

FRIENDS OF WAITE CONSERVATION RESERVE Inc.



COMING EVENTS

Walking Bees
1st Saturday &
3rd Sunday of Spring
Springwood Park
Entry off Old Mt Barker
Road

Nature Walk
Saturday 11th October
10 am – Noon
Start at Wild Dog's Glen
Bring your refreshments for
lunch to follow



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

President's message

The Friends group has spent another enjoyable and profitable year supporting the University of Adelaide by assisting the rehabilitation of Waite Conservation Reserve helping to turn it from a bit of a weedy wasteland into a thing of beauty and diversity. Recovery is slow, measured in tiny incremental steps. Not all the steps are forward. Typically it progresses two steps forward and one step back as each weed removed is replaced by a native grass or small shrub. Or sometimes by another weed! Importantly though the condition of the reserve is heading in the right direction.

A large part of the reason for this is the many hours of voluntary work provided by the Friends, - around 700 hours last year. Most of this is in weed control, particularly of smaller olives, Perennial veldt grass, African weed orchid and a host of other baddies. As well, we planted a range of tube-stock, especially in areas recently cleared of olives. The clearing was mostly done by university contractors as they continued to control dense infestations of mature olives especially around Netherby Spur.

More than a decade of olive control sees us to the point where mature olives have been removed from around 95 hectares of the reserve. This is a surprisingly large area when you have to traverse it on foot, with the reserve spanning almost 2½ km from end to end.

The challenge for us over the next 2-3 years will be to 'protect our investment' by seeking out and destroying the 1000's of olive seedlings and re-growth that are already threatening to undo all our hard work. We plan over the course of the season to systematically walk the entire 95 hectares removing that next generation of olives.

And in a cunning piece of marketing we've dispensed with all references to 'working bees' and re-badged them as the more user-friendly 'Walking Bees'. 'Walking bees' will be a great way to see and learn about the reserve and to get a bit of exercise, one step at a time, or at least two steps forward and one step back. Yes, walking still involves spillage of the odd teaspoon of sweat, but we will be rewarded by gallons of satisfaction through keeping the olives in check.

To make time for this, something's got to give and in this case it is our tree-planting efforts which have been such a feature of the last few years of working bees. Over that time we have planted many thousands of understorey seedlings - wattles, hop-bushes, sheoaks, myoporum, bursaria, grasses and so on.

Many seedlings have survived and hopefully will provide the seed for the next generation of plants. But the time has come to focus our full attention on the olives, to gradually exhaust the accumulated seed bank.

Peter's overview of the year continues on page 2

Peter Bird

Peter's overview of the year

Apart from working bees, our major project last year was a 'make-over' of our main walking trail including re-writing and printing a new trail brochure. The old trail guide and map were looking tired, just like the sundry lost walkers I have come across over the years trying to make sense of the old map. I've never found any human skeletons up there but suspect there may be a few who never found their way out! All that has changed and we now have a shiny new brochure with an accurate map, new stories, and some new illustrations.

To further help the directionally challenged we've also installed 20 trail markers, 10 facing in either direction, bearing our rather smart Blue Devil logo, to guide the way. We've also added 5 full-colour interpretive signs telling tall tales and true about some of our more interesting plants and animals such as koalas and mistletoe. I encourage you to take a walk and see our handiwork.

It was a team effort with the entire committee contributing to the content. But at the end of the day, we have our limitations so we enlisted wordsmith and long-standing member, Ann Prescott, to bring our words to life on the page. She did a great job and I thank her. Thanks also to Ann for ceremonially launching the new Waite Loop Walk at a bushwalk and BBQ last October. It was a beautiful day attended by a good crowd. And thank you also to the Adelaide & Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board that generously provided the funds.

Finally I'd like to pay special tribute to the committee for all their contributions during the year, and especially to one who is retiring Meg Byrt. Meg was one of those members without a special designation but was an integral member of the team. In theory Meg was my 'go to' person to do all of those little things that need to be done ...except that I never had to go to her because she would always see a job and volunteer first. Nothing was too much trouble. Everything done with a smile. A President's dream.

