

# *Bandicoot Tails*

## **Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park**

No. 148, December, 2012 – January, 2013

### **President's Words:**

This is the text of Tom's President Address at our November AGM. Reproducing this gives him a break from writing something special for our newsletter.

Sue and I have tried to be a bit high tech this year by showing the various activity hours in graph form. I now know why I have not bothered in the past and why the past low tech approach may be less graphic but it is decidedly more stress-free. That, however, has not detracted from the sum total of our efforts and despite absences, holidays and occasional physical malfunctions, we have maintained the pressure in all the hot-spots as well as advanced our removal of blackberry infestations along Bushrat Creek in a couple of sites.

The weed map of Scott Creek still has around 1500 recorded sites but many are now under control with only another twenty years worth left in the seed bank. We have certainly had the “Year of the Boneseed” but overall we are agreed it beats the “Year of the Erica” any day. We have clocked up a total of 1528 hours but are still awaiting a few stragglers hours as well, probably around the 1650. Fortunately we have the ongoing assistance of contract Bushcarers being funded from Jen Pitman’s Caring for Country grant and one of our Volunteer Support grants.

We have continued our push for volunteers both at markets other venues but results certainly don’t reflect the effort expended -- especially on Jenny Dawes’ behalf. Jenny remains undaunted but I will have to have a word to her supervisor if results don’t improve.

On the topic of volunteer hours, a recent article in the Weekender Herald on Volunteer monetary value to Australia overall was in the order of \$200 billion a year- more than the mining industry. With more of us baby boomers reaching the magic number, we should see an upsurge in this figure and hopefully our own ranks. Interestingly the study valued us at \$7/hour –anyone feel insulted?- (even at \$7/hr- the group was worth \$11550 this year). Still as the study also said, “the value of volunteering is difficult to measure – “volunteers learn new skills that are transferable to their workplace and they are fitter, healthier, more mentally alert and more socially connected than people who do not volunteer”. Finally you will be pleased to know volunteering also leads to a lower crime rate and I know most of our members would barely have time for any breaking and entering with their current agendas.

Another successful grant is paying Liz Campbell to analyse all our bird banding data. Liz has sent through some preliminary findings which are showing up some very interesting trends especially where rainfall and revegetation are concerned. I hope to show a few graphs a little later this evening if time permits.

As usual, our Vice Pres has put in a terrific individual effort in the park this year (often assisted by Jenny) and is just managing to keep the pest plant record spreadsheet up to date.

I'd like to thank all the faithful who continue to make such a valuable contribution to maintaining and improving the lovely Scott Creek Conservation Park. We are making steady progress on many fronts and judging by our hours alone, it is good to see that commitment remains undiminished.

Finally I would like to nominate Les and Donella Peters for life membership to the Group. They have been members from the outset and Les has spent countless hours (because he refuses to count them) on firstly getting our web-site up and with great time, patience and artistic skill, continues to make it an outstanding site which receives compliments on a regular basis. Les has also contributed greatly to projects like the bird brochure and is currently working on a walking trail guide on the web site. Donella has also contributed much to the group – rhyming couplets aside, she has always been ready to help out on stalls and fund raisers, and has very willingly (I think) taken on her current role of Treasurer. What better way to ensure ongoing commitment than to give them Life.

### **Office Bearers For 2013:**

There were no surprises in our election of officers. The slate remains unchanged, as follows:

President:	Tom Hands
Vice-president:	John Butler
Secretary:	Don Reid
Treasurer:	Donella Peters
Patron:	Enid Robertson

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### **Changes to Parks Legislation and Status:**

Below is a recent press release that heralds the change of status for some 67 parks. I recommend you have a look at the web site for a more complete picture of what this will mean to our reserve systems. Also below is a letter from one Friends Group and no doubt many more will follow. Never has the term "Nature Reserve" been more loosely applied.

