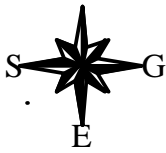


December 2005



MOONABIE EXPEDITION 2005

The SEG Moonabie Expedition to Munyaroo Conservation Park south of Whyalla has just been successfully completed. Although we had some very hot weather and half a day of rain, successful surveys were carried out on mammals, birds, vegetation, insects and reptiles.

We were particularly grateful for Ute Grehn stepping in at short notice to manage the vegetation survey. She worked extremely hard at collecting and identifying plants and was rewarded with recording a number of plants, which had not previously been recorded in the park.

Included in the team of expeditioners of all ages was a student from Cowell Area School, Joanne Storey.

After a late withdrawal of one of the scientific staff, Adrian Sherriff managed the reptile survey and did an admirable job including counting scales by torchlight to identify a wide range of reptiles.

As usual we record our grateful thanks to the South Australian Museum staff, Kath Kemper, Graham Carpenter, Jan Forrest and David Hurst for their assistance and willingness to explain their particular interests to the expeditioners.

Finally I thank John Morley and Sherrie Gotch and the members of the committee - John Love, Bruce Gotch and particularly Trent Porter for their work in making the expedition so successful.

A more detailed report on the expedition will appear in the next issue of SEGments.

Alun Thomas
Chief Leader Moonabie Expedition
Chairman, SEG

*****SEG 2006 Calendar*****

January

January last wk GRaSP Summer Trip

Feb/March

Feb 28 SEGments articles due

Mid March SEGments Vol. 21 No. 4

April

School holidays Minnowarra Survey

School holidays GRaSP Autumn trip

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PO Box 501, Unley SA 5061

**Brief Report
GRaSP Trip November 24 to 28, 2005**

On the recent GRaSP trip from 24-28 November Graham Blair and Chris Wright took five students from Adelaide University to help out with the expedition.

During the trip a CDMA modem pluviometer at Maynard's Well was successfully installed. It is not yet on the web, but it is expected to be set up in January 2006. All pluviometers were checked and data collected and equipment calibrated. One Cherryville logger (Exclosure Pluvio) failed, and was replaced with the spare one that had been removed from Maynards Well.

The new digital cameras worked well, thanks to Ray Hickman for setting them up and giving training. The participants did all the photo points, and took photos of the streamgauge for design of the protective cover. Very little surface water was available, and any water that was available, was a bit green. Two yellow-footed rock wallabies were seen in the usual place.

Copley Bakery is closed until April 06!! But Leigh Creek has a café, which is OK.

Upcoming GRaSP Trips

In January we will have to do the normal data recovery trip. There will also be a trip to put in the CDMA mobile phone units at North Moolooloo and Pfitzners Well, and a special trip to re-equip the water level recording station. There will be at least one trip to plan the upgrades to the Arcoona Creek pluviometers and test the radio paths.

If you are interested in helping out on GRaSP trips to the Gammon Ranges contact Chris Wright (phone 8278 8818 or email details on back page).

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MINNAWARRA BIODIVERSITY PROJECT
Report on Spring survey 20-23 October,
2005

Written by Richard Willing

A combination of illness and persistent rain during Spring caused severe disruption of the survey program. High ground water levels had flooded most of the pit fall traps so it was postponed for three weeks, but still these could be opened for only 40% of the available trapping time.

Volunteers to help run the project were thin on the ground by this time, but a small dedicated and hardy group donated a lot of their time and effort and most of the work was completed.

The weather for the first three days was mild and overcast with scattered showers. On the last day the weather turned foul with strong to gale force winds and heavy rain, soaking everybody while the final trap round was completed and the traps closed and collected.

Total numbers of mammals trapped were reduced after the very dry start to the winter and late opening rains. This is in contrast to the population of kangaroos (*Macropus fuliginosus*) whose numbers appear to have increased dramatically since the opening rains in June. Bush rats were the most common capture (80%), antechinus the least. Site 5 (creekside) produced most specimens (28); most swamp rats were trapped at site 1 (swamp).

Bats were not surveyed this time, and it is doubtful if any would have been captured in these weather conditions.

Totals Mammal Catches: *Antechinus flavipes* 4 new, 2 recaptured; Bush rat (*Rattus fuscipes*) 41 new, 39 recaptured; Swamp rat (*Rattus lutreolus*) 7 new, 8 recaptured; *Rattus rattus* 1.

Cool weather and reduced trapping time of the pit falls drastically reduced the numbers of frogs and skinks captured. Six Brown froglets (*Crinia signifera*) were trapped, 1 juvenile Sleepy lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*) entered an Elliott trap, and 1 Garden skink (*Lamphrolis guichenoti*) was observed opportunistically.