Meg is leaving her role as 'all round wrangler' and moving to the new role of 'grandchild wrangler' but we will continue to see her at working bees where she has been a regular. Thanks Meg

A huge thank you also to another regular at working bees but who is now sadly hanging up the barbeque tongs. I speak of Annette Baker. Annette has been the MVP at working bees, the 'most valuable player'. She single-handedly boosted attendances and maintained morale by generously donating and cooking the sausage sizzle at the conclusion of each working bee. I'm sure I'm not alone in thinking the highlight of each working bee is our coming together at lunchtime after the hard work is done when we share our stories and make our plans for our beloved reserve, all over a shared cuppa and a snag.

Annette was more than just the barbecue cook. She was a passionate commentator on all manner of things: geology, growing trees, dance. As well, she was confidante to our kids who, strangely, always seemed more fascinated with assisting the cook than pulling out weeds. So thanks Annette - I am already missing you

And not to forget Jennifer Gardner who continues to put in above and beyond the call of duty in supporting the Friends group.

And just to finish off, my perennial advertisement for the reserve. It's got it all: close to town, majestic Heysenesque gum trees, 200 native plants, lots of birds, koalas, lizards, a million butterflies, great views and heart-starting walks. It's a cracker so put us in your diary - first Saturday and third Sunday of the month, 9.00am - 12 noon for our fortnightly 'walking bees'.

Peter Bird

BUTTERFLIES OF WAITE

Mike Moore was the guest speaker at the Friends AGM, where he spoke about the Butterflies of the Waite Reserve. Mike is an excellent presenter and had some truly beautiful photos to illustrate his talk. In this article, he talks about just one of those species:

***Ogyris olane* The Broad Margined Azure.**

Ogyris olane is perhaps the least spectacular of the *Ogyris* genus. The males have a broad black-brown margins to both the fore and hind wings with the central and basal areas being coloured dark to bright purple. The females too have broad black margins but the central and basal areas are brighter being more a blue-purple in colour. Underneath both sexes are cryptically coloured with uneven and ragged bands of black and grey scales that imitate the texture and pattern of tree bark.



Broad Margined Azure male (top) and female (below)

Ogyris olane is largely a butterfly of south-eastern Australia, though there are populations up around Townsville too. The genus *Ogyris* feed on mistletoes, these plants have toxins within them which may confer some protection for the larvae and adult butterfly. *O. olane* has only been recorded as feeding on two species – *Amyema miquelli* and *A. pendula* both species of which are common and widespread.

The butterflies are on the wing from September through to May though there are usually peak in their population size - early in the season when the larvae that have over-wintered hatch, in December and January, and March to May. It is this second seasonal brood that I have found to be more numerous.

These butterflies are very active. The males usually fly rapidly around and between trees looking for females. The females after mating fly with more direction and purpose though all too regularly they encounter over enthusiastic males that make direct flight impossible.

The black, deeply pitted eggs are usually laid singly in scars and fissures on the twigs and leaf stems, but sometimes on the margins of the mistletoe's leaves. Upon hatching the tiny larvae hide under loose bark at the base of the mistletoe clump. As they grow they move away from the mistletoe and hide under bark on the host eucalypt often a large distance from the food plant. It is here that they also pupate.



The well camouflaged underside of *Ogyris olane*

These are one of the group of *Ogyris* that do not need ants to complete their life cycle in the wild. Often they are found associated with ants but the ants are not necessary. This makes them particularly easy to raise in captivity. Remember though if you are going to raise them please return them when they have hatched where you originally collected them. Also the taking of eggs and young larvae are going to be less damaging to the population over all. For information about raising at home one could contact the SA Museum or the Butterfly Conservation Society of South Australia.

Mike Moore

From the Committee

Committee

At the first committee meeting following the AGM, the following positions were filled.

President: Peter Bird

Secretary: Helen Pryor

Treasurer: Lynda Yates

Editor: Clinton Garrett

Electronic publicist: Erinne Stirling

Ecosystems advisors: Penny Paton

Peter Lang

University Representative: Jennifer Gardner

Nature Walk

All members and friends are invited to take part in a Nature Walk on Saturday October 11th. The walk will start from Wild Dog's Glen and will circuit through She-oak slope and return. The walk is about 4 kilometres and will take participants through a range of habitats. Bring your own refreshments for lunch to follow the walk.

