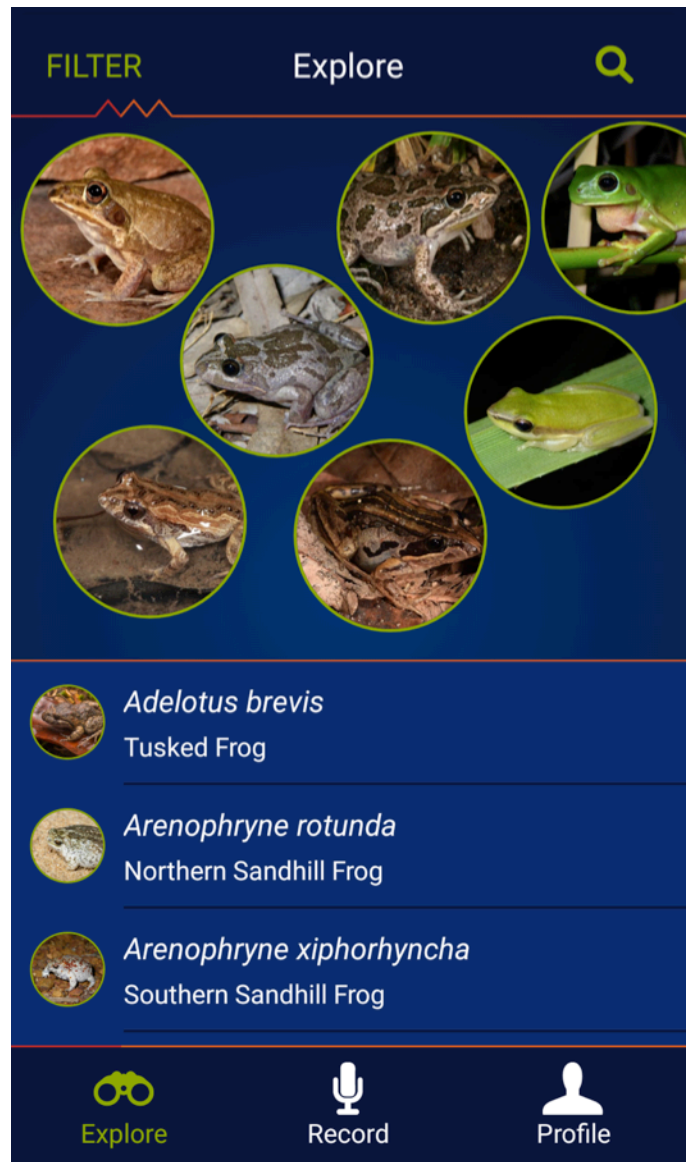
Fill in the gaps where frogs have not been documented.

Habitat photos or frog photos are useful.

We can contribute to frog survival

People recording frogs through the Frog ID app can contribute to the knowledge and monitoring of frogs throughout Australia, especially in regions such as central Australia where there is so much unknown about frogs. Frogs are keystone species in ecosystems – once lost entire ecosystems may collapse. They are vulnerable to loss of habitat, water pollution, disease and introduced predators, and climate change. We need to know more about frogs to prevent their loss.

Below: Opening of the app, and the explore screen where you search for your frog




Litoria gillenii – the Centralian Tree Frog

- still no recordings at the time I took this screen shot.

We need to get out there!

Frog Details



Centralian Tree Frog
Litoria gilleni

National Threat Status (EPBC): Unlisted

Calling period

Month	Activity
J	High
F	Low
M	None
A	None
M	None
J	None
J	None
A	None
S	None
O	Low
N	High
D	High

Explore Record Profile

Frog Details

Month	Activity
J	High
F	Low
M	None
A	None
M	None
J	None
J	None
A	None
S	None
O	Low
N	High
D	High

Calls
No Calls Available

Description

A large species of frog reaching up to 8 cm in body length. It has a bright green or olive-green back, with white or cream-coloured spots. The belly is white, and the male has a pale pink throat. The pupil is horizontal, and the iris is gold. The fronts and backs of the thighs are yellow. Fingers are slightly webbed and toes are three-quarters webbed, both with large discs.


