

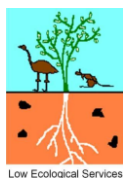
# Land for Wildlife

*Look after the land you live on*



## NEWSLETTER

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Low Ecological Services

**PowerWater**



Northern Territory Government

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## Land for Wildlife Update

Welcome to Land for Wildlife's first newsletter of the year. It is my great pleasure to start the year by announcing Land for Wildlife's success in gaining \$20 000 funding through the Caring for Country's Action Grants program! We are one of four landcare organisations in the Northern Territory to have been awarded funding through the Action Grants program.

A warm welcome to new members Ted & Nerys Egan, who joined up their property of 2.25 hectares to the program over the Christmas period. Land for Wildlife wrapped up 2009 with a membership of 88, which is 12031.5 hectares of recognised conservation protected land in and around Alice Springs! This year there are already two property owners undergoing registration, one of which will be Land for Wildlife's first member property on Aboriginal land. Garden for Wildlife closed 2009 with 126 member properties (70 433 square metres of conservation protected urban land). This year we hope to add many more properties to our membership to expand wildlife corridors between town and nature reserves and to see how we contribute to the new nature corridor concept stretching from Darwin down to Pt Augusta.

We will be running some great **workshops** this year, with the first two already a great success. The Trap-making Workshop for the feral Spotted Turtle-dove had an attendance of around 30 people, all there to learn about the feral bird and make traps to take home. The *Spiders! Hunting the Hunted* Workshop had an overwhelming attendance of over 75 people! More on this in 'Workshops', see below. Thank you to all those that attended!

This year we will be resurrecting the **feral Spotted Turtle-dove eradication program** formerly run by Parks & Wildlife. We will coordinate distribution and circulation of traps, recording of catch numbers, and are available to help with advice and disposal. We have a few traps available to loan you (more on this in 'Workshops', see below).

**Biodiversity Surveys** were conducted during the first weeks of December on Land for Wildlife properties in the Racecourse/Winery region of town. The report of our findings will be released online soon. Thanks to all those involved. Later in the year there will be volunteer opportunities during our 2010 Biodiversity Surveys.

A New Years Resolution for us all: **Look after the land you live on!** If you need help, or would like information on anything that will assist you to create wildlife habitat on your block this year let us know. Do you have a request for a workshop topic? 8955 5222, [lwf@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lwf@lowecol.com.au).

## Announcements

Greening Australia's Nursery in Darwin will be the first property in the Northern Territory to place a **Conservation Covenant** on their land. There is legislative capacity in each state and territory to enable landowners to protect natural bush on their property by placing it under a conservation covenant. This process is free and voluntary. If you are interested in providing legal protection for privately owned bushland by placing a conservation covenant on your land please contact Ilse for more information: 8955 5222/[lwf@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lwf@lowecol.com.au).

**Buffel Grass** is running rampant after all that rain. Most Buffel has sprouted seed heads and is beginning to brown. If spraying is your control method of choice make sure you do it while the grass is green and lush! Putting in the effort now saves a load more effort later.

Remember to remove any **Spotted Turtle-dove nests** you see on your property. The rain has spurred them in to breeding, and you may notice nests in palms, trees or on ledges in and around buildings. Please discourage them.

The rain may have affected your block in many positive ways, with new growth greening your gardens and remnant vegetation areas, but it may also have provoked **soil erosion**. If you have any concerns or queries about erosion on your property please contact us and we can arrange a visit to help you with management solutions. The soil is the building block for all the rest, so if it is unhealthy, you will have troubles somewhere down the line, and it is much cheaper and easier to fix these problems in their early stages. 8955 5222, [lwf@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lwf@lowecol.com.au).

### Australia's Native Vegetation Framework - Public consultation period now open

In 2008 the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) confirmed the importance of the Native Vegetation Framework as the national policy document for achieving:

- a reversal in the long-term decline of Australia's native vegetation, and
- an improvement in the condition of existing native vegetation.

The NRMMC directed that the review of the framework be finalised and on 5 November 2009 endorsed the draft Australia's Native Vegetation Framework for public consultation. The NRMMC invites members of the public to read this draft and welcomes your comments and ideas for improvement.

