



November -  
December 2022

## Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



A warm and sweaty morning did not deter our hardy Alice Springs Field Naturalists from gathering at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station to celebrate the holiday season and the end of a fantastic year with a bring and share breakfast. From all of us to all of you, we hope that you have a wonderful and peaceful holiday season with a very Merry Christmas and a promising New Year.

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*[Follow us on Facebook!](#)*

# Contacts:

<b>Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club</b>			Thankyou for being up to date with your membership fees, this goes towards our ongoing costs such as insurance.
President:	Clare Pearce	0434 340 338	
Vice-President:	Marg Friedel	0417 849 743	
Secretary:	Suzanne Bitar	0419 897 735	
Treasurer:	Neil Woolcock	0428 521 598	
Public Officer:	Anne Pye	0438 388 012	
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General members:	Jan Black	Life membership - Ten times normal fee.	
	Wendy Mactaggart		
Newsletter/ webpage	Clare Pearce	<a href="mailto:clarepearce01081969@gmail.com">clarepearce01081969@gmail.com</a>	Fees can be paid in cash, by cheque or by direct debit: Westpac - BSB No. 035303 Account No.100981
Facebook	Meg Mooney	<a href="mailto:moon3@iinet.net.au">moon3@iinet.net.au</a>	

## Coming events:

### Speaker night:

Date: 8/02/2023

Time: 7.00pm

Location: Olive Pink Botanic Garden

Topic: wildlife spotting at Watarrka National Park (topic TBC)

### Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club planning meeting:

Date: 12/2/2023

Location: Olive Pink Botanic Gardens

Time: 4.00pm

Topic: Planning the calendar for 2023 – all ideas for presenters and field trips welcome

If the weather is particularly warm, I'll hold the meeting in the air conditioning at my place, stay tuned!

## Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club - Christmas breakfast:

*It was a morn' before Christmas and down on the lawns  
The Field Nat's were swapping some breakfast and yarns  
The table was spread with treats all prepared  
And stories and memories of this year, they were shared*

*The Field Nat's sat round in comfortable chairs  
On emerald grass under shady gums there  
With the breeze in the leaves, clouds soaring above  
The birds they abounded, miners, a crow and the doves*

*And so out in the park there arose such a natter  
'Bout adventures we shared; the air filled with chatter  
The plates passed around, with so much to eat  
But the company it was that proved such a treat*

*Now Barb, Leigh, Neil and Rosalie too  
Oh Jan, Max, Megg, and Wendy, it's true  
And Ian, Sue and Wendy, and Margaret yoo hoo!  
T'was fantastic to celebrate the season with you*



# Witchetty Grubs and Cossid Moths

Neil Woolcock has sent in a couple of wonderful photos of a large Witchetty, or Cossid moth (*Endoxyla leucomochla*), found at his place.



Cossid moths, or Witchetty moths are adult form of one of the emblematic critters of the arid zone, the Witchetty Grub. Bill Low, from Low Ecological Services, says that the species is widespread in Central Australia and that it's been good times for the Witchetty moths after the regular, heavy rains. Apparently some years many can be seen coming into outdoor lights in the rural area, but in drier times it can be a few years between sightings.

The following is from Ausemade website - <https://ausemade.com.au/flora-fauna/fauna/insects/witchetty-grub/>

The witchetty grub (also spelt as *Witjuti*) is the larvae of the cossid moth (*Endoxyla leucomochla*). The larvae of this large grey moth can grow to 6 cm and longer. The large grub is found mainly in the woody roots of the witchetty bush (*Acacia kempeana*) where it makes its home. The witchetty bush is an important plant for the Indigenous People of Australia. During a really good season, you can collect up to as many as 50 grubs from the roots of one decent sized bush.

Aboriginal women and children will dig around the roots of the witchetty bush. The roots of the bush are usually shallow growing. When they strike the root, they would follow the root along for a short distance and if there is a swelling in the root, with no evidence of an exit hole, they would dig the root out of the ground and break it open at the swelling. If the grub is injured while breaking open the root, they would usually be eaten immediately. The majority of the grubs would be taken back to camp to be roasted lightly in coals before being eaten.

The grubs are rich in proteins and fats that are easily assimilated by humans, and as a food source is highly valued by the Aborigines. Only the hard head parts are not eaten. When eaten raw, they are said to have an almond like taste. When lightly roasted depending on your taste buds, they can have a flavour like an egg yolk or that of chicken to prawn taste. Although the grubs can be found at all

times of the year, not all Witchetty bushes will harbour the grub. The moths themselves are also eaten.<sup>1</sup>

As well as food for bush tucker, they were also used in [traditional bush medicine](#). The witchetty grubs were crushed into a paste, placed on burns and covered with a bandage to seal and soothe the skin by the indigenous people of Central Australia.