Explore Record Profile

Frog Details

Occurs in boulder fields and rock crevices.

Distribution

Found in the MacDonnell Ranges area, in central NT.



Breeding Biology

Explore Record Profile

A ramble amongst the buffel

Meg's walk - 7 April 2018
Report by Colleen O'Malley

It is always a pleasant surprise to head off into a veritable sea of buffel with a select group of Field Nats and unearth interesting finds. Our recent amble out the back of Meg's place was one such occasion. With Meg in the lead and slightly wrong-footed at the start because of the extra vigour of the buffel masking her usual trail, we headed roughly in the direction of Hidden Valley but toward some small stoney rises where the buffel had yet to get a stranglehold and where Meg had found interesting artefacts and plants and birds in the past.



We came across the odd *Heliotropium flintii*, *Indigofera colutea*, *Leiocarpa semicalva*, *Tephrosia supina*, *Solanum quadriloculatum*, *Evolvulus alisinoides* herbs in flower, and saw notch-leaves seedlings of *Josephinia eugeniae* and leaf bases of Ribbon Grass (*Chrysopogon fallax*) on heavier soils along a small creek line. There was the odd fungus lurking about, and plenty of fresh growth on the various shrubs and trees hanging in despite their buffel buffer.

Meg pointed out some notable places with evidence of earlier Aboriginal occupation still visible and showed us where a hot fire burnt through an area a few years back – far fewer corkwoods, ironwoods, mulga or bloodwoods survive in these burnt areas, and there is the risk that much more of this crown land area would burn in another fire given the much denser buffel cover now compared to a few years ago.

All in all it was a pleasant pre- breakfast stroll in good company along one of the suburban borders of our town as yet not completely over run by weeds.

Photos clockwise from top right: Black powderpuff fungi (*Podaxis pistillaris*); *Myllocerus* species weevil on *Solanum quadriloculatum* flower; the gang: Rosalie, Anne, Meg and Connie; seed store of native oat grass (*Enneapogon avenaceus*) gathered by *Pheidole* species ants.



Kunoth Bore trip with Pam Keil - 14 April 2018

Photos by Pam, Captions by Pam and Barb



Juvenile Assassin Bugs on one of the many central Australian Pea flowers, *Swainsona burkei*.



Low Desert Rose, *Gossypium bickii* seems to be always flowering on the sides of the Tanami Road.



This yellow-flowering Mistletoe was abundant in the Dead Finish, *Acacia teragonophylla*, shrubs around Kunoth Well. It is Harlequin Mistletoe, *Lysiana exocarpi* subsp. *exocarpi*, which more commonly has red and green flowers.



This little yellow flower attracted Pam's camera. The plant is *Tribulus eichlerianus*. There are several similar species, some introduced. Common names: Bindii and Caltrop. This one is native to Australia and very common in central Australia.



Above: Much of the vegetation around Kunoth Well was very dry, but this Headache Vine, *Cucumis agenteus* was very lush and productive. The stripy green fruits will ripen to bright red. It is an Aboriginal medicine plant with several different uses.

Below: We identified this beautiful Spider using the new **Spidentify** app. It is a Long-tailed St Andrew's Cross Spider, *Argiope protensa*. Note how it sits in the middle of its orb web with its legs spread out in pairs forming the cross, and has a very long abdomen.



Be Proud of the Feld Nats

It is now possible to get our Field Naturalists logo machine-embroidered onto shirts, hats, badges at Work Wear at 10 Fogarty Street.

Price as follows as follows: Shirt x 1 - \$13.20 or x 2 or more - \$6.60 each. Badges - \$13.20.

A good range of shirts is also available for sale at Work Wear.

Thanks to Rosalie Breen for organising this.



Central Australian Birds

A new brochure put together by local birders, Lisa and Pete Nunn is now available. It contains lots of their beautiful colour photos and is a great aid to keep in your glove box or backpack to help you identify our local birds.

Some species have photos of both male and female when they have different plumage. I like the way they have photographed many of the raptors in flight because that is the most common way they are seen.

Copies will be for sale at a special price for Field Naturalists at our next meeting.

