



SEGMENTS

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"FIVE STAR" TREKKING THE NEPALESE WAY

By Kylie Hyde

A great sense of achievement is achieved when you reach your trekking destination after enduring a variety of conditions while carrying everything that you require on your back. A completely different sense of achievement was gained while trekking, in what I would describe were "five star" circumstances, in the Annapurna region of Nepal. Imagine a group of three people trekking through the Gammon Ranges with 13 people there to carry equipment, cook and establish camp each day – this is, quite unexpectedly, what we were treated to on a fourteen day trek in Nepal last year.

Each day would commence with a cup of hot tea and a bowl of hot washing water being delivered to your tent. Following packing your bags, breakfast consisting of porridge, boiled eggs, crepes and toast would be served, while the tents were taken down and camp was packed up ready for the day ahead. With only thongs on their feet, the porters and kitchen hands would run off down the track, carrying incredible loads in large cane baskets via a strap around their foreheads. It would be a rare day when we would reach the destination before them and the only thing that we were required to carry was our day pack.

The views were splendid and changing every day from farmed

slopes to Rhododendron forests, as we edged closer to the mountains. The walking was not as difficult as I had envisaged until we reached the higher altitudes (4,000 m), steeper inclines and the "jungle". It was during these times that we were evermore grateful for our 13 helpers and our walking sticks. I found one of the most difficult aspects of the trek to be the duration of the trek, as we did not have a rest day until Day 7. Unbelievably, the rest day included an optional ten hour return walk to a lake at the highest altitudes of the trek when even most of our required days trekking were a maximum of six hours! Instead I took the opportunity to marvel at the magical views of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri Ranges which surrounded our secluded camp site.

The most frustrating part of the trek was only being able to communicate by smiling and hand language with the majority of our crew. Our guide, Mingma, was the only exception who could speak English quite fluently as he has been to many English lessons during the trekking off season. The days were filled with great conversations as Mingma taught us about Nepal while we also shared many stories about Australia.

It is possible to trek in Nepal without the aid of a trekking company, however, I would highly recommend

it due to the “added value” in experiencing and learning about Nepal and its people. I also remained illness free throughout the trek which I attribute to the thoroughness of our amazing cook – who managed to

bake us a cake on our final night of the trek. I would encourage anyone who loves trekking to go to Nepal and be spoilt by bathing in hot springs, eating three course dinners (in a dining tent with the tables and

chairs that they carried), having hot water bottles placed in your sleeping bag at night while making life long friends and seeing some of the best mountain ranges in the world.

YOUR TURN TO BAT?

Want to find out how to identify our bat species from their emitted signals?

Seminar at 1 Dale Rd Eden Hills on Sunday 14th April at 5.00pm to learn how to operate and interpret our Anabat System.



This seminar is a cooperative effort between S.E.G. and the Mammal Club.

RSVP Trent Porter 8278 9078 or grevillia@ozemail.com.au

SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR ALL YOU TRAVELLERS

In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery: *You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried daily except Thursday.*

Similarly, from the Soviet Weekly: *There will be a Moscow Exhibition of Arts by 15,000 Soviet Republic painters and sculptors. These were executed over the past two years.*

GAMMON RANGES PROJECT

ANNUAL SUMMARY

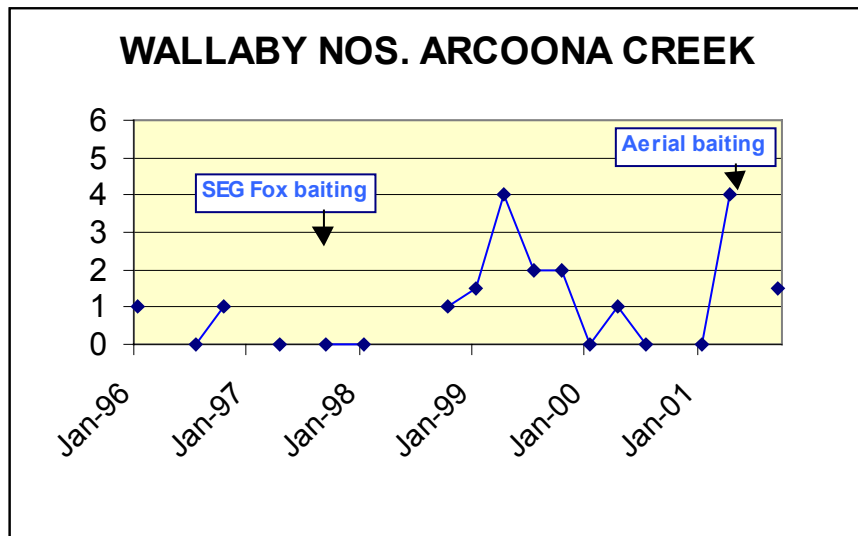
The Gammon Ranges Project has been divided into a number of separate projects and we present here a summary of some of the projects for the last twelve months.

