



### In this edition

Project updates

Pest plants and animals

Local volunteers recognised

Ramco Primary School gets involved

Community Notice Board



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### Introducing our newsletter

I am pleased to introduce Riverland West Landcare's 'new look' quarterly newsletter.

With the closure of the Riverland Weekly, we are back to publishing our own updates. Our intention with this newsletter is to provide you with information regarding natural resource management (NRM). We also have the Community Notice Board where we will post any opportunities for training or workshops relating to NRM.

In our continuing effort to provide support to the community, we are updating our website [www.rwlandcare.org.au](http://www.rwlandcare.org.au) and use Facebook to compliment the newsletter by providing other snippets of information and photos of what we are up to.

We want this newsletter to be a resource for the community. To ensure its success, I encourage you to submit any comments or suggestions or interesting stories to [admin@rwlandcare.org.au](mailto:admin@rwlandcare.org.au)

If you would like further information on any of the articles published in the newsletter, please contact the Riverland West Landcare office on 8541 2611

Cheers



Karen Bishop  
Project Officer

Sign up to email  
newsletter



### Ramco Lagoon Watering

After the 2011 floods there was significant recruitment of Black Box and Red Gum around the floodplain which had not been seen for a number of years. Because of the salinity issues associated with Ramco, we were concerned about the survival of these seedlings, especially the juvenile Black Box. With water donated through the Nature Foundation SA, RWL undertook a watering program with the aim to 'push' the salts in the top soil profile down below the root zones of the saplings with the aim to assist them grow to maturity. The program was cut short due to excessive rainfall which made access to the site impossible however, we hope to continue the watering at additional sites over the 2013-14 summer period.



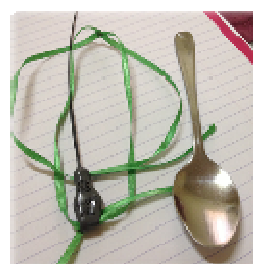
### Regent Parrot Recovery project

Trials on the five captive bred Regent Parrots have been continuing in the aviary. The harness used in the tracking trials from 2012 has been modified and it seems significant progress has been made towards being able to track the birds for all of the breeding season and beyond using the newly designed harness. The plan for the 2013 season is to place GPS trackers on a number of birds to gather information on movements, food sources, flight paths and roost sites during the breeding months. At the end of the breeding season we would like to place satellite trackers on some birds to track their movements over the wider landscape as they move away from the river corridor.

*Update by Kevin Smith*



Kevin Smith assisting Luke Ireland (DEWNR) attach a band to 1 of the 26 Regent Parrots captured and released. Of these, 23 were inspected by veterinarians from Adelaide Zoo.



One of the GPS units used in the tracking trial



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY



One of the nine seeders in action—a 60 foot machine, weighing 22 tonne and running in excess of 20kph

## Lowbank Ag Bureau seeding trial

Last year the Lowbank Ag Bureau (LAB) put nine different seeders to the test to work out which was better, disc or tynes?

According to Warren May, member of the LAB, the tyned machines were more expensive to run, used more fuel, and didn't sow as quickly. But even with that disadvantage, when all the numbers were crunched, when the protein and yield, and the price of wheat on the day were taken into consideration, the tynes represented a significant \$61-a-hectare advantage over the discs.

What was also significant, was that throughout the duration of the project (May to November) over 1,000 farmers and industry people visited the site asking questions and offering comments. Landline also picked up the story airing two episodes (sowing day and harvest day) which attracted national attention for the project.

To view these episodes of Landline **Ctrl + Click** to follow link:

<http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2012/s3511972.htm>

<http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2013/s3687110.htm>

## Aboriginal women in NRM

Funding secured from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources facilitated the engagement of Riverland Aboriginal women to reinvigorate their traditional knowledge and to increase their NRM knowledge and skills, particularly those relating to culturally significant species and cultural practices.

Throughout the project the ladies have been on a houseboat discovery journey along the river, undertaken excursions to local culturally significant sites and learnt about growing and using native plants for cultural medicinal purposes



L-R Alice Dare, Yvonne Abdulla, Viola Laccos and Nita Lindsay from the Riverland Katjuri Mimini Group visiting Berri Native Plants to learn more about the importance of local native species





African boxthorn



Boneseed

## Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)

The 'Weed Control Handbook for Declared Plants in South Australia' states that WoNS have been identified as national threats due to their invasiveness, economic and environmental impacts.

All weed management has costs, and these are paid by the community. Therefore, weed management benefits the community in terms of production and asset protection.

From July through to September is a good time to be on the look out for, and commence management of, African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) and Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*).

Both are introduced species which have become serious weeds. Boxthorns can become refuges for feral animals while Boneseed can smother and suppress native plants.

For further information on WoNS and Declared Plants visit the Biosecurity SA PIRSA website listed below.

[http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/187686/Full\\_Document\\_Final\\_Weeds.pdf](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/187686/Full_Document_Final_Weeds.pdf)

## Feral cats

According to a publication put out by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy "Wildlife Matters" Summer 2012/13 feral cats (*Felis catus*) occur right across the continent in every habitat type including deserts, forests and grasslands.

