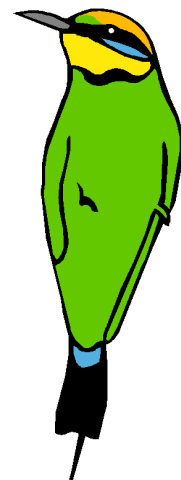


GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE



Making a Spotted Turtle-dove Funnel Trap

On Saturday 20th of June Land for Wildlife hosted a workshop on how to build your own Spotted Turtle-dove trap. Jon DeLaine from Parks and Wildlife gave a brilliant presentation about the behaviour and natural history of the feral birds and a trap-making demonstration. We then built our own Funnel Traps...

Materials:

- Chicken wire or weld mesh (arc mesh)
- Gutter guard
- Shade cloth

Jon recommends using 4 or 5cm weld mesh as the larger gauge will allow small native birds to fly in and out without getting trapped. When using large gauge it may be worth wrapping a strip of shade cloth or small mesh around the sides without entrances to prevent Turtle-doves from trying to poke through the bigger gauge. Jon mentioned several times during the workshop that these birds are not very smart; if the entrance way is not made obvious they will spend all day walking up and down one side trying to get at the bait. It's important to use wire because it is transparent, which will encourage birds to enter.



Tools:

- Wire- or bolt-cutters for cutting wire to size (be careful of sharp edges).
- Maspro clips (also known as ring clips, C-rings or hog-clips – a squarer variety). Very handy multi-purpose clips! Maspro clips are used to attach wire pieces together.
- If you are buying Maspro clips, purchase the special clamping pliers along with the clips which makes it much easier to close the rings compared to fiddling with pliers. Jon has put polypipe on the handles of his set to avoid getting blisters.

Bait:

- Commercial seed, purchased from supermarkets or pet shops, can be used as bait. Larger seeds are preferred over smaller seed, as the small seed will attract too many native birds. Avoid sunflower seed as you may be overrun by galahs (it is a favourite with parrots and very fattening for them)!

- If Spotted Turtle-doves are coming into your yard to eat your pet or chook food, use that as bait.

Building a Funnel Trap:

The Parks and Wildlife Fact Sheet has details on how to make these traps. If you have any concerns about your homemade trap, contact Parks and Wildlife and they can come to inspect them.



Funnel traps could be made with chicken wire in a circle or with weld-mesh clipped together in a square. No framework is required for either, and they do not need floors built in. Jon recommends that all types of traps be made without a floor. By lifting up the trap it enables the quick and stress-free release of native birds that get caught, instead of having to hand grab them out of the trap. Tent pegs can be used to hold traps sturdy.

Jon suggests leaving a rough edge on the narrow end of you funnel to discourage doves from trying to exit.



Cut four pieces of wire for walls and a piece for the roof. Traps should be a minimum of 50cm x 60cm. If your trap is high you will need to consider putting in a perch (e.g. thread a stick through large gauge wire).

Cut an entrance hole at ground level in one wall. This is where the funnels attached.

The funnel needs to be made out of softer gutter guard and maspro clipped to the the entrance hole so that it runs along the ground. Ensure that funnels are at least 20cm long and are no taller than 8cm at the tall end. The small end should have an opening

approximately the size of a can of baked beans. If your trap is large you should space 2-3 funnels around the trap. Funnels need to lead into the centre of the trap where the bait should be placed. In the roof or side of the trap cut another hole and cover it with shade cloth.

Cut an opening in the top so you can get the birds out. This can be covered with heavy shade cloth maspro clipped to the wire. Cut a small slit in the shade cloth; this is for you to reach into the trap and catch the bird. Place a square of wire over the shade cloth hole using solid wire or maspro clips to hinge it in the unlikely event a Turtle-dove will try to escape through the slit.



If you are going to set traps be prepared to check them regularly to prevent placing animals, native or feral, under stress. Make sure traps cannot be interfered with by dogs or cats. Jon suggests placing traps up high, for example on a table or on the roof. All native birds caught must be released as soon as possible. If you are continually catching natives, such as Crested Pigeons, try moving the trap to a different spot or discouraging the birds from feeding from the trap site. Jon suggests leaving Crested Pigeons in the trap for a short while or making a lot of noise to frighten them so they realise the trap is not an easy free feed. Be aware that birds can die of shock. Animal welfare is a priority.

