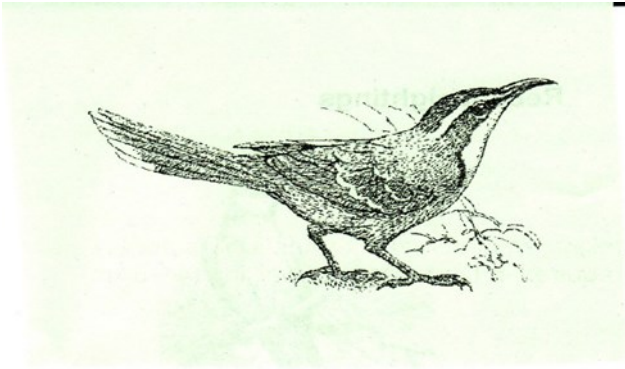




THE BABBLER



News from Gluepot Reserve Autumn 2024

This edition of the Babbler will focus on the many activities that occurred from Tuesday 16th April until Monday 22nd April.

The main activity during that period was the Annual Gluepot Working Bee. However, prior to this there was an Insect Course, as well as an overnight visit by high school students from the River Murray Youth Council (RMYC).

Work undertaken at the Working Bee was made much easier thanks to the arrival of a new tractor. This was made possible by a very generous donation.

During the Working Bee, on the Saturday evening, we also celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Friends of Gluepot Reserve.

TRACTOR ARRIVAL and MAKING A HOME FOR IT.



Photographs in this edition have been provided by Duncan MacKenzie, Sandy Dickson, Andrew Humpage, Jim Spiker, Bron Mart and Sue Nettlefold .

WORKSHOP ON INSECTS

Dr Peter McQuillan, an entomologist from the University of Tasmania, has been involved in research into the recent Looper infestation at Gluepot.

He was invited by Dave Georg to conduct a course on Insects in the Mallee.

10 people attended the Course, and then stayed on at Gluepot to assist with the Working Bee.

Peter also gave a very interesting and informative talk at the Dinner on Friday night.



River Murray Youth Council (RMYC) AUTUMN CAMP.

The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board (MRLB) run a program for students interested in the environment. There are 2 groups, one based in the Riverland, and one in Murray Bridge.

On Thursday 18th April, they arrived at Gluepot for their Autumn Camp. There were 15 children who were accompanied by mentors from the MRLB.

The Group camped overnight at the Babbler Campground, and our Gluepot Catering Committee made sure that they were well fed. During Thursday and Friday they were able to participate in some of the activities planned for the Working Bee.

They helped to set up a pitfall line, and enjoyed checking the traps, where we discovered a Ningau native marsupial, some skinks and some small dragons. We were fortunate that Jules Farquhar, a herpetologist, came with the group, and we all learned a lot!

The students were able to attend a birdbanding session, and also helped to plant some eucalypt seedlings as part of a project to revegetate old dam sites.

They were a very enthusiastic group to work with, and everyone enjoyed the experience.



THE WORKING BEE

The activities for the Working Bee started on Friday morning, after a communal breakfast in the Education Centre (the old shearing shed).

The various tasks were outlined on a large white board, and volunteers assigned to their jobs and research projects.

The jobs included completing the construction of the new amenities blocks at Babbler and Bellbird campsites, removing the old facilities and reinstalling the rain water tanks on new concrete slabs. A small team then worked to remove all the rubbish, paint doors and downpipes. The new tractor came into its own- removing concrete slabs, filling in holes and levelling ground.

Another small team was tasked with checking the electric fence and managed to solve several recurring problems.

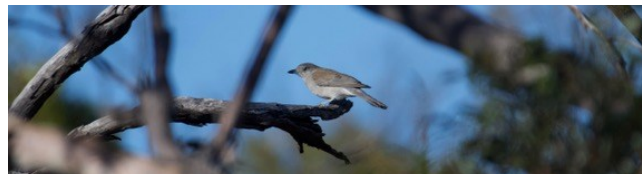
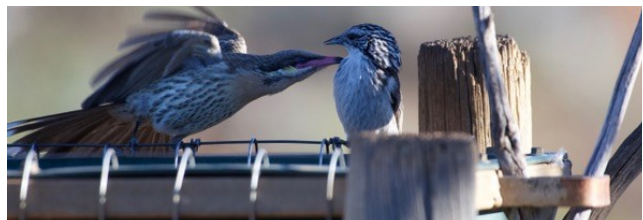
The research projects, Bird banding and Pitfall trapping, ran in conjunction with the Working Bee. Volunteers were encouraged to check out these activities if they could be spared from their other tasks.



