

Bandicoot Tails

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park

No. 159
August-September, 2015

President's Words:

The Almanda Project crowd funding project is off and running with many new donors as well as the tried and true. As before there was a flurry to begin with but things have slowed somewhat so if you have any friends (left) that have not heard about this project, why not send them the email with the project donation details in it. Proo Geddes is very generously donating all the profits from the sale of her recently published, "Send Her Down Huey", a beautifully illustrated children's book available at Matilda Bookshop in Stirling! To add to this, John and Proo are also donating all the proceeds from the Open Garden Weekend to be held on the 26th and 27th of September. Details in the programme. Anyone wishing to volunteer on the day either to collect gate takings or on our display, please let me know so we can work out a roster.

Recently John Butler, Jenny Dawes and I took our relatively new CE, Sandy Pitcher, on a guided tour of the park. Despite one of the coldest days on record and threatening weather, we managed to spend two and a half hours driving to various locations in a bit of a show and tell plus a lot of background information. Sandy obviously enjoyed the trip around and seeing some of the restoration sites and getting an idea of Scott Creek's size, diverse ecosystems and natural beauty. I believe Sandy really appreciated this opportunity to meet with us and be able to hear, first hand, our concerns for the future of our Parks in general. We certainly appreciated her visiting, all the more so as Sandy is the first CE to have done so in the twenty five years of our being here.

Below is a brief summary by Robert Lawrence, of a visit by NOSSA at the beginning of August, to the most recent burn site below Almanda Track. I thank Robert for his permission to publish.

'There were no surprises really. There were far fewer orchids in the area burnt in May than in the other areas of bushland that we examined. Basically, plants that had emerged in May were not represented apart from Thelymitra grandiflora. These had the ends burnt off, but are large enough to still continue growing. They looked weakened and did not have obvious buds like those in the unburnt areas.

There were colonies of Cyrtostylis reniformis. The leaves of these emerge later than most other species. They tend to grow in areas that do not accumulate leaf litter, so their

colonies were not damaged by the burn. *Arachnorchis leptochila* leaves also seem to have been later than other species.

In areas that were less intensely burnt, where the shrubs remained only scorched some other orchids such as *Glossodia* and *Arachnorchis* had emerged. Some had tips burnt. We saw a rosette of *Urochilus sanguineus* that had clearly emerged after the burn. There were very few Greenhoods that had survived.

Perhaps significantly, there were no fire-stimulated orchids. There were no *Prasophyllum* species. We did not see a single leaf of *Pyrorchis nigricans* in the burnt area.

My impression is that orchids will recover in the area, but it will take a few years. If they keep burning frequently and in adjacent areas, most of the orchids will be wiped out.'

A more comprehensive report will be published in the next NOSSA journal.

John Wamsley's Plant of the Month Let's talk about *Senecios*.

It is said that the genus "*Senecio*" is the largest genus in the largest family of flowering plants in the world. So! We should have a few in the Park. And we do. There are about 1,500 species worldwide, about 30 species in SA (including half a dozen introduced) and about a dozen indigenous species in our Park. They have all sorts of common names ranging across Groundsel, Ragwort, Fireweed, Daisy and *Senecio*. They are generally unloved. They are simply "not pretty enough for my garden". Which brings up an interesting argument. Should we judge people on their looks?

Probably their biggest problem is that an introduced one – African daisy – *Senecio pterophorus* was considered a fairly nasty weed. So! Anything that looked like African daisy was in trouble. A couple of weeks ago I was working in my garden when a couple of young ladies walked past with their dogs. They were discussing my garden and the fact that I only allowed indigenous natives. I heard one say to the other, "Well! That is a weed", which caught my attention. I looked up to see her pull out the offending plant and throw it on the road. No! It was not a weed; it was a local, indigenous *Senecio*.



From left to right: *S. glomeratus* (Annual Fireweed), *S. quadridentatus* (Cotton Fireweed), *S. tenuiflorus* (no common name) & *S. picridioides* (Fireweed) are some of the more common species in the Park.



Senecio minimus (Shrubby Fireweed) on the left is rated rare in SA and Vulnerable for MLR. It has not been recorded very much with a couple of plants in Bushrat Creek and Hadrian Gully. However! There are now about twenty individuals growing in Almanda Creek as part of the FOSCCP Almanda Project.

Senecio runcinifolius (Lagoon or Tall Groundsel) on the right is rare in the park and rated K in MLR which means either Rare or Endangered. Again, it has only been recorded twice in the Park but now about twenty individuals thrive along Almanda Creek from one individual that came up after blackberry removal two years ago.