Coupled with the very strong push for increased access to parks for mountain biking – (Cleland, Belair and Sturt Gorge already well underway), the ongoing, (and I believe) unsustainable, prescribed burning program, our parks are anything but "remaining at the forefront both nationally and internationally" (whatever that means). If some of the bureaucrats were to actually leave their insulated environments and be shown the weed infested state of many of our parks and reserves, perhaps they could be persuaded to change their priorities. Unlike humans, these reserves cannot look after themselves and "healthy parks" will remain a platitude whilst attention seeking press releases take precedence over concerted action to make healthy diversity filled parks a reality.

**Thursday, 8 November 2012**

#### ***Consultation opens on national parks legislation amendments***

Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Paul Caica today launched the public consultation period on proposed changes to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972.

"South Australia's national parks legislation is 40 years old and will benefit from some improvements to reflect current approaches to managing parks," Mr Caica said.

"The amendments will modernise the legislation by introducing a new reserve category system in line with modern approaches to park management around the world."

"Some parks will be reclassified to reflect the new system, but 75 per cent of the state's parks will remain in their existing category."

"The amendments are not intended to change how we manage and use our parks. Rather, they are to make it clearer why we manage and use them as we do."

"Recreational activities currently permitted in parks will continue to be permitted and future activities will continue to be assessed through the statutory management planning process."

In addition to the current categories of national park, conservation park, recreation park, regional reserve and game reserve, the amendments create the two new categories of heritage park and nature reserve and will modernise the legislation by introducing a new reserve category system. The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources has engaged extensively with Traditional Owners, conservation groups and the mining industry in shaping the proposed amendments.

Mr Caica said the proposed changes will not increase the regulatory burden on mining companies but will clarify rights of access.

"The amendments will also update co-management provisions, recognising the aspirations of Traditional Owners for greater access to and connection with country," he said.

"These amendments reflect contemporary park management approaches, and will ensure the state's park system remains at the forefront both nationally and internationally."

The consultation period runs until December 21 2012. For more information and to make a submission visit [www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/npwactamendments](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/npwactamendments)

#### MOUNT MONSTER CONSERVATION PARK ! MINING ?

On 8<sup>th</sup> Nov 2012, Minister Paul Caica issued a news release inviting public comment on changes to the South Australian *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The changes affect Mount Monster Conservation Park in that the additions of land made to the park in 2010, will be reclassified as a "Nature Reserve", while the original park area will remain "Conservation Park". The newly created classification of "Nature Reserve", specifically provides that mining can occur in these reserves.

I wanted to make the community aware of this and encourage anyone who is concerned about future mining at Mount Monster, to make a public comment while the opportunity exists. Once it is designated as "Nature Reserve", it may be harder for community or the Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) to argue against mining recommencing. Although mining was not excluded from the additions to the Conservation Park in 2010, I believe there are good reasons for mining to be prohibited in these areas and so oppose these areas being downgraded to "Nature Reserve".

My reasons are as follows.

1. Granite outcrops at Mount Monster, which would be targeted for mining, are listed as critical habitat for the Nationally Endangered plant *Prostanthera eurybioides* (Monarto Mint Bush), which only occurs in granite outcrops near Mount Monster (including in the area proposed to become "Nature Reserve") and in the Monarto area of South Australia. The recommencement of mining would therefore seem to conflict with the Federal Government *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
2. Prior to its addition to the conservation park in 2010, Lot 11, was under the care and control of the local council and classified as "Parklands", for the use and enjoyment of the local community. This status was revoked so that it could become part of the conservation park. Mining does not seem to me to be compatible with either community use and enjoyment, or conservation.

- As well as an enjoyable area for the local community and an important area for conservation of the Monarto Mint Bush, Mount Monster is a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared for agriculture since mining was first allowed there in the 1950s. In this regard it is a refuge for many native plant and animal species which may be displaced by the recommencement of mining, through direct habitat destruction, loss of water source or animals being scared off by blasting.

It is my opinion that the whole of Mount Monster Conservation Park should remain as "Conservation Park" and no areas should be reclassified as "Nature Reserve".

The public consultation period runs until December 21<sup>st</sup> 2012. For More information and to make a submission visit [www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/npwactamendments](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/npwactamendments)  
Jenny McInerney- Keith.

