

LAND FOR WILDLIFE



& Garden for Wildlife

Land for Wildlife and Garden for Wildlife

Central Australia Newsletter

May 2016

From the Land for Wildlife Coordinator

We've had sun, a drizzle of rain and everything in between over the last few weeks in central Australia. What a delight the cool change has been! The plants are taking the opportunity to pop out some fresh growth and there're a few young birds around begging for a feed.

I've been settling into Alice Springs nicely and attending as many events as I can. I finished the previous week with a seminar on my PhD research. Thanks to all that attended and had enthusiastic questions!

I've also been out exploring some wider spaces of central Australia and have been discovering lots of plants and animals while I've been at it. What have you seen active lately?

*Welcome to the new layout
for the newsletter! Please let
us know what you think
about the design.*

*Email us your feedback
lfw@lowecol.com.au*

In This Issue

From the Land for Wildlife coordinator • 1
What is your vegetation type? • 2
Native plant sale at OPBG • 2
Instagram • 2
Avian nests • 2
Art competition • 3
Keep and eye to the sky • 3
Ntaria junior rangers • 4
New GfW member • 4
Cat trapping • 5
Bird survey • 5
Pets on Parade • 6
Domestic cat responsible ownership • 6
Further reading etc • 7



Land for Wildlife's Caragh and Katie were at the native plant sale at OPBG (Image C. Appleby)



Saplings reaching for the morning sun at the OPBG native plant sale

Native Plant Sale at Olive Pink Botanic Garden

The Land for Wildlife / Garden for Wildlife team were at the Australian Plant Society Sale at Olive Pink Botanic Garden. What a flurry of plant buying activity! Thanks to everyone that came over to say hi or expressed interest in joining up with Land for Wildlife / Garden for Wildlife. Stay posted with emails as we will get in touch in the coming weeks regarding new memberships. Good luck growing the little beauties you purchased!

Instagram

Land for Wildlife / Garden for Wildlife Central Australia is now on Instagram! Follow us and tag @LfW_Alice in your LfW photos so we can see how your property is coming along

https://www.instagram.com/lfw_alice/

» New to Instagram?

Head to the Instagram smart phone App, register for an Instagram account and away you go!

You can follow other Instagram accounts of interest to you by searching tags or usernames and clicking 'Follow'. Photos from users you follow will appear on your Instagram home page / news feed. For example, follow @LfW_Alice to see the photos we post!

To share photos or videos of your own: Upload files with the camera tab, give them a description, tag other users (e.g. @LfW_Alice) in photos that are relevant to them, and use hastags without spaces (e.g. #Landforwildlife) in the description to cover topics. You can also add photo filters to the images, as well as borders, to style it up.

By clicking hashtag links you can see photos that others have posted with the same tag.

What is Your Vegetation Type?

We've updated the Land for Wildlife / Garden for Wildlife webpage for vegetation types.

There's now an easier to follow step-by-step guide on how to determine the vegetation types on your property.

Step 1: Locate your house on the maps provided

Step 2: Identify your vegetation type

Step 3: Select the appropriate vegetation species list

Step 4: Learn your land unit

Visit the [Vegetation Maps](#) webpage.



Singing honeyeater (*Lichenostomus virescens*) nest

Avian Nests

If you missed the Rangeland Biology and Ecology Seminar entitled 'The structural and thermal properties of avian cup-shaped nests', you can read the full review article:

[An overview of the factors influencing the morphology and thermal properties of avian nests](#). Caragh B. Heenan. Avian Biology Research; 6(2), 2013.



Art Competition: International Day for Biological Diversity

The International Day for Biological Diversity takes place on Sunday May 22 2016. Established by the United Nations, the day aims to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.

"Biodiversity is the foundation for life and for the essential services provided by ecosystems."

Land for Wildlife and Garden for Wildlife Central Australia members are fantastic at preserving and re-establishing biodiversity on local properties. So to get involved in our little way, we are opening up an art competition to our members to showcase biodiversity through art. Paint, draw, etch, stencil (*etc*) your heart out and submit a piece of artwork that you think represents biodiversity in Central Australia. (cont...)



Clockwise from top left: Wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*) with a morning snack at the Power Water ponds; Black swans (*Cygnus atratus*) taking time out to preen; Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*) making a ruckus.

Keep an Eye to the Sky!

» *Red-tailed Black Cockatoos and a Wedge-tailed Eagle with a morning snack*

The Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*) were out in force at the office of Land for Wildlife this week. Not surprising that they are active given their breeding season is a couple of months in and there is plenty of seed available after summer rains. Females lay a single egg in a tree hollow lined with chewed wood shavings and the male provides her food while the female is busy incubating the egg. Meanwhile at the Power Water Ponds, a Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*) had caught something of the feathered variety for a morning snack. It's always a sight to see such a large bird standing over a kill – though the nearby swans didn't seem too concerned for their own welfare.

