



*Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.*

## **THE TNC NEWSLETTER**

*Number 7 April 2012*



## **Dawn Atwell Reserve**

*The Toodyay Naturalists' Club is indebted to the Toodyay Op Shop for their support in producing the April newsletter*

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a wonderful beginning to the Nat's Club year with the presentation by Robert and Beth Boase of Dowerin on their incredibly valuable wetland located on their farm, 'Arinya'. To protect the biodiversity of this area, 215ha has been placed under a 'conservation covenant' through the National Trust WA with the assistance of World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The story of the trek that Robert and Beth took to protect this valuable area is told, together with photos, within the newsletter.

March 14/15th – A Sensor Camera Workshop, held at the Chittering Landcare Centre at Muchea, was a great success. Seven Nat's Club members attended; Beth had booked to attend but, unfortunately, she became ill several days beforehand.

It was a very well presented workshop by Phil Lewis and Mike Griffiths with the use of a variety of makes of 'sensor' cameras. Each seemed to have advantages over the other which went with the disadvantages. Some were slower than others to function, some were quite heavy, some took video and some did not; there were many aspects of the cameras to take into consideration if intending to purchase. The two days were not without much humour as Phil has a wonderful spontaneous laugh that kept everyone in good spirits.

The period in the field, a glorious large area of pristine jarrah forest belonging to one of the participants, was a wonderful experience. It was even more so when we learned that the property was protected by a 'conservation covenant'! Of course, we felt much wiser as to the value of this protection, following Robert and Beth Boase enlightening February presentation.

Rod Smith was the Club's March Guest speaker with his presentation, 'The Characteristics of Young Birds'. What an enlightening presentation it was! It is never easy to be *totally* sure of a sighting when it involves a young or juvenile bird as the colour changes can be so dramatic from the parent birds. However, Rod gave many pointers on the characteristics such as the coloured mouth, the varying colours of the eyes at different ages and of course the changing colouring and patterning of the feathers. Rod's presentation was thoroughly enjoyed by all including the children present.

March 22nd - CRG Meeting at Southern Cross was well attended but is worrying with further bids for increased mining in pristine areas. A station, Inniun, has been purchased by DEC through Cliffs as an off-set for the increased exploration. As the existing mining ventures are progressing even deeper into the earth it is an extremely worrying situation to be pursuing land further into the once pristine landscape that is now shockingly scarred by mining.

## 'CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY'

At 7am on Saturday March 31st there was a combined effort to collect litter along Julimar Road from Sandspring Road to Coondle West Road by the Toodyay Historical Society (THS), the Friends of the River (TFOR), and our Club members. Great appreciation has been voiced by the Shire Administration and the public especially those living in the vicinity of this beautiful country road; it was an excellent PR project.

As coordinator this year, I would like to thank, most sincerely, all those who assisted on the day including two people that could not stay for long but still gave invaluable help; they collected the Shire signage on the Friday afternoon and set it up early on the Saturday, before the 7am start. Following the litter pickup another helper drove out to collect and return the signage to the Shire depot. Thank you so much Maurie Jackson and Gaven Donegan!!

April 13th and 14th saw several members of the Club selling raffle tickets as a fund-raising venture which was outstandingly successful financially. However, the interaction with the community was also rewarding as so many people stopped to chat about what they observe on their own properties, ask questions about wildlife and showed genuine interest in natural history. Application forms and programmes were taken plus books were sold. The two days spent at the forefront of the public eye had excellent results!

At the April 21st General Meeting members and visitors enjoyed the beautiful photography presentation by members of the Easter Hills (Branch) Wildflower Society Photographic Group. The Group travel far afield to areas such as Dryandra (in the vicinity of Narrogin) and Eneabba plus search for beautiful plants on their own Hills properties.

The Club members are extremely grateful to those folk who attend the Club and give such interesting and thought-provoking presentations on a variety of topics.

