



SEGMENTS

Journal of the
Scientific Expedition Group



Scientific Expedition Group Expedition Marqualpie 2008

The Scientific Expedition Group (SEG) major expedition for 2008 will be to the Marqualpie region of northern South Australia. This land system, around 100km north of Innamincka, consists of large sand dunes with potentially rich interdunal areas. The area is vegetated with bloodwoods, mallee and Spinifex. Scientifically this area is almost entirely unknown.

On this expedition SEG will be combining with the SA Biological Survey Group, of the Department for Environment and Heritage. The purpose of the trip is to add to the knowledge of all the different life forms in this unexplored part of South Australia.

The expedition will provide a great opportunity for people of all ages and expertise to observe and participate in professionally conducted field survey work with experienced biologists and natural historians.

The expedition will include surveys of vegetation, invertebrates, reptiles, mammals (including bats at night), birds, fungie, and a search for marsupial moles. Standard biological survey methods will be used to identify, measure, document and release animals caught. There may also be a study conducted on visitor impacts on the lakes and water holes in the vicinity.

Dates: Because of the distances to be covered, the expedition departs on Saturday 13th September 2008 and returns on Sunday 28th September 2008. One night will be spent each way at Mt. Lyndhurst Station shearer's quarters (roughly half way).

Costs are not yet finalised but will be around \$700 per person to cover transport, food and participation in all activities.

To register your interest in the expedition, please contact Trent Porter either via phone (08) 8278 9078 or email on trentasaurus@bigpond.com

*******SEG Calendar 2008*******

April	
April 23-27	Minnawarra Autumn Survey
April 23-28	VGRaSP April Trip
May	
May 23	SEGments deadline for articles for June issue
July	
July 10-14	VGRaSP July Trip
August	
August 22	SEGments deadline for articles for September issue
September	
September 26	SEG AGM? (date to be confirmed)
September 27-30	Minnawarra Spring Survey? (dates to be confirmed)
October	
October 3-8	VGRaSP October Trip? (dates to be confirmed)
November	
November 21	SEGments deadline for articles for December issue

Be quick if you are interest in Expedition Marqualpie 2008

.....spaces are strictly limited.

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SEGments is the authorised journal of the
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PO Box 501, Unley SA 5061

MINNAWARRA BIODIVERSITY PROJECT
Autumn Survey 23-27 April 2008
Written by Richard Willing

Helpers needed for Autumn wildlife survey!

Autumn is here and brings with it the next Minnowarra scrub biodiversity survey. The project is run by SEG, a volunteer, non-profit organization that encourages an awareness of the natural environment. The Minnowarra survey monitors the long-term effect of excluding cattle and sheep from the scrub near Myponga where eight survey sites have been established and monitored for the past seven years.

Traps will be opened on Wednesday 23rd April 2008 for four days and nights, until Sunday 27th April.

In each survey, almost 200 traps are used to capture mammals and reptiles. Three different trap types are used. Pitfall traps are sunk into the ground and have a fence running across them. Small animals run along the fence and fall into the pits. Elliott traps, small folding metal box traps that are baited with rolled oats and peanut paste, are placed around the pit line to trap small mammals such as bush rats. Large cage traps are put at each end of the pitfall line to capture larger animals. All traps are inspected each morning and evening, and trapped animals are identified, weighed, marked and released. In the evenings unidentified animals and plants are studied and identified.

Vegetation, birds, reptiles and frogs are also surveyed at the eight sites and a bat-meter is used to record bat calls which can be used to identify species. Bats will also be trapped in nets.

Between 100 and 200 specimens are trapped during each survey. It is expected that bush rats, swamp rats, antechinus (marsupial mice), and a variety of frogs and skinks will be captured, though pygmy possums, echidnas and antechinus carrying pouch young have previously been recorded. Results are entered into the SA Biological Survey.

Young people and adults are welcome to help with the survey for one or several days. Camping space is provided near a large shed with a heater, electricity, barbeque, cooking gear and a toilet. Bring your own food and camping gear.

Registration is essential to be covered by our insurance. A small donation would be welcome to help cover expenses (suggest \$10 adult, \$5 students).

For information and registration please ring Richard 8558 6381; or mobile 0408 807 517; email: willingr@comstech.com



MALLEE FOWL MONITORING

SEG has been invited to participate in a mallee fowl monitoring programme in the Murray Mallee. If we accept, we would have to survey one or more grids once a year in the period from mid-October to January.

With a few volunteers a grid could be done in two days although for some of the larger sites and where there are many nests it may take slightly longer. All necessary training and recording equipment would be provided. If we can get a sufficient number of volunteers we will offer to do one or two grids later this year.