#### Bird Banding:

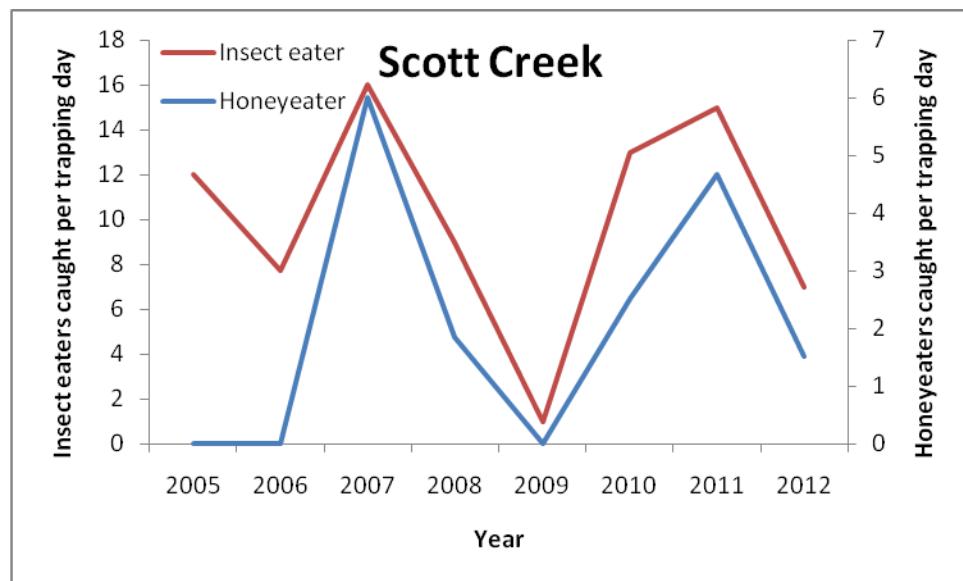
The weather has relented and let us have two full weekends of banding in October and November. Results were as follows.

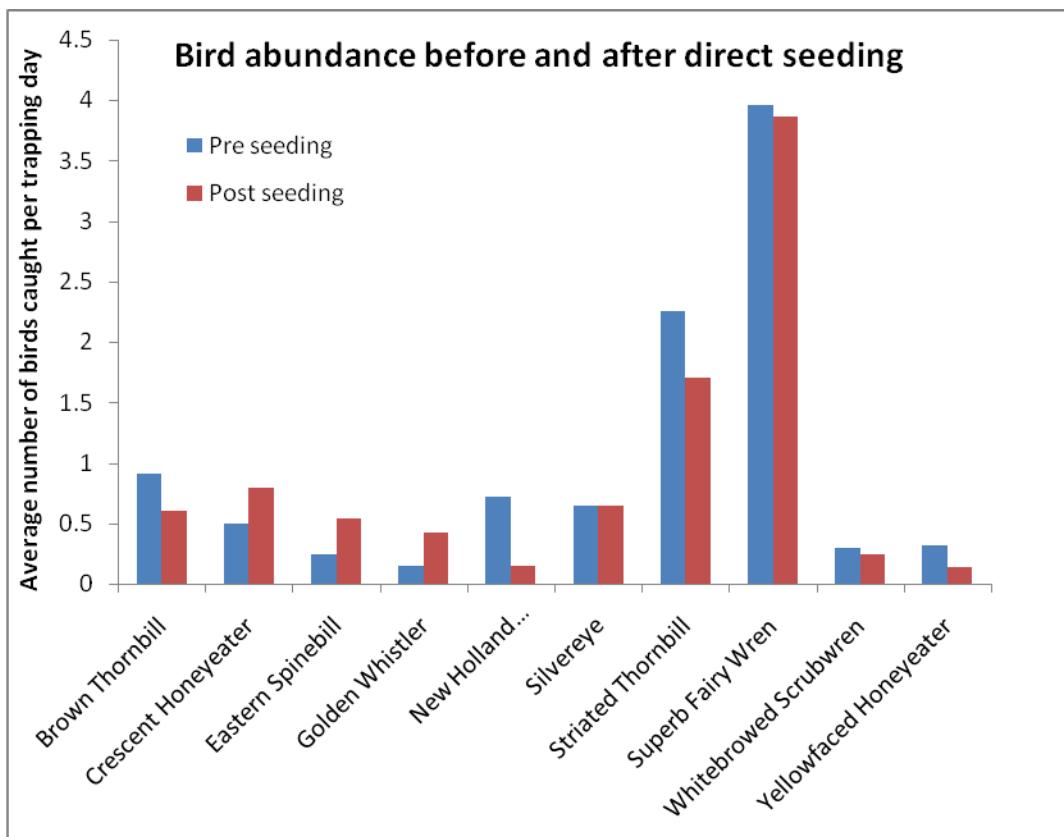
October 20th. and 21<sup>st</sup>. saw us at the Gate 7 site. 13 birds from 7 species were netted, including 2 retraps. 28 species were observed on the two mornings.

