

# FRIENDS of VULKATHUNHA-GAMMON RANGES NATIONAL PARK Inc.

NEWSLETTER No. 15



## PARK VISITS 2021

### Balcanoona and Weetootla

**16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> April and 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> September.** To register an interest please contact either Martin [m.caon56@gmail.com](mailto:m.caon56@gmail.com) or Roger a [roger\\_mathers@yahoo.com](mailto:roger_mathers@yahoo.com) (there is an underscore between roger and mathers)

### Oocaboolina

**30<sup>th</sup> April to 7<sup>th</sup> May and 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September.** To register an interest please contact Graeme – [gdoats@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gdoats@bigpond.net.au)

The September visits have been designed to overlap between Balcanoona/Weetootla and Oocaboolina to allow members to participate in all projects. A BBQ lunch is planned at Balcanoona on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September. Members wishing to work at both are able to travel to Oocaboolina after lunch on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

The Friends

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Will be held on

**FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021**

7.30 pm at the

**FULLARTON PARK COMMUNITY  
CENTRE (Parkview Room)**

**Guest Speaker – to be confirmed.**

## WELCOME

**Peta Conor and Michael Brown**

Peta and Michael responded to our online advert through SEEK Volunteers for the position of Minute Secretary due to former Secretary **Ray Hickman** not seeking re-election to the committee after 5 years at the 2020 AGM.

Peta has been appointed Acting Minute Secretary and Michael joined the Committee to fill a casual vacancy as a Committee person.

The Committee extends to you both a very warm welcome and we hope that your involvement will be long and happy.

## **Flinders Ranges Purple Spotted Gudgeon (*Mogurnda Clivicola*) - Fish Translocation**

**Martin Caon**

Rob Brandle (Senior Ecologist with the Department of Environment & Water) has obtained approval from the Co-Management Board of V-GRNP to translocate some of the Flinders Ranges *Mogurnda* (FRM or the fish) to another location in the Flinders Ranges to provide a refuge population for the species. Establishing another population of fish will reduce the risk that the Flinders Ranges *Mogurnda* will become extinct if an untoward event affects the Weetootla population. The reason that The Friends measure the water quality in the springs inhabited by fish is to gain an understanding of the requirements of the fish so that a potential insurance population at a refuge site can be established in a suitable body of water. Monitoring the fish also allows us to understand the status and health of the current fish population.

Approval has also been given to do some genetic analysis on the fish to determine whether the fish at Weetootla and Nepouie are from the same population. Some people think that the fish in Nepouie were placed there in the 1970s by someone who took fish from the Weetootla population. Rob Brandle has engaged Mark Lethbridge (from Flinders University) to assess habitats, develop a translocation plan, and manage the translocations as part of the translocation planning process. Ark will also collect some genetic material from the fish at the Weetootla, Yuwanhinya and Nepouie Springs. Rob Brandle has asked whether the Friends group would be interested in monitoring the translocated populations of FRM post establishment as an adjunct to the monitoring work we do in Vulkathunha. For this he would cover costs for equipment and travel, at least to 2023. I have responded that we would indeed be keen to be involved. After Rob and I have had some discussions, I will know more about what is proposed and provide further updates.

### **Flickr photo sharing account**

Chris Kirby has established a closed Flickr account for the Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park at this site: <https://www.flickr.com/groups/14710340@N24/>

This site is open for Friends members to share and display their favourite photos to our group. It is also visible to the public. To post your photos, you will first have to open your own Flickr account, post your photos there, “geotag” them. You then need to request membership to the Friends group page (Chris manages this), and then upload your photos to the Friends site. Instruction on how to do this is available on our website or from Chris ([chriskirbyreader@gmail.com](mailto:chriskirbyreader@gmail.com)). You are encouraged to add your photos as this will provide a useful body of photos to choose from for future newsletters, other publications, grant requests, Rangers to use.