FOXES & ROCK-WALLABIES

Peter Bird

Fox baiting conducted by SEG over the last 5 years took a quantum leap in 2001 with the introduction by NPWS of aerial baiting throughout the entire Gammon Ranges National Park. In one fell swoop the baited area increased several thousand fold. At the same time GRaSPers were encouraged to continue with quarterly ground baiting to provide further protection for the Arcoona Creek population of Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies...so we did.

And how have the wallabies responded? The graph shows quarterly wallaby counts along "Wallaby" and "Evasive" Creek valleys since 1996. Early promise of recovery was dashed by early 2000 as sightings crashed back to zero. Last year however, numbers began to creep up once more. Hopefully continued park-wide baiting will see the wallabies recover to the point where GRaSPers will soon be kicking them out of the way as they walk up Arcoona Creek.



Future SEG macroinvertebrate sampling

The Scientific Expedition Group (SEG) have been sampling macroinvertebrates from the Gammon Ranges for over 10 years. Sampling is opportunistic and there appears to be no real objective. If sampling is to continue then the Group must decide exactly what it is they want to gain or achieve. Here are some suggestions:

1. Monitor to assess changes:

Macroinvertebrates are commonly used as indicators of changes in water quality. The samples need to be processed promptly, then if there is a problem it can be addressed. However, a number of questions should be considered: Is the Group willing to address problems if they arise? Who will the Group give the information to if a problem is detected? How reliable is the information?

2. Set up a scientific study:

This may be out of the scope for SEG work, nevertheless it is a suggestion worth considering:

A study could be set up that measures the assemblage of macroinvertebrate species and their relationships to habitat characteristics (by measuring habitat variables, such as impact from grazing, turbidity, salinity, depth, temperature, flow rate, etc.). This could be done by volunteers or perhaps an honours student. Once relationships are established then hypotheses can be formed and tested. For example, the initial information may suggest that the impact of grazing at the waters edge is influencing the composition of the macroinvertebrate assemblage, therefore a study can be set up to test this theory. If further study proves that damage created by goats is having a negative impact on the macroinvertebrate assemblage (and hence water quality, biodiversity, etc.) then this can be used as weight to push for increased management of the goat problem in the area.

3. An educational program:

The SEG may consider using the macroinvertebrate component of their existing activities as an educational program to give members an opportunity to learn more about macroinvertebrates. The sampling results could be included in the Waterwatch database if collection (including water quality information) is consistent with their methods. This could be the most feasible suggestion, and the macroinvertebrate report (produced last year) goes some way towards addressing this.

You may have other ideas. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please call me. I would also be happy to take part in a meeting that specifically discusses this issue.

Scotte Wedderburn

ph. 8377 5249 (h) or 8463 6941 (w)

Report on the operation of hydrology monitoring for 2001

Graham Blair

Geographic Perspective

The rainfall-monitoring network established and operated by SEG in the Gammon Ranges provides useful data on rainfall quantity, distribution and intensity at various elevations within an arid area for which, until projects such as the GRASP occurred, very little data existed within South Australia.

Of great significance however, does the role the SEG rainfall-monitoring network plays in a larger network of rainfall monitoring stretching west east across the Flinders Ranges comprising:

- a rain gauge west of Leigh Creek at Aroona dam operated by DWR;
- four gauges distributed across catchments to the east of Leigh Creek operated by Department for Water Resources;
- four rain gauges operated by SEG within the Gammon Ranges covering the higher altitudes of the ranges; and
- a gauge, recently installed by the Bureau of Meteorology at the Gammon Ranges National Park head quarters, east of

the ranges. A network providing such broad distribution of rain gauges within an arid area is certainly unique within South Australia, and possibly throughout Australia.

