



Bandicoot Tails

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park

No. 193

December 2023—February 2024

Website: www.friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/friendsofscottcreekcp

Welcome to your summer edition of Bandicoot Tails.

During summer our scheduled bushcare activities will start at the earlier time of 8.30am, meeting at the nearest gate for the location of the activity. An email will be sent to bushcarers advising the location in advance. Any new members can contact the leader on info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au to receive the emails.

Unless otherwise indicated, all articles and photos by Peter Watton. Please send any contributions for the summer edition to info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au by mid-February.

The President's words:

This is the President's Report for the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park AGM, 21st November 2023.

After the fire in January 2021, we took notice of the 'South Australian wildlife and habitat bushfire recovery framework' published by the SA Government as a response to the major bushfires on Kangaroo Island and in the Adelaide Hills the previous year. According to this framework, we are now almost in 'phase 4, Longer term beyond 3 years' stage. The (hoped for) outcome will be: 'Priority threatened species and habitats have long-term resilience'.

The objectives for this next phase are:

1. To secure outcomes achieved in first three years.
2. To develop dynamic tools to guide fire management actions.
3. To build resilience into social, economic and ecological systems by learning from the recovery process and building capacity to respond positively to future events.

Whilst we continue to face the obvious dangers of climate change and the pessimistic outlook of forecasters for the coming fire season, we also face the reality of declining interest from the wider community as the fire event in the Park recedes into the past. We had great initial support, but the crunch effort seems to have fallen back onto the resilient group of the Friends and the (much appreciated) new members who have also stuck with us.

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The 'Framework' is an ambitious plan, and much more comprehensive than we as a Friends group can realistically try to achieve. So, it is prudent for us to select from the 'implementation goals' in 'improving future preparedness for bushfires and bushfire recovery'.

To this end, the tenacity of Peter Watton and now Anna Dutkiewicz in following up every opportunity to apply for grant funding is awesome. The Park in this third year since the fire has shown amazing botanical growth – unfortunately as much in unwanted plants as in those that truly belong (and are worthy of conservation effort and protection). The Bushcare teams continue in the face of an enormous task and do so with an admirable herculean effort. The Park is almost as unrecognisable in parts today because of the massive barricade of Golden Wattle barriers as it was in the dusty ash of January 2021. But it contains promise that the ecology will emerge more strongly into its true character.

John Wamsley has studiously described the reduction of insect life in the Park. The inter-relationship of every aspect of the ecology and the essential connections between life-forms must remain foremost in our attention. When one link is vulnerable, the whole natural system is at risk. Perhaps this aspect may lead to more motivation from the wider community to become friends of the Park. I never thought I would miss the essential cleaning of insects from the car windscreen after a drive around the hills.

Two separate papers were produced through the year that highlighted the changes in the avian population of Scott Creek Conservation Park. The first by Freya Harrihill indicated that the immediate impact of the fire was essentially a re-location of bird population intensity to unburnt habitat (and food source). The other paper tracked the changes in bird banding observations before and after the fire and was published in the newsletter of the Australian Bird Study Association (ABSA). This second paper has drawn the attention of scientific researchers who are keen to see further validation work on the statistics. We will also continue to seek ways in which we can collaborate with expert researchers who are working in Scott Creek Conservation Park and nearby.

Our thanks goes to Friends members who regularly volunteer time and sheer hard work to preserve this important part of the Mount Lofty Ranges heritage and environment. We are also grateful to the workforce of NPWS who are often found to be putting in more than their employment contract requires.

We have come a long way in the last year. Thanks to Anna and contributing Friends members for the renewed website. This facility is becoming more of a repository for the community to draw on when investigating the Park. Thanks again to Peter for the outstanding 'Bandicoot Tails' newsletter – it is worth reading every word and viewing every photo. Thanks also to Jenny for her legendary work in organising the Bushcare activities and generally keeping an eye on the Park. We also must thank Andrew for his consistent work in keeping our finances in view.

Jim Spiker

President Friends of Scott Creek
Conservation Park.

Right: Jim presiding over
the AGM.



Elections: At our AGM, elections were held for positions on your group's committee, with the following nominations received and all voted in unopposed:

President	Jim Spiker
Vice President	Peter Watton
Correspondence Secretary	Vacancy—Jim called for nominations, none received yet
Treasurer	Andrew Biven
Minute Secretary	Anna Dutkiewicz
Administration Assistant	Jenny Dawes
Membership Officer	Lorraine Billett

Following the official AGM proceedings, our two guest speakers took the stage:

Diane Colombelli-Negrel, Director, Flinders University Bird Lab research group, on "From nestling to adult: ontogeny and ecological relevance of personality in superb fairy-wrens."

The talk summarised the Bird Lab's research that has been conducted over the last few years in Cleland Wildlife Park on wild Superb Fairy Wrens, and the implications for Scott Creek CP.

Given there is a lot of change in the environment and their habitat, the focus of the study is on their behaviour and how they can adapt, also called behavioural flexibility. The opposite of behavioural flexibility is animal personality which doesn't change over time.

The researchers studied 5 different measures such as shyness-boldness, exploration-avoidances, aggressiveness, sociability and activity. These traits were measured in 3 life stages: nestling, fledgeling and adult. Questions they wanted to answer included whether the traits were genetically programmed or learnt, and does difference in personality influence foraging and deliver a caloric payoff?

There is a lot more data to analyse, but to date, the study is showing that all birds were successful regardless of their different foraging behaviours.

The study is being extended into Scott Creek Conservation Park. Some objectives will be to find more ways to determine personality traits, without capturing the birds, and to see how personality traits vary across study sites.

Andrew Sheath, DEW (Department for Environment and Water) Fire Ecologist AMLR, on "Post fire threatened species monitoring"

Andrew is a threatened species advisor to the CFS during prescribed burns in the Park. He has compared information on two threatened species in Scott Creek Conservation Park and surrounding land from before the 2021 bushfire to post bushfire surveys. The two threatened species were the Chestnut-rumped Heathwren and Southern Brown Bandicoot.

For the Chestnut-rumped Heathwrens, there were 36 survey transects across Scott Creek CP and neighbouring SA Water land, which was also severely impacted by the fire. His comparison found that by 2023, Chestnut-rumped Heathwrens were detected in the fire scar, similar to the distribution before the fire. This shows that this species is an early successional species after fire.

For Southern Brown Bandicoots, the study found that there was little change in the number of Bandicoots in 2022 compared to 6 months after the fire. However, by 2023 the number of sightings had increased.

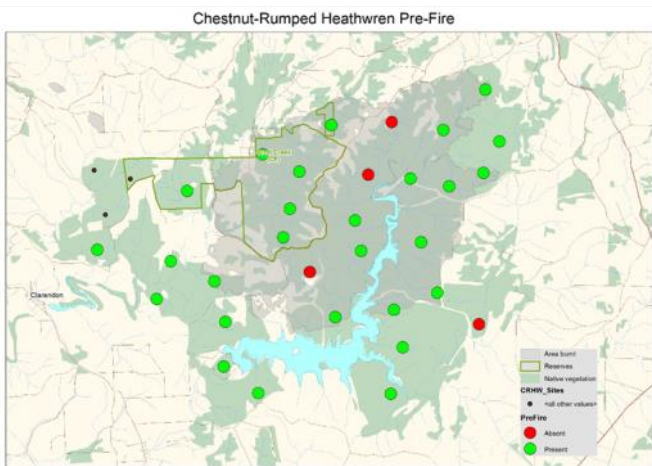


Right: Jim thanking Diane after her presentation.

