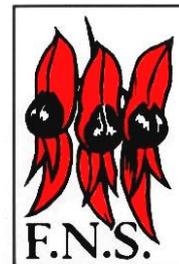


THE 131ST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FIELD NATURALISTS SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

July 2014 – June 2015

PRESENTED AT THE DEFERRED AGM ON THE 11TH NOVEMBER 2015



Ladies and Gentlemen,

In presenting the 131st Annual Report of the Field Naturalists Society of South Australia Incorporated (FNSSA), I would like to thank the FNSSA Council and the Society's membership for their support over the last year.

We must acknowledge the outgoing FNSSA Council for their contribution and show appreciation to those remaining and elected on the Council. Jenny Mealor as our long-time Secretary and Treasurer is admired for her dedication, time and effort to attend to details, her ability to organise and prioritise agenda items. She has been committed to managing our finances, and liaising with our bookkeeper, Tim Neill, who tracks our accounts received and payments made, offers advice, and provides monthly statements for Council. Jenny liaised with our auditor Kevin Osborn appointed from June 2013 for the management of both our General Account and the Lirabenda Endowment Fund (LEF). Graham Medlin is valued for his commitment and editorial skills in compiling our publication, *The South Australian Naturalist* (SAN) and for his liaising with LEF recipients to arrange SAN articles and monthly speakers and for his advice to deal with matters of importance. Appreciation is given to Bob Whatmough for his many years of effort as Membership Officer to contact members regarding membership renewals, liaising with new members, and for maintaining our website with WebCentral since December 2013. Colin Beer is acknowledged for his considerable contribution including his FNSSA representation on the Natural Resources Management Willunga Basin Champions' Group, and assistance with Society finances. The contribution by Russell Cook as our Vice President, Janet Pedler, Rona Sakko, and Kathleen Patitsas, who joined Council in March 2015, towards assisting Council matters, has been valuable.

We are appreciative that Colin Beer has continued as convener of the Lirabenda Endowment Fund. He chaired the selection meeting in January 2015 and presented a report to Council in February. Jenny Mealor again undertook the secretarial work to manage application information, receive, copy and distribute applications for assessment and correspond with applicants. When issues arose with applicants throughout the year, consultation and recommendations by Colin and Jenny aided Council's decisions. For 2015 we received 24 applications and were able to award 10 LEF Grants. We are very grateful to the Society members on the LEF panel of assessors, who assisted with the process and volunteered to liaise with successful applicants. This panel consisted of Colin Beer, Bob Sharrad, Graham Medlin, Helen Vonow, and Greg Kirby with Peter Matejcic's attendance as President in an ex officio capacity, also assessing the applications. The Lirabenda Endowment Fund has now been in existence for nearly 11 years and our Grants have supported numerous research projects by providing much-needed funds to assist with the collection of data and the reporting of many aspects of the South Australia's natural environment. In accordance with the 2013 LEF Roles and Responsibilities Guidelines a LEF sub-committee met in August 2014 to oversee LEF investments and made recommendations to Council regarding January 2015 grant allocations.

Special mention needs to be given to Joan and Colin Beer for their continued effort, and dedication, organising regular working bees at Manning Reserve and initiative in making a successful application to the Onkaparinga Council Community Grants Scheme for the removal of Olives. Bob Whatmough's regular contribution at Manning Reserve working bees and assistance from others to remove Olives and Boneseed needs acknowledging. The time and effort by many other FNSSA members visiting our properties and behind the scenes has been invaluable. As our Society representative I continued as our delegate to the Conservation Council of South Australia (CCSA) attending meetings and functions.

COUNCIL:

Council held 11 monthly meetings between July 2014 and June 2015. Elected Council Office Bearers last October 2014 include: Peter Matejcic (President), Russell Cook (Vice President), Jenny Mealor (Secretary and Treasurer), Robert Whatmough (Membership Officer and Webmaster), and Graham Medlin (Editor). Other Council members include: Colin Beer, Janet Pedler and Rona Sakko. Two unfilled vacancies remained on Council until Kathleen Patitsas was co-opted in March 2015.