*Desraé Clarke*

# FIRST AID FOR WILDLIFE by Sarah Dudley

## **OBSERVE**

When sick, injured, orphaned or displaced wildlife are rescued they will be in frightened, probably in pain from an injury and/or in shock.

## **DANGERS**

*Check the dangers to yourself from:*

passing traffic, beaks, talons, teeth and claws. Use a towel or piece of clothing to throw over a bird or animal before attempting to pick it up.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Place the rescued wildlife in a cardboard box (or such like) with a towel in the bottom and a lid on top to create a secure, warm and dark surrounding
- Place the box in a QUIET place away from TV, children and domestic pets.
- Contact **Kanyana Wildlife Hospital on 9291 3900** or **Wildlife Helpline on 9474 9055 (24 hour service)** to be directed to the nearest voluntary carer.

## **PLEASE NOTE**

Do **NOT** offer any food or water to wildlife until advice has been received from the Wildlife Hospital or Helpline contact.

**NEVER OFFER COW'S MILK TO ANY WILDLIFE** as the lactose causes gastric problems.

The risk of dehydration is very high so transportation to trained people is of the highest priority!!!

Take the animal or bird to your nearest voluntary carer as soon as possible where veterinary treatment will be given as necessary; do not wait to see what will happen! Without expert medical help the bird, animal or reptile's medical condition may deteriorate and be beyond help very rapidly.

## **WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE CONTACTS**

**Sarah Dudley** – Julimar – 0428 129 477 - 9574 2118  
All animals

**Wildcare Helpline** – Volunteers – 24 hours - 9474 9055  
All animals

**Kanyana Wildlife Hospital** – 9291 3900  
120 Gilchrist Road, Lesmurdie (off Welshpool East)



## **Correction**

In the December 2011 Newsletter, Number 6, the photograph of the little dragon was labelled as a Western Bearded Dragon. Our Patron, John Dell, contacted me to say this was an incorrect identification; it is a Western Netted Dragon and sent the following information.

‘The photographed dragon is a female *Ctenophorus reticulatus* that is usually known as the Western Netted Ground Dragon although some older references use the name Reticulated Dragon. They generally live in a burrow, just like the one in the photo, and hunt for insects in the vicinity of the burrow. Western Bearded Dragons do not live in burrows but the female will dig a short burrow in which to lay her eggs.’

Many thanks to John for alerting me to that correction.

Distribution of this little reptile is the southern half of Western Australia where it favours heavy, stony soils. It may be found beneath logs, isolated stones and boulders, exfoliating granite and behind the bark of fallen trees.

*(Photographs of the Western Netted Ground Dragon can be found on Page 7)*

# 'A Natural Wonderland'

## Boase Reserve Conservation Covenant

Helena Mills Conservation Covenant Coordinator



Above: The sign introducing the Boase Reserve, a wonderfully outstanding site in the Wheatbelt.

Right: One of the custodians of the site, Beth Boase, exploring an unusual outcrop in the reserve.



Rob and Beth Boase consider themselves lucky to live and work in a very special place. The conservation community thinks that the unique and precious flora, fauna and ecosystems of *Arinya* are lucky to have found owners who recognise and care so deeply for the natural heritage values of their farm. *Arinya* is 133km north east of Perth near the wheatbelt town of Dowerin and in December last year the National Trust registered a covenant on 214 ha of the Boase's bushland to protect it forever. In addition to legal protection, the covenant will assist with the management of the bushland through providing increased access to funding, recognition and inclusion into the National Reserve System. The covenanting process followed from a partnership between Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management and World Wildlife Fund-Australia.

The Boases bought the property in 1973 because of its impressive bushland. Little did they know that they had purchased a property containing a naturally saline seep, a number of rare flora species as well as Acorn Banksia/Woody Pear woodlands which had been rapidly disappearing elsewhere in the wheatbelt. Experts have confirmed that the saline seep is unique – it supports species normally associated with coastal or marine areas, floating mats of vegetation strong enough to walk on and bubbling springs.

