



September 2024

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



Dysphania kalpari—Rat-tail Goosefoot. One of the photos featured in Barb Gilfedder's Show and Tell, which followed the AGM in August—see more inside!

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month (except December and January) at 7:00pm at the Olive Pink Botanic Garden.

CONTENTS

Meetings, trips and contacts	p. 2
Spencer Valley visit—Saturday 17th August 2024	p. 3
Field Diary—Member's Night	p. 5
Slide Show— Member's Night	p. 6
Moths!	p. 6
Flowers Everywhere — Bond Springs Track	p. 7
AGM—minutes, President's & Treasurer's reports	p. 8

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[Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club](#)

The next newsletter will be published on **1 October 2024**.
We appreciate all contributions, articles, and photos both local and from elsewhere.
Please have them to Lisa McLean lisamclean@outlook.com by **20 September 2024**.

ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Wednesday 11th September – 7.00pm. Camel trek in sand country and the magic of outdoor education. Exhilarated after a 6 day camel trek with Class 7&8 students, Megan Hatton will share her experience of fields of flowers, a variety of grasses and our beautiful desert in all its glory.

Share your suggestions! Ideas [and leaders!] for field trips and member talks are always welcome! Keep an eye out for the next Planning Meeting. Thanks most recently to Sue Morrish and Dave Albrecht for leading the walk through Spencer Valley. See page 3 for a recap and photos of the day.

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY—ALICE SPRINGS

Wednesday 4th September —7.00 pm. Pasture dynamics in Central Australian rangelands: What makes this good cattle country and how to keep it that way. Alison Kain, Pastoral Production Officer (extension), Livestock Industries Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade.

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Committee Members

President	Vacant	
Vice President	Vacant	
Secretary	Lisa McLean	0412 642 987
Treasurer	Neil Woolcock	0428 521 598
Property Officer	Jill Brew	0437 223 203

General Members

Kylie Cowan	0418 477 450
Peter McDonald	0427 177 450
Wendy Mactaggart	0434 495 903

Public Officer

Anne Pye	0438 388 012
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Other Club Responsibilities

Newsletter—Lisa McLean
Facebook—Meg Mooney moon3@iinet.net.au
Website—Kylie Cowan

Positions Vacant

As you'll note from the AGM minutes included in this newsletter, the positions of President and Vice President remain vacant. The committee will continue to work together to ensure Club activities continue.

Thank you

Thanks to all contributors toward this month's newsletter: Jane & Peter Bannister, Kylie Cowan, Marg Friedel, Barb Gilfedder, Fiona Walsh.

Welcome new members

Welcome to the following new member who has recently joined the Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club.

Tamara Morgan

Be sure to give Tamara a warm welcome at an upcoming event, field trip or speaker night.

Annual subscriptions are due

Family \$35 / Family concession \$30 / Individual \$25 / Individual concession @\$20. Members living interstate—newsletter only—\$10. Subscription year is 1 August—31 July. Westpac details: BSB: 035303 / Acc: 100981. Include your name as a reference on the transaction.

Moths!

Jane and Peter Bannister brought these moth pupae [right] to the recent Member's Night 'Show and Tell'.

They are often found in dead wood; but these particular ones were found between the house bricks tucked behind a rain gutter down pipe. These have a silky/woolly texture, and some suggested these were Cedar Moth (*Leptocneria reducta*) pupae. However, despite our best efforts we're finding them difficult to identify with any certainty.

Any ideas?

For more moths from Jane and Peter, see page 6.



Spencer Valley Visit—Saturday 17th August 2024

Marg Friedel (text) and Fiona Walsh (photos)



What a pleasure it was to visit Spencer Valley with Sue Morrish and Dave Albrecht as our guides. After a wonderful season for wildflowers throughout central Australia, Spencer Valley was full of treasures. Sue had promised we would see some wildflowers and learn some new plant names, and that we did. Not all the highlights were spectacular. For one, I was intrigued to learn that we have two native *Oxalis* species, one of which was billowing green under a sheltering shrub. Other more familiar friends were the *Themedas*—*triandra* and *avenacea*, an abundance of daisies, and blue flowered *Erodium crinitum*, variously Storks/Cranes/Herons-bill, depending on who you talked to.

