

Friends of the Porongurup Range

CITIZEN SCIENCE REPORT

by Loxley Fedec

Meeting 17th May 2018



Porongurup BioBlitz 27th & 28th April 2018 Report

Thanks to funding by the State Natural Resource Management 2015 Community Action Grant the BioBlitz event was able to be held as part of the Gondwanan Relictual Moist Refugia Relictual Species project. With further thanks to the South Coast Natural Resource Management 2018 Increasing Capacity Small Grant we were also able to contribute funding towards the Wetland Survey initiated by and in collaboration with Greenskills. Thanks to Basil Schur from Greenskills for arranging the Wetland Survey and to Letisha Newman from SCNRM for help with an eleventh hour approval for the extra funding.

The weather was just perfect for most of the BioBlitz with just a little drizzle early on the Friday. It did not stop the itinerary at all and the weekend proceeded as planned without anyone getting lost or injured. Fantastic!

There was around 60 or more people registered for the entire event with around 30-35 for each activity. Most people participated in more than one activity with a few who even participated in all of them. There was a total of 151 observations including 71 species that were uploaded to iNaturalist during the weekend event. Many of the photos taken have not yet been uploaded to iNat and many more observations were not recorded. This was disappointing given the main objective of a BioBlitz was to observe and record our Biodiversity on iNaturalist but it seemed it was a new concept to many and will need time to develop. It was however a significant overall contribution to the iNat Porongurup Biodiversity project which has gone from 590 observations from 260 species in February this year to now

782 observations from 329 species. Atlas of Living Australia says we have 1710 described species (& many more yet undescribed) in the Porongurup so although there is still a long way to go we are making good progress.

A short welcome by our chairperson Judy McKinnon and an introduction workshop to iNaturalist by Citizen Science and BioBlitz co-ordinator Loxley Fedec was held and it was pleasing that many of those in attendance had already familiarised themselves with the iNaturalist and FrogID apps.

Thanks to Peter Luscombe for kicking off the activities with his talk about Local Flora – fire and ferals. It was very interesting to hear the survival strategies plants use during tough times.



LEFT: The 'reccie' trip for the Kaimerndyip leg of the Wetland Survey was in this amazing Unimog beast of a vehicle owned and kindly chauffeured by Maggie's friends and visitors Jim & Julie Curtin. They also took some amazing drone footage of both Wetland Survey sites and have allowed us to use it in our efforts to create awareness of the Porongurup.



RIGHT: This shot of Kaimerndyip Lake was taken by the Curtin's drone and shows a significant number of 'drowned' trees on the lake edge resulting from much wetter periods in the past.

Bird expert, photographer & author Michael Morcombe then led a large group of people on an informal bird walk at Twin Creeks that ended up being more an iNat excursion with plants, bugs and critters – & birds - all in the mix.



The Spider Stalk activity later that Friday evening was well attended with 35 or more people. We were on a bit of a quest to spot a male specimen of the Bertmanius tumidus spider which our Celebrity Scientist guide Dr Mark Harvey would so dearly have loved us to find. Unfortunately fame was not to be ours on the night but Mark was as always a fantastic guide and full of information which was soaked up with relish – especially by the more serious young academics among us. We had a little scout around the downhill area from Waddy’s Hut before heading up along the Wansbrough Walk Trail. Not a huge number of spiders were out on the night but we still captured some good observations which was great. Many many thanks to Dr Mark Harvey who always draws a crowd and makes spiders seem so cute and cuddly.

BELOW: A gravid Ticking Frog belly up – Geocrinia leai – from near Waddys Hut

The dry weather was a major handicap for the planned featured activity of surveying Ticking Frogs (Geocrinia leai) unfortunately with only 3 ticking frogs being seen – all near Waddy’s Hut during Spider Stalking. Sadly, not a single croak was heard anywhere else from a Ticking Frog! This also meant that our planned pledge to upload sound files to the FrogID survey were very limited. Monitoring Ticking Frogs still remains however as a worthy ongoing survey activity and the FrogID app is a



great tool on which to do it since no pictures are required. We should push forward with monitoring this species throughout our area but particularly within the identified transect. Those who came along to the Frog Walk still felt it was worthwhile and all gave positive feedback. Dr Dale Roberts was amazing as usual with his knowledge and anecdotal stories – especially the one about the Neobatrachus Frog who was so deep in aestivation and had sat on Dales desk for 2 years with just an occasional toss here and there to see if it could be stirred. Eventually Dale splashed/immersed it with water and incredibly it awoke! Our sincere thanks to Dale for generously volunteering his time once again.