BIRD BANDING

The Bird Banding group netted at the Airstrip on Friday morning with visits from both groups from the River Murray Youth Council. Just the two birds were netted on this day. They had a better turn out on Saturday at Froggy Tank with five qualified banders and 16 captures and several volunteers dropping in on their time off duty. Sunday morning was quieter with only five birds processed. We let a Red-capped Robin go as it had been caught late in the morning and was showing signs of stress. In all we banded 1 Red-capped Robin, 1 Southern Whiteface, 4 Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, 7 Splendid Fairy-wrens, 2 Striated Pardalotes, 1 Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, 1 Grey Shrike-thrush, 3 White-browed Babblers, 1 Jacky Winter and the highlight bird - 1 Redthroat, only the third banded at Gluepot. One wren came back to visit that we had banded earlier.

Jim Spiker



PITFALL TRAPPING

Four of the 45 pitfall lines at Gluepot, 2 in spinifex, 1 in open Mallee and 1 in bluebush habitat, were opened on the Thursday. Each line was then inspected morning and late afternoon, with captures recorded, photographed, and released. Over the 4 days, a total of 3 small mammals, 10 skinks, 2 legless lizards and 8 dragons were found. The days were warm, but nights quite cold, so unfortunately we did not find any geckos. The traps were closed after inspection on the Monday morning.



CATERING and a CELEBRATION

Margaret Falkenberg and Anne Morphett catered for all the events, including those involving the RMYC students and their mentors, from lunch time on Thursday until breakfast on Monday. This included morning and afternoon teas as well as all meals. This is a mammoth effort, and our heartfelt thanks go out to them. Thanks also to the many people who helped with food preparation, tidying up, and washing up.

At a communal dinner, everyone has the opportunity to meet, chat and make new acquaintances. Every evening, a summary of the days activities was given by each of the team leaders, so everyone could keep abreast of what was achieved that day.

On the Saturday night, Margaret planned a special meal to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Friends of Gluepot Reserve.

During the evening, Sue Nettlefold gave a synopsis of the history of our Friends group, and Duncan MacKenzie, the President of Friends of Parks Inc. and the Patron of Gluepot Reserve, gave us an understanding of how the over-arching body works. He outlined the many things that have been achieved at Gluepot, stressing that the volunteers are the lifeblood of the Reserve.

Five families were awarded Certificates of Appreciation and 20 year pins from the Department of Environment and the National Parks and Wildlife Service in recognition of their outstanding contributions over the last 20 years. Sadly, recipients **Charlene and Bill Santos**, were unable to be present for this occasion.



Clockwise from above:—

Anne Morphett and Margaret Falkenberg

Rosemary and Duncan MacKenzie

Sue and Rod Bradtke

Don and Chris Lill (with John and Sue Nettlefold)

Margaret and Ian Falkenberg



GLUEPOT RESERVE

Gluepot Reserve is a Reserve of Birdlife Australia.

ABN: 75 149 124 774 Email: gluepot@gluepot.org Telephone: (08) 8892 8600 Website: www.gluepot.org

Postal address: PO Box 345, Waikerie, SA 5330 On Facebook.

Gluepot is a not-for-profit conservation reserve, managed and operated entirely by volunteers.

It is funded through donations and bequests from its supporters, and by grants for capital works and projects.

If you wish to support the Reserve by being a donor or providing a bequest, please contact the Chairman:

Ian Falkenberg E-Mail: hawknest2@bigpond.com Phone: 0428842873

This 'Gluepot' Newsletter is produced as an e-newsletter, and is not available as a printed version.

Contributions, comment, and feedback may be forwarded to the editors—Sue Nettlefold and Bronwyn Mart

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