Saving the best to (almost) last, we saw some tiny creeping parakeelyas, and all was revealed. Here was the species whose name was spelt with five consonants in a row: *Calandrinia ptychosperma*! A big name for a diminutive and attractive, pink-flowered plant.

Thank you, Sue and Dave for leading the trip and sharing their knowledge, and Fiona Walsh for the photographs (which continue over the page). 🐦



Landcarer, Sue Morrish, orientates the group



[Above] *Oxalis* en masse.

[Right] *Oxalis radicata*, one of two native species, this one distinguished by hairs on the stem.





[Above] *Themeda, triandra* and *avenacea*

[Left] a mantis mimics bark peels

[Below] *Erodium crinitum*—variously Storks/Cranes/Herons-bill

[Bottom] *Calandrinia ptychosperma*—Creeping Parakeelya

[Bottom left] *Rhodanthe tietkensis*—Sand Sunray



Naturalist Diary

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Member Night

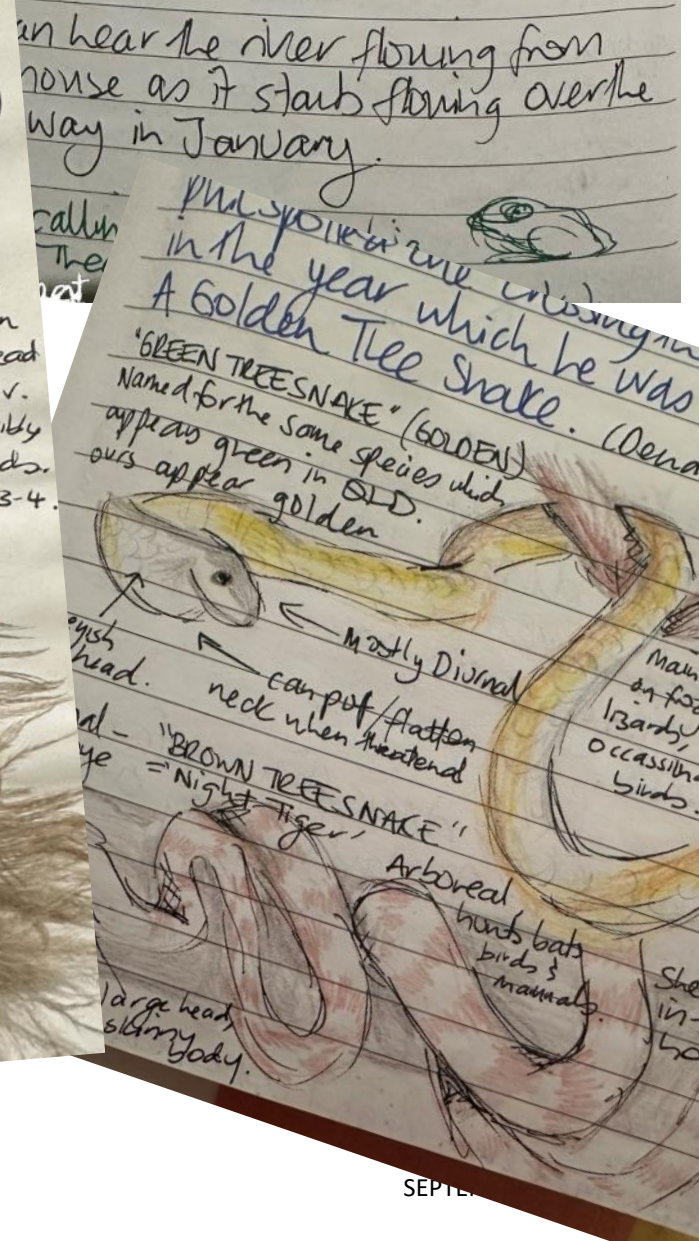
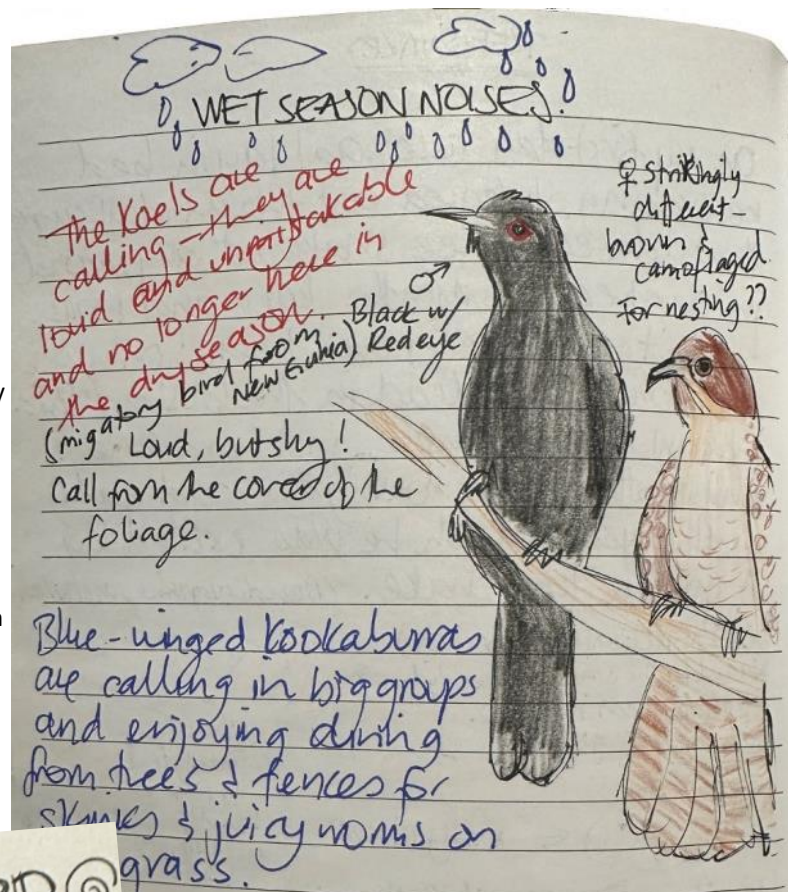
14 August 2024