All Australians have a potential role to play in managing our native vegetation and the NRMMC welcomes all feedback on the consultation draft which can be found along with a submission template at <http://www.environment.gov.au/land/vegetation/review/index>

[x.html](#). Sectors engaged in native vegetation management should particularly think about making a submission. These sectors include government, the scientific community, regional natural resource management groups, industry, non-government environment organisations, Indigenous groups, farmers and other landholders.

The strategic national policy framework is aimed at guiding management decisions that affect native vegetation in all jurisdictions and all sectors of the community. I encourage you all to read and comment on the Native Vegetation Framework. Some questions to consider:

- Are the vision, goals and principles appropriate?
- Are the outcomes for each goal logical and achievable? Should there be others instead of or in addition to these?
- What are your suggestions for national, measurable targets?
- Do you think the framework will adequately address the major native vegetation issues? If not, do you have any suggestions for improvement?
- Is there anything else this framework should cover?

Please direct any questions not answered by the website to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts Community Information Unit at:

Free call **1800 803 772** or

Email: [ciu@environment.gov.au](mailto:ciu@environment.gov.au).

Thank you everyone for your support of the GfW/LfW programs. As a result of your support **landcare groups** of Alice Springs have met with ASTC last month to discuss the council's future support of local landcare and natural resource management.

**Start growing your Christmas tree for next year!** Grow a native tree, like a Mulga or a Coolabah which have relatively fast growth speeds, for your next year's Christmas tree! An environmentally appropriate alternative to plastic or pine!

The Power and Water Corporation **Melaleuca Awards** for Environmental Excellence are now open for nominations in 2010. There are a number of exciting updates for this year's Awards including the introduction of an Individual category, a school poster competition (happening in March/April with details being released in two weeks) and the presentation night being held on the eve of World Environment Day (Friday 4 June) at the Top End Sustainable Living Festival/Tropical Garden Spectacular location.

The Awards recognise and reward Territorians doing the right thing by the environment, so if that's you, or you know of someone who should be entering please see the attached flyer (end of newsletter) or visit our website for more information -

[http://www.powerwater.com.au/environment/melaleuca\\_awards/](http://www.powerwater.com.au/environment/melaleuca_awards/)

**Mobilemuster:** Alice Springs Town Council is swapping old mobile phones for native plants. Hand in your old phone by March 11 to The ASTC reception for a voucher redeemable at the Greening Australia Nursery, CDU Sadadeen. Avoid phones, which are made of 90% recyclable materials, ending up at the tip.

See end of newsletter for an announcement from Northern Territory Government, Dept. Health & Families regarding **mosquito-borne diseases**.

## Workshops

### Gardening

Geof Miers Garden Solutions Nursery are conducting some fantastic **Gardening Workshops** over the next few months. See 'Dates to remember' for more details.

### Milkwood Permaculture Course

Interested in arid permaculture? There is a fantastic course coming to Alice Springs in April! See the below links for information and the attached poster! Bookings are essential for the course to go ahead, so be sure to enrol now!

More info:

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=logo#/event.php?eid=261209086444&ref=mf>

<http://milkwoodpermaculture.com.au/courses/details/11-alice-autumn-pdc>

(See poster at end of newsletter)

### Seedsavers, Alice Springs

#### 'Growing seedlings and preparing soil for the winter garden'

This next Seedsavers meeting is on Sunday 28th of Feb. at 33 Clarke St, 10am. All welcome. A message from Chris Brock:

"This meeting is timed well for all who want to get serious about their winter garden this year. There is still time to prepare soil if you haven't already done so.

For me the brassicas are the star performers over winter but there's so much more as you would know. The Brassicas are good to get in early - See my blog link if you want to see what I am planting <http://alicebackyard.blogspot.com/>

I also encourage people to bring in seed packets they have purchased from Eden seeds etc as I always find I never use all of the seeds in them - then they go out of date.

This **meeting will focus on raising seeds/ seedlings and soil preparation for the winter garden**, but I'm sure there will be some seed sorting on the side. This will be followed



by seed swapping and people are free to take seeds from the seed collection. Cheers, Chris."

### Recent Workshops:

## **Trap making for the feral Spotted Turtle-dove**

GfW members the Poulsens constructing a Funnel Trap.



Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February Land for Wildlife hosted a very successful Trap-making workshop for feral Spotted Turtle-dove. Around 30 people attended to learn about the invasive bird and made traps to take home. Fact sheets and Bird Identification sheets were distributed (available online [www.lowecol.com](http://www.lowecol.com), 'Member Information' page), and disposal methods discussed (I recommend taking all feral Turtle-doves to the Desert Park for disposal). Welcome to new Garden for Wildlife member Sam Bettany who joined the program after the workshop.

We now have a limited number of traps available, and I have a small waiting list of members that have requested traps over the past couple of months. But if you would like to borrow a trap, please contact me (8955 5222, [lfw@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lfw@lowecol.com.au)) and I can place you on the list. As there is a waiting list I am recommending a 2 week loan period, after which I will collect the trap for recirculation. It is fine for you to then go back onto the waiting list, and once I have more traps in our collection loans can be extended. If you have had a very successful trapping period and have removed your ferals, it may be useful to rest your trap by loaning it a friend or neighbour and get it back when feral doves re-appear in a few weeks.

**Important:** For anyone trapping Turtle-doves please report to Land for Wildlife the number of birds you have caught, the date, and your address. This enables us to estimate bird abundance in different areas of town to identify hotspots, and also to monitor the effectiveness of the program. A data sheet is available for download on the website. Go to [www.lowecol.com.au](http://www.lowecol.com.au), follow the Land for Wildlife link to



LfW coordinator, Ilse, talks of the impacts feral Spotted Turtle-dove populations have on our native birds.

**Member Information:**  
Feral Animal Management, and download 'Spotted Turtle dove Catch records Form' (Word doc). Thank you. Be careful to distinguish between the native doves (Crested pigeon, Peaceful Dove and Diamond Dove) and the spotted turtle dove and let the local natives go. The local natives have a hard enough time

competing with the Turtle doves, that they don't need added difficulties with land holders. There is an ID Sheet available online (same location as Catch records Form).

Could anyone that has a Parks & Wildlife or a home-made Turtle-dove trap that is not currently using it and wouldn't mind lending it to other GfW/LfW members please let us know on 8955 5222 or [lfw@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lfw@lowecol.com.au). Thanks!

## **Spiders! Hunting the Hunters!**



Robbie (left) and Alan (right) talk of primitive and modern spiders.

On Thursday February 18, Garden/Land for Wildlife made room at Olive Pink Botanic Gardens in anticipation of a rather large turn-out for this very popular workshop. Expectations were surpassed when over 75 people showed up to hear brothers Robbie Henderson (former invertebrate keeper from Desert Park and bug enthusiast) and Alan Henderson (Manager "Bugs Alive", Melbourne Museum) talk about primitive spiders, modern spiders, their webweaving habits, thier hunting styles, thier reproductive behaviour and much much more! The presentation consisted of beautifully detailed photographs of Australian and locally native spiders and very humorous brotherly banter! Robbie talked of ways to protect and look after our native spiders, including encouraging native biodiversity, letting spiders live alongside us, being water wise and monitoring our household power usage to minimise the

effects of climate change. Thankyou to all that attended, to Olive Pink Botanic Gardens for squeezing us all in, and to Bean Tree Cafe for the loan of their chairs! Huntsmans, Orbweavers, and Wolf spiders were seen during a spotlighting session at the close of the presentation - the gardens were lit up like a fun fair with so many head torches!



Robbie lights up a Garden Orbweaver in the centre of its web by the waterhole at Olive Pink Botanic Gardens.

## Articles

### Rain!

With rain comes change; a poignant sign for us at the beginning of a new year?! All around us things are coming to life. What happens after rain? What can we expect to see? The desert is green with seedlings and bouncing with grasshoppers, moths, flying termites, flies and mosquitoes – and lots of frogs to eat them! Waterholes are flushed and full, and food is plentiful. The rivers have flowed and water has gone deep enough to replenish the root systems of trees. Plants are flowering and birds are active, quickly nesting to make the most of the suddenly abundant food source. Ibis and Spoonbill have arrived in town, feeding and roosting at the Sewage Treatment Ponds, and the gecko's are having a field day feeding on moths around household lights. Euro's have dispersed now food is plentiful and are not seen so regularly by Ilparpa residents.