The Boases kept their wonderland to themselves for many years, not wanting to disturb it too much, and shared it only with close friends and family. However, they eventually realised that the best way to save it was to understand it. As skilled naturalists in their own right Rob, Beth and their son Craig have done much of the work identifying and cataloguing the species on the property. The Boases have also invited many experts onto their property to further probe its mysteries – hydrologists, botanists, limnologists, zoologists and any number of other interested specialists. The latest investigation, in partnership with the Department of Environment and Conservation's Threatened Ecological Community section, is determining whether some ordinary-looking rather crusty areas of the seep are in fact 'microbial mats' the like of which are found near the famous stromatolites of Shark Bay.

# 'A Natural Wonderland' ...cont

## *Arinya Conservation Covenant*

Helena Mills Conservation Covenant Coordinator

The species lists for *Arinya* are also impressive. Two priority ecological communities, sixteen species of threatened or priority flora and an occasional flock of Carnaby's Black Cockatoos share the bushland with the Boase family. In addition to farming, the Boases run a native plant nursery that supplies revegetation projects throughout the wheatbelt.

The National Trust is looking forward to their on-going relationship with the Boase family and their unique wheatbelt property.



### ***What is a 'conservation covenant'?***

A conservation covenant is an agreement between a landowner and the Trust, which protects and enhances the natural, cultural and/or scientific values of the land. The covenant is registered on the property and binds all future owners. Our conservation covenants derive from the National Trust of Australia (WA) Act 1964.

They have the force of statute, and should be distinguished from common law covenants. Unlike common law covenants and planning schemes that can be amended, conservation covenants are permanent.

Right: An interesting view of the unusual seep, where some of the 'crusty' areas could in fact be microbial mats, possibly the genesis of stromatolites, not unlike those at Shark Bay



## *Red-tail Black Cockatoo by Ann Hall*

I just wanted to let you guys know that on Thursday 5th of April we had a group of approx 40 birds here. There was a group of 15 here the previous day. They had roosted on the property overnight. About 7.30am a group of 30 or so flew in. They all stayed for the day yesterday, but moved on late in the afternoon. So far this Good Friday I have not heard them at all. It is almost 8am.

We first saw the cockatoos on the 19th September 2011. That matched with what I read in the Herald in the December edition. We have seen a group of about 5 birds on average once a week. I hope you can open the photos. It looks like the group is made up of pairs and their young with some photo's showing the male feeding the 'baby'.

I wonder now if more birds are 'grouping up' and will be moving on somewhere else like the Rainbow Bee-eaters do.

Though they are a bit noisy I love having them around.

We brought this property on Timberden Drive in April, 2001. We see the White-tailed Cockatoos from around October to February/March, though they do seem to be here earlier and later for the last few years. Occasionally we do see a couple fly over through the other months. I guess they go into the Julimar Forest as we don't see them here. I was very surprised to hear the Red-tails on that morning of the 19th September.

Having said that I was just outside (8.20am) and I can hear them in the distance. Only sounds like a few there, probably on the neighbouring property.

Thought you might like to know,

Ann



*Left: Baby Red-tail Black Cockatoo trying to get a feed from Dad, high in a marri tree on Ann and Peter's property.*

*Below: The baby was successful, and is being fed. Mum is acting as lookout while all this is going on.*



# *My Botanical Journey* by Jacqueline Lucas



Figure 1 *Drosera menziesii*

Hello, my name is Jacqueline Lucas and I love plants!

How did this all start? Well I think it had to have started with fostering by my mum, she is an avid gardener, and I remember being little and going for walks in the bush with her and us talking about special plants. She also had a little herbarium that she had made as a school project, and she had kept it, and I loved looking at it. As a family we would go on many holidays to the bush and go bushwalking, and I began to look more and more for different plants. I am prone to easily sprained ankles, so I had to watch the ground I was walking on very carefully,

and hey presto, that had the added benefit of noticing all the little ground dwellers! My dad fostered an interest in photography and both parents encouraged my interest in science.