Achievements and events over the last year from July 2014 to June 2015 included:

- Ratification in October of our Society's Guidelines (old By-laws) commenced in March, which now includes details of The Lirabenda Endowment Fund and matches our current Constitution.
- Discussions around a Vision and Action Plan for FNSSA were commenced and have been ongoing since November 2014.
- A review of Council Roles and Responsibilities since December 2014.
- A review of streamlining Council business and providing a list of correspondence and of financial matters in preparation for future meetings with a suggestion that unless there be urgent matters to discuss, reports on Properties and from the Editor might be given at alternate meetings.
- A social gathering for Council members and partners was organised for Monday 22nd June at the Hackney Hotel.
- The purchase of additional 10 Nature Conservation medallions by a local supplier Allan Olson Ltd. Pty. at Forestville SA, which was completed this September 2014 along with 50 additional FNSSA badges.
- Discussions to develop Guidelines for Supporting Projects using our Society's general surplus funds.
- Concluding the Manning Reserve incident with a Report on Manning Reserve Kangaroo Culling including recommendations by Peter Matejcic in September 2014.
- Acceptance of the LEF Finance committee report in August 2014.
- Science Alive arrangements and participation in the 3-day event during August 2014.
- Committing the Society to a further \$24,000 3-year ARC funded Pygmy Bluetongue project with Flinders University.
- Allocating \$600 toward the Adelaide Fungal Study Group request in February to give \$600 financial assistance to student members of the AFSG to enable them to attend the workshop which the AFSG organizes each year.
- In February committing to a policy for FNSSA visits onto private land that all clubs be asked to seek permission and notify landowners of intended visits as soon as programs are confirmed so that landowners have a contact to inform of any special arrangements, particularly during hot weather and fire ban times. Club will be asked to form details of their own "hot weather" plans.
- Pat Church died on 15th January. She had been a very active and respected member of the Society. Her funeral was well-attended and several interesting and informative eulogies were given.
- Peter Matejcic visited the Millicent Field Naturalists in the South East of SA over three days in mid-April 2015, and gave an evening presentation on the topic of 'Biodiversity Data Contributions' Field Naturalists can make to the DEWNR and Atlas of Living Australia database records. His visit also included a visit to Nicholls Reserve and Carpenter Rocks with 18 others. A report was provided to Council on improving networks and joint events between Adelaide and the South East members, who are active and committed to local environmental issues and other similar organisations.
- The Junior Field Naturalists were provided with \$1,000 towards approximately 70 JFN Membership Folders (one per family) that Rona Sakko and her committee have organised.
- The Nature Conservation Award for 2014 was awarded to DEWNR field survey biologist David Armstrong. As he was unable to be present at the October 2014 meeting, the medal which goes with the award was accepted by Dr Tony Robinson on his behalf. David's enthusiasm for his work as a field biologist comes out in his accounts of survey work from the arid Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands and Sandy Desert Surveys to the eradication of feral cats on Macquarie Island, recounted in 'The Life and Times of a Field Biologist' in *The South Australian Naturalist*, Vol. 88, No. 2, July–December 2014, pp. 69–75.

FINANCES:

The present financial position of the Society remains sound and conservative with a mix of savings, fixed-rate term deposits and income-raising shares with tax credits in the portfolio aimed at long-term sustainability. This is needed given fluctuations in Australia's economic environment and diminished government grants to environmental organisations similar to ourselves and growing demands on our expenses. The Society is a not-for-profit organisation and recognises balancing spending on Society's needs and projects with long-term savings.



MEMBERSHIP:

As at 30th June 2015 our total membership was 157 up 15 from 142 members in the previous year. Membership was made up of the following categories:

- 74 Ordinary members and 15 Country members,
- 2 Honorary members and 23 Life members,
- 21 Concessional Pensioner and 8 Student members and
- 4 Affiliations.

CLUBS:

The **Botany Club** has 12 active members with an average attendance at excursions being eight; in addition there are usually one or two visitors. Excursions are held nine times a year to both privately-owned reserves or to conservation parks. Excursions are usually led by members except when private land is visited when the owner escorts the group pointing out plants of particular interest. Among sites visited this year were Goolwa Golf course and an old cemetery, Para Wirra C.P., Cox Scrub C.P., Roachdale Reserve owned by the National Trust of SA, Cromer C.P., Walter Newell Reserve a Bushcare site in Ferguson Road, Goolwa and two privately owned properties. Plant lists are made which can then be compared with lists made in the past. The club has in its possession lists consolidated by Gill Briggs and acquired from her family after her death. Meetings are held when needed at North Lodge in the Botanic Gardens.