Please register your interest with Bruce Gotch email bgotch@picknowl.com.au or phone (08) 8280 7392.

Walkerville Historical Society Public Lecture

Lyn O'Grady, editor of the 'Walkerville Times' the newsletter of the Walkerville Historical Society would like to invite people to a presentation on:

"South Australia's Largest Meteorite Impact and its consequences"

Speaker: Professor Victor Gostin

Wednesday April 9 at 7:30pm

Walkerville Town Hall

This is a joint function of the Historical Society and Walkerville Council.

**Gluepot Environmental Education Centre
Courses for 2008**

The following 14 courses are scheduled for 2008. Apart from the Bat Course in December (a three day course) all courses shown are of two days duration (Saturday and Sunday), and where possible, attendees should try to arrive at the Reserve on the Friday afternoon. Courses will finish at about 4.30pm on the Sunday.

A 'General Brochure' and detailed PDF brochures for each course are available from the Gluepot website at: www.riverland.net.au/gluepot

For further information and course registration, please contact: Mrs Anne Morphett, Environmental Education Centre Administrator, Birds Australia Gluepot Reserve
61 Sturdee Street
Linden Park SA 5065
Phone (08) 8379 3865
Fax (08) 8364 5527
Email anne_morphett@yahoo.com.au

COURSE SUBJECT	DATES
The Art of the Ant	12 & 13 April
An Introduction to Birds & Birdwatching	19 & 20 April
An Introduction to Nature Photography	17 & 18 May
An Introduction to Macro Photography	24 & 25 May
An Introduction to Scientific Botanical Illustration	14 & 15 June
GPS and GIS Workshop	28 & 29 June
An Introduction to Bird Banding	30 & 31 Aug.
An Introduction to Nature Photography	6 & 7 Sept.
An Introduction to Macro Photography	13 & 14 Sept.
An Introduction to Birds and Birdwatching	20 & 21 Sept.
An Introduction to Bird Banding	4 & 5 Oct.
Painting Nature	18 & 19 Oct.
The Art of the Ant	8 & 9 Nov.
The Bats of Gluepot Reserve	5, 6 & 7 Dec

VULKATHUNHA-GAMMON RANGES DATA RECOVERY TRIP, 29 Nov - 4 Dec 2007

Leaders Report by Chris Wright

Leader: Chris Wright

Expeditioners: John Love, Chris Davill, Janet Davill, Phil Davill, Pippi Shanks, Michael Edwards, Lisa Colby, Michelle Trethewey, Garry Trethewey.

Transport used: J Love's Prado with C. Wright's trailer, P. Davill's Range Rover and trailer, G. Trethewey's Ford Courier ute.

Itinerary: Left Adelaide Thursday morning, arrived at Leigh Creek early afternoon. The Davills went to North Moolooloo to work on the pluvios. The rest of the party arrived at Arcoona Creek Thursday afternoon.

The Tretheweys and Pippi left for Adelaide about midday on Monday 3 Dec. The others went to Balcanoona to see Arthur Coulthard, the assistant ranger, and left for Adelaide on Tuesday morning, arriving late that afternoon in Adelaide. There were no breakdowns, punctures etc.

For a more detailed description of the expedition see Garry Trethewey's account.

Notes: Temperatures at Leigh Creek were: 30/11 - 36.5°C; 1/12 - 38°C; 2/12 - 36.6°C.

Removed from the sites: Some disintegrating invertebrate pitfall pots near the Quandong enclosure were removed. There are still more that should be removed.

Surface water: Woodcutters Well: a dribble down from it.

Seeps: some surface water. Wild Ass Waterhole had 25mm x 600mm x 25mm on Friday but only mud 3 days later. Grandfield waterhole had small amounts. 25-50 litres a short way up Eichler Creek.

Pluviometers: Data loggers were exchanged and instruments calibrated at all pluvios. New transmission modems for Telstra's next generation system installed at North Moolooloo, Pfitzner's Well, Maynard's Well and Arcoona Bluff.

Stream gauge: Arcoona Creek: Two steel stands for solar panels and transmission modem were installed at the top of the outcrop behind the stream gauge.

Instructions to leaders of the next trip: Bring back more pitfall buckets from near the Quandong enclosure if possible.

Report by Garry Trethewey

The itinerary changed a few times prior to arrival. Originally the whole trip was projected for the week before, which saw me making a hurried request for annual leave, and then eventually taking a few sickies. The Tretheweys weren't interested in the Monday - Tuesday overnight at Balcanoona. Instead they planned a day or two at Chambers Gorge afterward. It's always easy planning in your own lounge room. Different when you're tired, hot, sore and want an icecream.