I was lucky enough to gain a place in a Biological Sciences course at La Trobe University, Victoria in 1983. There I studied botany and zoology, and finished with an Honours degree in Botany. There were some wonderful times at university, with many varied and interesting field trips. One of my favourite assignments was the production of a herbarium for my second year studies and I well and truly exceeded the requirement of 50 specimens. I had a novel method of collecting specimens. I also did a lot of horse riding, and I would collect specimens from the road side on horseback. I managed to cover a lot of ground in this way, which was handy as I didn't yet have my driver's license.

When I finished my studies I came to Western Australia in January 1987 for a holiday, to watch the America's Cup, and I loved it so much I stayed. On weekends I went with my new friends "down south" and loved exploring the new environments. I was amazed with the differences and similarities between the flora of both sides of the continent. One family that is much more prominent over here is the Proteaceae, and I am still flummoxed by many of them, but have become much better at their identification.

During my time in WA I worked many different jobs, from dishwasher, nursery hand, CBH siding officer, cook at Fremantle Sailing Club, to a science/agriculture teacher at Catholic Agricultural College, Bindoon. This was a start of the re-ignition of my passion for botany. I was lucky enough to live on the school farm, for my first two years of the job, and, there are approximately 5000 acres of natural bush to explore on horseback. It is magnificent bushland, in some areas it had been logged in the 1930s and 1940s, but was essentially pristine. While working at the College, I developed a self guided wildflower walk trail, and would also conduct guided tours on the weekends during spring. I was also heavily involved in landcare education, and at one stage was the Chairperson of the Chittering Valley LCDC. As part of this, I was also Chairperson of the committee which set up the Chittering Landcare Centre, in Muchea. Keep Australia Beautiful WA used to run an Earth School Project, and under my after school program Earth School at CAC Bindoon, we entered the competition and came third in the State in 2000. It was most exciting. This competition involved civic duties of the students, caring for the school physical environment as well as working on caring for the natural environment.



Figure 3 Blackboy Ridge Vista

In 1994 I was the recipient of a desperate phone call from the Bindoon Tourist Centre. Someone had told them of my interest in wildflowers (small town) and I was asked if I could come and help identify wildflowers they were putting on display for their Wool and Wildflower Weekend.

I was hesitant at first but, found to my delight, that I was able to do as requested, and that is how I became involved in the Chittering Wildflower Show, which I am still involved with now.

As well as exploring the 5000 acres offered by the College I would also explore the local bushland in Bindoon. I spent hours driving around in Julimar Conservation Park looking for elusive orchids and other plants. I also explored Blackboy Ridge.



Figure 2 *Banksia menziesii* Firewood Banksia

# My Botanical Journey *by Jacqueline Lucas*

Initially the locals had to do a bit of convincing as to the value of Blackboy Ridge, as there were a few bad seasons where not many plants were flowering. However, I still recall the wonder of climbing up an escarpment to reach the plateau at the top to discover what can only be described as a spider orchid meadow. It was astonishing, and I also found a blackboy with sixteen spider orchids underneath it!! There are also several reserves to the north in the Shire of Chittering which I would explore, taking photographs.

At the end of 2004 I moved to Toodyay, and in 2005 I joined the Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc. I was still working at the College, and it was a delight each day to drive to and from work along Dewars Pool Rd, looking at the changing florascapes. I would often stop at points in Julimar on the way home from work to take photographs of the plants. I was lucky enough to have a 'point and shoot' Sony camera, which also had manual settings, which I could adjust to take some lovely pictures. It took lots of patience - initially there were many more doozies than good ones, and at times it was very frustrating. In 2009 I lashed out and bought a Canon digital camera, with macro and telephoto lenses, and have been learning how to use them now. After moving to Toodyay I also became involved in the Victoria Plains Wildflower Walk as a guide, and have lead walks for several years in various reserves around the Shire of Victoria Plains.