Birds were surveyed in 6 Of the 8 sites in early October, again curtailed by rain. A

representative sample of the usual approximately 30 species was found, with no new sightings.

The weather was quite unsuitable for invertebrate surveys, so the SA Museum will be conducting their invertebrate survey in December. Micropitfall traps were opened during this survey, and the specimens sent to the museum. These results will be reported when available.

In summary this survey was plagued by difficulties but was mostly completed successfully. The reduced numbers of mammal and skink captures demonstrated how seasonal variations can affect individual surveys, confirming the need to run the project for a long time before valid conclusions may be drawn from the data collected.

GRaSP – A General Description

Continued from September issue of SEGments

Information provided by John Love and Chris Wright from details written for the SEG website

Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby Monitoring

The yellow-footed rock wallaby (*Petrogale xanthopus*) is restricted to small scattered colonies in arid rocky ranges of northern South Australia and adjacent areas of New South Wales and Queensland. This beautiful species has declined considerably since European settlement and many isolated populations have become extinct. Predation by foxes is known to be a major contributing factor in this decline. Wallaby populations protected by fox baiting programs elsewhere in South Australia are recovering strongly.

A small colony survives in the Arcoona Creek area of the Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges National Park. Sightings of only two or three animals at a time have been made in recent years. All have been made in steep gorges associated with two small tributaries of Arcoona Creek. In dry conditions the wallabies descend from the cliffs to drink at soaks in the creek, where they are exposed to increased risk of fox predation.



Yellow-Footed Rock Wallaby, Gammon Ranges
Photographer – Trent Porter

In September 1997 SEG, with help from the Animal and Plant Control Commission and the then Department of Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs, embarked on a program to control foxes and monitor wallaby populations in the Arcoona Creek area. Fox baiting by SEG ceased in 2002 when aerial baiting was begun by the Department for Environment and Heritage

The aim of monitoring rock-wallaby numbers and distribution is to measure population changes, which might occur as a result of the fox baiting program. The populations of other large herbivores, with which rock wallabies may compete, is similarly monitored.



Yellow-Footed Rock Wallaby, Gammon Ranges
Photographer – Trent Porter

Feral Animal Counts

Goats, rabbits, donkeys and foxes are known to inhabit the project area. Sightings of these animals, or recent scats, are recorded in all phases of the project.

In 2007 an update will be provided on the monitoring of yellow-footed rock-wallaby numbers in the Gammon Ranges.



Reminder- SEG Subscriptions are due

Please make payments payable to SEG and post details to the address provided on the back page along with your completed subscription form.



Christmas Message from the Editors

To all readers of SEGments we hope you enjoy a safe festive season and good year in 2006.

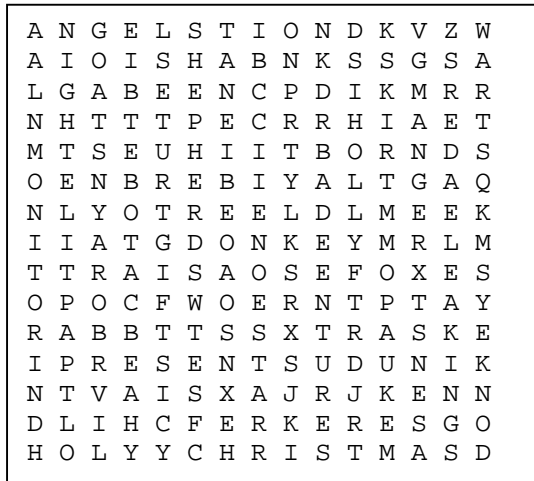
*Cheers From
Matt and Linda-Marie McDowell*

Kids Corner

The hidden words are related to Christmas. The words are hidden in all directions. Can you find them all?

Word List

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| child | star |
| kings | straw |
| shepherd | tree |
| angels | christmas |
| night | gifts |
| donkey | presnets |
| born | manger |
| holly | holy |





SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION GROUP - Membership

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 receive regular information on SEG activities and expeditions

Patron: Her Excellency, the Honourable Marjorie Jackson-Nelson, AC, CVO, MBE, Governor of South Australia

SEG COMMITTEE Office Bearers

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SEG WEBSITE www.communitywebs.org/scientificexpeditiongroup

SEG EMAIL ADDRESS segcomms@telstra.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS (Including GST)

Working adult member - - - - -	\$16.50
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Family membership - - - - -	\$22.00
Organisation membership - - - - -	\$22.00

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name

Address

.

Telephone (H) (W)

E-mail

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

.
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Applications should be addressed to :

The Hon. Secretary
 Scientific Expedition Group Inc.
 P.O. Box 501
 Unley S.A. 5061