But how much rain do we need to rejuvenate the land? The rule of thumb for pastoralists for rainfall to be effective and promote plant growth is: during winter at least half an inch of rain is needed (approximately 12ml), and during summer one inch is needed (25.4ml). This January we have received 125ml (around 5 inches)! Your garden will be very happy, and we should see the effects of this rain for a few months to come with plants flowering and seeding. But don't forget that this is a time for invasive species to flourish too. **Help our natives by getting on top of your Buffel Grass infestations now before they go to seed!!!** Whether you choose to chip or poison, now is the time.

Another invasive species flourishing after the rain are Spotted Turtle-doves. Keep your eyes out for them nesting

in your backyard. Be sure to remove nests if they are, and deter them from hanging around your property.



Photo courtesy Bob Gosford

### Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes

Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes, *Coracina maxima*, have been recently spotted in Alice Springs! The Ground Cuckoo-Shrike is in the same family as the Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike that we see regularly around town, but this bird is the largest of the cuckoo-shrikes and the only cuckoo-shrike adapted to foraging on the ground. It is an uncommon bird, endemic to Australia, which lives in small family groups of 3-4. It feeds on insects, preferring inland woodlands and open grasslands for habitat. The Ground Cuckoo-Shrike is what is colloquially termed a 'rainbird'. Rainbirds follow the rain around, or become more active, noisy and visible with rain, because rain provides food. Rainbirds are thought to sing before the rain, and are used as rain signals. Other rainbirds include Pallid Cuckoos, Channel-billed Cuckoos, and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos. Ground Cuckoo-shrikes will breed after rain, so there will hopefully be a lot of activity after this month's downpour.

*Ed- Indeed, a nest was found during an assessment on a new Land for Wildlife member's property!*

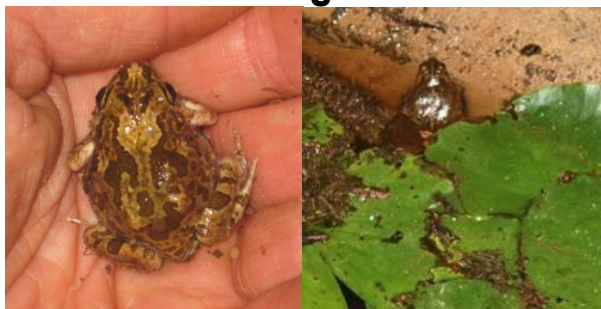


Photo: Ilse Pickerd



## Frogs!

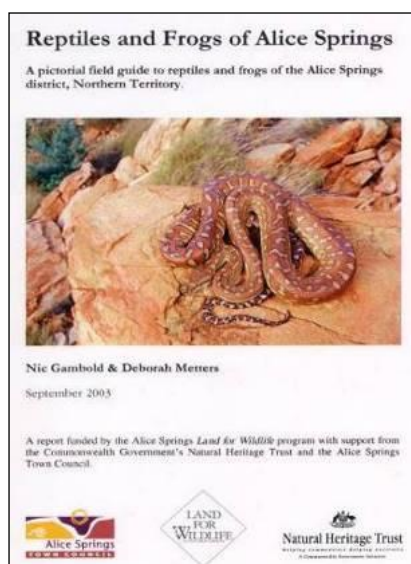
Photos courtesy Bill Low



A Spencer's Burrowing Frog (left) and Main's Burrowing Frog (right) at a property in the Airport/Winery region of town. Rd.

The cacophony of frog calls from water holes is deafening this month with frogs such as Spencer's Burrowing, Maine's frog, Red Tree Frog and Green Crevice Frog all trying to attract mates. You will be able to identify Main's Frog without even seeing it – it's the one that sounds like a bleating sheep! The Red Tree Frog calls rapidly and lightly. Spencer's Burrowing Frog has quickly dug itself out from deep down in the sand of desert rivers and creeks, where it has been waiting for a rainfall event just like this one. The female will lay her eggs in a foam nest, which breaks down after 24 hours, leaving a thin layer containing the eggs at the surface of the water. Once hatched, the tadpoles will complete their development in around 6 weeks. Frogs need to start breeding and laying eggs as quickly as they can so that tadpoles have time to develop into frogs before the water dries up. Tadpoles also need to hatch before fish eat them, as frogs are not the only creatures taking advantage of the rain! As the desert dries up again and the weather cools down, and the insects populations reduce the burrowing frogs will disappear underground again, and the waterholes will fall silent.