The **Adelaide Fungal Studies Group** conducted eight forays and had four meetings from 1st July 2014 to 30th June 2015. Meetings are held at the State Herbarium of SA. Average attendance at forays was 15, and 16 at meetings. Forays in 2014 were to Kuitpo Forest, Cromer C.P., Scott Creek C.P. and Deep Creek C.P. In addition, a three-day workshop in July was conducted in Deep Creek C.P. In 2015 the first usual and popular foray was to Mount Lofty Botanic Garden followed by lunch at the Crafers Hotel, kindly organised by Jenny Mealor and Yvonne Maher. This was followed by AFSG's annual foray to Belair National Park for the Junior Field Naturalists (JFN). During this very enjoyable event the AFSG were impressed by the enthusiasm and interest of the juniors and their parents. Further forays were to Spring Mount C.P., Kuitpo Forest and Arbury Park Outdoor Education Centre. Leaders of forays were Pam Catchside and Thelma Bridle, with others helping at the foray for the JFN. Other events in which the AFSG were involved included the Deep Creek Open Day in September 2014 which Thelma Bridle attended and Science Week in August 2014. A poster on Fungi of the Mount Lofty Ranges in conjunction with the Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board was finally completed and published. The final meeting for 2014 was popular with nine members presenting images of fungi seen during the fungal season of 2014. At the first meeting in 2015, six members presented talks on their projects which ranged from the family Geoglossaceae in Southern Australia, Kangaroo Island *Amanitas*, screening fungi for antibiotics, nematode-eating fungi, 'caffeinated fungi!' and the genus *Agaricus*. The AFSG wish to thank all those who participated on forays and those who attended meetings, valuing their company, participation and obvious enjoyment. The AFSG are grateful to the FNSSA for their continued support, in particular the provision of scholarships to help students attend the annual workshop. Thank you to Pam Catchside and Thelma Bridle for providing a report on events.

The **Mammal Club** met on the second Monday of each month from February to December. Meetings were chaired by Peter Matejcic, assisted by Graham Medlin as Records Officer and Treasurer. Kathleen Patitsas also assisted Peter with the Minutes. Membership increased from 11 to 12. The Mammal Club is indebted to the Conservation Council of South Australia for use of their rooms in Franklin Street, Adelaide, for meetings from February to November 2014, partly held at their premises at 157 Franklin St, Adelaide during 2014 and at 'The Joinery', 111 Franklin St, in 2015. The December 2014 meeting was a social gathering held at 'The Brompton Hotel' attended by 10 members and friends. Graham Medlin spent several meetings describing how to analyse Anabat calls recorded during field trips. During the 2014 BioBlitz program organised by Philip Roetman from UniSA supporting the 'Discovery Circle' and 'Citizen Science' programs, Peter participated at the Salisbury Harry Bowey Reserve on two days, while both Graham and Peter participated on the Oaklands Park Estate Wetlands program during August 2014. While average attendance at monthly meetings was low, participation on field trips continued to be high. All surveys were a combined effort from members and friends of the Mammal Club and the SA Herpetology Group. Led by Peter Matejcic, the campout survey over the Labor Day long-weekend from October 4–6, 2014, was held at the Winninowie Conservation Park, on the coastline, south of Port Augusta. The survey was attended by 10 participants. The Easter survey during April 2015 was held at Eaglehawk Waterhole, near Francis, in the South East of South Australia. This habitat restoration reserve and Heritage Agreement property, owned by the Nature Glenelg Trust, was trapped at 3 sites and nearby Geegeela C.P. surveyed for 4 sites. The survey was attended by more than 40 participants, including people from the local region and Victoria. The trip was co-led by Peter Matejcic and Bryan Hayward. Spotlighting was undertaken and the Anabat was used to record bat echolocation calls for later analysis. An April 2015 visit to a privately owned Truro Farm on the eastern foothills of the Mount Lofty Ranges was made by Peter to identify fauna present. Peter and Graham attended the three-day event Science Week in August 2014. During May 2015 Peter participated in Threatened Species Assessment Workshops for mammal species organised by DEWNR's Sharon Gillam. In March 2015, Peter Matejcic and Graham Medlin attended a talk by Katherine Moseby on the translocation of the Western Quoll to the Flinders Ranges.

PUBLICATIONS:

Two issues of *The South Australian Naturalist* (SAN) Volume 88, No. 2 July–December 2014 and Volume 89, No. 1 January–June 2015 were published during the financial year. The RMIT Informit e-Library continues making the volumes of ‘The South Australian Naturalist’, with contents and abstracts available for viewing since July-December 2006. Digital scanning of back SAN issues remains completed for Volumes 8 to 23.

Our publication on properties remains on-hold near the final stages of editing and will be completed when time becomes available.

PROPERTIES:

Manning Reserve has been formally managed by Joan and Colin Beer representing the Society and they have submitted regular reports. Weeding days were held monthly with an annual total of 184 hours worked. With up to five people attending less prevalent weeds have been tackled; including Disa, Watsonia and Euphorbia. Boneseed and Olives are being sought out and other weeds treated on an opportunistic basis. The old signs that were relocated when the new entrance signs were installed are in a sorry state needing to be removed or if possible repainted. Colin identified nesting boxes to be removed and this was recently undertaken in September 2015. Fences need to be assessed for replacement or repair given that kangaroos regularly create new holes. “NO DOGS” signs have been purchased and need installing on both gates to remind irresponsible dog owners of their responsibilities and to resolve this identified problem. An initiative by Joan and Colin was to submit an application for a City of Onkaparinga Council Community Grant. This has been successful in obtaining \$3,932 to remove Olives. Tony Paterson has been contacted to do this work which must be completed in 12 months. Bridal Creeper needs attention and information from the Bush Management Advisor is being undertaken. Interest in the reserve by the general public is evident when bushwalkers, bird watchers, and members of Native Orchid Society have been seen when working bees were held. This included the offer of assistance to remove woody weeds by a member of the public.