You can try the 'free feed/free baiting' technique, where traps are left open with food in them for a few days which allows Turtle-doves to become comfortable with the feeding spot and gives them a false sense of security.

Trap Placement:

Placement of the trap should be out of full sun and safe from predators (cats and dogs, snakes should be considered in the warmer months). If your trap begins to slow on catch numbers you can try moving the trap to a different place in your garden. When placing a trap, vegetation or mulch can be built up around the sides leaving the entrance side clear. This will direct Turtle-doves to the trap entrance.

Disposal of birds:

Not sure what to do with feral doves once they are caught? I found this delicious recipe on the internet from last years Bush Foods competition...

www.abc.net.au/local/recipes/2008/09/11/2361756.htm?site=alicesprings

If you're not keen on pigeon pie, I would strongly recommend that all feral doves are taken to the Desert Park where they are euthanised and used for food for raptors. Turn off the Park's main entry road off Larapinta Dve onto the Service Road and look for the holding aviary for feral doves. You will see a sign that says 'Workshop' with an arrow to the left. Follow that service road along until you come to the aviary on your left. Unlock the door and place Turtle-doves inside. Be sure not to let any other captives out. Birds can be delivered between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm. If you are unable to deliver your catch give us a call at Land for Wildlife and we may be able to deliver them for you. Turtle-doves delivered to the Desert Park are then euthanized humanely and fed out to captive animals. This is great behavioural enrichment, especially for birds of prey, as it is a realistic prey size with feathers and bones to work around, keeping captive animals teeth, beaks, and claws sharp and exercised. The Desert Park will not accept dead birds for animal feed as it is a quarantine risk. Dead birds when buried can make great mulch for the garden, but if you're not sure how to humanely kill a bird don't do it!

Trap Rotation:

It was suggested at the workshop that houses along a street or groups of friends could share traps and run a rotation system. Parks and Wildlife can loan traps over very extended periods, and as long as someone is willing to take responsibility for the trap, they are happy for traps to be shared around. If anyone is interested in participating in a trap circuit let us know. We may be able to contact other members in your street or or area to see if they are interested also.



Contacts:

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Time to Plant...

For those that are gardening in the middle of winter you may have luck planting Sennas, Eremophilas, Grevilleas, Hakeas, Eucalyptus, Acacias and Stemodia at this time of year.

It is not the time to plant grasses as they can rot in their dormant winter state. Solanums are a bit frost intolerant, as well as several other bush foods like the Bush Apricot Tree, *Pittosporum phylliraeoides*, Pencil yam *Vigna lanceolata*, wild passionfruit/caper bush *Caparis spinosa*. It is also not the best time to plant Bean tree, *Erythrina vespertilio*, or Whitewood, *Atalaya hemiglauca*.

Dates to remember

July 31: National Tree Day

The Alice Springs Landcare Inc is hosting a schools National Tree Day event from 1:30 - 3:30pm at Dixon Rd Community Park, Dixon Rd Northside.

August 1 – 2: National Tree Day Weekend

There will be Tree planting at Tucker Park, Northside on Sunday the 2nd. Contact Andy Vinter for more details: andy_vinter@yahoo.com.au

August 9:

Landcare Field Day at Spencer Hill, 9am – 11am. Meet at Gosse Street Park.

Field Naturalists Club walk. South side of Mt Gillen, Leader: Connie Spencer

August 12:

Field Naturalists Club Annual General Meeting and Member's Night, 7:30 at Olive Pink Botanic Gardens

August 14:

Closing date for Eco Fair 'Learn Space' workshops, trade stalls and display stalls applications

August 22:

Field Naturalists Club walk. A 3/4 of a day walk in the hills to the north of the Larapinta subdivision. For information regarding meeting place and time contact: Connie Spencer on 8952 4694.

August 29 - 30:

Wearable Arts Exhibition. Venue: Araluen Cultural Precinct. Tickets on sale now and selling fast!

September 9:

Field Naturalist Club Meeting: Star Gazing with Stuart Traynor.

7:30pm at Olive Pink Botanic Garden

Visitors and new members welcome. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month (except December and January). www.geocities.com/alicenats

September 12:

Field Naturalists Club Ridge walk from Trepina Gorge to John Hayes Rock Hole – or reverse.

September 19:

Desert Smart EcoFair

7am – 5pm @ Olive Pink Botanic Gardens

September 19-26

Bird Week