Either email us an image of your artwork or snail mail it our way and be in it to win it. What you win: Your artwork will be the headline image for an upcoming Land for Wildlife newsletter and be showcased on social media as part of the competition (with all due credits given, of course!). Let's show the national Land for Wildlife members how great our biodiversity is here. Go on, get creative!

Ntaria Junior Rangers

I discovered a new perk to being the Land for Wildlife Coordinator – I get to be involved with the Ntaria Junior Ranger Program!

I made the journey out to meet the kids yesterday, which was a riot of fun! I joined them as they learned about Dingos (*Canis lupus dingo*), drew some of their favourite animals and collected some plant samples... all in the picturesque bushland near Ntaria.



New Garden for Wildlife Member

» Lynn Day

Welcome Lynn Day, new Garden for wildlife member! Low Ecological Services has been fortunate to have Lynn's expertise in report editing for many years and so it's great to see her come on board as a GfW member!

Lynn has been working hard to convert an old swimming pool in the yard into a native grass patch. Her intention is to attract more birds to her garden.

She's doing well so far on the bird front, as she has a lovely male Western Bowerbird (*Chlamydera guttata*) in her yard with a very impressive bower to boot. There's an excellent collection of white and green items, including plastic bottle caps and fresh figs.

Great work at maintaining the native vegetation in your yard, Lynn!



Ntaria Junior Rangers learning about the local wildlife and drawing their favourite animals



Above: Western Bowerbird (*Chlamydera guttata*) bower with a collection of green and white jewels.



Left: Member garden with a great variety of large trees, shrubs, forbs and grasses.

(Images J. Kreusser)

Cat Trapping Tips and Tricks

Feral cats have contributed to the disappearance of many ground dwelling birds and mammals in the arid zone and continue to threaten the success of recovery programs for endangered species. As a result, they are listed as a key threatening process under the Commonwealth *EPBC Act 1999*.

Trapping for cats may be more successful in the cooler months due to the reduced food supply in the landscape (*i.e.* reptiles) during this time. Now that the air is developing more of a chill, it's a great time to start thinking about trapping feral cats on your property. Here are some tips for trapping feral cats:

- Trap on your own property. If trapping elsewhere you must obtain written permission from the property owner.
- Use fresh bait (chicken, raw meat or liver, smelly tinned fish).
- Set traps in the evening and check early morning to avoid accidental by-catch of native wildlife during the day.
- A cage trap placed in amongst vegetation (so that the opening is the only point available to be investigated) is likely to be more effective than placing it in open areas.
- A trap may be fitted with shade cloth to prevent captured animals from stress during the warm months and to create curiosity for cats to enter at the entrance.
- It is also thought that cats are less likely to walk on the cage floor, due to the texture of the mesh, so try covering with soil, sand, or vegetation.

Traps are available from the Alice Springs Town Council (Ph 08 8950 0500). Any captured cats can be taken to the Alice Springs Animal Shelter (Ph 08 8953 4430).



Feral cat caught in a trap on a rural Alice Springs property (J. Kreusser)



Australian Wildlife Conservancy

2017 Newhaven Sanctuary Bird Survey

Expressions of interest have opened up for the 2017 Newhaven bird survey team. Covering 262,000 hectares, and located near the intersection of three central Australian bioregions, Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary is one of Australia's largest non-government protected areas.

Newhaven is renowned as a key arid zone bird watching destination.

Supporting 170 species of birds, the property was originally purchased by Birdlife Australia before being transferred to AWC in 2006.

The dates for the survey next year are 11

March to 25 March:

Saturday 11 March –

Alice Springs to Newhaven

Sunday 12 March –

Orientation Day

Monday 13 March – Friday 24 March –

Survey period

Saturday 25 March –

Newhaven to Alice Springs

For further information, please contact

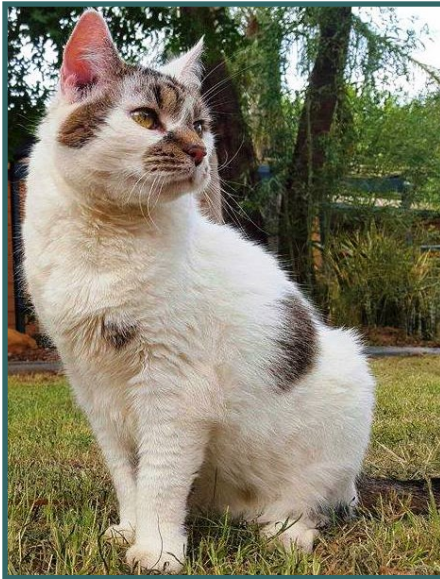
Judith Hoyle, Newhaven Bird Survey

Coordinator, on 0437549301 or via email

at puffin_54@hotmail.com

www.australianwildlife.org





Domestic cat in Alice Springs

Upcoming Event

» *Pets on Parade*

The Alice Springs Town Council are hosting the Pets on Parade event on Sunday 22nd May 2016 8:45 am; and the Land for Wildlife team will be there!