The downside of it all is that the Department, in their wisdom, has given up and decided that African daisy can replace the indigenous species. They say in their discussion paper titled “**Policy** African daisy (*Senecio pterophorus*)”:

“In many cases the best way of controlling African daisy is to do nothing, as it is short lived, and once other vegetation returns, it disappears. It creates an environment unsuitable for its own seedlings.”

“African daisy is easily controlled as a seedling by grazing by goats or sheep; no ill effects on these livestock have been reported in Australia.”

“It appears that native organisms which feed on native *Senecio* species are able to exploit African daisy.”

“There is no evidence that African daisy is spreading or is likely to spread to uninfested areas. African daisy will continue to occur in generally uninfested areas that are disturbed by fire or clearing.”

What they are saying here is that African Daisy is like all our native *senecios* and if we ignore it then it will replace our native *senecios* but that doesn't matter because they are only *senecios*.

Finally a “pretty” one, *Senecio pinnatifolius* (formerly *S.lautus*) (Variable Groundsel) in fact so variable that it has now been split into a number of species and I do not know which one is in this photo. Rare in the park, Tom has recorded one after the Kangaroo Gully burn and it has been recorded not too far away, so keep your eyes open.



Bird banding Notes:

With the hiatus in the production of our newsletter, there is quite a lot to report. The following table summarises the work we have done to the end of August.

Date	Location	Total Captures	Recaptures
19 th . April	Gate 3 Crossroads	21	2
2 nd .- 3 rd . May	Gate 4	36	15
16 th – 17 th . May	Gate 3 Crossroads	22	5
6 th . – 7 th . June	Gate 7	37	9
20 th . – 21 st . June	Gate 11	27	9
4 th . – 5 th . July	Gate 9	20	6
19 th . July	Mackereth Creek	7	1

Notable recaptures ages are as follows:

Superb Fairy Wren	4+ at Gate 4			
Brown Thornbill	6+ at Gate 4			
Striated Thornbill	5+ at Gate 4	6+ at Gate 7	5+ at Gate 7	5+ at Gate 7
	6+ at Gate 7	7+ at Gate 7	5+ at Gate 11	5+ at Gate 9
Whitebrowed Scrubwren	9+ at Gate 4	5+ at Gate 7	13+ at Gate 9	
Eastern Spinebill	4+ at Gate 11			

The long-lived Scrubwren at Gate 9 had been netted 4 times before and originally captured on the 30th. June, 2003, each time at the same net site. This bird is our oldest recorded Scrubwren and looked to still be in good condition. The oldest known Scrubwren is one caught at Iluka, N.S.W., last recorded at 17years 7 months of age and still going strong.

The several Striated Thornbills also demonstrated the relatively long life spans that some of these little birds can reach .

PROGRAMME-AUGUST-NOVEMBER

Month	Date	Activity	Location
August	22	Saturday Working bee	G13, Periwinkle, Arum Lily, Fleabane, Twisted Chimney, Area 14
	23	ANZANG Photographic Exhibition	Meet at Museum Cafe, 10.30 am.
	27	Anniversary Book meeting	Expressoholics, Aldgate, 2pm
	29-30	Bird banding	Gate 4, 7.00 am.
September	1	Tuesday working bee	TBA
	10	Business Meeting	Reid's residence, Mt. Bold Rd., Bradbury, 7.30 pm.
	13	Sunday Working Bee	Boneseed, broom, east end of Blue gum Flat, Areas 19,20
	19-20	Bird banding	Scott Creek, 7.00 am.
	26	Saturday Working Bee Wirrapunga Open Garden-Fund Raising	Broom, erica, Gate 7, Area 5 10am-4.30pm, Williams Rd, Aldgate
October	3-4	Bird banding	Derwentia Creek, 7.00 am.
	6	Tuesday working bee	Panhandle, broom, Sollya, boneseed, Areas 31,32
	11	Sunday Working Bee	Watsonia, East of G5, under power lines, tongs of death.
	17-18	Bird banding	Gate 11, 7.00 am
	24	Saturday Working bee	Upper Bushrat Ck & old house site, various, bring diggers for bulbs & thistles.

	31	Bird banding	Scott Creek, 6.30 am.
November	3	Tuesday working bee	TBA- these next WB's are flexible- depends on where weeds are flowering/seeding
	8	Sunday Working Bee	TBA
	12	Annual General Meeting	Cherry Gardens CFS Hall, Main Rd, Cherry Gdns, 7.30pm
	14-45	Bird banding	Gate 7, 6.30 am.
	28	Saturday Working bee	TBA

MEET AT GATE 15, ALMANDA CAR PARK, 9.00AM

PLEASE ADVISE TOM BEFORE WORKING BEE IF YOU WANT TO GO DIRECTLY TO THE SITE

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

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