Forest Range Reserve had further contracted removal of Blackberry and Broom undertaken by Tony Paterson with *Better Bushland P/L* in May 2015 for \$2,200. Further Society General Funds will be needed to continue the management of woody weed regrowth. No further HAG funding has been available during the July 2014 – June 2015 period. Tracks and the entrance were slashed and maintained to reduce fire hazards. Peter Matejcic remains the Society representative overseeing management and reporting on Forest Range Reserve.

Tookayerta Marsh was totally burnt out accidentally in October 2014 by an adjacent landowner. Since the fire, Peter Matejcic has represented the Society managing the reserve and convening a Tookayerta Marsh Subcommittee with Graham Medlin and Janet Pedler to oversee the priorities for repairs to fencing and other issues. The status of access to our property via Bonds Road has still not been resolved with the Alexandrina Council. Monitoring the regeneration and biodiversity returning to Tookayerta Marsh after the fire is an ongoing requirement with the Society working with Julie Schofield, Rebecca Duffield and John Gitsham, as the CCSA Emu Fairywren Fleurieu Swamps Project team with the *Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Association Inc.* GWLAP have provided two amounts of \$1,000 for post-fire weed management of Blackberry and Thistles. Photopoints and monitoring sites have been established and commenced. A foot track through the property has been identified for slashing. Council is soon to sign off on an insurance settlement for 60% replacement costs of the burnt fencing. It has taken considerable time for the neighbour who caused the fire, to submit a public liability claim and a Society’s ‘Letter of Demand’ to be processed by his insurance company.

The shortfall is due to the insurance company claiming depreciation for a 14 year-old fence with a life of approximately 35 years. Advice about the best options has been received from another insurance company at this time. They recommend that Council sign off and meet part of the outstanding amount to avoid any further delay. Council has, during 2015, reviewed its insurance portfolio to include replacement of fencing and improved cover for assets.

Nicholls Reserve at Carpenter Rocks remains a concern for Council, being the least visited. In November 2014 Peter Matejcic visited the reserve and during March 2015, Peter met with Millicent and Mount Gambier Field Naturalists over three days. Nicholls Reserve was visited with 17 participants and the management of weeds including the increasing impact of Coastal Wattle and discarded rubbish on the reserve was discussed. Peter believes the management of Nicholls Reserve is best undertaken by interested locals. During late 2014 the adjacent Dickens Heritage Property was sold and attached to enlarging the adjacent Carpenter Rocks C.P. Nicholls Reserve and adjacent properties are now part of a ZoosSA and SA Museum study on the Striped Snake-lizard (*Delma impar*) within the Carpenter Rocks region.

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The Society wishes to thank the South Australian Museum via Arts SA for allowing us to hire the Royal Society Room at the Science Centre for our monthly Wednesday meetings and for providing shelf space for our library. Thank you to the Conservation Council of South Australia for generously allowing us to use and hold our monthly Wednesday Council and Monday Mammal Club meetings at their Franklin Street premises.

CONCLUSION:

Lirabenda Endowment Fund recipients and other speakers continued to provide stimulating talks each month on a range of environmental research topics and projects. Dr Steve Lapidge’s excellent talk at the March 2015 meeting on ‘*The future of invasive species management*’ was well-attended. While attendance by Society members at monthly meetings is remains low, these meetings are an important gathering for interaction between members, presenters and visitors and updating everyone about issues, clubs and events.

Strength within the Society can be seen in Club activities, excursions and surveys with members working together to share their passions and expertise. Sponsoring projects, maintaining partnerships and networks with other organisations and interested individuals has been essential so that the Society shows an active and public presence and voice.

Membership on Council needs to be urgently addressed. Unfilled vacancies remain an issue. Council needs to work together harmoniously as a team, positively supporting and assisting roles and responsibilities to achieve goals. A handful of Council members are dedicated to undertaking the majority of current roles and responsibilities and core business for the Society and the same dedicated individuals cannot meet any new priorities, further Society expectations or commitments without the addition of new members on Council. As in my previous three annual reports I stress the necessity of attracting, electing and co-opting new members onto Council at our AGM and throughout the year to fill vacancies. The Society needs to encourage FNSSA members to nominate and positively assist the work of Council in the years ahead.

Thank you to all Society members and their clubs who have worked as a team to support the needs of the Field Naturalists Society of South Australia.

I look forward to assisting the work of the FNSSA in the years ahead.

Peter Matejci,
President July 2014–June 2015.
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