Feral cats reach sexual maturity at 12 months of age and can breed in any season, with two litters a year and an average of four kittens per litter.

Total population estimates vary from 5 million to 18 million feral cats, with the Federal Government citing a figure of 18 million cats in its statutory Threat Abatement Plan.

Each feral cat kills between 5-30 animals per day. While they appear to prefer small mammals, they also eat birds, reptiles and amphibians. Taking the lower figure in that range (5) and multiplying it by a conservative population estimate of 15 million cats—gives **minimum estimate of 75 million native animals killed daily by feral cats.**

Feral cats also carry diseases such as toxoplasmosis which can be transmitted to and cause serious illness and death in native wildlife, stock and humans. They are usually short haired with a variety of colours such as tortoiseshell, black, tabby and ginger.



RWL is interested in your story of feral cats. If we can collect them all together we may be able to estimate the threat in our region and take some action to help control them in the future. Email our office Karen@rwlandcare.org.au or ring us on 8541 2611 with your information.

# Volunteering

## Local volunteers recognised

More than 40 volunteers from across the Riverland joined in the celebrations at the McCormick centre in Renmark in June to acknowledge the contribution of local volunteers at the Annual Riverland Natural Resources Management Volunteer Awards.

The awards were presented by Renmark to Paringa Mayor Mr Neil Martinson and Chair of the Riverland NRM Group, Mr Ken Stokes.

Several RWL volunteers, who freely share their skills, knowledge and time, were recognised for their involvement in NRM projects with certificates being awarded to both individuals and groups.



Modified water tank for delivery of environmental water

*"No matter how big and powerful government gets, and the many services it provides, it can never take the place of volunteers".*

*Ronald Reagan*



Regent Parrot nest camera in situ



Mayor Neil Martinson, Raelene Schmitke, Roger Schmitke, Ken Stokes



Joseph Whitehead and Asher Whitehead (YET)

## Individual Achievement

Raelene Schmitke : hundreds of hours spent viewing Regent Parrot video footage

## Group Achievement

Waikerie Primary School Youth Environment Team (YET)

## Innovative Achievement

Hart Lagoon Wetland Group : "Walk for a healthy Hart" community engagement event

Philip Bishop : Purpose built trailer/irrigation system for delivering environmental water

## Innovative Winner

Darren Schmitke : Designing, building and implementing a CCTV system to record movement at Regent Parrot nesting hollows

## Project Winner

Regent Parrot Recovery project

## Individual Youth Award Winner

Joseph Whitehead : Former YET member, current RMYC member and mentor for the Statewide Youth Environment Council

## Gazania's—going, going, gone?

Year 6/7 students from Ramco Primary School are involved with a trial project to test different methods of controlling Gazanias, a native plant of southern Africa.

Although an attractive plant, they are a highly invasive weed which is a big threat to our floodplains as they can dramatically alter plant communities by outcompeting native plants with their high demand for nutrients and water.

The students, working in groups, have an assigned plot which they will monitor over the period of the project, recording observations on a weekly basis to test their control methods for success rates.

The various control methods to be trialed include:

- Removal of flower heads
- Digging out the entire plant
- Squashing the plant
- Covering the entire area with black plastic
- Cutting and spraying with glyphosate\*
- Spraying the whole plant with glyphosate
- Control site

\* glyphosate to be applied by Chemical Certified volunteer



Seth immersing himself in the project



Students working on one of 7 plots



## Regent Parrot Recovery Program

Funding has just been confirmed through DEWNR for "Innovative camera technology for nest site conservation of Regent Parrots".

This innovative method of capturing nest activity of the nationally threatened Regent Parrot using CCTV video cameras and recording equipment will contribute to the Regent Parrot Recovery Program.

The aim is to assess breeding success, competition for nest hollows, fledgling numbers and the presence of predators over a full breeding season.

The footage collected will require many volunteer hours of viewing so if you have some spare time and would like to contribute to this important project, please contact the RWL office for details.



# Community Notice Board

## Small Animal Vertebrate Survey

Pit Line Trapping

14th—18th October

Taylorville Station

Contact Graham Frahn

0418 816 064



This little Pygmy possum was one of the interesting discoveries found at Taylorville Station during the 2012 survey.



## Community Wetland monitoring workshop to be held in Spring

Do you want to know what birds,  
fish or frogs can be found in our  
area?

Contact RWL for more information  
or to register your interest

Just a reminder...

Riverland Field Days are fast  
approaching

September 18th—19th

Come and visit us in the Natural  
Resources marquee







## Would you like to get involved?

As a not for profit, community based organisation, we are able to provide free assistance with :

Volunteering opportunities

Sourcing funding

Access to technical information

Access to equipment

Sourcing partnerships with other community groups or organisations

☐

I wish to be added to the mailing list

☐

I wish to be taken off the mailing list

☐

I wish to become a RW Landcare member

☐

I wish to become a volunteer

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12a Peake Terrace  
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## Committee Members

Chairman: Roger Schmitke

Vice Chair: Frances Simes

Elise Byrne

Renee Thompson

Jeany Winter

Dawn Horton

Councillor: Kym Webber

Councillor: David Peake



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