

SEPT 2009
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OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

MEETING THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3
7:30 pm Australian National University

Is the grassland earless dragon going extinct?

Wendy Dimond

• **Demographics of *Tympanocryptis pinguicolla* in the ACT**
•

The endangered grassland earless dragon (*Tympanocryptis pinguicolla*) is an endemic species confined to areas of native grassland in the Southern Tablelands and Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Surveys of populations in the ACT have revealed a contraction in distribution and declines in trapping rates raising concern for the future of this species. To better define the nature of the decline and the factors affecting it, we conducted a systematic mark-recapture study at two sites in the ACT. Our trapping revealed a dramatic crash in population numbers since 2006. At the site where the species is believed to be most abundant population size decreased from 2287 ± 255 to 276 ± 98 , (). Of the two populations sampled, only one produced sufficient captures to enable survival estimates to be made. In that population, seasonal survival in juvenile (0.33-0.44), sub-adult (0.28 -0.4) and adult (0.28-0.63) stages did not change over the two years of sampling. Using the data derived from that study to perform a stage-based, population viability analysis, we show that extinction of the largest remaining population is likely within 15 years and identify egg production and/or juvenile survival as the life stages of greatest influence on population growth rate. We discuss our findings in the light of the prevailing drought conditions and their implications for the future management of this rapidly disappearing species. Wendy Dimond is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Applied Ecology, University of Canberra. Her interests include population biology and modelling as well as translocation/relocation science.

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC. GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATTER

Outing: Red Hill Sunday 6th September 11am

We don't often visit inner South Canberra, so this should be something a bit different. On this North-facing slope, flowers include wattles (being September), Hardenbergia, Hovea and other early spring specials. Also there is a patch of Button Wrinkleworts although they are not likely to be in flower. Red Hill has interesting geological features and explanatory signs. The returning migration of birds should mean there are yellow-faced and white-naped honeyeaters, and red wattlebirds although not in the numbers of autumn. Other birds I have seen include a very tame grey butcherbird and grey currawong, plus there should be cuckoos and woodswallows. Tony will bring along his bird list for Red Hill.

We will meet some members of the Red Hill Regenerators, at the top of Red Hill, next to the Café (Red Hill Dr). Bring binos, lunch, good walking shoes, wet weather gear and field guides. Call Benj on 0400 250 230 if you need to.

Tidbinbilla Space Complex August outing report

On a cold morning we were happy to be inside at the Canberra Space Centre at the (Tidbinbilla) Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex. After a little wander Phyl managed to grab a Volunteer guide, Steve, who introduced us to Space and the centre. We were surprised, particularly Mandy, that the largest dish is actually bigger than the one in Parkes, perhaps it looks smaller due to the mountains on either side. Anyway the biggest one is DSS-43, which is 70-metres, while the other ones are DSS-34: 34-metres, DSS-45: 34-metres, and DSS-46: 26 metres.

Steve explained that the Complex sends out signals as well as receiving (perhaps this is the reason for the change in name). Steve talked for quite a while and answered many questions. One that stumped him and was amusing to me went something like 'I heard that in 50 years the Earth will be the centre of the solar system'. After a long pause it was clarified that it meant, in the centre of the line of planets. After the talk we had morning tea at the Moon Rock café and saw the dishes move, which happened surprisingly quickly. I sat next to Judy, Janice and Sylvie. Dierk and Mandy/Kevin both brought visitors, who I think enjoyed the day.

Afterwards, people split up, things of interest to me were the compact food, the clothing and of course 'how to go to the toilet', while others watched the docos/movies. Many people were surprised how thin the sides of the Space Shuttle actually were.

Overall it was a very relaxing Sunday. And if you missed the trip it is definitely worth visiting.

BENJ

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

<http://www.birdata.com.au/homecontent.do>

Birdata is your gateway to Birds Australia data including the Atlas of Australian Birds and Nest record scheme. You can use Birdata to draw bird distribution maps and generate bird lists for any part of the country. You can also join in the Atlas and submit survey information to this important environmental database.

For example, you can obtain a bird list for your post code, or obtain information on the Australian distribution for any selected species.

Leap into Frogwatch this Spring!

Find out all about our local frogs Learn how to identify different frog species Take action to protect these fascinating creatures

Preparations are in full swing for this year's ACT and Region Frogwatch Program, and I hope that you are enthusiastic to participate in this year's activities! Please read on to get the details of our exciting program for this spring, and how you can get involved in Frogwatching.

Frogwatch is an exciting community activity that is open to everyone with an interest in frogs. Frogwatch aims to involve large numbers of volunteers to undertake frog monitoring in the ACT and region.

To participate, simply come along to one of our free Frogwatch training events, where you will learn all about our amphibian friends. You will receive your free Frogwatch Kit that includes all you need to know to participate in the ACT and Region National Water Week Frogwatch Census in October 2009. See below for more details on our Frogwatch training events.

If you would like to help spread the word, there is a flyer attached. Please feel free to forward this on as well as print the flyer to place on your workplace or community noticeboard.