Walking Bees

Peter brought the committee up to date with progress so far. In addition to many seedling olives being removed, Helen has put effort into poisoning Bridal creeper, Andy and Peter have done repair work to a rain damaged section of the Yurrebilla trail.

From September to December, Walking bees will be in the eastern section of the park, with entry off the Eagle on the Hill Road– Gate 82.

A flyer and advertising will be produced to alert more people to these walking bees.

A map and more detail on Walking bees is on pages 5 and 6

Walking Trail Brochures Success

Helen has been placing these in the boxes at either end of the walking trail. The up-take of them by the public has been so good that our stocks were running down. She has successfully applied for a grant from the Mitcham City Council to assist in the printing of 10,000 copies. The Friends group will contribute \$1353 to almost match the \$1500 from Council. Well done Helen!

Next Committee Meeting

Wednesday 17th September. 6.00pm

OUR NEWEST COMMITTEE MEMBER Erinne Stirling



My journey to this point has been rather complicated, but here is the short version: I have lived in many different places in Australia, most of which were in the country. I moved from Whyalla to Adelaide to attend university, and have come out with two Bachelors degrees (one in Science in Natural Resources, and the other Environmental Management and Policy).

I will soon graduate with a Master's degree (Environmental Management) as I am in the second year of a two year course. I am currently researching carbon sequestration rates in tidal salt marshes. Thankfully, knee high shrubbery is my favourite vegetation type.

My interest in the reserve stems from studying soil science at the Waite Campus of Adelaide University. Although we never visited the reserve as part of class, I was aware of the reserve and occasionally ventured up the hill on my own time to experience the climb and the view. I am interested in carnivorous plants and have a collection of native sundews growing at home; I'm yet to find any in the reserve.

I have experience creating and maintaining websites and social media connections and have been selected as 'Promotions Officer' to communicate with the public and boost volunteer rates. The other benefits I bring to the Friends group are realistic optimism and creative problem solving.

Cheers, **Erinne.**

Bandicoot at Waite



For years I have looked for evidence of bandicoots in the reserve. Only once have I seen anything remotely resembling their diagnostic digs and even then I suspect I was dreaming and the digs were made by introduced black rats.

Then lo and behold what should turn up right under my nose, but a bandicoot living only 150 metres from my desk here on campus.

The Southern Brown Bandicoot *Isodon obesulus* occurs in both Cleland and Belair parks, each less than 2 km from the reserve. Bandicoots are spring/summer breeders, reaching peak numbers in late summer after which some animals typically disperse in autumn.

The bandicoot was first noticed in late March so I can only imagine that this little guy was a disperser from one of these parks and, presuming he came in a straight line, he must have come through Waite Conservation Reserve.

I wonder does this mean we can add him to the reserve list? I say 'him' with authority because, if you inspect the accompanying photo, you'll see the evidence upon which I base this claim.

He must have tip-toed very quickly and very quietly through the reserve to avoid the foxes that occur there. Foxes also occur on Waite campus including the one which was frequently photographed on the trail camera that I set up to record the bandicoot. Cats, black rats and a range of bird species were also captured on camera. Fortuitously the bandicoot set up camp in some of the best habitat on campus, an area of landscaped native gardens offering dense cover right down to ground level.

"Barry", so-dubbed by a colleague, has lived a charmed life, dodging foxes, cats and cars for more than 4 months, digging in the mulch, and every few days smiling for the camera. At last count he was still present on 12 August. Long may he continue to dodge.

Peter Bird



If you have not done so already it is time to renew your membership.



You can mail your cheque to our treasurer Lynda Yates at:

PO Box 19

Brighton SA 5048

Individuals \$15
Families \$20

Walking Bees

This year it has been decided to concentrate on removing regenerating olives over the 96 hectares of the Reserve cleared of the original olives. The 8 working bees (two per month) since May 3rd have been systematically covering the area from the southern boundary up to Netherby Spur. The areas vary enormously with some areas being relatively olive free, so the pace of walking varies correspondingly but people choose their own pace. Also the height of the olive does not reliably determine the size of the lignotuber below, so some olives take longer than others to pull or cut and swab.