Instrumentation

Rainfall

During 2001 the operation of the 4 rain gauges within the Gammon Ranges was successful. This success can be directly attributed to the current system of dual loggers at each site. Of the two loggers at each site, one is a simple device requiring changeover every three months, while the other is a complex device deployed permanently and requiring annual battery changeover and data retrieval. Considering the remote location of the network, the dual logger approach has paid off. Firstly it provides greater redundancy to offset equipment failure. It also compliments the volunteer nature of the program whereby a simple logger exchange is all that is required for the frequent retrieval visits, with the more complex backup equipment being left for an annual maintenance visit.

For example, a failure occurred with one of the exclusion zone loggers during an intense rainstorm during January 2001, however no data was lost because the second logger remained operational.

Minor maintenance is required at some of the sites to keep the drainage-tubing etc. in good condition. Calibration checks are made at all sites at least once a year. Currently, all the gauges appear to be operating with acceptable accuracy.

Water level

2001 resulted in no data loss in collecting water level data. Once again this was directly attributed to having a backup logger. The data indicated two flow events occurred during the first 7 months of 2001. A brief event occurred during January 2001. A larger event followed in June 2001, sufficiently recharging the sub surface storage to the extent a small surface flow was still present along much of length of Arcoona Creek a month later.

Conductivity

Monitoring of electrical conductivity at the stream flow gauge site was not successful during 2001. The equipment is the most recent of all the monitoring equipment installed and requires further investigation and possible configuration modification to achieve successful operation. On future data retrieval visits, it would be helpful, provided water is present and covering the transducers within the pool of the monitoring site, for a sample to be taken, noting the date, time. This would provide point checks of the conductivity data being recorded.

Future investigation

As monitoring continues within the Gammon Ranges, useful data is becoming available for flow in Arcoona Creek. Considering the availability of the good record now available from the rain gauge network that can provide the quantity, intensity and spatial distribution of rainstorms, a logical next step of the project would be to attempt to quantify the flow. This would possibly require a detailed survey of bed profile in the reach adjacent the level recorder, as well as establishing a method to record flood slope characteristics. It is suggested a sub group with knowledge in this area investigate the feasibility of progressing the project to this next step.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

The Scientific Expedition Group (SEG) welcomes enquiries from all members and friends who are interested in participating in one or more of our projects or expeditions. Please contact the leader or convener of the project or expedition that interests you for more information.

We welcome enquiries from anyone from 16 - 60 years (or more) who would like to participate in our scientific, environmental and educational projects.

Current recurring projects

GRaSP

Gammon Ranges Scientific Project (GRaSP) is now in its thirteenth year. The project involves a four or five day trip to the Gammon Ranges about four or five times a year. A data collection project involving flora and fauna and rainfall gauging which also involves bush camping and trekking. Other activities include feral animal counts, fox baiting and yellow footed rock wallaby counts. Expeditions are being planned for September and December 2001.

Contact Chris Wright 8278 8818

Minnawarra

SEG is running a biodiversity project in the Spring Mount area near Myponga based on a number of Heritage Sites on Richard Willing's property, Minnawarra. The next survey will take place during October. For information contact Richard Willing on mobile phone 0408 807 517 and see the notice on page 7.

Future Expeditions

An expedition to Munyeroo on the eastern coast of Eyre Peninsula is in the early stages of planning. The Scientific Leader will be Kingsley Turner. For information contact Richard Willing on mobile phone 0408 807 517

Adventures at Minnawarra

I am reliably advised that a one ton Land Rover truck that two gentlemen who shall remain nameless were driving got bogged in mud during the Minawarra expedition. It is now operating safely after it was winched out of the mud with a tractor that was then returned to the farm by Amanda Ruler. Amanda also had to fetch help for the same two persons who flattened their battery and flooded the carburettor on a separate occasion on the same trip. Fortunately she was able to supply jumper leads and get the car started again. The mud dried out after a few days and the truck is now back in working order. The two "rescued" persons have apparently been in hiding since.