Witchetty moths are widespread in their distribution and therefore have many different Indigenous language names:

Language		Name
Adnyamathanha	Wutjuri	
Alyawarr		Atnyemayt
Anmatyerr		Atnyematy
Eastern Arrernte	Atnyematye	
Luritja		Maku
Pinupi		Lunki, maku, pilanpa
Pitjantjara		Lunki, maku, ilykuwarra
Warlpiri		Ngarlkirdi

## Did you #spotapollinator? Wendy did!



The Australian Pollinator Count is a fantastic citizen science event held in November and the #spotthepollinator photo competition just one of the ways that we can be involved.

The #spotthepollinator competition in the NT was coordinated by Karlee Foster from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade and entrants from around the NT entered photos of pollinators they saw hard at work among the flowers.

Our very own Wendy MacTaggart entered this beautiful image of a bee interacting with a Wild Orange flower, winning a fantastic Yeti cooler for her efforts!

Congratulations Wendy, I hope your Yeti comes in handy on your adventures around the traps.

# Geological Society of the NT – 2023 calendar

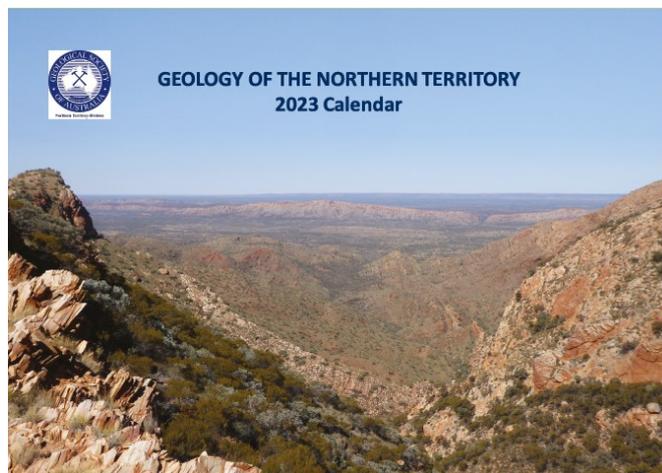
Anett from the Geological Society of the Northern Territory has been in touch to let us know that the Society has a wonderful 2023 wall calendar, available just in time for Christmas.

The calendar, put together by the Geological Society of Australia (GSA), is a first of its kind and features images of fantastic places and rocks across the NT.

The profits from the sale of the calendar will be used to support the publication of the geological and landscape guide book to the Larapinta Trail that will hopefully be published by the GSA by April 2023.

Profits from the Larapinta Trail geological guide book will go towards the GSA to support other geo-tourism projects across the NT.

The calendar would make a fantastic last minute Christmas / New Years gift and you will find the GAS order forms at the end of this newsletter.



## FEBRUARY 2023

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
		1	2	3	4	5	<b>Coroboree Rock</b> By Patrick Nelson 60m high dolostone of the Slaters Springs Group is dwarfed by the Heavitree Formation about 40km east of Alice Springs. The image taken from an elevated ridge of Lillie Formation, is a part of the Neoproterozoic succession of the Amadeus Basin.
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28						

# Alice Springs Field Naturalists – volunteering for citizen science

Diane Chanut, Senior Ranger at Watarrka National Park has been in touch with me about a possible project for the Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club.

Motion sensor trail cameras are used as monitoring tools in many different projects to great effect. Wildlife, both native and introduced, are lured to a particular location by a food bait, When the animal approaches the bait station their movement triggers the trail camera and a photo is taken of whatever is interacting with the bait.

This is a fantastic way of surveying animals as it has minimal impact on the environment. The bait is usually a scent bait, and doesn't provide the animals with any actual food, and the animals are able to interact with the bait, and be photographed by the camera, without being interfered with in any way by the surveyors.

Sounds great right, that is until you need to search through many short snips of footage, or individual photographs to see what's a critter, and what's simply grass waving in the wind.

The Watarrka Rangers are asking the Alice Springs Field Naturalists for assistance with their fox baiting camera footage. The bait stations are being interfered with, and images are being recorded, but the rangers do not have the time to sort through the footage to find what's out there. The Rangers are wondering if there are any Field Naturalists who would like to volunteer to watch short sections of footage, usually a minute or so in length, with the knowledge that occasionally there might be something special popping up on screen.

All that our volunteers will need is access to a computer with a USB port and maybe half an hour or so each week for a couple of weeks.

Diane is downloading footage from the trail cameras onto a handful of USBs and I am hoping to get hold of these over the Christmas period. The USB's will include some footage off the cameras and an Excel spreadsheet. Our volunteers will only need to look over each small section of footage and record what they saw on the spreadsheet.