A great field guide for Frog & Reptile ID, 'Reptiles and Frogs of Alice Springs' by Nic Gambold & Deborah Metters, is available from us for \$20. Contact us for a copy!



## Signs of a Creature No Longer With Us



Photo: Ilse Pickerd

This dark specimen photographed above was found by a *Land for Wildlife* member in a cave on the Blatherskite Range above his property! It is what's known as 'Amberat', and is the excretory product of the now extinct Lesser Stick Nest Rat, *Leporillus apicalis*.

The Stick nest Rat was a moderately sized (60g) nocturnal rodent, about which little is known. It differs from its relative the Greater Stick Nest Rat (*Leporillus conditor*) by a narrow brush of white hairs near the tip of its tail and size. The Greater Stick Nest Rat now survives only on the West and Eastern Franklin Islands off South Australia and a few others it has been successfully introduced to where cats have never existed or have been removed.

Most rodents burrow, but the Lesser Stick Nest Rat differed in its construction of large elaborate nests of sticks up to a metre high and more than



Lesser Stick Nest Rat  
Illustration by Peter Schouten

twice that in diameter. The sticks were interwoven to form a sturdy structure which protected them from most predators and perhaps sheltered the rodents from the sun. These nests are still found in crevasses and caves in sandstone rocky country and have been studied by various students including former LFW coordinator Kim Webeck who has written a paper on their distribution. The rats were apparently fairly specific in their latrine duties and deposited urine and droppings in these nests (cemented together by viscous urine), which solidifies into a hard substance known as Amber-rat. So this dark specimen photographed above is a solidified, fossilised mound of urine and faecal matter from the extinct Lesser Stick Nest Rat, one of the few tell-tale signs left that this creature once existed in our Centre. Quite special really. Peter Latz has had the materials analysed and if you would like to read more about it, look for the paper in the AZRI library.

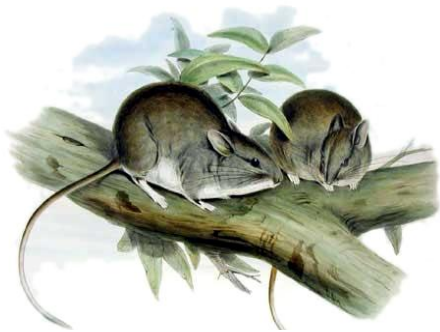


Illustration: John Gould, F.R.S., *Mammals of Australia*, 1863.

The middens are widespread across arid zones in Australia, and dating shows that some nest/midden sites have been used continuously for centuries! Nests also contain bone, egg shell, hair, faecal matter of bats, echidnas, dingos, owls, insects and other species, due to the rodents scavenging behaviour. This allows researchers to investigate the history of Australia's arid zones and reconstruct what plants, animals and insects were living in these past environments, using traditional macroscopic analysis (pollen profiling), carbon dating and DNA profiling.

The Stick Nest Rat once lived in the arid and semi-arid areas of central and southern Australia. It has been extinct in the NT since the 1940s after a 30 year decline. Extinction was probably due to range of factors; predation from introduced cats and foxes, habitat alteration by introduction of exotic herbivores (sheep, cattle, rabbits) and changed fire regimes, and competition with these introduced herbivores. The Stick Nest Rat formerly occurred from the Riverine in NSW through the Gibson

Desert and inland South Australia to Western Australia. In the NT it was found in arid and semi-arid areas such as in Uluru-Kata-Tjuta National Park, Arltunga Historical Reserve, Trepina Gorge National park, West McDonnell National Park, Finke Gorge national Park, and next door to a Land for Wildlife member's backyard!



View from the cave  
Photo: Ilse Pickerd.

Interestingly, in 2008 the updated IUCN Status for the Lesser Stick Nest Rat was 'downgraded' from nationally 'Extinct' to 'Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct)' due to a reliable record in 1970 of a sighting in Western Australia, and continued occasional reports of fresh vegetation added to old stick-nests. However, no confirmed reports have been made since 1933, and the possibility of a small population still existing in yet to be surveyed remote lands of the Australian is slight. This species is probably extinct and if there are surviving animals the numbers would be very small.