The event promotes responsible pet ownership to the local community, with local pet owners joining in on a parade of their pets from Leichhardt Terrace and concluding on the Civic Centre lawns.

Land for Wildlife will be there with some fun games and a brain teaser, as well as information regarding domestic cats in Alice Springs. Come and say hi and show off your pet!

For more information contact the Alice Springs Town Council Ranger Unity on 08 8950 0500 or check out the website (<http://www.alicesprings.nt.gov.au/events/pets-parade>).

Domestic Cat Responsible Ownership

There's a lot of talk about domestic cats on the Alice Springs Community Forum, where residents are voicing their opinions regarding domestic cats that are roaming into neighbouring yards. Roaming domestic cats have the ability to spray, defecate or fight on neighbouring properties, spread or contract disease via other cats, run the risk of being hit by a car, can contribute to the feral cat population and also hunt wildlife. But cats are not all bad – Domestic cats make great companion animals, and when managed responsibly, they can have little to no impact on the local environment. Some simple actions can greatly improve their welfare, prevent them from hunting urban wildlife, and contribute to positive neighbourly relations:

Registration: Alice Springs Town Council by-laws state that a cat at large (outside of the owner's boundary) can be impounded. Retrieving a domestic cat can be costly, but is achievable if the cat is registered (a requirement of pet ownership in AS municipality). Registration is cheaper if cats are desexed (prevents over-production of kittens but they also live longer on average and stray less) and microchipped (helps authorities identify you as the pet owner if your cat accidentally gets trapped).

Containment: Even well-fed cats kill wildlife because of their hunting instinct. Placing bells on the collar to prevent an individual from hunting has limited effectiveness and so containment is the only effective action. Preventing cats from roaming also gives them a longer life expectancy, due to a reduction in injury-related death. Domestic cats are adaptable and can be kept indoors or in outdoor enclosures without detriment to their happiness, as shown by personality tests from the Cat Tracker program (<http://www.discoverycircle.org.au/projects/cat-tracker/>). Owners of older cats have no need to be concerned about changing the habits of their pet cats - the adjustment can be made gradually by keeping it inside for longer and longer periods of time. Owners are encouraged to provide their feline friends with a stimulating indoors environment, including somewhere to sharpen their claws. It is vital to give your cat lots of attention and play time and provide places to look out the window, lounge, play, and scratch.

Outdoor cat enclosures: Making use of enclosed areas outside, such as cat runs, can allow domestic cats to experience foreign smells and sunshine. You may like to consider enclosing part of your verandah.

Harnesses: If you want your cat to experience the outdoors you can train your cat to go outside on a harness and leash.

Land for Wildlife Central Australia had great success with the domestic cat monitoring program in 2015-2016, helping domestic cat owners of Alice Springs to identify roaming patterns and travel distances of their cats. Stay posted for the findings of the study!

Further Reading



Article • Australia's 10 deserts: Everything you need to know about the 10 deserts that make up almost a fifth of Australia



Article • Robots, lasers, poison: the high-tech bid to cull wild cats in the outback



Article • Better offsets for threatened species



Resource • BowerBird.org.au — report sightings of wildlife, help identify wildlife and browse images submitted by other members

Do you have any stories or images to share?

Get in touch! We are always looking for members to share their experiences via our social media and newsletter. Email us with your suggestions of articles or topics that you wish to hear more about.

Keep updated with more information about what is going on:

Visit our Land for Wildlife & Garden for Wildlife website and connect with us on social media (Click the links in the side panel when viewing in your browser)!

Cheers,

Caragh, Jen and Bill

All images by C. Heenan, unless specified otherwise.

Copyright © 2016 Low Ecological Services, All rights reserved.



Land for Wildlife & Garden for Wildlife Central Australia newsletter is published by Low Ecological Services P/L through funding from the Northern Territory Government.

Opinions expressed by contributors to the Land for Wildlife & Garden for Wildlife Central Australia newsletter are not necessarily those of the Land for Wildlife program nor any of the supporting agencies.

Contact Us

Land for Wildlife, GFW
Low Ecological Services
P.O. Box 3130
Alice Springs NT 0871
(+61) 8 89 555 222
lfw@lowecol.com.au
Visit us on the web at:
[http://
wildlife.lowecol.com.au/](http://wildlife.lowecol.com.au/)

Stay Connected with Land for Wildlife on Social Media



Visit our website
to read the blogs



Befriend Tawny
Frogmouth on
Facebook



Follow Land for
Wildlife on
Facebook



Follow Tawny
Frogmouth on
Facebook



Follow Tawny
Frogmouth on
Instagram:
@LFW_Alice



Subscribe to Land
for Wildlife on
Twitter:
@LFW_Alice

**... and tag us in your
posts to keep us
updated!**