There's been a couple of people show an interest in this project already, but it would be great to have a couple more names on the list. There's a possibility that at some point in the new year our volunteers may also have the chance to sort through trail camera footage from a rock rat survey project. I reckon it'll be really exciting to see the small whiskery face of a threatened species pop up on my screen at home.

If you think that this project is something that you'd like to be involved with please let me know via [clarepearce01081969@gmail.com](mailto:clarepearce01081969@gmail.com).

# Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club

## presentations and excursions in 2022

Our first full year back on deck without COVID restrictions has been a busy one with some fascinating presentations and interesting excursions.

Thankyou to all the members who organized or led activities, the more input we get from everyone the better our program is!

Barb Gilfedder has sent me through a list of presenters, members and excursion leaders who contributed to the Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club this year. I know that you will all join me in thanking them for their efforts, and their generously donated time and knowledge.

Presenters, contributors and excursion leaders 2021-2022

Bill Low - [lowecol@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lowecol@lowecol.com.au)  
Doug McDougall - [stenocarpus75@gmail.com](mailto:stenocarpus75@gmail.com)  
Ian Coleman - [curator@opbg.com.au](mailto:curator@opbg.com.au)  
John Gaynor - [john.gaynor@nt.gov.au](mailto:john.gaynor@nt.gov.au)  
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Ken Johnson - [johnson5@bigpond.net.au](mailto:johnson5@bigpond.net.au)  
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Franca Frederiksen - [david.franca@bigpond.com](mailto:david.franca@bigpond.com)  
Nikola Van de Wetering - [n.vandewetering@icloud.com](mailto:n.vandewetering@icloud.com)  
Anett Weisheit - [aweisheit@gmx.de](mailto:aweisheit@gmx.de)  
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Steve Morton - [mortondunnart@gmail.com](mailto:mortondunnart@gmail.com)  
Joe Schofield - [josef.schofield@australianwildlife.org](mailto:josef.schofield@australianwildlife.org)  
Jimmy Cocking - [closetonature@gmail.com](mailto:closetonature@gmail.com)  
Anne Schmidt - [gschmidt@bigpond.com](mailto:gschmidt@bigpond.com)  
Tim Fernando -  
Angus Duguid - [Angus.Duguid@nt.gov.au](mailto:Angus.Duguid@nt.gov.au)  
Glenn Marshall - [glenn.jane@yahoo.com.au](mailto:glenn.jane@yahoo.com.au)

Also Members

Lisa Nunn, Patrick Nelson, Marg Friedel, Charlie Carter and Deb Clarke

**GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC.**  
**Northern Territory Division**



**CATALOGUE AND ORDER FORM**  
**December 2022**

Prices are inclusive of GST

**Order Form Attached**

# 2023 CALENDAR GEOLOGY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

The 2023 NT Geology Calendar is an A4 landscape monthly calendar featuring high resolution photos that highlight the diversity of geology across the Northern Territory.

100% of profits go towards publishing a new book- The Geological guide to the Larrapinta Trail- by GSA member Anett Weisheit.

One calendar		\$25.00
Two calendars	\$22.50	
Three or more calendars	\$20.00 each + postage and handling	

\$10 postage and handling applies, or free local pickup in Alice Springs or Darwin.

## Postage examples

One calendar: \$25.00 plus \$10 postage and handling = \$35.00 inc GST

Two calendars: \$45.00 plus \$10 postage and handling = \$55.00 inc GST

Three calendars: \$60.00 plus \$10 postage and handling = \$70.00 inc GST

Three + calendars: \$20 each, and please email [gsa.northernterritory@gmail.com](mailto:gsa.northernterritory@gmail.com) to ascertain total postage charges.

## AUSTRALIA-WIDE PUBLICATIONS

The Federal office of the Society also publishes a catalogue of the Society's publications from across Australia. This can be seen on [www.gsa.org.au](http://www.gsa.org.au)

# ORDER FORM

TO: Geological Society of Australia Incorporated (NT Division),  
Divisional Sales

Email: [gsa.northernterritory@gmail.com](mailto:gsa.northernterritory@gmail.com)

C/- Jo Whelan (Treasurer)

Please forward me the following publications:

Product	Quantity	Cost incl. GST	Postage	Total price

For multiple products, please email to ascertain total postage charges.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

## Payment options

1. ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER MADE OF \$.....

To BSB 082 067, Acc. No. 52507 4491, in name of Geological Society of Australia, quoting your surname and NT (e.g. 'Jarrett NT').

Please advise by email when payment made.

2. CHEQUE FOR \$.....

(Make all cheques payable to Geological Society of Australia)

If you have any questions concerning this order, please email [gsa.northernterritory@gmail.com](mailto:gsa.northernterritory@gmail.com)