## Letters to the Editor

Hi Ilse

Last week I FINALLY finished my feral dove trap. Am ashamed it has taken so long!

Have been scattering seed around and waiting for my head to adjust to dealing with trapped birds.

Early this morning I went out to scatter seed to lead birds inside the cage... and lo & behold! there were already 2 feral doves inside - with NO seed around to encourage them.

It was easy catching them and putting them into pillow cases.

Then I drove out to put them in the holding cage at Desert Park.

They were 2 young ones wide eyed and knew no better. Perhaps they were looking for somewhere to sleep last night?

There are plenty more out there coo cooing! However, there have been no ferals near my back yard since then! They seem to be staying in the safety of neighbours - even though I have scattered seed.

Cheers, Julie Taylor

Garden for Wildlife member

*Ed-You may find that your success rates decline after time as the birds, as unintelligent as they are, clue onto the trap site. A solution to this is to move the trap to a new safe position in your yard, or to stop trapping for a period of time then start up again. Remember, they are really truly are not so intelligent and can be easily fooled!*

Yes Ilse - I caught one yesterday. This was an adult bird. It looked at me very crossly and accusingly when it was sitting on the perch in the Desert Park holding cage!

Happily, I had a crested pigeon return to my yard today and some of the silly coo-ing has stopped for a while.

Think I will get my neighbours across the road to try the trap in their yard sometimes. I can hear their doves from my place.

Regards,

Julie

*Ed- Fabulous work!*

G'day Bill,

Can you tell me anything about these please? 10 - 12mm long, lots of holes in ground.

I've only ever seen them before, Nov 08, after the rains.

Thanks & cheers

Rod Cramer

*(P.T.O. for photograph sent in by Rod)*





Ed – This one had us stumped so we consulted Invertebrate Specialist, Patrick Honan of Melbourne Zoo. “This is definitely a native wasp. Wasps have thin waists”, whereas bees have a thick waist where thorax and abdomen meet, “it is hairless and has wasp-like markings, and in the top right of the photo there is an individual hovering like wasp. However, these wasps are completely yellow and unstriped which is unusual, and they have green eyes which is also unusual. You can see the ocelli, the three little dots on the top of the head, clearly in this photograph. These are light sensitive organs which are normally not as distinctive as this in wasps. They are most likely Sand Wasps belonging to the wasp subfamily Nyssoninae, which includes more than 150 Australian species. Sand Wasps are not social but often dig burrows (the many holes in the ground Rod saw) close to each other so that a large number of wasps occur in a small area. Solitary wasps tend to burrow, whereas social wasps nest in tree hollows or caves”. Many of you will be familiar with the mud nests stuck to walls, trees, rocks and other solid surfaces which are built by local wasps. “The adult wasps collect insect prey to feed the larvae which live at the bottom of the burrows. Unlike other species that provision the burrow with prey and then seal it up, a Sand Wasp will continually provision the larva with prey throughout its early life, and leave the burrow open as it flies off to hunt. Adults can be seen hovering over the burrow to get its bearings before it flies off, or hovering over sand ready to pounce on flying insects. This species is not harmful to humans.

Thanks Ilse,  
Any info on the clumping/balling/wrestling behavior?  
Rod

Hi Rod,  
Patrick pointed out the wasps on their side in the photograph, and mentioned it may possible that they were fighting, over prey or over a female, accounting for the clumping/wrestling behaviour. Both possibilities are conducive with the recent rainfall we have had, as prey availability has increased which spurs breeding behaviour. But the presence of many adult wasps in one place will be due to burrows occurring in close proximity.

An interesting aside: Patrick said the photographed congregation reminded him of ‘Bee Balls’ (photographed below), even though the photographed insects are definitely wasps, not bees. “When a bee hive is invaded say for example by a hornet whose outer covering is too thick for a bee’s sting to penetrate, social bees will cluster around the invader and vibrate their wings for half an hour. When they stop and leave, the hornet is dead”. Patrick said that this puzzled entomologists for some time, but it is now realised that bees can tolerate upper temperatures of 0.2°C higher than what a hornet can. By vibrating their wings in a tight cluster, enough heat is generated to ‘cook’ the hornet. The bees suffer very high temperatures by doing this, which is why they immediately disperse once the hornet is dead. This behaviour is only observed in bees, in situations of hive invasion, and Patrick is unsure if it has been observed in native Australian bees.