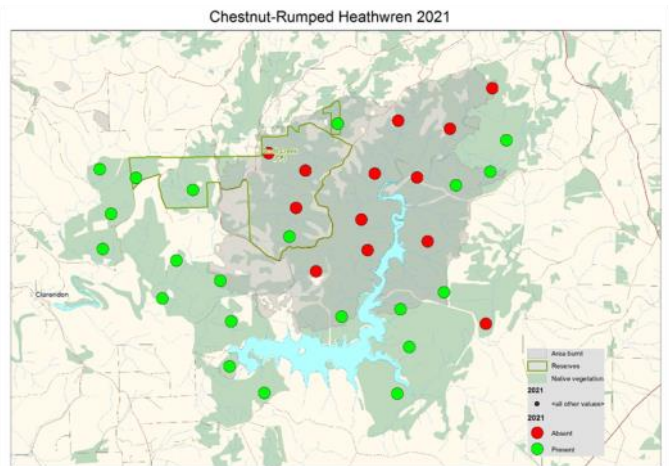
From Andrew's presentation on the monitoring of the Nationally Endangered Chestnut-rumped Heathwren.

What we did – Chestnut-rumped Heathwrens

- Surveyed both burnt and unburnt within the complex
- 36 bird survey transects
- Surveyed minimum of two times to detect presence
- Bird call back sites located on 'ridges' where heath is most optimal



Above left: detection of Chestnut-rumped Heathwren pre-fire survey.

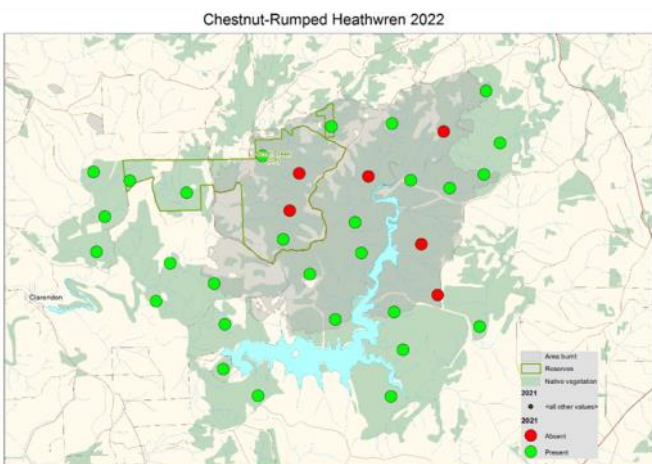


Above right: detection of Chestnut-rumped Heathwren 2021 survey.

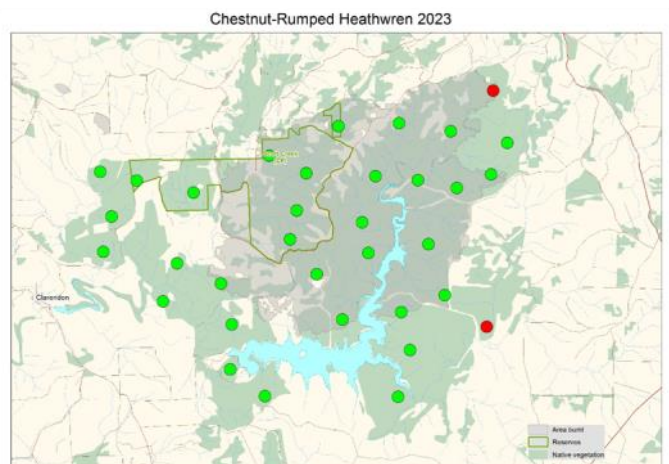
Survey sites

- Detected
- Not detected

Below right: detection of Chestnut-rumped Heathwren 2023 survey.



Below left: detection of Chestnut-rumped Heathwren 2022 survey.



Summer.

Jason Tyndall

Some of the early signs that summer's arrival is imminent include the male Common Brown Butterflies that glide across paths and grassy fields and the emergence of the Hyacinth Orchid. Shinglebacks are more commonly encountered.

It is predicted to be a hot summer – but whatever ensues the landscape knows that the seasons will change. That the wildflowers may be mostly dormant now, but they will again bloom. A beautiful and complex cycle.

Here are some life forms that you may encounter during summer:

Jewel Spider/Christmas Spider (*Austracantha minax*)

A small and exquisite spider that can often be seen in colonies in the warmer months especially in the lead up to Christmas. Early mornings will often see the webs of jewel spiders decorated in diamond-like dew giving the appearance of a glistening fortress. Females are larger up to 1cm with males being as small as 3mm.



Helena Gum Moth (*Opodiphthera helena*)

November is the peak flying period for the magnificent Helena Gum Moth. With a wingspan of 15cm it is a titan of the moth world. In summer their caterpillars can be found eating gum leaves all through the day. When first hatched caterpillars are blackish, as they age they get brighter in colour and eventually getting to 9cm, as fat as a thumb and bright green. Once in their cocoon, they may stay there for several years if conditions aren't right.



White-striped Free-tail Bat (*Austronomus australis*)

For many, bats are feared for varied reasons. But they are one of the most beautiful mammals that come alive under the blanket of darkness. The White-striped Free-tail Bat is a microbat – meaning it has a mouse-sized body, a wingspan under 25cm, and a diet of insects. In SA there are 24 species of microbat. This particular bat is one of few that can be heard by the human ear. On warm nights they make the sound 'tink tink'. And they are not restricted to the National Parks but also urban backyards. For those that don't like bats, once they find out that they can eat half their body weight a night of insects – a big portion includes mosquitoes, they are quick to have a change of heart.



Image: Michael Pennay

Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*)

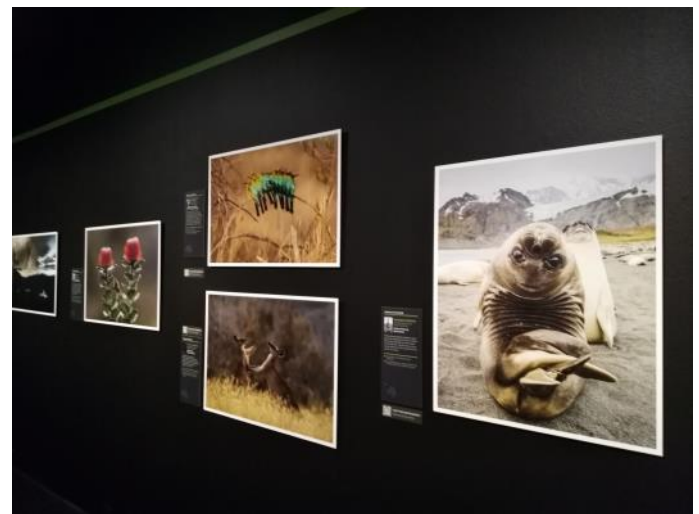
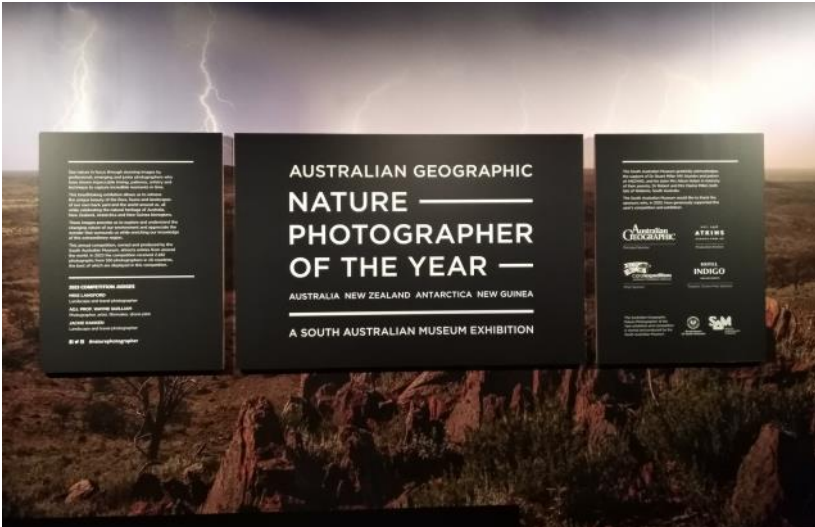
A well-known food source for Koalas. From summer through to autumn these gums flower providing much needed sustenance for insects and birds. In the park there are two subspecies which are quite easy to tell apart as long as you can count the number of buds/flowers/seed pods in a cluster (umbel). If there are three it is subspecies viminalis and up to seven it is subspecies cygentensis. There is a beautiful specimen at the Almanda carpark (count the buds to determine what species it is!).



Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year:

Unfortunately, our scheduled visit to the SA Museum in September, to see the exhibition for the Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year saw only a couple of our members attend, although I know several others have gotten along to see it at other times.

Here's a few of the many spectacular images on display.



Spring Wander:

On a mild Sunday morning in October, 22 members, friends and visitors gathered at gate 3 for our regular spring wander. Previously described as spring walks, the change in title reflects our more casual approach to these get-togethers in the park, where we take the opportunity to wander along at a slower pace, stopping along the way for Peter or Jason to identify the call of a bird, show others a special plant or insect, or provide a bit of information about how the different organisms interact with each other in nature.

We headed up Bandicoot Track to the Crossroads, heading along Currawong Ridge Track to Cup Gum Track, from where we walked up the hill to Tom's Outlook. We stopped here for some morning tea, and spent some time on hands and knees looking at some of the tiny plants and insects.



It was a treat to spot what was later identified as a Chequered Cuckoo Bee or Blue-spotted Cloak-and-dagger Bee (left—*Thyreus caeruleopunctatus*), asleep on the tip of a Black Rapier-sedge (*Lepidosperma carphoides*). While we are aware that there is a decline in insects worldwide, including right here at home, it is always very exciting (for some of us) when we see a tiny native bee or other pollinator on our wildflowers, let alone a big one like this.

We all wandered back to gate 3 in our own time, having enjoyed good company, good exercise and a little piece of nature's wonder.



Image: Janet Davill



Image: Jenny Dawes

Above and below: The spring wander in the park.



Image: Jenny Dawes



Scott Creek CP Fire Recovery Review:

In October, rangers Brent and Jen got together to arrange a visit to the park to review where things were at with fire recovery after the January 2021 Cherry Gardens fire.

It took a bit of planning, but all came together on Thursday 16th November, when Peter and Mark joined a group of NPWS staff to visit a couple of sites that had received large investment in weed management, both before the fire and since, by the Friends group, contractors and the NPWS Fire Management crew.

We started by driving across to Cup Gum Track, where we looked down into Blechnum Creek and discussed the large number of scattered Montpellier Broom we could see in it, many with seed pods developing. Our Tuesday bushcare activity in November was spent working in part of this area, and we have arranged for a contractor to come in and finish off the treatment of this priority weed as soon as they can. This area was worked through by both contractors and the Friends group before the fire, and again each year since.

While there, Andy Sheath (Fire Ecologist AMLR) gave us a brief summary of the fauna monitoring that had been done for the nationally endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot and Chestnut-rumped Heathwren. This reflected some of what Andy has since presented on at our AGM.

We then drove up Bronzewing Track to the cleared area above Bushrat Creek to the north, where we looked at the old Erica Forest site, which had been treated following the fire, only to be colonised by a large English Broom infestation. Part of this has only recently been worked on by a contractor, but more needs to be done and, again, we have arranged for another contractor to come in and do more work as soon as they can.



Above and below: The Fire Recovery Review visit to Bushrat Creek.



From here we walked down to the junction of Bushrat Creek and North Bushrat Creek, finding some scattered Montpellier Broom with seed pods developing. We spent a bit of time hand weeding these, and Craig Lowe (DEW Fire Management) said that, having worked in other parts of this creek system recently, they would be able to do the follow-up, working from Cup Gum Track up to this area. Contractors and the Friends group have also worked through the creekline both before and since the fire.



Above: Bushrat Creek junction.

Finally, we returned to gate 3 and sat and discussed fire recovery in general. In particular we were trying to work out what had worked well and what gaps there were, which could be improved upon in the future.

We have been reasonably happy with the funding situation, which has financed bushcare contractors do much of the larger priority weed treatment, although it has continued to take up a lot of our time with preparation of grant applications and subsequent management of funds and reporting.

It has really been the lack of an ongoing role within NPWS that was dedicated to supporting the park and Friends group with prioritising weed management, liaising with contractors and overseeing work orders, reporting and invoicing, which has been missing. The six months Kat Hill was helping us out in this capacity, as a part of her broader role, ensured the various parts of the park impacted by the fire were checked regularly for weed growth, and that treatment could be arranged with contractors in a timely way. Since we lost this extra support, we have found ourselves to be chasing our tails and acting very reactively as we come across more patches of priority weeds, often when they are already large and close to setting seed.

We have, perhaps, not been helped by the successive relatively mild summers and wet years experienced since the fire. This has seen continued germination of fire responsive weed seed in areas where they have been treated already, followed by strong growth to flowering and seeding stage within a twelve month period. In addition, a hot, dry summer will often see many late germinating weed seedlings die before the following year's breaking rains in late autumn. This can greatly reduce the time it takes to follow-up the previous weed treatment in these areas.

It was suggested that a role like this within each region could also assist groups manage larger Friends of Parks Partnership Grants, in between emergency response activities.

Peter Watton—Grants & Funding, Contractor Liaison & Reporting

Bushcare activities:

As with our last report in Bandicoot Tails, we continued to try and treat the flowering priority weeds throughout spring, in particular the Boneseed and Montpellier and English Brooms, plus the Sallow Wattle (*Acacia longifolia* spp. *longifolia*), to prevent seed-set.

In September we still had some fairly wet sessions, but the warmer days arrived with October. The Bureau of Meteorology has confirmed that the El Niño weather pattern is active over the Pacific Ocean, while the lesser known climate driver, known as a “positive” Indian Ocean Dipole, has also developed. These mean we are likely to experience hotter and drier conditions this summer, which may in turn help reduce the survival rate of new woody weed seedlings that have germinated during spring.

Almanda Bush Gardening:

The Almanda Bush Gardening team has continued work along the north side of Scott Creek, next to Matthews Road, while also following up the previous weed removal along Almanda Creek.

Bandi Bunch:

Bandi Bunch is continuing to work in the higher value native habitat, hand weeding priority woody weeds (Blackberry, Broom), and cutting and swabbing where hand-removal isn't possible (e.g. big, old crowns of blackberry too deep to dig out without damaging surrounding soil and vegetation).

Scheduled bushcare activities during winter:

5th September 2023—five volunteers returned to the area above Blackwater Dam, near gate 8, to continue working on a variety of woody weeds that were now flowering, including many English Broom and *Acacia longifolia*, along with smaller numbers of Boneseed, Montpellier Broom and Blackberry.



Above left: Lots of English Broom stems at the gate 8 activity.



Above right: *Acacia longifolia* at gate 8 in September.

Below left: Large flowering Boneseed along Upper Fern Gully.

Below right: One Erica was found along Upper Fern Gully.



10th September 2023—eight volunteers patrolled through the area between Cup Gum Track and Upper Fern Gully, east from Currawong Gully, finding some large Boneseed, a couple of *Acacia longifolia* and Blackberry along the creeklines, plus one Erica and some South African Daisy. The area higher up the hillside was in excellent condition, and some of our group didn't come across a single weed to deal with!

23rd September 2023—ten volunteers worked on the Montpellier Broom patch at the Crossroads, above Fern Creek. There was a very large number of large flowering Broom, which we mostly cut off at ground level without applying herbicide, to save some of the extra time that would be taken to cut and swab, so that we managed to get through the whole patch in one session. The need to fine-tune strategies like this, so that we prevented seed-set and didn't have to return to this patch this season, is a crucial part of our planning.