Kylie Cowan

After the recent AGM I shared a little about what being a field naturalist means to me - and that a diary to record my observations (not always with names or answers) has been an important part of that. Keeping a nature diary is a great way to:

- Explore your observations in detail
- Keep records of changes or patterns over time
- Jog your memory
- Encourage further research of something you've seen in the field
- Practise the skill of observation

They can take any form... lists, drawings, descriptions, poetry, sketches, diagrams, thoughts, data... whatever you like! 🐾



Slide show...

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Member Night
14 August 2024

Lisa McLean

Another item following the AGM, was a short, but very interesting slide show, presented by Marg Friedel.

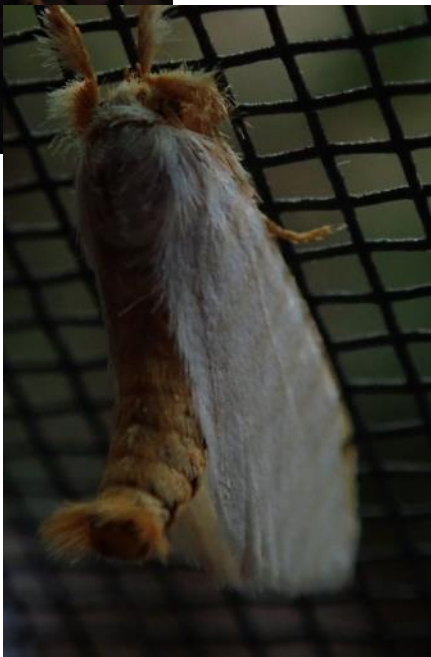
These slides—*Aerial Views of Alice Springs*— and accompanying booklet—were found by Barb Gilfedder who saved them from being taken to the tip! Produced by the NT Department of Education in 1980, they show a developing town of Alice Springs. The Club will be trying to get these cleaned and digitised before passing them back to the National Trust.

