



Working Together

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Inside this issue:

Roadside vegetation management	1
Feral Scan	1-2
Annual General Meeting	2
Tawny Dragon Research	2
2013 Regent Parrot Nest Survey	3
River Murray Turtles and their decline	3
Upcoming Fire Management Forum	4
Sugar Shack wetland refill	4



Sugar Shack Wetland refilling



Roadside vegetation management

The Mid Murray LAP is working with the Mid Murray Council to update their Roadside Vegetation Management Plan. The LAP has been fortunate enough to secure \$20,000 grant funds from the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation and a further contribution from the Mid Murray Council of \$15,000. The purpose of this grant is to initialise a renewed effort around the management of remnant roadside vegetation in the Mid Murray Local Government area. This grant will assist in gaining further support and funding towards this larger project. The overall roadside vegetation project will utilise existing documents and local expert opinion to update the roadside vegetation management plans of the Mid Murray Council area. Due to the large size of the Mid Murray Council area (more than 3000km of roads, much of it bordered by remnant native vegetation and over 300 council reserves,

many of which contain valuable vegetation remnants) a prioritisation process will be used to rank remnant vegetation with a high biodiversity value &/or listed vulnerable plants &/or plant communities.

These high priority areas will be surveyed, mapped and marked, the information gathered will be used to update the management plans and include all the threats to the remnants and actions that can be undertaken to minimise or prevent further degradation or destruction. The on ground works staff from the Mid Murray Council will be trained to recognise these significant areas that have been identified and they will be incorporated in their mapping system used for roadside works.

Some of the outcomes will include creating a greater awareness of the importance of maintaining remnant roadside vegetation and providing support to the Mid Murray

Council to implement actions, educating the roadside workers and surrounding landholders to significant areas.

The Mid Murray LAP is seeking landholders within the Mid Murray Council Area to notify us on roadsides that they think are of significant value for their diversity, condition or contain rare species, to ensure we capture them in this updated plan. Please contact Aimee Linke, Project Manager at the Mid Murray LAP on 8564 6044, 0427 590 344, mid-lap@internode.on.net by the 28th of February.



FeralScan

FeralScan is a community website that allows you to map sightings of pest animals and record the problems they are causing in your local area. FeralScan will have direct benefits to farmers, community groups and individuals managing pest animals and their impacts.

FeralScan is freely available and can be used by farmers, local communities, Land-

care groups, local government, pest controllers, schools and individuals anywhere in Australia. Data entered into FeralScan can be used to help coordinate on ground control to address the problems pest animals are causing in your local area and across the country. FeralScan provides lots of useful resources:

1. Enter pest animal sightings, damage and control activities in

your local area

2. Examine the latest pest animal map for your local area
3. Create and print your own pest animal maps
4. View or upload photos
5. Access the latest resources
6. Connect with community action groups in your area.

Species- FeralScan provides websites for Rabbits, Foxes, Feral Camels, Myna birds, Cane Toads, Feral Pigs, Feral Goats,

'...build a better picture about pest animals and the problems they are causing to our farmers, economy, environment...'

FeralScan *continued*

Wild Dogs and Starlings and will soon provide websites for Deer and Feral Fish.

FeralScan is optimised for mobile smartphone users and will soon provide improved facilities for community groups.

How do I get involved?- Go to FeralScan at www.feralscan.org.au

-Register your name and email address to become an official F e r a l S c a n u s e r
-Start mapping feral animals in

your local area, and examine the latest map -Encourage others to enter sightings. Help to build a better picture about pest animals and the problems they are causing to our farmers, economy, environment, culture and communities. Source: <http://www.feral.org.au/feralscan/>

AGM

The Mid Murray LAP held their 16th AGM on the 22nd of November at Big Bend by Night. We had over 30 people attend the meeting with the welcoming of a new member Alan Brown and the appointment of a new chairman Terry Franklin, with Inez Bormann surrendering the role after 16 years. Once the formalities were over everyone joined us for lunch by the riverside transported by cart by David Le Brun who did a fabulous job of catering salad and



AGM *continued*

silverside, with pancakes on the BBQ for dessert. We all then enjoyed an afternoon river cruise with Mark Coleman from Illawonga Camp, we learnt more on the ecology, geology and history of the River Murray. As well as current issues facing some landholders with the proposed closing of wetlands as a management option under the Riverine Recovery Project. There is so much on offer in

our region, some times you just need to get out there and find it.



Tawny Dragon Research

The tawny dragon, *Ctenophorus decresii*, is a small, rock dwelling lizard found only in eastern South Australia. Research has identified a southern and a northern form of the species, however, it is currently not known where one form ends and the other begins, or whether they are able to inter-breed. Claire McLean, from the University of Melbourne, will be conducting research this December, in the Eastern Mt Lofty

Tawny Dragon Research *continued*

'...species inhabit rocky areas ranging from rock clusters in paddocks to large outcrops and gorges.'

Ranges between Burra and Palmer, to identify populations of the tawny dragon in this region and pinpoint exactly where the two forms of the species come into contact. This is important to determine whether southern and northern tawny dragons should actually be recognised as separate species.