Above: Montpellier Broom patch at the Crossroads, before and after.

Below left: Large Montpellier Broom piled up at the Crossroads.

Below right: Phil and Peter with Montpellier Broom at the Crossroads.



3rd October 2023—six volunteers worked along the east side of Scott Creek, following up and extending previous activities working from the northern end, targeting large flowering Boneseed and Montpellier Broom amongst Blackberry and Bracken Fern.

8th October 2023—six volunteers roamed the hillside around Stockyard Track, treating Montpellier and English Broom, Tagasaste, Boneseed, some Bulbil *Watsonia* and one Erica.

28th October 2023—eight volunteers patrolled the area between Brown Frog Creek and Blackwater Creek, finding most of the area in excellent condition, with a couple of fairly large patches of Montpellier and English Broom up closer to Mount Bold Ridge Track, Blackberry and large Boneseed down Hakea Creek, and a few tall *Acacia dealbata* and a patch of Slender Thistles also dealt with.



Above: Flowering Boneseed and Montpellier Broom were the main targets at our bushcare activity in Scott Creek in October.

7th November 2023—five volunteers headed into Blechnum Creek to make a start on this season's post-fire Montpellier Broom growth, with conditions perfect for them to flower and seed in their first year. We have contacted a contractor to see if we can get some work done through this area before all the seed matures.

12th November 2023—nine volunteers returned to the gate 8 site above Blackwater Dam to finish off the *Acacia longifolia* we encountered last time we were there dealing with Broom. While it took some time finding the patch again, we found a few Broom and scrambling Blackberry, plus some large Boneseed to treat along the way.

25th November 2023—nine volunteers ventured into the western, unburnt side of the park for a change of scenery. Working west from gate 18 on Frith Road, we found many scattered Boneseed, along with a myriad of other weeds in smaller numbers, although we will need to return to spray patches of Blackberry and both Bulbil and Bordered *Watsonia* at a later date.

Additional independent bushcare activities:

2nd September 2023—Andrew and Mardi continued their work on woody weeds at the top of Number 1 block, including, Blackberry, Boneseed, English Broom, Montpellier Broom, South African Daisy and Tagasaste.

10th September 2023—after the regular bushcare session, Peter went up to the gate 7 Erica and *Watsonia* patch to spray the huge number of Bordered *Watsonia* seedlings that had germinated since last year, spot spraying some of the larger plants in the same area.

10th September 2023—after the regular bushcare session, Glenn sprayed *Watsonia*, Belladonna Lily and One O'clock in Kangaroo Gully.

Below: Montpellier and English Broom and an assortment of other weeds were worked on around Stockyard Track.



18th September 2023—Peter sprayed a large area of Cape Tulip growing at the top of Almada Valley.

22nd September 2023—Peter returned to spray some more Cape Tulip in upper Almada Valley. The Cape Tulip was largely flowering now, so getting a bit late and won't do any more this year.

23rd September 2023—After the regular bushcare session, Peter and Glenn spot sprayed Watsonia, both Bulbil and Bordered species, and Erica at the gate 7 patch.

8th October 2023—after the regular bushcare session, Glenn returned to spot spray more Watsonia and Erica at the gate 7 patch.

27th October 2023—Mark and Peter headed into the southern end of Number 1 Block to treat Erica and a couple of Watsonia on the south side of the south creekline, a patch of Tagasaste in the creek near the eastern fenceline, and a large patch of English Broom growing to 2.5-3m tall a little further up the hillside.

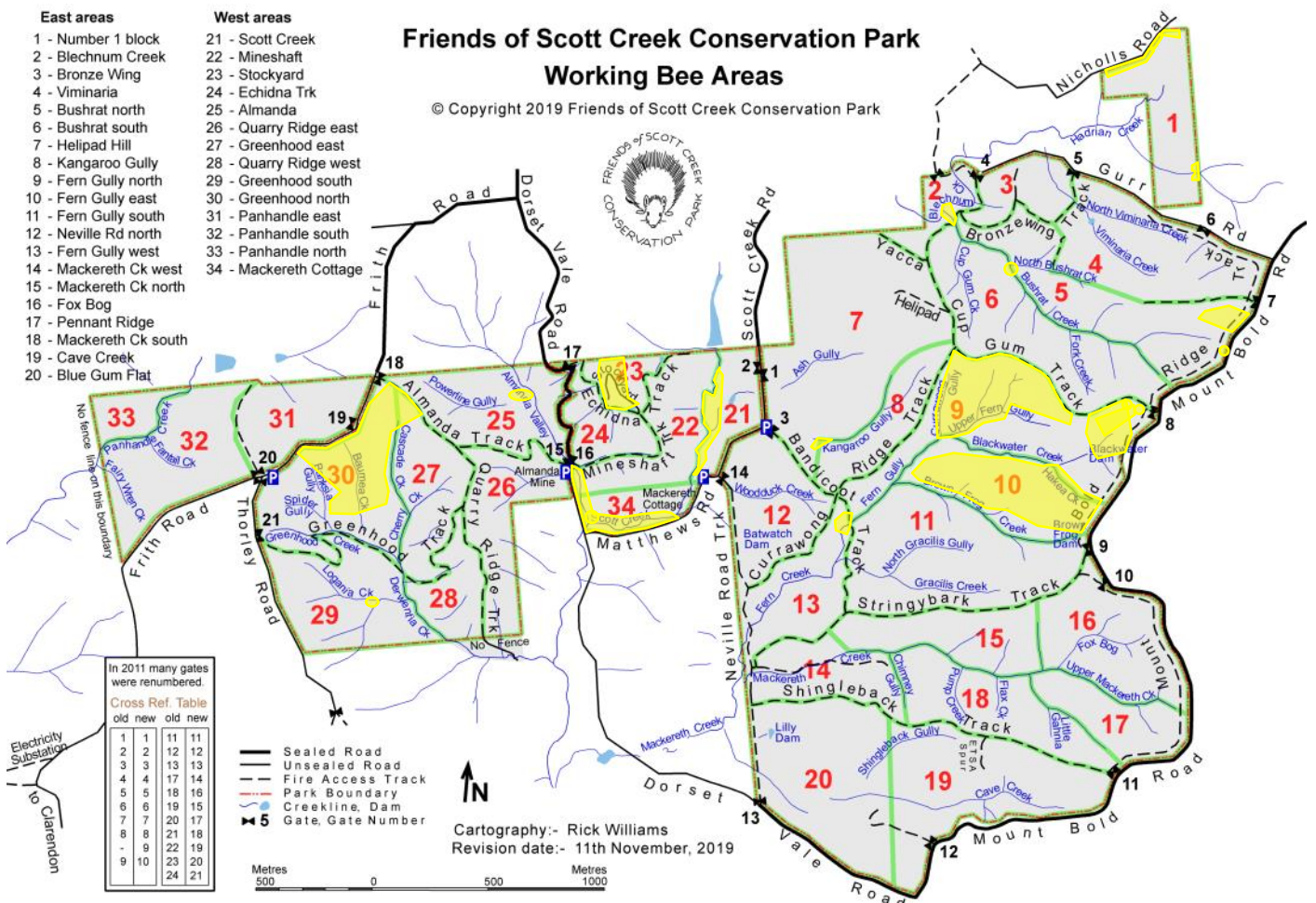
28th October 2023—Glenn and Peter returned to spray more Watsonia, Erica and Blackberry at the gate 7 patch, along with a few Watsonia just south below Cup Gum Track and along the edge of Mount Bold Ridge Track.

12th November 2023—Glenn and Peter stayed after the regular bushcare session near gate 8 to re-spray the patch of Blue Periwinkle at the old house site.