The opening slide shows a sketch drawing of Heavitree Gap, with other slides showing the new Stott Terrace bridge and Gap Road before the construction of the Tom Brown Roundabout. We look forward to being able to share these more widely in the future. 🐦

... and more moths!

Also from Jane and Peter Bannister, these moths are not the moths producing the pupae, but are just as mysterious (to me). And unfortunately my moth-phobia allowed me only so much time on iNaturalist, etc. to get a good look at various moths to identify them.

The moth below can be seen with a raised abdomen—which it does when feeling threatened. 🐦



Flowers everywhere — Bond Springs Track

Barb Gilfedder

As a small part of ASFNC Members' Night, I decided to show a few photos that I had taken that morning. Rosalie, Connie and I had travelled up the North Stuart Highway to the Tanami turnoff. There was a bit of Buffel Grass near the road but some natives were growing through particularly in the narrow drainage channels.

We found a track that turned off the Tanami Road and followed the fenceline of the Bond Springs airstrip, which is used by the Gliding Club. I suppose the track is for access to the fence and as a firebreak. There was less Buffel along there. We drove along slowly, admiring flowering plants along the way, stopping frequently to study them more closely and take a few photos and explore a bit further..

Stenopetalum nutans, Nodding Threadpetal was looking especially lush, with lots of flowers and teardrop-shaped fruit on long drooping stems. I have never seen so much *Dysphania kalpari*, Rat-tail Goosefoot. In some places it lined the track thickly as a verge up to two metres wide. I like the *Gnephosis arachnoidea*, Erect Yellow-heads. The stems and leaves are very fine and stiff and the billybutton-type buds and flowers are greenish. There were many *Eremophila gilesii* bushes, Mulga Fuchsia, covered with mauve flowers, usually close to Mulga trees as their common name suggests. I always love finding the *Tribulus astrocarpus*, Star Burr. It is such a delicate, prostrate herb, not as aggressive as other species in this genus, and has perfect five-pointed star fruits, as its name tells us. There were lots of other species, but these were my favourites.

And that's not all. The birds were obviously enjoying the lushness too. Thornbills and Zebra Finches were darting between shrubs and a Chiming Wedgebill and a Rufous Whistler sang almost continuously.

It was a lovely morning, looking, discussing IDs, and generally getting excited about our beautiful local native plants that have responded so well to the rain earlier in the year. 🌿



Eremophila gilesii—Mulga Fuchsia



Bond Springs fence track



Gnephosis arachnoidea—Erect Yellow-heads



Stenopetalum nutans—Nodding Threadpetal



Roepera echleri—Shrubby Twinleaf



**ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.
Minutes of the AGM held at Olive Pink Botanic Garden
Wednesday 14 August 2024**

Open: The President Marg Friedel welcomed members and declared the meeting open at 7.08 pm.

Present: Lisa McLean, Marg Friedel, Barb Gilfedder, Jill Brew, Connie Spencer, Jane Bannister, Sue O'Callaghan, Bev Gray, Neil Woolcock, Meg Mooney, Kylie Cowan, Peter Bannister, Wendy & Ian Mann, Rosalie Breen.

Apologies: Suzanne Lollback, Julie Taylor, Rosalie Schulz, Wendy Mactaggart, Peter Beky, Leigh Woolcock, Max O'Callaghan, Anne Pye

Minutes: The minutes of the previous AGM, held Wednesday 10 August 2023, were distributed and viewed.

Moved: Connie Spencer

Seconded: Jane Bannister

Accepted: Yes

President's Report:

Presented by Marg Friedel

Moved: Kylie Cowan

Seconded: Jane Bannister

Accepted: Yes

Treasurer's Report:

Presented by Neil Woolcock.

Moved: Peter Bannister

Seconded: Kylie Cowan

Accepted: Yes

Election of Office Bearers:

All positions were declared vacant, and Wendy Haynes presided over the election of office bearers for 2024-2025.