With the good rains this year it is a pleasure walking over the hills, seeing the native plants flourishing in the areas we have not visited before, or for a long time, as well as taking in the spectacular views. However there are also a disturbing number of olives which were treated some years ago showing re-growth. These will need to be managed differently and currently Pete is researching the best method to deal with them.

There have been a total of 190 hours spent by an average of 8 people, per session. 38 hectares of the target area has been covered, so almost 40% of the Reserve has been re-worked. You can see the area completed on the map on the opposite page.

(Thanks for the statistics from Pete Bird who is ably coordinating the WBs.)



Olive regrowth on Netherby Spur



Walking trail damage

Pete and Andy spent one working bee rebuilding part of the walking trail damaged by bikes. This is an on-going problem.

Peter Lang and others planted Acacia seedlings in the area next to Carrick Hill. This was just before the late winter rains. As a result there seems to have been a reasonable survival rate.

The remaining 2014 Walking Bees from September to December will start from the Springwood Park entrance at the top of the Reserve. It is predicted the top area will be faster to complete as it has had many more working bees and should have less olives.

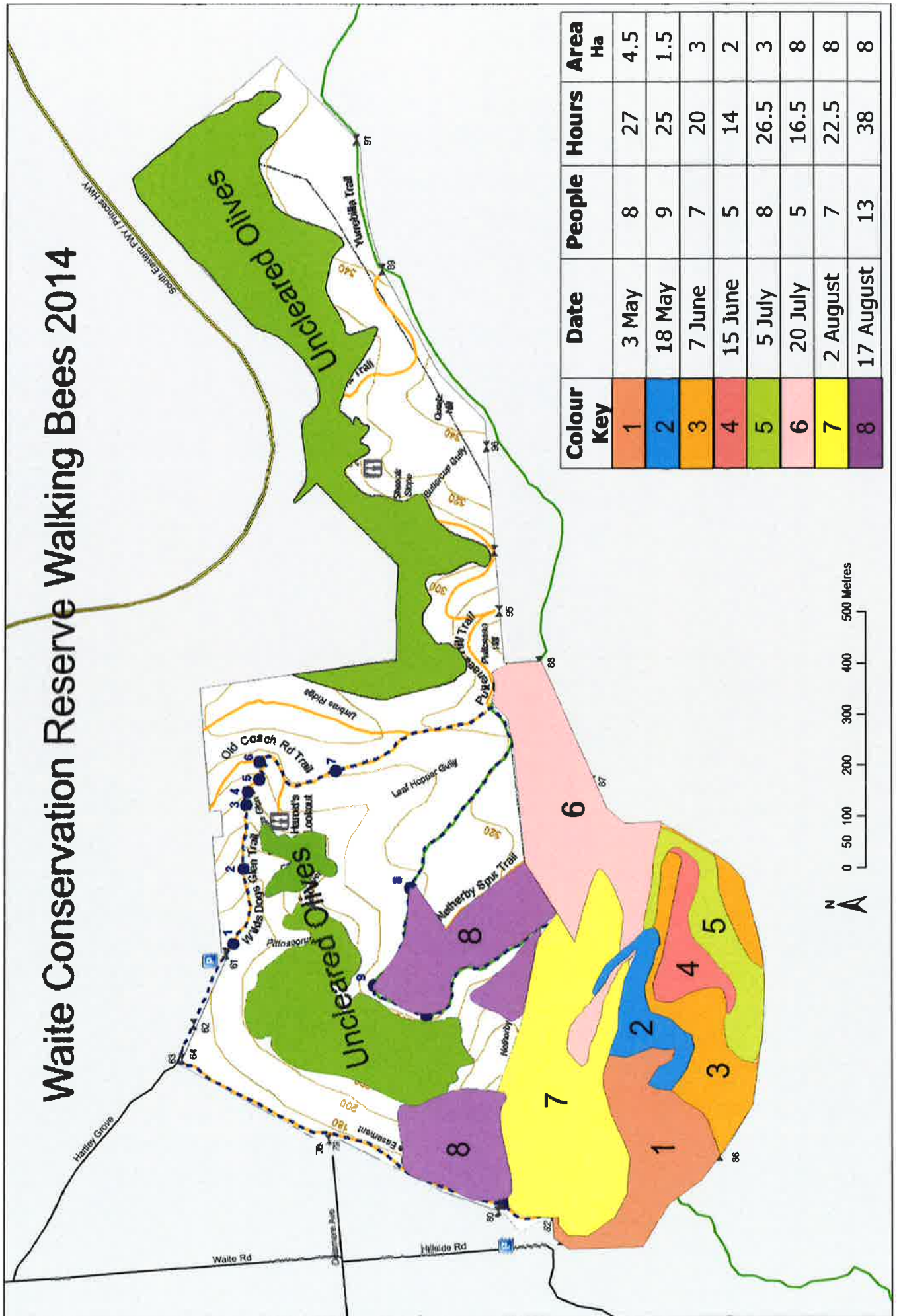
Come and see parts of the Reserve you may not have seen for awhile! Bring a cuppa and a friend. A flyer with the dates was sent out prior to this newsletter. Please print it and put it on the fridge to remind you of when the Walking Bees are.