16th November 2023—after a post-fire visit to the park with NPWS staff, Peter finished off the last (at this stage) of the Willows on the northern side of Scott Creek along the first stretch east from Dorset Vale Road. There were two Pussy Willows and one Weeping Willow, right at the point where Almada Creek enters Scott Creek, which was difficult to see and get access to and so managed to get missed previously.

17th November 2023—Andrew and Mardi returned to Number 1 block, this time checking pretty much the entire northern boundary, treating lots of Acacia longifolia, a few Sollya and some Boneseed, Montpellier and Blackberry.

Peter Watton



Funding and Contractor report:

Funding update—thanks to Anna for her help with grant applications:

- Submitted the second year progress report for our three year project “Threatened Species Recovery Scott Creek”, funded under the NPWS Friends of Parks Partnership Grants Program 2021-2022.
- Submitted application under the NPWS Friends of Parks Small Grants Program 2023-2024 for \$5,000 for contractor work on Boneseed, Montpellier Broom and Blackberry behind Mackereth Cottage.

Below is a list of the main work that contractors have completed during spring:

- funded from the NPWS On-Park Volunteer Support Grant—Partnership Grants Program:
 - Bushrat Creek—Mint Green patrolled either end treating priority weeds, mainly Montpellier Broom.
 - Bushrat Creek middle—Mint Green did primary treatment of English Broom.
 - Mackereth Creek—Mint Green followed up treatment of priority weeds along the creekline.



Volunteers working for conservation



- funded under the Green Adelaide Grassroots Grants:
 - Scott Creek—TFL Works treated Montpellier Broom, Boneseed and Dog Rose.
 - Panhandle—TFL Works treated Montpellier Broom, Sollya and Dog Rose.

This project is funded by Green Adelaide.



- Funded under the Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu Grassroots Grant:
 - Yacca Hill west—Andrew Morgan Environmental continued his work on Sollya and other priority weeds, previously funded from a Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu Priority Fund.

This project is supported by [Landscape Hills and Fleurieu's](#) Grassroots Grants Program, and is funded by the landscape levy.



I have also liaised with contractors to get more work done in Blechnum, Blackwater and Bushrat Creeks.

Peter Watton—Grants & Funding, Contractor Liaison & Reporting

Below: Mint Green treatment of English Broom at Bushrat Creek middle.





Above and below: TFL Works treatment of Boneseed and Montpellier Broom along Scott Creek.



Below: TFL Works also treated Montpellier Broom, Erica and Sollya in the Panhandle.

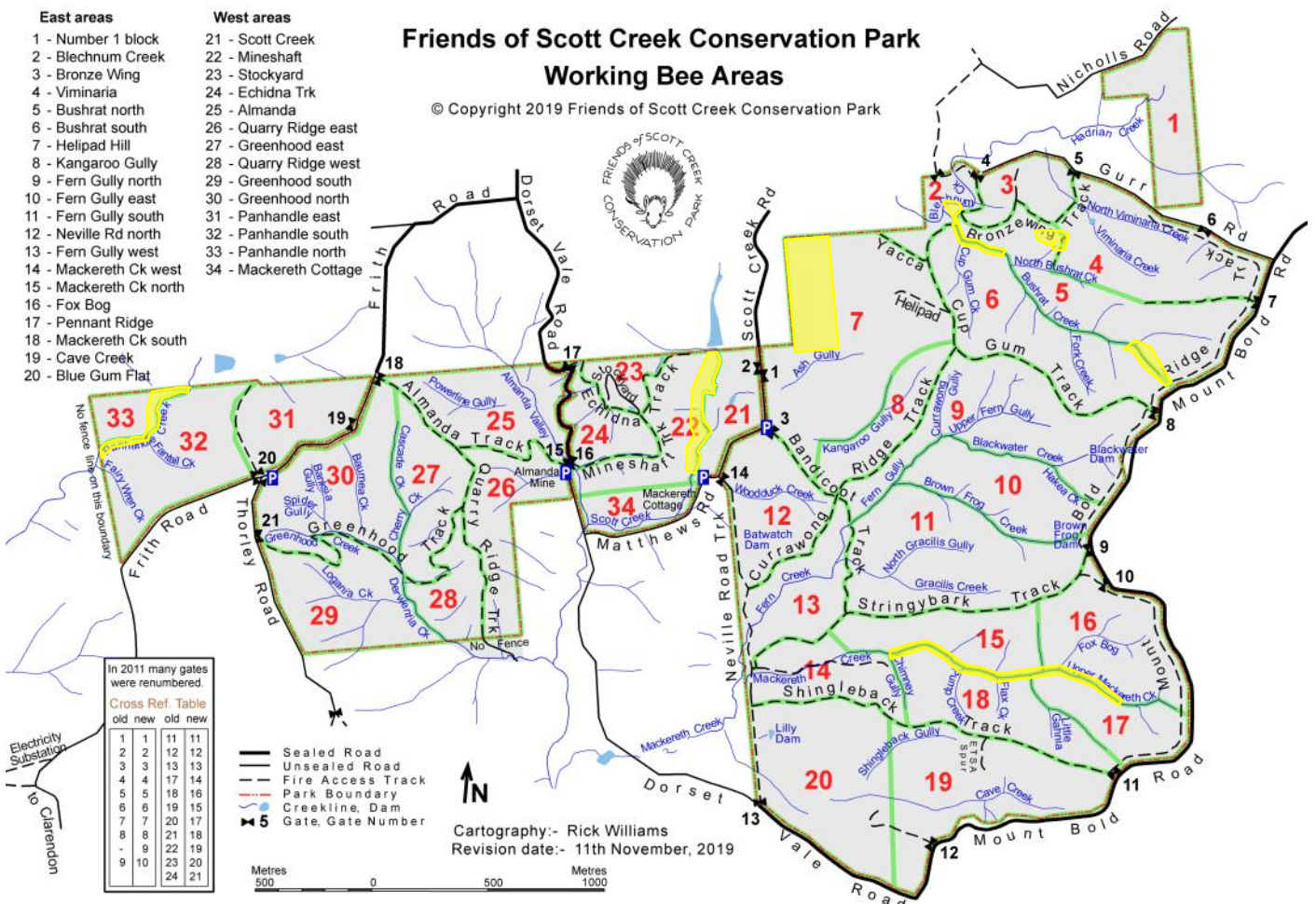
This project is funded by Green Adelaide.





Above: Andrew Morgan Environmental work on Sollya and other priority weeds on Yacca Hill west.

This project is supported by [Landscape Hills and Fleurieu's Grassroots Grants Program](#), and is funded by the landscape levy.



In 2011 many gates were renumbered.		
Cross Ref. Table		
old	new	old
1	1	11
2	2	12
3	3	13
4	4	17
5	5	18
6	6	19
7	7	20
8	8	21
9	9	22
		23
		24
		21

Bird Banding Report for AGM: January—November 2023

For the same period (Jan to Nov) in 2022, we processed 247 birds. This equates to an increase of just over 57% over the same time. Recaptures were down to less than 12% compared to a project rate of nearly 18%. In this year we have banded our first ever Painted Button-quail, Crested Shrike-tit and Rainbow Lorikeet.

There has been a marked return in Crescent Honeyeaters, New Holland Honeyeaters, Superb Fairy-wrens, and Eastern Spinebills. Included in our capture of Superb Fairy-wrens were three birds that were banded by the Flinders University group, near Gate 3, with colour banded markings. Petra passed on a photo of the oldest (6+) that had been banded as a nestling.

We have seen a drop off in the number of older birds in our recaptures. There have been only three birds older than 5 years; a White-browed Scrubwren from Gurr Road at 11+ years, a Striated Thornbill at 6+ years and the Superb Fairy-wren mentioned earlier. The recaptured Laughing Kookaburra from near Kangaroo Gully at 4+ years was the next oldest re-capture. This is an indication that there was a significant fire effect on the bird population.