The Wetland Survey held on the Saturday morning was surprising for many of us. The presentation and organisation by Geraldine & Steve Janicke was superb and a rare opportunity to increase our awareness and appreciation for the important role wetlands play in our environment. Many thanks to the Janickes for the insight.

Freshwater Wetland at Nunarrup Lagoon yielded an enormous volume of creatures and we were very industrious in separating them all out and identifying them – well, at least Geraldine knew what we were looking at!

The



RIGHT: 4 baby sygnets with the mother Swan on the lagoon



The Kaimerndyip Lake is a very large lake with a good amount of water in it. Entirely different to Nunarrup we were met with a great opportunity to see how the 2 very different systems compared. Interestingly, the super saline Kaimerndyip still supported a surprising number of tiny creatures. Although fewer in variety and less in number it was absolutely amazing that this harsh environment could support any life at all. It just goes to show that all environments have a role to play. See a more detailed inventory of Wetland species which has been included at the end of this report.

Sunday saw the participants roll in to Twin Creeks Silver Shed once again. Lucia chaired a great 'de-brief' chat about why we were doing the BioBlitz and how we can better do it in the future. She also spoke about Twin Creeks and some of the other activities that go on there. Many thanks to Lucia. Liz Tanner from SCNRM, Kath Gray from the Albany Wildflower Society & Herbarium and Deon Utber from DCBA were also in attendance and their contribution to the discussion was fantastic. Thankyou to them all. A simple sausage sizzle and salads saw the event windup by about 1pm.

IDENTIFICATIONS

There are still quite a few observations that need identifying. Some species like reptiles and insects are readily identified by the iNat community but in reality it is our own community of specialists who are best informed to identify our own local species – especially plants. Please contribute and share what you know to build integrity within our iNat projects.