Male tawny dragons (pictured)

are blue-grey with a black stripe along their flank and bright coloration around their neck and jaw which can be orange, yellow, grey or blue, while females have more subdued brown and grey coloration. The species inhabit rocky areas ranging from rock clusters in paddocks to large outcrops and gorges. Tawny dragons are most likely to be seen basking in the sunlight on the top of rocks and will flee to crevices or gaps beneath

rocks if disturbed. If you have suitable rocky habitat, or think you may have seen tawny dragons on your property please contact Claire McLean on 0401545011, or email mcleanca@unimelb.edu.au



2013 Regent Parrot Nest Survey *source Kevin Smith's Nov 2013 RP News*

The 10 selected nest colonies were surveyed during the period August to early November by a number of volunteers. A full report will be written on this work, but in the mean time here is a snippet of what is to be included in the report.

One colony, upstream of Renmark, which is located in dead River Red Gums that were drowned when the locks were installed in the river 80 years ago has been surveyed several

times since 1991 with the following results.

In this colony 20% of the nest trees have decayed to the point where they have fallen over (in some of these drowned tree colonies over 30% of

Year	No. nests
1991	27
2000	26
2003	20
2006	9
2008	4
2010	0
2013	1

the nest trees from 1991 have gone). Perhaps the nest hollows in the remaining trees in these colonies are no longer suitable for Regent Parrots to nest in. So, where are the Regents that once nested here? There are several stands of live trees (with what appear to be suitable hollows for nesting) in that section of the river, but few of these are used by Regent Parrots. The more we find out about these fascinating birds, the more we realize we do not know.

'In this colony 20% of the nest trees have decayed to the point where they have fallen over..'

River Murray turtles and their decline *by Mike Thompson*

Serious concern about declines in populations of turtles in the River Murray has led to a new project to map the distribution and abundance of turtles and identify places where they breed in South Australia.

Australian turtles live in all sorts of aquatic environments. The Murray in South Australia has three species of turtles, the Murray short-necked tur-

tle (*Emydura macquarii*), the Eastern long-necked turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*) and the broad-shelled turtle (*Chelodina expansa*). The short and long-necked turtles are widespread and common, whereas the broad-shelled turtle is much less common.

The biomass of turtles in the River Murray ecosystem is (or was) enormous, with estimates of up to 100,000 tonnes

of turtles in the Murray in the 1980s and early 1990s (Thompson 1993). Turtles are major consumers of invertebrate prey, small fishes, aquatic plants and importantly, carrion, making them integral to ecosystem health in the Murray, and ultimately to water quality, through their part in the decomposition chain.

For many decades, predation

'... biomass of turtles in the River Murray ecosystem is (or was) enormous, with estimates of up to 100,000 tonnes..'

River Murray turtles and their decline *continued*

on the eggs of turtles by foxes has been considered a potential problem for the health of turtle populations (Thompson 1983) and more recently direct predation of nesting female turtles by foxes has been recognized as critical (Spencer and Thompson, 2005). Recent sampling of turtle populations showed a decline of 69 - 91% in populations of common species that had been studied in Victoria in the 1970s. Observations of turtles

throughout their range are important and as many people as possible are encouraged to become involved in recording their turtle observations. Copies of the data sheet and associated information pack are available to anyone who is interested in being involved. For now, two types of observations are critically important. The first is the location of turtle nesting. The most obvious signs of turtle nesting activity are the remains of nests that have been exca-

vated by foxes. The second type of important information is the location and sex of any dead turtle, particularly if the cause of death can be identified. Contact us at the addresses below if you have any questions. Michael B. Thompson Mike.Thompson@sydney.edu.au (02) 9351 3989 or Ricky-John Spencer R.Spencer@uws.edu.au (02) 45 701962

'..direct predation of nesting female turtles by foxes has been recognized as critical....'

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Upcoming Fire Management Forum March 13-14

The FIRE MANAGEMENT WITHIN GRASSLAND ECOSYSTEMS FORUM will be hosted by the City of Salisbury and attended by expert fire management officers, grassland practitioners, researchers and ecologists from around Australia, whose aim is to restore and manage temperate and grassy woodland vegetation communities using fire as a restoration technique. The two day forum will bring

together over 100 leading professionals to discuss latest practice and share knowledge. It will include presentations by leading academics and practitioners on the use of fire as a management tool; panel discussions on burning regimes within grassland ecosystems; and opportunities for networking and information sharing. The City of Salisbury is a leader and innovator in revegetation strategies, resto-

ration techniques and world class storm water management through its extensive wetlands systems, providing an ideal location for this two day forum. All profits from the forum will be allocated towards Landcare Restoration (on-ground works, monitoring and training) within the Northern Adelaide Plains and Foothills. For more information contact tcook@salisbury.sa.gov.au

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Sugar Shack wetland refill

Carp free and looking good!

On January 10th the structure was opened and Sugar Shack Pangki (Wetland) was reconnected to the River Murray via Yatco Creek. This followed a managed 9 month drying period as part of the ongoing management undertaken by Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Incorporated (MACAI), Natural Resources SA MDB and the Mid Murray Local Action Planning Inc. The wetland is one of eight wetlands within the Swan Reach

Floodplain Complex which was dominated by the invasive European Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) this time last year. Wetland managers expect that by excluding European Carp during the refill of the wetland, through the use of carp screens installed on the wetland inlet structure, improvements in water quality and abundance of wildlife will follow. The refill is carefully managed and is expected to take approximately four weeks but already large numbers of waterbirds have been observed

including Hardheads and Grey Teal feeding amongst newly inundated areas. Water quality, frog, fish, bird, groundwater and vegetation monitoring will be undertaken regularly throughout the duration of the refill and following refill. The results of this monitoring will be presented in the next newsletter.

For further information please contact Kate Mason on (08) 85 329100 kate.mason@sa.gov.au