The banding team continues to gain interest and growth. Betty Brezovskis and Steve Francis are now signed up for training in gaining an 'A' Class authority. Mark Fagan, Maree Merchant, and Diego Guevera are now a regular part of the team joining with Peter Watton, Jenny Dawes and Jim Spiker as the long termers.

Banding will continue next year to rotate around the 12 sites. We usually band, weather permitting on the first and third weekend each month. Our relative permits are all in order and data is submitted to the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme for the national database records.

Please check the program at the end of this newsletter for dates and times of future banding sessions. Visitors are welcome to 'come and see' banding without having to commit to an early start. If you would like to receive an email notice, get in touch with me at president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au.

Jim Spiker
Bird Banding Coordinator



Above: White-throated Treecreeper, banded along Greenhood Track in November.

Below left and right: Superb Fairy-wrens banded along Greenhood Track early November.



Bird	All Captures	Recaptures	Control
Brown Thornbill	17	0	
Brown-headed Honeyeater	1	0	
Buff-rumped Thornbill	4	0	
Common Blackbird	1	0	
Crescent Honeyeater	22	2	
Crested Shrike-tit	2	0	
Eastern Spinebill	15	2	
European Goldfinch	1	0	
Golden Whistler	9	1	
Grey Currawong	1	0	
Grey Fantail	5	0	
Grey Shrike-thrush	4	0	
Laughing Kookaburra	1	1	
New Holland Honeyeater	63	4	
Painted Button-quail	1	0	
Rainbow Lorikeet	2	0	
Red Wattlebird	2	0	
Red-browed Finch	9	1	
Scarlet Robin	4	0	
Silvereye	39	3	
Striated Thornbill	43	8	
Superb Fairy-wren	85	23	3
White-browed Scrubwren	21	5	
White-naped Honeyeater	7	0	
White-throated Treecreeper	3	0	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	19	0	
TOTAL (26 Species)	381	45	3





Above left: Young Eastern Spinebill.



Above right: Adult Eastern Spinebill.

Below left: Striated Thornbill (left) and Brown Thornbill.



Below right: White-browed Scrubwren.



Below left: New Holland Honeyeater.



Below right: Silvereye.



Photo Gallery:



Above left: Blue-banded Bee on Yellow Rush-lily.
Below left: Dusky Woodswallow on nest.



Above right: Short-beaked Echidna.
Below right: Satin-green Forester.



Above left: Native Bee on Common Fringe-myrtle.
Below left: Moth (*Taxeotis reserata*).



Above right: Sleepy Lizard.
Below right: Bracket Fungi.



Photo Gallery:



Above left: Red Parrot-pea.
Below left: Slender Ringtail.



Above right: Native Bee on White Everlasting.
Below right: Holly Flat-pea.



Above left: Willow-herb Day-Moth.
Below left: White-necked Heron.

Above right: Spotted Ground Swift Spider.
Below right: Spider-flower.

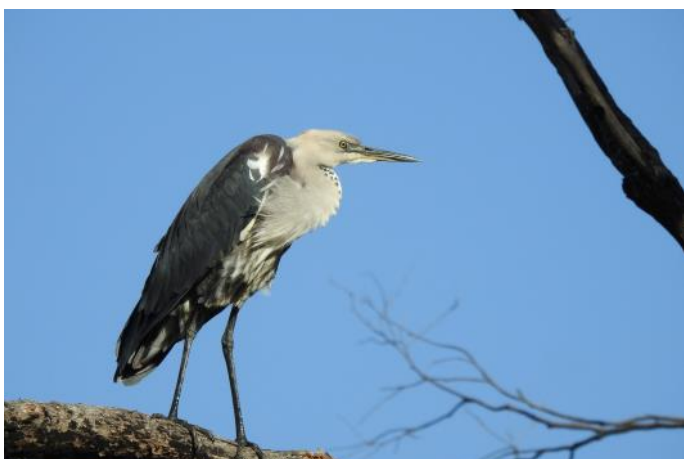


Photo Gallery:



Above left: Blotched Dusky-Blue.

Below left: Blue Pincushion.



Above right: Fringed Daisy-bush.

Below right: Moth on Shrubby Dampiera.



Above left: Native Bee on Button Everlasting.

Below left: Orbweaver Spider, possibly Speckled.



Above right: Leaf Beetle.

Below right: Sedge Moth on Short-fruit Oxalis.



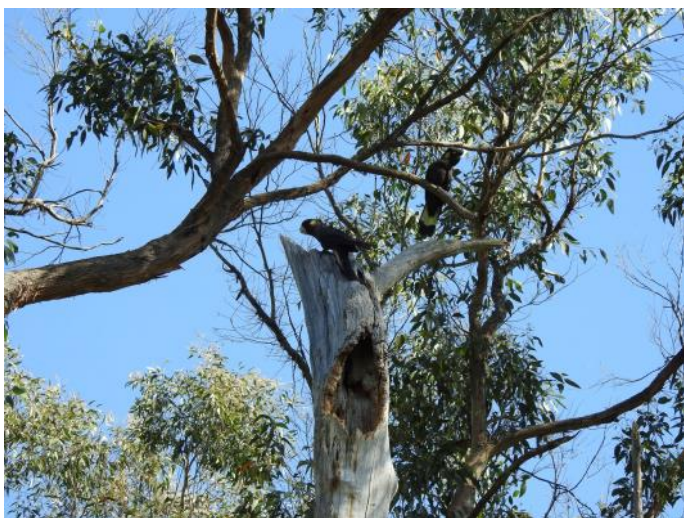
Photo Gallery:



Above left and right and left: Three biocontrols on Salvation Jane, identified by Susan Ivory from Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu at our spring wander in October at the Crossroads.



Above and left: Pair of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos working on a tree hollow in Blechnum Creek.



Below left and right: Patch of old growth Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) found in the Greenhood north area of the park.



There ain't no insects no more:

Let's start with what the United Nations tells us, I quote:

'Many people think of insects as a nuisance. They don't realize that without them we are doomed.'

'While there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that there are fewer insects than there used to be—older people will remember that a car journey in summertime in the northern hemisphere used to leave your windscreen plastered with dead insects—until recently there have been few studies of insect population declines.'

"Insects make up about half of all known living organisms. They play key roles in, pollination, nutrient cycling, food chains of birds and other insectivores, and are one of the pillars of our ecosystems. However, the wide use of insecticides, fragmentation of habitats and climate change are placing multiple threats on them, and their populations are under sharp decline," says a January 2019 UN Environment [Foresight Brief](#).'



We are losing the Little things that run the world

'Across the world, more than 40 per cent of insect species are declining and a third are endangered, the analysis found. **The rate of extinction is eight times faster than that of mammals, birds and reptiles.** The total mass of insects is falling by a precipitous 2.5 per cent a year, according to the best data available, suggesting they could vanish within a century.'

"The world's insects are hurtling down the path to extinction, threatening a catastrophic collapse of nature's ecosystems," says UN Environment biodiversity expert Marieta Sakalian. "We urgently need to take action on many fronts to stem this decline."