Kids Corner

This quarter's word puzzle is made using words from the Encounter 2002 Project



WORD LIST

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| NICOLAS | PETER |
| BAUDIN | GOOD |
| MATTHEW | WESTALL |
| FLINDERS | WOOLUNDUNGA |
| RANGES | INVESTIGATOR |
| ENCOUNTER | ROBERT |
| CHINAMAN | BROWN |
| CREEK | MOUNT |
| WINNOWNIE | ASCENT |
| HORROCKS | |

EDITORIAL

I am pleased to report that the Encounter 2002 Project re-enactment of the Ascent of Mount Brown has just been successfully completed. A full report of the project will appear in the next issue of SEGments.

I can tell you that despite an extremely hot day all walkers completed the climb to the top of Mt Brown. Warren Bonython, our 85 year old President was cheered by the welcoming party when he completed the climb from Old Woolundunga Station in about three and a half hours.

Our thanks go to Graeme Oats for his magnificent organisation even though he made the landing re-enactment too realistic when he wandered off into a mangrove swamp in the dark and sank in the mud.

The work of the Scientific Expedition Group goes on with a seminar on the use of the Anabat recorder, the next phase of the Minnowarra Biodiversity Project, the Munyaroo Expedition and the Gammon Ranges Scientific Project. All projects need more helpers and you are asked to contact anyone on the Committee if you can be of assistance in any way.

Also in the early stages of planning is a possible expedition to Witjira National Park in the very far north of our State with particular reference to mound springs and the "weed" date palms. This will also give us an opportunity to have an adventure phase in the Simpson Desert. This promises to be one of the most exciting expeditions for some time. Keep reading your SEGments for details as they develop.

Alun Thomas

SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION GROUP

The Scientific Expedition Group came into being at a public meeting on 21st August 1984. Membership is open to any persons, family or organisation interested in the following aims:

The promotion and running of expeditions of a scientific, cultural and adventurous nature.

The furthering of knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural environment.

Promotion of the values and philosophy of wilderness.

Enabling people to learn the skills required for planning and running expeditions, and to develop sound field techniques.

Members will receive regular information on S. E. G. activities and expeditions

SUBSCRIPTIONS (Including GST)

Working adult member -----	\$16.50
Pensioner student or unemployed -----	\$11.00
Family membership -----	\$22.00
Organisation membership -----	\$22.00

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name

Address

Telephone (H) (W)

Details of scientific, cultural, adventuring or other relevant skill or interests you may be prepared to share with the group:

.....

Applications should be addressed to : The Hon. Secretary
 Scientific Expedition Group Inc.
 P.O. Box 501
 Unley S.A. 5061

Patron: His Excellency, the Honourable
 Sir Eric Neal, AC, CVO.
 Governor of South Australia

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SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION GROUP

MINNAWARRA PROJECT

(Measuring Biodiversity in Native Vegetation in Heritage Areas)

DATES: Thursday 25th April to Sunday 28th April 2002

Eight sites have been set up and the mammal traps will be open for 4 days and nights. The trap lines are visited twice daily to record and release mammals and reptiles. During the days surveys of birds and vegetation will be undertaken. It is also planned to remove some feral plants and weeds from the scrub depending on the weather. Last spring 125 mammals were trapped. Volunteers to help set up the traps on Wednesday or Thursday would be appreciated.

A shed (with heater) and small marquee will be set up, but expeditioners are welcome to bring their own tents as there is plenty of camping space. Bring your own food, eating and sleeping gear. A toilet is available in the nearby farm house.

Please spread the word if there are people you know who might be interested.

Please make contact as soon as possible and indicate:

1. Your interest in these few days
2. Your availability – which days can you come? Can you help set up on Thursday, or close the traplines on Monday?
3. Transport – will you bring a car? Can you transport anybody else? More details including map will be provided later. It may be possible to meet a bus in Myponga, depending on the day and time.

RICHARD WILLING

Chairman SEG & Project Coordinator

Phones: **8558 6381**; mobile **0408 807 517**;

email willingr@intertech.net.au

Snailmail: **PO Box 69, MYPONGA SA 5202**; **Box 501, UNLEY SA 5061**