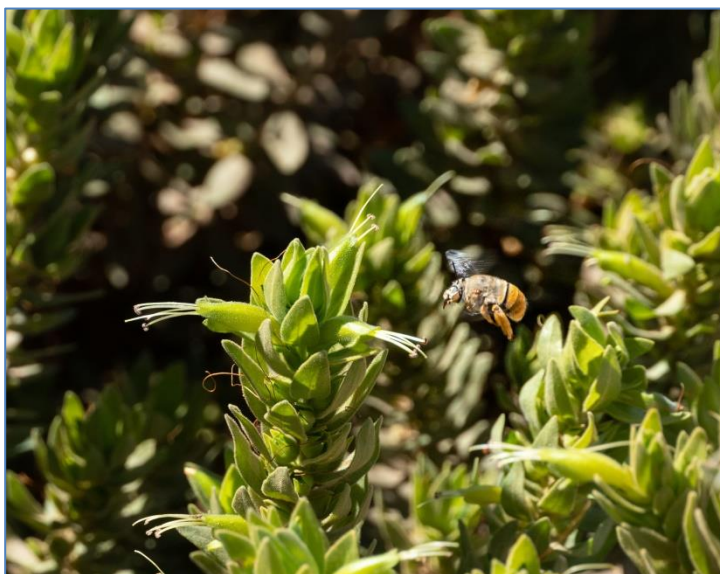
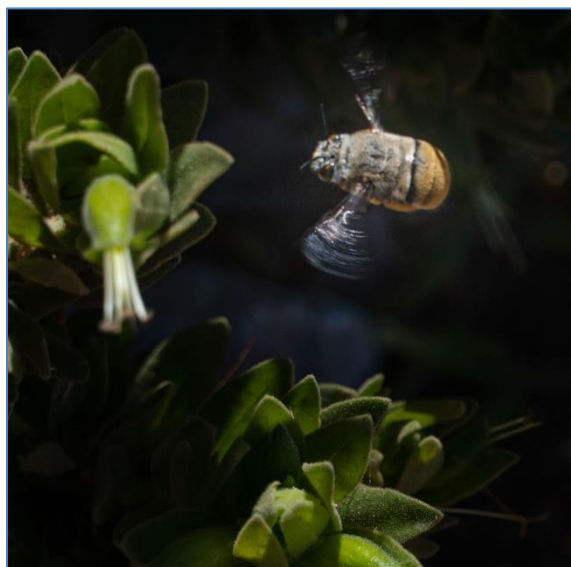
### **Friends – Tax Deductible Gift Fund**

The Friends Committee agreed some time ago that we should apply to have a tax deductible gift fund established and registered on the Register of Environmental Organisations (REO). Last year Ray Hickman and Graeme Oats drafted an application and also drafted amendments to the Friends Constitution. The amended Constitution was ratified at the AGM last March & registered with the SA Business and Consumer Services. (BCS)

The application and amended Constitution was lodge with the REO in May. We were later advised that some clauses of the Constitution were not acceptable. These have now been revised and submitted to the REO who have confirmed that the Constitution acceptable.

At the 2021 AGM a motion will be put to approve the amended Constitution, followed by again by a lodgement at the BCS

## Finding of the Native Bee (*Amegilla bombiformis*)



During our visit to Balcanoona in August we observed a number of these native bees busy at work in the Eremophila bushes planted in the re-vegetation area at Balcanoona. The ID of the bees caused interest, a few people thought that they might be the 'teddy bear bees' which it turned out to be correct, *Amegilla bomiformis*. Nicki De Preu submitted the sighting with 2 of my photos to iNaturalistAU as this bee has not been recorded in SA before, making it a significant sighting.

The nearest sighting listed on the map is in Melbourne and many sightings have been made in coastal NSW.

For your interest, so far 1,650 species of native bees have been discovered across the continent.

If you would like to view our record the link is <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/taxa/543954-Amegilla-bombiformis> and <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/observations/61187981> - the latter is Nicky De Preu's entry.

**Chris Kirby**

### **Landscapes SA Arid Lands – Grassroots Grant**

The SA Arid Lands Landscape Board\* has awarded the "Friends" \$4,041.00 as one of the successful "Grassroots Grants" applicants for 2020/21. We applied for funding for a project entitled 'Environmental monitoring and protection of habitat refuges in the Gammon Ranges'.

The money will be used to buy four motion-activated cameras (and their peripherals) which can be left in the field to record wildlife – for example Yellow-Foot Rock Wallaby. These will allow us to extend our monitoring efforts for the Park's YFRW population. In addition we will buy an underwater camera for fish filming; some "AquaspeX" water monitoring kits to measure calcium and nitrate in the water; and a backpack sprayer and weedicide to help tackle Horehound weed in the Park. We expect that this equipment will be deployed during our next visit to Vulkathunha in April 2021.

\*(SA Arid Lands Landscape Board is one of the SA Government's eight regional Boards that administer the Landscape South Australia Act 2019)



## **Activity Reports**

**Reports of works undertaken during the visit to the Park by the members during August can be found on the following links.**