‘Bee Balls’

Photo credit: M. Sugahara, F. Sakamoto

Hi Bill,  
What about this?  
Rod



Hi Rod,  
This is a male Red headed Mouse Spider *Missulena insignis*. It is one of the Mygalomorph tube, funnel-web or trap door spiders. This one lives in a mouse-like hole in the ground. The male has bright coloured carapace and pincers. Males wander to look for mates particularly after rains. The female is brown to blackish but with a tinged red carapace, and is secretive. The South Australian Redheaded Mouse spider, *Missulena occatoria*, may get up this far and there appears to be confusion in the popular



spider literature about the two species. *Missulena insignis* may be included in *occatoria* now.

Some web sites.

[http://www.ento.csiro.au/aicn/name\\_s/b\\_2597.htm](http://www.ento.csiro.au/aicn/name_s/b_2597.htm)

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~ednieuw/australian/Mygalomorphae/Mygalomorphae.htm>

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/Mouse-Spider>

Cheers

Bill

Land for Wildlife/Garden for Wildlife Director

Ed – Even though in photographs the Mouse Spider appears huge, it is a medium sized spider. Its body size ranges from 1cm to 3.5cm.

## What Land for Wildlife/Garden for Wildlife members saw in the rain!



*Hyles livornicoides* is a species of Hawk Moth (left) that appears en masse after rain. The moth is the adult stage of a Yeperenye caterpillar (right).

Photo credit: H. Cross



A Land for Wildlife member in Ilparpa had a visit from an Australian Tarantula (Barking Spider), who came inside looking for some shelter from the rain!



A Bearded Dragon basks in the morning sun on a roadside after a day of 'cold' rain and cloudy weather.



Winged ants and termites fly to light. This is part of a 'dispersal' flight triggered by rain and moisture where winged adults search for a mate, shedding their wings before breeding (never to fly again), and then scout a location to start a new colony. There are many websites that can help you identify a winged ant from a winged termite. Try [http://www.bugz.com.au/pest\\_info.htm](http://www.bugz.com.au/pest_info.htm)



A very green Red gum in the Todd gathers foam floating down the river (foam is caused by plant 'sweat' - organic compounds such as resins and terpene oils transpired from trees – or salts in the soil dissolved by rainwater).



Ants quickly build a tower over their nest entrance to avoid flooding during the rain.

Send us some pics! [lfw@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lfw@lowecol.com.au)

## Calendar

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February** – Central Australian Frog & Insect Talks, 7-9pm@Simpson's Gap BBQ area. Numbers limited, bookings 89518247/Michael.barritt@nt.gov.au

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March** - Gardening Workshop with Geoff Miers: 'Establishing & Maintaining an Organic No Dig Garden', 2pm – 3.30pm, \$20. To register call 8953 7477 (limited 20 places).

- Clean Up Australia Day

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March** – Field Naturalists' Meeting. Guest speaker Stuart Traynor, 'John McDouall Stuart's 1860 Expedition; A 'Natural' History'. 7:30pm @Olive Pink Botanic Gardens

**20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March** – Miss Pink's Birthday celebrations at Olive Pink Botanic gardens. A plant sale and the launch of the Friends of OPBG will be part of the celebrations

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March** - Gardening Workshop with Geoff Miers: 'Secrets to Successful Composting', 2pm – 3pm, \$15. To register call 8953 7477 (limited 20 places)

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April** - Gardening Workshop with Geoff Miers: 'Planting Citrus with Confidence', 2pm – 3pm, \$10. To register call 8953 7477 (limited 20 places)

**April 4 -17** – Milkwood Permaculture Course. Bookings/Info phone Kirsten (02) 6373 7763. (Poster below)

Take care,

Ilse & Bill  
Land for Wildlife Coordinators

This newsletter has been produced by  
Ilse Pickerd and Bill Low, *LfW* coordinators, W.A. Low  
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"The Northern Territory Government through the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport is pleased to sponsor Land for Wildlife. This publication may not represent the views of the Northern Territory Government"



The office after the rain, and one of our vehicles well and truly immobilised until it all dries out!





Northern  
Territory  
Government

# Central Australian Frog & Insect Talks



Always wanted to know a little more about our unique desert waterholes?