New Book

Olive Pink:
artist, activist and gardener
by Gillian Ward

to be launched at
the Olive Pink Botanic Garden

on Saturday 5th May at 5.30pm
by Colleen O'Malley

Refreshments provided

RSVP: curator@opbg.com.au



ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INCORPORATED
Minutes of the general meeting held at the Higher Education Building
Charles Darwin University – Wednesday 11 April 2018

Open: The President, Barbara Gilfedder, declared the meeting open at 8:30 pm following a presentation via Skype with Dr Jodi Rowley, Curator at the Sydney Museum, on frogs and the new FrogID app, organised by Rosalie Schultz and Jennifer Kreusser.

Thanks to Margaret Lawrence for supper and to Rosalie Schultz for the newsletter write-up.

Present: 28 members, 16 visitors and 6 apologies as per attendance book.

Minutes: The Minutes of the March 2018 general meeting as printed in the newsletter were accepted by the meeting.

Business Arising:

- Website and the display of newsletters on it. Robyn Grey-Gardner and Pam Keil have in hand.
- Donation of \$1000 sent to Australian Wildlife Conservancy (for Newhaven Reserve in particular). Thank you with much appreciation has been received from Leah Royle of AWC and Joe Schofield at Newhaven Reserve. Joe has also offered to be a guest speaker if a mutually agreeable time can be organised in the future. Currently all meetings have speakers until November.

Treasurer's Report:

Balance of all funds (including petty cash) end February 2018 \$4,194.36

March Income:	Membership	12.50
	Bank interest	.33
	Total Income	12.83

March Expenditure:	Post Office box rental	<u>127.00</u>
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(Petty Cash \$30.15)

Total of all funds (including petty cash) end March 2018 \$4,080.19

Report accepted by the meeting.

General Business:

- *Birds of Central Australia* brochure by Lisa and Pete Nunn now available (\$5 for ASFNC members). ASFNC previously agreed to a loan of one third of the cost interest free, to be paid back when funds from sales available. An amount of \$1756 has been paid to Lisa and Pete.
- Anne Pye and Rosalie Breen have looked into prices for **ASFNC embroidered logo on badges and shirts** etc. at Work Wear as follows: Shirt (own item) x 1 - \$13.20 or x 2 or more - \$6.60. Badges - \$13.20. A good range of shirts is also available for sale at Work Wear
- **Vinyl banner** useful on occasions such as the Heritage Markets coming up. Barb displayed a couple of designs that she had come up with. Quote from TJ Signs of \$155 for banner 1200mm x 500mm. General opinion of members was that it was too expensive. Vista Print much cheaper. Barb will look into again when their next sale on.

Past Events:

- Sunday 18 March 2018 - Bird Count Alice Springs Sewage ponds organized by Pam Keil. Eight participants.
- Saturday 7 April 2018 - Walk 3-4 km with Meg Mooney. Five participants.

Future Events:

- **Sat 15 April 2018** Drive to Kunoth Well (a birding hotspot) with Pam Keil. Details to be sent out in an email
- **Sun 29 April 2018** OPBG walk with Connie Spencer. Meet 7:00 am at the gate on Tuncks Road.
- **Wed 2 May 2018** APSAS monthly meeting - Mountain photos by Bec Duncum.
- **Sat 5 May 2018** OPBG-Book Launch - *Miss Pink paintings* by Gillian Ward. 5.30 pm Refreshments
- **Sat 5-Mon 7 May 2018** Tower Rock trip – leader needed. Pam Keil has directions and details but unable to go.
- **Sat 12 May 2018** Walk to Henry and Sue's garden with Connie Spencer. Details closer to date.

Sun 20 May 2018 ASTS Heritage Markets – ASFNC/APS AS joint stall. A selection of interesting items for display needed.

Next Meeting: - Wednesday 9 May 2018 – Adam Yates, Curator of Natural Sciences, NT Museum on *Alcoota fossils* and new museum space. **Scribe** – Rosalie Breen; **Supper** – Jill Brew.

Meeting closed at 9 pm.

Minutes compiled by Connie Spencer