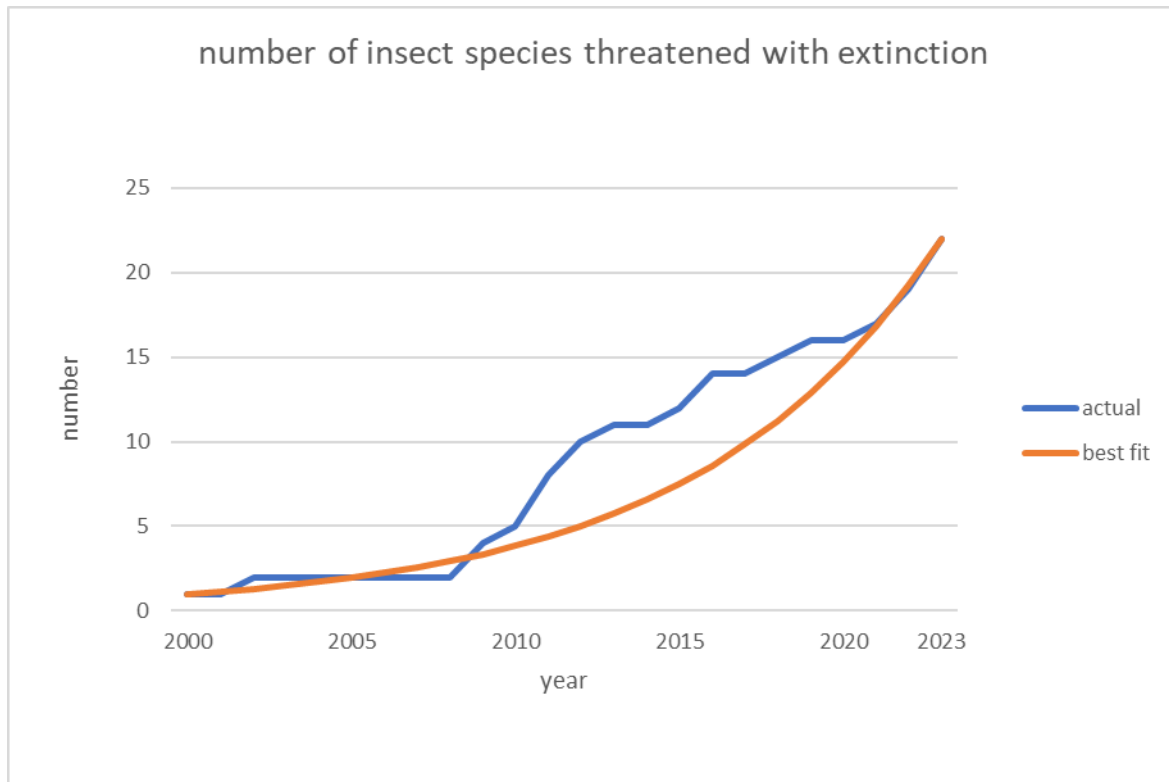
'The researchers set out their conclusions in unusually forceful terms for a peer-reviewed scientific paper: "The [insect] trends confirm that the sixth major extinction event is profoundly impacting life forms on our planet... Unless we change our ways of producing food, insects as a whole will go down the path of extinction in a few decades... The repercussions this will have for the planet's ecosystems are catastrophic to say the least."' [1]

How do we handle such news in Australia? We need only look at our chief apologist, the ABC. They use a bit of Trumpian Logic. After all, our Australian scientists do not worry about insects. They do what the government tells them to do. Otherwise they lose their jobs. The government is only concerned with the cute and cuddly. You need only look at their conclusions. While the world scientists very clearly tell us that if the Australian experience is similar to the rest of the world, then 65,000 of our Australian insect species are endangered and hurtling towards extinction, our Department of Environment tells us that only 15 of our Australian insects are endangered (mostly bees and butterflies). [2]

The ABC starts by appearing to agree with the problem with something like, "Our Christmas Beetles have gone". Then they sow the seeds of doubt with, "Our scientists have not looked at the problem, so we don't really know". Finally, they give an alternative with, "It doesn't matter anyway, we can always invent machines that go around pollinating all our Eucalypt Trees". [3]

So! We have a problem. The United Nations tell us that probably 65,000 of our insect species are endangered while our Government tells us that only 15 of our insect species are endangered. Who should we believe?

The chart below shows information supplied by the Australian Government.



Correlation coefficient .95

I could spend a lot of time and space showing that we have a serious problem, not with our scientists but with those pretending to interpret the scientific results. So, I will just give one example and leave you with the fact that the ABC is not telling us the truth when it comes to environmental matters.

They say, **“The rate of extinction is eight times faster than that of mammals, birds and reptiles.”** Such a statement is absurd when talking about exponential growth. Suppose it is eight times faster over a twenty-year period. Which is a fact. Then over a forty-year period it would be sixty-four times faster.

I just give a few facts that I am aware of:

Firstly, I have a cabin in the Flinders Ranges which I have visited regularly over the last twenty years. At first when I drove up there my windscreen had to be regularly cleaned due to insect splatts. Over the last two years I could count the number of insect splatts on my windscreen on my fingers.

Secondly, I have lived in the Adelaide Hills for 55 years. This Spring is the first where I have not woken to a chorus (but depleting) of Honeyeaters. Just one single Blackbird greets my awakening this Spring. Honeyeaters feed their young on insects. There are no insects today and therefore no Honeyeaters.

Thirdly, I have a friend who worked for an Adelaide Council. One of his jobs was to clean out the filters on a fountain. He tells me that once, around Christmas, the fountain would become clogged with Christmas beetles, but there are no Christmas Beetles seen in Adelaide anymore.

Fourthly, I remember a time when a light left on outside attracted millions of insects. My windows at night attracted tree frogs and geckos feeding on the insects on the outside of my windows. There are no insects on the outside of my windows anymore and so no tree frogs and geckos.

What is the cause? Of course, there is the general problems affecting all living species. Land clearance increased human activity and invasive species. However! Insects face an additional challenge. We have waged a relentless war against insects. We have actively targeted them. We have successfully exterminated them.

The most widely used groups of insecticides in recent years have been the organophosphates which include parathion methyl, chlorpyrifos, dimethoate, profenfos and diazinon. Around 5,000 tonnes of active ingredients from this group, which comprises around 30 identifiably distinct chemicals, have been used annually. The next most significant group of insecticides are the acetyl choline esterase inhibitors, comprising various carbamates, of which about 3,000 tonnes have been used each year. Metham sodium is the most highly used carbamate. Over 500 tonnes per annum are used of those insecticides which act as GABA-gated chloride channel antagonists, the most important of these being endosulfan, which is a cyclodiene organochlorine, but which does not build up in the fat of mammals or persist in the environment. Of the remaining insecticides, the twenty chemicals in the pyrethroids and pyrethrins group are the most widely used, totalling up to a couple of hundred tonnes per annum. [4]

Over 1% of the Australian land area is soaked with insecticide every year. Every invertebrate on that 1% is killed. The runoff ensures that every invertebrate in every creek from this 1% is also killed.

I spend my spare time restoring a section of Scott Creek within Scott Creek Conservation Park. Scott Creek is a beautiful creek. However! If you look into the water, there is very little life. Upstream landuse, where insecticides are used to destroy pasture pests, ensure there is little life in Scott Creek.

in addition most households have a can of fly spray so that any unwary insect venturing into humanities living space can be quickly dealt with.

The Award-winning Adelaide folk band **Goldstein** have written a song that says it all. It talks about “human activity” and “biodiversity”. Its title is “F*** All Left”.

What is the solution? Of course, we know the solution. However! It is probably too late. Australia is a signatory to the 30/30 convention on nature. We have actually agreed to set aside 30% of our land for nature by 2030. It is just that our government is a bit confused about what this means. They think this is just a matter of putting up a sign saying, “this bit of land is protected” and they further think it just refers to the “cute and cuddly” as well. Most of Australia’s so-called protected areas are infested with invasive species as well as being subjected to human interference. If they were given a reasoned score on their effective protection, we could only claim that about 2% of Australia’s land mass could be classed as protected.