Helen Pryor



Peter with part of the re-built trail.

Waite Conservation Reserve Walking Bees 2014





Eastern Barn Owl at Waite
Jennifer Gardner Photo.

Another new species for Waite

Jennifer Gardner and Peter Bird were surprised and delighted to see a Barn Owl on 18th May 2014 in a Jacaranda in the Urrbrae House garden. As is their wont, Noisy Miners and Little Ravens were swooping the bird, causing it to fly to a pear tree, then to another Jacaranda and eventually out of the area.

The previous record of a Barn Owl in the vicinity is of one heard calling in Springwood Park on the night of the FWCR bat survey, 23 March 2012, less than 200 m from the Stone Reserve. At the time the Reserve supported far more grass cover than the surrounding cattle-grazed farmland and doubtless more House Mice.

Barn Owls appear in Adelaide every now and then, often after numbers have built up in the countryside after rapid population increases following mouse plagues. As well as House Mice, Barn Owls eat small birds, small reptiles like geckos and skinks and invertebrates such as flying beetles and moths.

They nest in tree hollows, caves and buildings, usually in spring, but also in response to mouse plagues at any time of the year. They raise three or four young, but when mice numbers crash, so do Barn Owl numbers. They are particularly vulnerable to cold wet conditions when numbers of birds are found emaciated or dead.

Penny Paton

FILM FUND RAISER

The Friends of Urrbrae House and Friends of the Waite Arboretum invited Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve to a joint fundraiser film at the Capri Theatre. The 1940s Art Deco Modern Capri, owned by the Theatre Organ Society, is run by volunteers as an independent, not for profit cinema and is a popular, elegant venue for showing fund raising films. The film, *Grace of Monaco*, was selected well in advance to ensure the date chosen was on the weekend of release. Unfortunately the date was Sunday 8th June on a long weekend with other attractions and the film had received poor reviews.

Despite this, over 150 people attended on the wintry afternoon, gathering in the warm foyer for a successful raffle of three baskets, which was kindly organised by Beth Johnstone. We then moved up to the fine auditorium to listen to a recital on the world famous Wurlitzer pipe organ before watching the film. Visually lavish, it showed Grace Kelly, grappling with the reality of fairy tale romance, courtly intrigue and possible return to Hollywood against a backdrop of the looming invasion of Monaco by France in 1962.

We thank Marilyn Gilbertson and the other organisers of the film event for all the Friends Groups with their differing memberships and appreciate the \$186 FWCR share of the proceedings.