Due to popular demand three frog & insect walks and talks are planned for the summer of 2010.

Come along for an updated FREE slideshow down in the creek at Simpsons Gap.

Finish off the night with a spotlight walk, spotting some of our astonishing frogs and insects.

Bring a chair or rug, a torch and wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Feel free to bring your camera - there will be frogs and waterhole insects!

Simpsons Gap BBQ area  
7-9pm Friday 19th February 2010

Simpsons Gap BBQ area  
7-9pm Saturday 20th February, 2010

Simpsons Gap BBQ area  
7-9pm Saturday 27th February, 2010

## **Bookings Essential:**

Numbers limited, call  
Michael Barritt at Parks and  
Wildlife on 89518247 or email at:  
[michael.barritt@nt.gov.au](mailto:michael.barritt@nt.gov.au)



**fresh ideas | real results**

## Red Centre rain brings warning of mosquito-borne diseases

Monday 11 January 2009

Residents of Central Australia are being urged to protect themselves against mosquitoes that could carry Ross River virus (RRV) and Barmah Forest virus (BFV) following rain in the area.

Symptoms most commonly associated with infections from RRV and BFV include painful or swollen joints (particularly in the hands, ankles and knees), sore muscles, aching tendons, skin rash, fatigue, fever, headache and swollen lymph nodes.

"The main mosquito that transmits RRV and BFV is the common banded mosquito. Receptacle-breeding mosquitoes are also potential carriers of RRV," said Nina Kurucz, Operations Manager, Medical Entomology, Department of Health and Families Centre for Disease Control.

"Mosquitoes breed in grassy depressions and drains, water-filled containers including pot plant drip trays, old tyres, drums, boats, disused pools and fish ponds, roof gutters, and even palm frond bases.

"Residents are urged to check roof gutters to make sure they are free-draining, tip out anything that can hold water, and store containers under cover," added Ms Kurucz.

Measures to prevent mosquito bites include:

- avoid outdoor exposure around dusk and at night, near rivers and areas of dense vegetation, and any areas of high mosquito activity
- use mosquito-proof accommodation and camping facilities at night
- between dusk and dawn where mosquito bites are likely, wear protective light-coloured clothing with long sleeves, long trousers, and ankle protection with socks
- use a protective repellent containing 20 per cent DEET or Picaridin as a supplement to protective clothing when outdoors at night
- ensure children are adequately protected against mosquito bites
- contact the Alice Springs Environmental Health Office on 8955 6122 if you have concerns about mosquito breeding sites

Symptoms of infections from RRV and BFV can last from a few weeks or months, with some people experiencing symptoms for up to one year. Children are generally less affected by RRV disease than adults, and tend to recover quicker.

There is no vaccine to prevent RRV or BFV infection. Protection from being bitten is the best course of action to prevent these diseases.

More information: [www.health.nt.gov.au/Medical\\_Entomology](http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Medical_Entomology)

Media contacts: Chelsea Rogers 0401 114 113, Darrel Trueman 0401 116 203



# PERMACULTURE Design Course



Free for  
Farmers +  
indigenous land  
managers through  
the FARMREADY  
scheme

## ALICE SPRINGS: APRIL 4 - 17 2010

A two-week course that provides essential skills for understanding and implementing good Permaculture design, wherever you may live. Special 'designing for drylands' focus. Learn to grow healthy organic food for your family, design water into your landscape and how to farm for the future, naturally...

The teacher: Nick Ritar is a leading educator and advocate on how Permaculture principles can provide food security through sustainable farming practices in both rural and city environments.

Included in your course are a bunch of practical workshops, design exercises and exclusive site visits to amazing examples of sustainability in the Alice Springs area.

Go to our website for full details on booking into this course.

Course Venue: Olive Pink Botanical Gardens, Alice Springs

Course Dates: Sunday 4th - Saturday 17th April 2010

Course cost: \$1200 for two weeks (Free with FarmReady)

More info: Phone Kirsten on 02 6373 7763 or go to

[www.MilkwoodPermaculture.com.au](http://www.MilkwoodPermaculture.com.au)





POWER AND WATER CORPORATION

# 2010 MELALEUCA AWARDS

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Awards Presented  
**Friday**  
**4 June 2010**

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