John Wamsley

[1] <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/insect-declines-are-stark-warning-humanity>

[2] [EPBC Act List of Threatened Fauna \(environment.gov.au\)](https://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/act-list-of-threatened-fauna)

[3] [Pollination technology is addressing declining insect populations, but not everyone's a fan - ABC News](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-15/pollination-technology-addressing-declining-insect-populations-but-not-everyones-a-fan/10557440)

[4] <https://www.atse.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/pesticide-use-australia.pdf>

Office bearers:

Any queries on Friends activities, please contact the relevant person below, general queries to: info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

President: Jim Spiker email: president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Vice President: Peter Watton email: info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Treasurer: Andrew Biven email: treasurer@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Correspondence Secretary: position vacant email: secretary@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Administration Assistant: Jenny Dawes email: info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Minute Secretary: Anna Dutkiewicz email: webmaster@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Membership Officer: Lorraine Billett email via: info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Other roles and positions:

Bird Banding Coordinator: Jim Spiker (contact details above)

Bushcare Coordinator: Jenny Dawes (contact details above)

Assistant Bushcare Coordinator: Glenn Giles

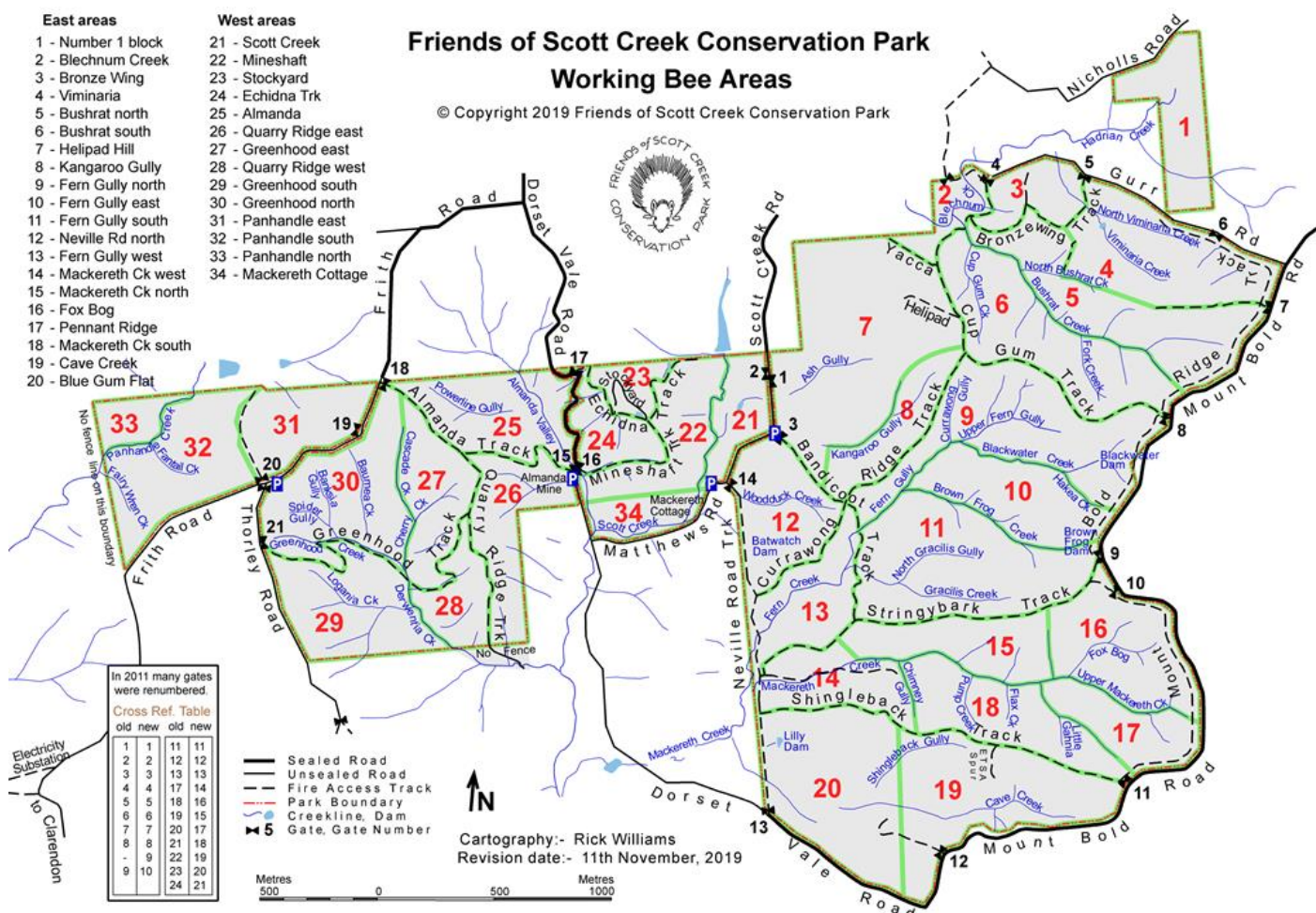
Bushcare — Grants & Funding, Contractor Liaison & Reporting: Peter Watton (contact details above)

Bush Gardening Almanda Creek: John Wamsley email: john@johnwamsley.com

Editor Bandicoot Tails & Facebook: Peter Watton (contact details above)

Website Coordinator: Anna Dutkiewicz email: webmaster@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Social & Events Coordinators: Jenny Dawes (contact details above), Sue Braddock-Smith



Summer Program of Activities December 2023–February 2024

The Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park welcome visitors to all of our activities, which include regular bushcare, bird banding and bush gardening.

For enquiries and information: E info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au W www.friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Bushcare activities: During summer we will meet at **8.30am** at the **nearest gate for the activity location**.

An email will be sent to bushcarers advising the location in advance.

Any **new members** interested in joining us, contact the above email address to receive the email.

Be prepared for walking through sometimes rugged bushland, including areas recovering from fire, and bring a small backpack to carry your morning tea.

Bird Banding activities: Contact the Bird Banding Coordinator (see next page) to receive emails about activities.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Local activities will be **cancelled** if a **fire ban** or **severe weather warning** is announced for the **Mount Lofty Ranges**. Bird banding will also be cancelled in conditions that may adversely affect the birds.

See links to BOM & CFS websites below.

BOM website: <http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteve/dorset-vale>

CFS website: https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/bans_and_ratings

Month/Day	Date	Activity	Location
DECEMBER 2023			
Tuesday	5	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
Sunday	10	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
Friday	15	Christmas Event All Welcome!	Biven residence 146 Bradbury Rd Mylor (cnr Ridge Rd). General meeting at 5.30pm followed by Christmas gathering 6.00pm start. BBQ available, BYO food and drinks and folding chair if possible. Please RSVP to 0404 878 344 or treasurer@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au
Saturday, Sunday	16, 17	Bird Banding	FB Fox Bog, via Gate 9, 6:30 am
Saturday	23	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
JANUARY 2024			
Tuesday	2	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
Saturday, Sunday	6, 7	Bird Banding	PR Pennant Ridge, Gate 11. 6:30 am
Sunday	14	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
Saturday, Sunday	20, 21	Bird Banding	TC Twisted Chimney, via Gate 13, 6:30 am
Wednesday	24	Social Lunch All Welcome	Joan's Pantry—Hawthorndene at noon (Watahuna Ave opposite the oval)
Saturday	27	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
FEBRUARY 2024			
Saturday, Sunday	3, 4	Bird Banding	PH The Panhandle, Gate 20, 7:00 am
Tuesday	6	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
Sunday	11	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
Saturday, Sunday	17, 18	Bird Banding	MC Mackereth Cottage, Carpark, 7:00 am
Tuesday	20	General Meeting All Welcome!	Venue and time to be advised
Saturday	24	Bushcare	Post-fire weed regeneration will determine location
Thursday	29	Social Lunch All Welcome	Essence—Stirling at noon (down lane between Gardiners Real Estate and Stirling Florist in Stirling's main street)