We spent the 17<sup>th</sup>. and 18<sup>th</sup>. November at the Gate 9 site. We had a high capture rate, with 45 birds netted from 11 species, including 12 retraps. Our 'take' included a Sacred Kingfisher, something of an uncommon occurrence. The retraps included Superb Fairy Wrens aged 5+, 6+ and 7+. The last is a female, who is the oldest Wren we have recorded since we began banding in Scott Creek. Four Striated Thornbills were also recaptured, the oldest one being a 6+ bird, a not uncommon age for this species.

An exceptionally high number of 35 species was observed .

Some Bird Banding Data – graphs supplied by Liz Campbell, based on our banding results.





This shows that species such as eastern spinebill, crescent honeyeater and golden whistler seem to have increased in abundance since the seeding, whereas brown thornbill, new holland honeyeaters and striated thornbills seem to have decreased in abundance since the seeding. Other species show smaller changes.

**Programme December 2012 – April 2013**  
**All working bees meet at 9.00am at G18 (now Gate 16)**

December	4	Tuesday Working Bee	Broom, Erica E of G5
	9	Sunday Working Bee	Sth of Shingleback- Boneseed
	15	Bird Banding	Mackereth Ck, 6.30 am
	16	Bird Banding	Mackereth Ck, 6.30 am.
	21	<b>Christmas BBQ</b>	<b>At Thompson's from 6pm.</b>
	22	Saturday Working Bee	Panhandle-broom/billardiera
January	1	Tuesday Working Bee	East side Echidna Track-broom/boneseed
	10	<b>Business Meeting</b>	Reid's residence, Mt. Bold Road, Bradbury, 7.30 pm.
	13	Sunday Working Bee	S&E of Quarry Ridge Tr
<b>N.B.Wed</b>	16	“Social Committee”	TBA
	19	Bird Banding	Gate 4, 6.30am.
	20	Bird Banding	Gate 4, 6.30 am.
	26	Saturday Working Bee	Gate 8-agapanthus/broom

February	<b>3</b>	<b>Bird outing</b>	<b>Re-visit Laratinga Wetlands at Mt Barker – Meet at Entrance at 8am</b>
	5	Tuesday Working Bee	TBA
	10	Sunday Working Bee	TBA
	16	Bird Banding	Scott Creek, 7.00 am.
	17	Bird Banding	Scott Creek, 7.00 am.
	23	Saturday Working Bee	TBA
March	2, 3	Bird Banding	Derwentia Creek, 6.30 am.
	5	Tuesday Working Bee	
	10	Sunday Working Bee	
	14	Business Meeting	
	16, 17	Bird Banding	Gate 19, 6.30 am.
	23	Saturday Working Bee	
	29	<b>Good Friday Walk</b>	TBA
April	2	Tuesday Working Bee	
	6, 7	Bird banding	Gate 3 Crossroads, 7.00 am.
	14	Sunday Working Bee	
<b>N.B. Wed</b>	17	Social Committee	TBA
	20, 21	Bird Banding	Gate 9 site, 7.00 am.
	27	Saturday Working Bee	

### Officebearers:

Any queries on Friends activities, please contact your office bearers.

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**Friends Website:** <http://friendsofscottcreek.org>