President: No nominations

Vice President: No nominations

Secretary: Lisa McLean

Nominated: Connie Spencer

Seconded: Suzanne Lollback

Accepted: Yes

Treasurer: Neil Woolcock

Nominated: Marg Friedel

Seconded: Bob Read

Property Officer Jill Brew
Nominated: Marg Friedel
Seconded: Kylie Cowan

Committee Member Kylie Cowan
Nominated: Lisa McLean
Seconded: Marg Friedel

Committee Member Peter McDonald
Nominated by: Kylie Cowan
Seconded by: Marg Friedel

Committee Member Wendy Mactaggart
Nominated by: Jill Bree
Seconded by: Marg Friedel

Public Officer Anne Pye
Nominated by: Marg Friedel
Seconded by: Peter McDonald

The position of President and Vice President were not filled.
Wendy Haynes congratulated and thanked all elected members and called for a nomination of meeting chair from the floor.

Lisa McLean nominated herself, seconded by Marg Friedel.

Lisa took over chairing the meeting.

Other positions appointed:

Website Manager: Kylie Cowan

Newsletter Editor: Lisa McLean

Facebook Administration: Meg Mooney

Meeting Closed: 7:45pm

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Inc.

2024 President's Report

In 2023/24 we had a wonderfully varied program of speakers and field trips. Recalling the speaker line-up, in September, following our AGM in August, Dorothy Latimer told us how to make the most of photographing birds. In October and November, Fiona Walsh explained the significance of 'fairy circles' in spinifex ecosystems, and Jayne Brim Box asked members to share their knowledge of the Finke River for a study to improve its management. Then it was time for the Christmas party at the Telegraph Station. How can we forget the 19°C day and rain, with the Todd flowing and everyone except Pete McDonald rugged up for the cold? Pete thought it was summer and came in T-shirt and shorts.

After the Christmas break, Marg Friedel presented a history of buffel grass in the Centre, Sam Hussey introduced us to modern uses of traditional bush medicines, and Angus Newey talked us through hunting strategies of desert raptors, with spectacular photos as illustrations. Glenn Edwards reflected on his 30 years of feral animal management research, an insightful overview. Alex Nelson summarised the history of Pitchi Richi Sanctuary in tandem with Rhonnda Tomlinson's collected records and photos presented by Marg Friedel. At our final speaker night, Neil and Leigh Woolcock took us on a photo journey through the Northern Territory and Queensland.

Thanks are due to members who suggested speakers, provided supper for the social gatherings afterwards or who wrote up the talks for the Newsletter. It's been good to hear the buzz of conversation after the talks! And of course a big thankyou to Sam Hussey and Doug McDougall, who have made Olive Pink Botanic Garden available to us for meetings, helped us to run them, made display space available for our Newsletter and generally been welcoming and supportive.

And the field trips... what a diversity of activities! We caught up with the flowering shrubs at Corroboree Rock in August (leader Marg Friedel). Instead of a trip in September, we had two in October, when we visited the Old Timers Museum (Meggy Kelham) and Pitchi Richi (Marg Friedel). Pete McDonald's planned gecko night in November was rained out, but thankfully the deferred gecko night was a big success in December. In February, the Desert Park hosted a visit to their Zoology section (Marg Friedel), and Pete prepared to host a fossil excursion to the Arumbera Range in March but was rained out again. Neil Woolcock attempted a Wallaby Gap excursion in April but the area was closed due to nearby fires. Lisa McLean successfully led the second attempt. Members may recall that Neil has had field trips washed out, more than once, and burnt out, and it appears that Pete may be taking over his mantle. Pete led his deferred fossil excursion to the Arumbera Range in May, with the help of palaeontologist Adam Yates, and drew an appreciative crowd. In June, Neil led a small group on a trip to Arltunga and Joker Gorge – a gem of a place – and it didn't rain. The final trip, led by Wendy Mactaggart in July, was to Cassia Hill, where flowering shrubs and *Ptilotus* species were a feature. A big thanks to all the leaders for some great trips.

Throughout the year we have shared events with the Australian Plants Society Alice Springs – both speaker nights and field trips. This has been especially valuable because it has meant there have been field trips available in every month, even when ours have been cancelled. Thanks to APSAS President Suzanne Lollback for continuing co-operation, such that both clubs have promoted each others' events and avoided date clashes or duplication of speakers or topics.