No breakdowns, punctures etc. on the way. The planned convoy didn't happen. All three vehicles were variously late. The first meeting place, Clare bakery, wasn't open. Various phones still worked so we all met at

Jamestown bakery. Some confusion about whether lunch was at Copley or not, so some waited ages at Copley while others got LPG and lunch at Leigh Creek. In spite of a vast profusion of mobile phones, communication didn't happen. No GSM coverage at Copley or Leigh Creek (thanks Telstra), CDMA and various brands of Next and 3 and G all didn't talk to each other, partly because of phones being turned off, partly because of lack of signal and partly because one company won't talk to the other.

After lunch at Copley, and a search party finding the Leigh Creek party at Leigh Creek, it was agreed to meet at Owiendana, so the Leigh Creek party, having finished lunch, went and had lunch at Copley. The Copley party ambled along looking at interesting rock formations, mines and *Maireana melanocarpus* exclosures, until the lunch party caught up at "The Lizard on the Road". Everybody leapt out of their cars and took 100's of photos of a bearded dragon, signalling passing traffic not to squash it. Eventually John tickled it's tail stimulating it's anti-paparazzi reflex, and it ran away.

Although it had been getting hotter as we drove north, there was evidence of recent isolated but heavy rain – north of Parachilna, every few km a creek had dumped debris across the road or had a pool of water, all else being dry. We could see streaks of rain to the east, building hopes we'd get a bit around Vandenberg camp.

Just after "The Lizard on the Road", we got a few big plops of rain on the windscreen. What I thought might be the first signs of epilepsy turned out to be lightning to the south east. More big plops, becoming steady, with an enormous 10 minute downpour at the last gate before Owie. I had full hopes of running creeks (or at least enough to drink in rock pools) at Vandenberg. In the event, our rain was again local, none fell at Vandenberg.

Temperatures at Leigh Creek were 30/11 - 36.5°C, 1/12 - 38°C, 2/12 - 36.6°C, and a reprieve on 3/12. This didn't affect what was done, but it certainly affected the doers.

Plans included installing huge metal stands above the water level monitor and on Arcoona Bluff with a view to secure placement of future equipment. That meant that bags of ready mix cement, a generator, lots of water, the big awkward metal stands and lots of other stuff had to be carried to the

water level gauge (the easy bit) and to Arcoona Bluff Pluvio (the hard bit). Other plans were more routine - check pluvios, monitor any water in waterholes (took no time at all), tidy some old pitfall traps, and the standing agenda of giving some uni kids a bit of experience in the bush.

I was reminded of my early bushwalking days. All the wrong equipment, hand me downs, stuff that didn't fit, snow gear in the North Flinders & vice versa, conflicting information and directives from various authorities a lack of experience and general disorganisation, not helped by three people having to share and explore equipment and procedures. I'm sure that tipping a meal on the ground next to a saucepan was an accident. I hope my laughter and bossiness didn't frighten the others off.

We camped at the exclosures (NOT in them, Chris pointed out) upstream and opposite from where SEG normally camps. Easy to find once you've been shown the way.

Because of the dryness, and logistics allowing, we broke up into 3 parties for 30/11. All the Davills went up to Arcoona bluff Pluvio with their enormous loads. I remember looking up from the creek bed seeing them struggling up the initial slope in full sun. We at least had a flat creek bed and some shade. Chris Wright, Michael and John worked on the installation at the water level gauge.

Michelle, Pippi, Lisa and I carried a few litres of water up to Vandenberg to help with the water situation. (The cache was OK, but I'd prefer to avoid using it all up). We started well, but as we went on, and the day heated up, we tended to stop more and more, and drink more and more, and be slower and slower, and do less and less talking. On the way back, empty, we picked up some of the flowerpots (old plastic pitfall traps), not too heavy, but a little extra weight. I'd had a yen to find out how much heat I could cope with. (Dunno what would have happened if I hadn't coped, there wasn't a lot of spare energy available to carry me.) We were pretty bugged by the time we got back, but we'd coped with 36.5°.

1/12 John, Pippi, and Michael went straight to Vandenberg. Chris Wright, Lisa, Michelle and Garry went to Vandenberg via Arcoona South Pluvio. It was another hot day, but again I was surprised that I seemed to cope. Obviously the low humidity helped, although

the risk of unnoticed dehydration is another of those little things you file away in the back of your mind.

I spent what was left of the afternoon sleeping on a shaded ledge opposite the campsite, the coolest place around. Others chatted or slept wherever they could find shade. The Davilles stayed behind and didn't go to Vandenberg at all, preferring more herculean pastimes.