Figure 4 *Caladenia longicauda* with blackboy



Figure 6 Pale form of *Hibbertia lasiopus*

In 2010 Sally Craddock and I started collecting botanical specimens from the now Dawn Atwell Reserve and preparing a list of specimens. This built on the excellent foundation work done by Frank Turnbull in all his years of working in the reserve. The two lists, along with Frank's Fauna list were used in the management plan written by WWF for Dawn Atwell Reserve.

I love the flora of Western Australia and still have so much to learn. I really enjoy leading guided walks throughout the bush, although I am not very fast, but sometimes I think it's the slowness that leads me to discover plants which are often missed by others. Fortunately I have a pretty good memory when it comes to the names of the plants, and I also love to collect little bits of information about the history of the plants such as the indigenous use of them. I am now fortunate enough to work part-time for Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Inc in Northam. Since I have been there I have been able to increase my knowledge of indigenous usage of the plants.

The current project I am working on is a brochure for the Stewart Moir Reserve in Coondle West Road, Coondle. Where to next.....a very good question.



Figure 7  
*Caladenia longicauda*  
Stark white spider orchid



Figure 5 *Thelymitra stellata*, Star Orchid

# Wildlife in Action



Our Patron John Dell contacted Julianne Waldock, from the Western Australian Museum, who has provided this information on the beautiful little silver spider that has visited a number of people (pictured above)..

The spider is a tailed spider, *Argiope protensa* (family Araneidae). These spiders build orb-webs in low shrubs and heath and sit in the web throughout the day. The white colouration assists in deflecting the sun's heat. These spiders also have the ability to extend the tip of the abdomen which may also play a part in temperature control.

This specimen is either a juvenile or female, females range from 13 to 22 mm in length, males are considerably smaller.

*Argiope protensa* is found all over mainland Australia except for the wetter regions such as the far south-west and tropical north. It is also recorded from New Guinea, New Caledonia and New Zealand.

There are no records of these spiders biting humans.

*Right.: A beautiful visitor that Lee Francis had recently, on her back patio.*



# The Ants and the Butterfly

Book review by Desraé Clarke

Written by Caitlan Moloney and, with Joanna Meredith's exquisite water colour illustrations, 'The Ant and the Butterfly' has been produced by the Mukinbudin Conservation Society as a result of funding gained through the Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management (NRM) Community Small Grants Programme.

The story is of a beautiful butterfly that was once thought to be extinct, the Arid Bronze Azure Butterfly, (*Ogyris subterrestris petrina*). However, it has been found in a patch of bush just west of the Mukinbudin town site. During studies by visiting scientists, it became apparent that there was a remarkable symbiotic relationship between the butterfly and sugar ants (*Componotus terentranus*).

The story is simply and charmingly written using descriptive words depicting the association between the ants and the butterfly. The tiny, newly hatched larva is carried by the ants to their home beneath the ground to be carefully and lovingly looked after. Sometime later, in the ants' dark home, the little larva began to feel itchy, jumpy