The membership of the Committee has been much more stable this year than the last, and the members have all contributed willingly to the running of the Club. Special thanks go to Lisa Mclean, our dynamic Secretary, who has been an invaluable support to the Club, seeking ways to make our management more efficient, and has additionally taken on the Editorship of the Newsletter. Treasurer Neil Woolcock has kept us up to date on our finances, which are now on a healthy footing after a full year of increased subscriptions. With healthier finances, the Club has been able to purchase its own laptop, having depended on APSAS's laptop for some years, for speaker nights – many thanks APSAS. And thanks are also due to Bec Duncum, who audited our finances again this year, as she has for many years. Jill Brew stepped up to become the Property Officer during 2024, enabling the appointment of Kylie Cowan as a general member, already an active recruit. There has been no Vice President during 2023-24. My heartfelt thanks to all Committee members, old and new.

I also want to acknowledge the important contributions of non-Committee members to the smooth running of the Club. Our Public Officer, Anne Pye, continues to ensure we meet our legal obligations to the Business Centre NT. Meg Mooney manages our Facebook page and Robyn Grey-Gardner uploads the Newsletter to our website – sincere thanks to you all. In the absence of a website manager I have managed the website as best I can.

The Newsletter has been a wonderful flag bearer for the Club and Editor Lisa deserves accolades for her work. Every month there are great stories, beautiful photographs and a foretaste of activities to come. The feedback from readers is enthusiastic and it wouldn't happen if it wasn't for the contributions from all of you. Please keep up the good work! Thank you Lisa and everyone.

Repeating my sentiments from last year: A final acknowledgement of the Committee and all Club members – it's been a pleasure spending time with you all and helping the Club to flourish.

Marg Friedel
14 August 2024

Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club

Treasurer's report for the 2023 – 2024 financial year

The Financial Report, audited by Rebecca Duncum, is presented for approval.

The club's account balance was \$1,128.97 as at 30th June 2024 (down from \$1,173.64 in 2023).
The club recorded a loss for the year of \$44.67.

Income for the year was \$2,334.00.

Membership subscriptions were \$1,895.00 (up \$756.00 on last year, largely because of the increase in membership fees, and two life membership payments).

We received \$30.00 in donations, and \$30.00 as payment for brochures and pamphlets.

Also included in the income was \$379 paid by Lisa McLean for a computer hard drive that was returned to the vendor. This was offset by a \$379 payment to Lisa when the hard drive was purchased. After the purchase Lisa discovered a hard drive amongst the club computer goods, and hence no new hard drive was required.

The major expenditure for the year was \$1,002.40 for a club computer. Without the increase in membership fees last year this purchase would probably not have gone ahead.

The other major outgoings for the year, in addition to the \$379 reimbursed to Lisa, were \$495.88 for public liability insurance, \$182.40 for Bean Tree Cafe gift vouchers and plant society brochures that we present to our speakers, a \$100 donation to Field Nats of Victoria for their ANH medallion, and a PO Box fee of \$159.00.

There was a website Domain renewal fee of \$39.99.

We received 56 payments for memberships for the 23/24 period, plus 7 that were paid in advance last year making a total of 63 (55 last year). Many payments were family subscriptions. We have 6 life members, 4 of which have been awarded, and two have been paid for. We also provide 4 complimentary memberships to people who provide assistance to the Club at no cost. We attracted 10 new memberships to the Club during the year, some of which were family memberships. Some others have moved on or have not renewed.

Membership subscriptions for 2024/2025 are now due.

These subscription payments will boost the club's funds to about \$3,000.

We can expect expenditure for the year to be about \$1,500, leaving a balance of about \$1,500 that will allow the club to support appropriate programs of our choosing, or to purchase items for the club.

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

Family membership \$35. Concession \$30

Single membership \$25. Concession \$20

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

Newsletter only for past members who move interstate \$10

Half subscriptions after January for new members.

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

Neil Woolcock
Treasurer