**Oocaboolina: -**

<http://www.rayh.id.au/vulkathunha/documents/Oocareportaugust2020.pdf>

**Trip Leader and Weetootla: -**

<http://www.rayh.id.au/vulkathunha/documents/Tripleaderreportaugust2020.pdf>

**Balcanoona: -**

<http://www.rayh.id.au/vulkathunha/documents/Balrevegreportaugust2020.pdf>

## **BIRD OBSERVATIONS – AUGUST 2020**

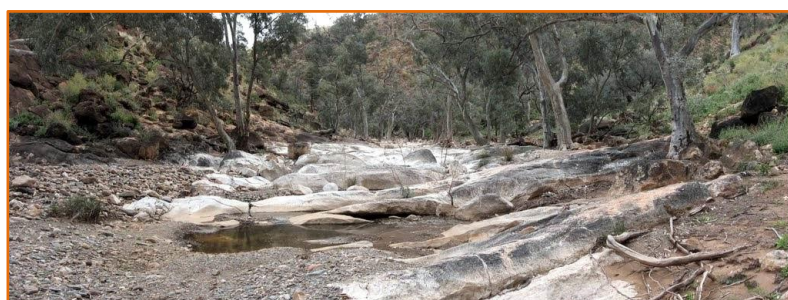
Despite the very dry conditions in August, there was a significant number of bird species to observe. The bird list compiled earlier in the year by Barbara Godfrey was updated by Chris Kirby and Nicki de Preu. Others contributed their sightings too. Most birds were sighted in the creek area below the homestead. The Zebra Finch populations appeared to be largely intact in the scrub on the corner section of the Mount Hopeless and Arkaroola roads. Birds, including wrens and other small birds were seen around the re-veg areas taking advantage of the water around the plants. The tank area above the Shearers Quarters on top of the hill was also fruitful, as a small soak has been created. Unfortunately, a small group of wild goats was also using the soak to their advantage. I saw and photographed a flock of Elegant Parrots here, both at sunrise and sunset on all days. There were no sightings of any marsupials in the homestead area, sadly there were many skeletons of wallabies scattered around, as testimony to the ravages of the drought.

Sightings of birds were also recorded while on sampling walks in Weetootla Creek and tributaries. Martin Caon was able to direct people to where he might have expected to see rock-wallabies while we were walking through the creek beds, some were seen, but the majority appear to have been wiped out. There were so many skeletal remains in the creek beds, it was heart-breaking. While there is permanent water in some of the springs the wallabies (and no doubt goats) had eaten all the available food. We were pleased to come across two echidnas when walking back from Bunyip Gorge and we saw recent diggings in the Balcanoona Creek area.

A list was made of the birds observed while walking on the new proposed hill track above the homestead, with the thought that this information could be useful for the rangers when compiling the information and leaflets for visitors. The proposed walk skirts up to a look-out with a view across the station buildings and out to the Gammon Ranges Road. The track returns to the homestead area via the creek and the Balcanoona Bluff Information area, on the Arkaroola Road.

**Chris Kirby.**

**Weetootla Creek – towards the spring**



### ***Bird Observations - Weetootla and Tributaries***

Bird Species	Comments
Australian Ringneck	Adults with juvenile
Australian Raven	
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Common
Variegated Fairy-wren	Male with females sighted regularly around Quarters
Tree Martin	Observed at hollow in Redgum
Little Corella	
Grey Shrike-thrush	
White-browed Babbler	
Striated Pardalote	
Willie Wagtail	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Pair observed flying overhead
Yellow-throated Miner	
White-plumed Honeyeater	
Peaceful Dove	
Weebill	
Emu	Adult male with 6 chicks
Singing Honeyeater	
Rufous Whistler	Male sighted
Mistletoe bird	
Pacific Black Duck	Took off from the Lovely Pool - no photos Heard calling at Nepouie - no photos
Common Bronzewing	
Dusky Woodswallow	
Chirruping Wedgebill	Heard calling - no photos

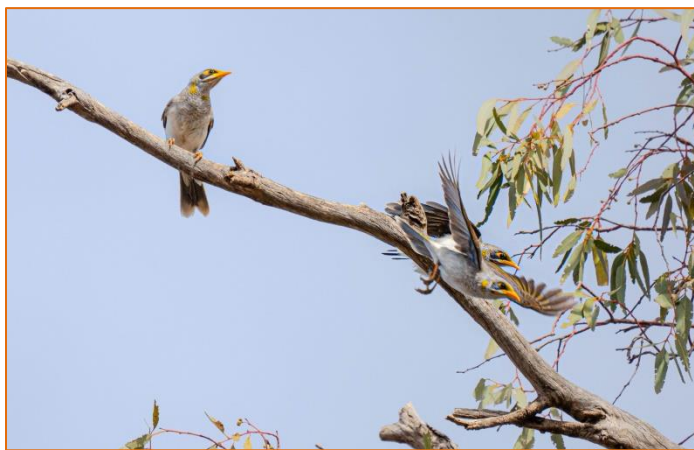


**Portion of the Homestead Re-vegetation Project at Balcanoona**

**Photo by Chris Kirby.**

**Bird observations on the route of proposed new walk.** Route of walk covers low hill to NNW of Balcanoona Park H/Q then down to Echo Bend and along the Balcanoona Creek. Total Species: 15

Bird Species	Comments
Australian Raven	Common Male with females sighted regularly around S Qtrs       Pair observed flying overhead
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	
Variegated Fairy-wren	
Grey Shrike-thrush	
White-browed Babbler	
Striated Pardalote	
Willie Wagtail	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	
Yellow-throated Miner	
White-plumed Honeyeater	
Zebra Finch	
Budgerigar	
Collared Sparrowhawk	
Crested Pigeon	
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	



**Photos by Chris Kirby.**

Top left – Yellow-plumed honeyeater

Top right – Yellow throated Miner and

Left – Variegated Fairy Wren

Right – Hill NNW of Homestead







**Echidna and Quandong fruit – photos by Chris Kirby**