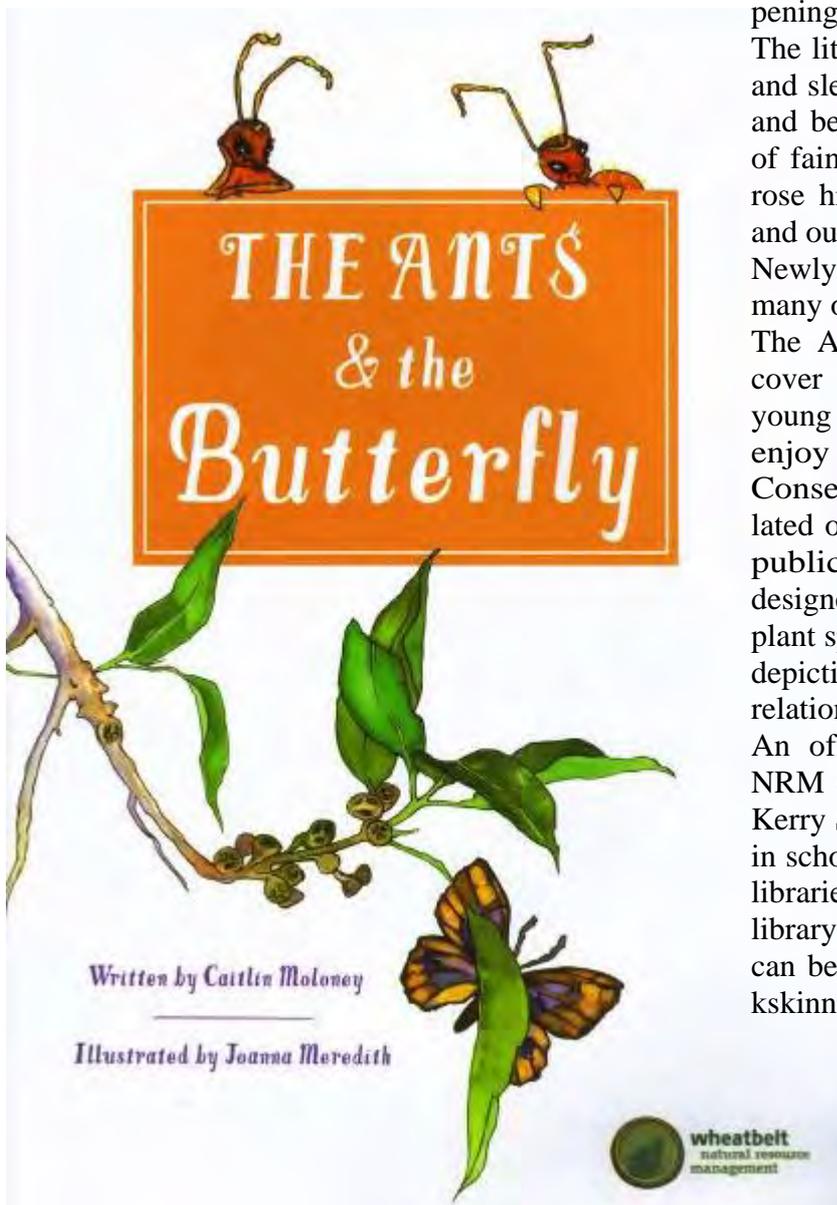
and quite restless – something was happening - and it was!

The little larva became a pupa then slept and slept for many days. Finally, it woke and began to move toward a distant ray of faint light. It twisted and turned as it rose higher and higher toward the light and out of the ant home.

Newly developed wings took it to join many other beautiful butterflies.

The A4 size publication, with a strong cover and inside pages, is suitable for young hands to help turn the pages and enjoy the book. The Mukinbudin Conservation Society is to be congratulated on the production of this delightful publication. The Society has also designed a garden consisting of local plant species with sturdy metal sculptures depicting the story of this extraordinary relationship – take time to make a visit!

An offer is made from the Wheatbelt NRM Community Small Grants Officer, Kerry Skinner, to include this publication in school and local, or community group, libraries; the Toodyay Naturalists' Club library has a copy in its collection. Kerry can be contacted on 9690 2254 or email [kskinner@wheatbeltnrm.org.au](mailto:kskinner@wheatbeltnrm.org.au)



# *Western Netted Ground Dragon*



*Photo above: Baby Western netted ground dragon, rescued from a cat by Sam Connor*

*Photo below: Western netted ground dragon, emerging from its burrow*



# ENVIRONMENT MATTERS



Above: Malkup Brook Reserve - the unfortunate aftermath of a hazard reduction burn. (Photo Greg Warburton)  
A replanting day has been organised for Saturday 28th July 2012. Club members who are available to assist on that day will be most welcome.

Contact Bethan Lloyd (ph 9574 5882) for more details.

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