Helen Pryor



Records of night birds are for obvious reasons often few and far between, but we do have records of three species from the greater Waite area. As mentioned in this newsletter, Jennifer and Peter saw a Barn Owl in the Urrbrae House garden in May this year and it is recorded as a vagrant for the Waite Conservation Reserve. Barn Owl records from the suburbs are fairly rare, as this species is more a bird of farmland and open areas. They often roost in sheds or derelict buildings in the country, but will also hide in dense vegetation during the day to evade diurnal birds that harass them.

Their heart-shaped disc face and beautiful soft markings belie the harsh and unearthly shrieking calls that shatter the night air. This is often the only clue that they are about, but their habit of sitting on fence posts along roads at night in their search for prey makes them a common sight in farming country.

Their main prey is small mammals, particularly House Mice, but they also take small birds, small reptiles like geckos and skinks and flying invertebrates. Numbers build up astronomically on the back of mice plagues, with birds capable of raising three or four young at a time, and breeding back-to-back as long as the mice numbers hold out. After the boom is the bust and it is common to find emaciated and starving Barn Owls in cold wet weather following big breeding events. They nest in hollows, caves and deserted buildings and one pair even tried to nest on the floor of a bird hide, when nesting sites were in short supply.

The other owl species likely to be seen in Adelaide is the more common Boobook Owl (or Southern Boobook), known to many just by the resonating 'boobook' or 'mopoke' call that can be heard at night throughout the leafy suburbs. There is a record of this species from the Arboretum, and it would undoubtedly occur in the Reserve as well, but few observers are there at night to hear the calls. These calls are territorial, oft-repeated and are sometimes answered by birds in neighbouring territories.

Boobooks roost in dense vegetation by day and, if smaller birds find them, their squawking and harassment can be a good way to locate them. Boobooks and other night birds have incredibly soft feathers and their silent flight does not give their prey much of a chance. Young birds have a very different cricket-like churring call – last summer we were treated to two young sitting on power lines in our street before dawn and feeding in our garden.



Tawny Frogmouth seen during Butterfly Walk 2012
Clint Garrett photo

The third night bird recorded at the Waite is the Tawny Frogmouth; a pair was seen on the rose arbour at Urrbrae House – not their usual habitat. They are best-known for their ability to mimic a dead stick by sitting on a horizontal branch often close to a tree trunk with a very upright, slim posture and their big yellow eyes almost closed. Frogmouths' cryptic mottled plumage, blending in with the background of branches, makes them hard to spot. Their call is a soft, repeated 'oom oom' and they feed on insects, spiders, reptiles, frogs, and small birds and mammals, with their wide-gaped bill. They are not usually seen in the suburbs, but do occur and breed in the Adelaide Hills. Both parent birds build their platform nest of sticks on a horizontal branch, incubate the eggs and feed the young

Penny Paton

OPEN GARDENS

Wirrapunga Gleeville Under The Hills

September 27th and 28th

Wirrapunga Indigenous Garden is open as part of the Australian Open Garden Scheme on the 27th and 28th September from 10am to 4.30pm each day. The garden is located at:

7 Williams Road, Aldgate.

The highlight of the event will be the showcasing of the incredibly beautiful orchids which once grew in abundance, throughout the area just 40 years ago. Forty five species of locally indigenous orchids now thrive at Wirrapunga. The opening dates have been chosen to specifically show off the most spectacular of them.

There will also be talks, food, plant sale, wildlife displays and an art display and sale. Funds raised go to the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered - FAME.



***Caladenia dilatata* Green Comb Spider Orchid**
Clint Garrett photo



1 Dashwood Road, Beaumont

Open: 10:00am to 4:30pm

Explore this historic garden where five generations of Clelands and descendants have lived since the 1850s. Despite its suburban setting the rambling garden retains a country feel. The venerable olive trees were the first imported into SA for oil production and the original wine and table grape vines still frame the productive vegetable garden and orchard. Other highlights include perennial borders, dry creek bed, huge Norfolk Island pine, and the Lemon-scented Gum planted to commemorate Peace in 1945.

Entry \$8

Plant sale and morning & afternoon teas

The Open Garden will support BioR, a not-for-profit organisation that aims to implement large-scale habitat restoration in the Mt Lofty Ranges. So visit the garden and support this important environmental cause.

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