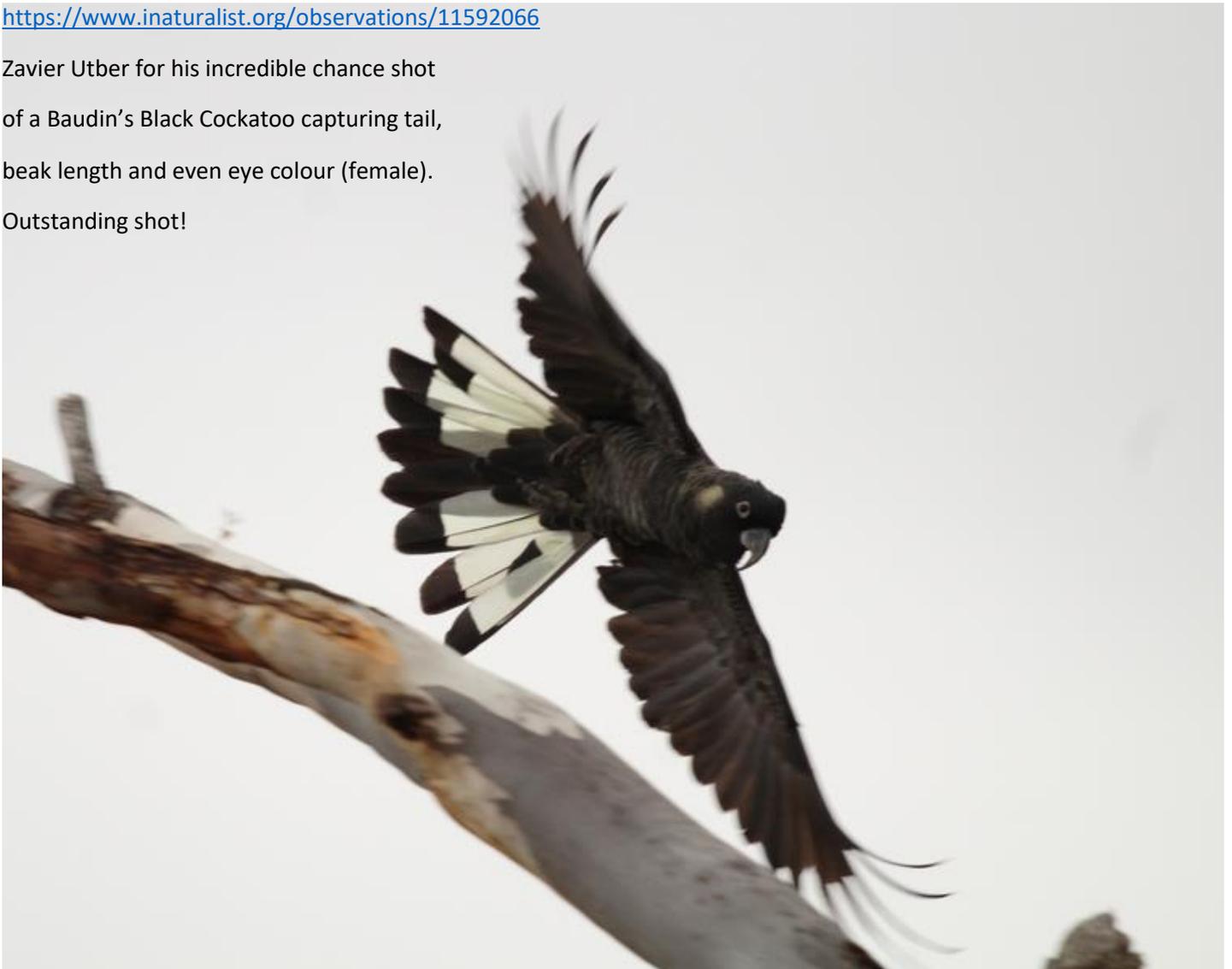
Go to iNaturalist web page and click on 'IDENTIFY' at the top of the page to open a list of observations needing identification. Filter according to place, project, date and your abilities or follow this link. https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/identify?project_id=14842

The photo competition was judged by Bo Janmaat and Michael Morcombe. It was a challenge for both of them to accomplish this using just a computer & an iPad but they rose to it and did a great job. Our thanks to Michael and Bo.

BEST PICTURE WINNER:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/11592066>

Zavier Utber for his incredible chance shot of a Baudin's Black Cockatoo capturing tail, beak length and even eye colour (female). Outstanding shot!



BEST PICTURE RUNNER-UP: Sharon Rost for her image of the very obliging Proshermacha spider in its burrow on the left. Several images of this fantastic subject had been put up on iNat but the judges felt Sharon's was the best capture.

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/11601184>



MOST UNUSUAL OBSERVATION:

LEFT: Katie Harris' pseudoscorpion near Waddy's Hut

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/11577441>

RUNNER-UP MOST UNUSUAL:

RIGHT: Kath Gray's Banded Garden Spider - *Argiope trifasciata*



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/11593613>

MOST OBSERVATIONS was easily won by Kath Gray with an incredible 61 not only taken but also uploaded in just 3 days as well as personally attending ALL activities. Well done Kath. Your contribution is very much appreciated.

RUNNER-UP MOST OBSERVATIONS was won by Katie Harris with 19. Good effort Kat

It was recognised that 3 of the 4 winning pictures were in fact invertebrates! Although there was also some nice flora pics it had been an exceptionally dry autumn so there was not a lot blooming during the actual event. There were no mammals and few bird pics to choose from but luckily the invertebrates were well represented.

*Can anybody ID Kath Gray pics to species this *Styphelia* (left) or maybe this *Leucopogon* (right)*

If so can you please follow the link provided to enter your ID.



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/11589545>



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/11589097>