After dark, we all went to check Sambot Pluvio. The uni kids explored theoretical and real world issues with getting a lot of heavy, delicate equipment to work in a hostile environment. They demonstrated knowledge of lots of tech stuff and they asked a lot of good questions. Perhaps a few masters papers will emanate from that little jaunt.

2/12 All the Vandenberg people went up the hill to North Tusk Hill and then on to Plateau Pluvio. I wanted to talk to John (the instruction book coordinator) about a few ambiguities, possible misplaced photo point markers, conflicting instructions, etc., so we took a slightly longer route than needed, but we also got more rests.

We had a small bushfire, only noticed because we happened to be going the same direction as the wind. No names will be mentioned to avoid embarrassment, but it may be good to review SEG's "Minimum Impact Camping Guidelines." Burning toilet paper is a risk, and illegal in National Parks during fire danger season, which varies each year but is approximately November to April, and illegal anywhere on a Total Fire Ban day, even if you didn't know it was one. One of us got a nasty fright and some bruises slipping down a cliff while looking for the source of the smoke. Anyway, we all lived, and the plateau still has trees & bushes.

Again, the day got hotter and we got tired, again we managed to cope.

3/12 We left Vandenberg bright & early in what turned out to be a cooler day, packs a bit lighter, well rested. Accumulated injuries, blisters, strains etc. didn't seem too much of a bother, and we made good time back to camp. Janet made us all cups of tea with milk. Very nice. In the back of my ute was around 250 litres of water we didn't need, so after lots of drinks and washes and showers Chris lay in a wheel barrow and had 70 litres of water tipped over him.

Pippi, Michelle & I left for Adelaide and I believe all the others went to Balcanoonna to say hello to a ranger.

Overall, not a lot of goats, at least in comparison to our trip a month or two before, nor roos. However this might be misleading. Isolated showers had occurred for a few days before this trip, so they could be up a hill eating moist vegetation. Last trip we saw them around Woodcutter's well, the soak, and any stock troughs on Owie or Mt Serle. The soak was easily accessible. Last trip, animal's lips couldn't reach it, but their stretched tongues got wet between rocks, and lots of animals were hanging around it. This trip I could gather up handfuls of salty water.

Instructions to leaders of the next trip - Keep a bit of room for picking up old pitfall pots when returning from Vandenberg. They're not heavy, but bulky, and needed garbages that you can tie on your pack. I'm not sure of the value of a convoy. Both of the SEG convoys I've been on have been disorganised time wasters. I'd prefer a destination location & time.

Kids Corner

The hidden words are taken from Scrubby Peak Expedition reports in the December issue of SEGments. The words are hidden in all directions. Can you find them all?

Word List

birds	pressing	survey
camp	snake	vegetation
habitat	specimen	walk
mammals	students	Wudinna

K	L	A	W	T	D	E	R	E	G	N	A	P	N	Z
L	H	O	C	A	M	P	E	R	V	H	C	A	P	A
I	F	F	G	F	D	X	E	A	G	O	N	N	D	N
N	E	E	A	N	N	K	L	G	E	E	A	A	A	N
D	X	T	S	F	A	L	K	K	M	A	T	R	A	I
I	C	N	B	N	J	E	S	I	A	R	T	A	W	D
M	A	W	S	O	N	R	C	B	A	T	C	M	O	U
N	A	T	H	R	V	E	D	R	T	Y	X	A	F	W
E	I	M	E	E	P	P	U	S	L	A	M	M	A	M
B	I	R	D	S	N	R	N	M	O	U	D	I	E	A
S	T	U	D	E	N	T	S	F	A	G	M	O	T	S
N	A	T	A	T	I	B	A	H	T	G	T	L	M	O
G	R	S	U	R	V	E	Y	I	N	G	A	D	Y	Z
E	T	W	V	E	G	E	T	A	T	I	O	N	M	D
C	P	R	E	S	S	I	N	G	T	A	O	C	D	Y



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: His Excellency Rear-Admiral Kevin Scarce AO CSC RANR, Governor of South Australia

SEG COMMITTEE Office Bearers

President Dr Richard Willing
 Chairman Alun Thomas
 Vice-Chairman John Hayes
 Hon. Secretary John Love
 Hon. Treasurer Graeme Oats

SEGments Editors

Linda-Marie & Matthew McDowell
 Ph. 8278 4795 (after hours)
 Post contributions to: 5 Roseberry Ave. Eden Hills SA 5050
 or email linda-marie.mcdowell@epa.sa.gov.au

SEG WEBSITE www.communitywebs.org/scientificexpeditiongroup

SEG EMAIL ADDRESS segcomms@telstra.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS (Including GST)

Working adult member ----- \$20.00
 Pensioner student or unemployed ----- \$10.00
 Family membership ----- \$25.00
 Organisation membership ----- \$25.00

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