Kind Regards,
Emma Keightley

Emma Keightley

ACT Frogwatch Coordinator
Ginninderra Catchment Group

Phone: (02) 6278 3309

Fax: (02) 6278 3926

Email: waterwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au

www.ginninderralandcare.org.au

Post: PO Box 446, Holt, ACT, 261

Office: Kippax Health Centre, Kippax Place, Holt

FROGWATCH TRAINING EVENTS, 2009 - DETAILS

In early Spring 2009, we will be conducting a series of Frogwatch Training Events. You will only need to attend one of these to participate in the spring Census in October. We recommend attending one of the Introductory Seminars if you have never done Frogwatch before, or if you'd like a refresher on the basics of Frogwatching. The Advanced Field Trip is suitable for experienced Frogwatchers who would like to opportunity to learn more about frogs and frogwatching.

Introducing Frogwatch - Frogwatch Basics

This seminar is essential for the first time Frogwatcher or as a refresher for those who have participated in previous years. It will cover all you need to know to participate in the 2009 National Water Week Frogwatch Census, including identifying frog species, using Frogwatch Field Data Sheets, undertaking habitat assessments and performing your first frog monitoring activity.

This seminar will include a short walk in the gardens to practice our frog identification skills. Please be prepared by bringing sturdy shoes, a torch, and wet weather gear if necessary.

Please note: both of these introductory seminars will be the same - you only need to attend on one evening.

Introductory Seminar 1

DATE: Wednesday 23rd September, 2009

TIME: 6:00 - 9:00pm

VENUE: Australian National Botanic Gardens - Education Centre (Crosbie Morrison Building)

Clunies Ross St, Acton

The gates to the botanic gardens will be open from 5:45 pm. Please arrive promptly as the gates will be locked at 6:15 pm sharp! Please understand we are relying on good will from the Australian National Botanic Gardens to allow us to be there after hours so please follow instructions and respect both arrival and departure times.

Introductory Seminar 2 (Repeat of Seminar 1) Note: this session will only run if the first seminar is fully booked

DATE: Wednesday 7th October, 2009

TIME: 6:00 - 9:00pm

VENUE: Australian National Botanic Gardens - Education Centre (Crosbie Morrison Building)

Clunies Ross St, Acton

The gates to the botanic gardens will be open from 5:45 pm. Please arrive promptly as the gates will be locked at 6:15 pm sharp! Please understand we are relying on good will from the Australian National Botanic Gardens to allow us to be there after hours so please follow instructions and respect both arrival and departure times.

Advanced Frogwatch Training - Field Trip to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

This seminar is aimed at experienced Frogwatchers, who would like to further develop their identification and monitoring skills. Participants in this field trip will have the opportunity to investigate important components of frog habitat, and talk with expert ecologists in the field. Come along and learn about the Corroboree Frog Breeding Program as well as practice your Frogwatching skills.

DATE: Wednesday 30th September, 2009

TIME: 5:30 - 8:30pm

LOCATION: Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. More detailed directions will be provided upon registration.

We will be walking as a group around the nature reserve, throughout the evening. Please be prepared by bringing sturdy shoes, a torch and wet weather gear if necessary. In case of severe weather conditions, participants who have registered will be advised of an alternative venue closer to the date.

RSVPs are essential. Registrations CLOSE on Wednesday 16 September 2009.

To reserve your place at any of the Frogwatch Training Events, or to register your participation in the Frogwatch Census, please contact:

Emma Keightley

ACT & Region Frogwatch Coordinator

Ginninderra Catchment Group

Ph: 6278 3309

waterwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au

Committee members

Please make a note in your diaries. We meet every odd month on the 3rd Wednesday at 7:30 pm at the Conservation Council Offices. The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 16 September at 7:30 pm.**

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO ALL MEMBERS THAT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Field Naturalists Association of Canberra will be held on Thursday 1st October, 2009 at 8:00 pm at the Division of Zoology and Botany, Building 116, in the Australian National University and will include short member presentations on recent experiences in Africa.

Business:

- a) To confirm the minutes of the last preceding annual general meeting.
- b) To receive from the committee, auditor, and servants of the Association reports upon the transactions of the Association during the last preceding financial year.
- c) To elect the officers of the Association (President; Vice President; Treasurer; Secretary) and the ordinary committee members
- d) To appoint the auditor and determine his/her remuneration
- e) To conduct other business of which notice has been given

Nominations for election of members of Committee shall be made in writing (see below) and shall be delivered to an officer of the Association by Monday September 22. If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies on the committee, the candidates shall be deemed to be elected and further nominations shall be received at the annual general meeting.

I hereby nominate _____

BLOCK LETTERS

A member of the Field Naturalists Association of Canberra Inc

For the position of _____

Name of Proposer _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Name of Secunder _____

Signature _____ Date _____

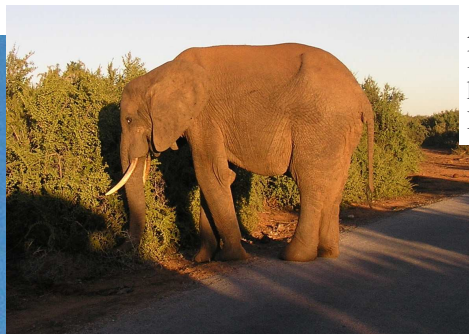
Acceptance of Nomination

I _____ accept nomination for _____

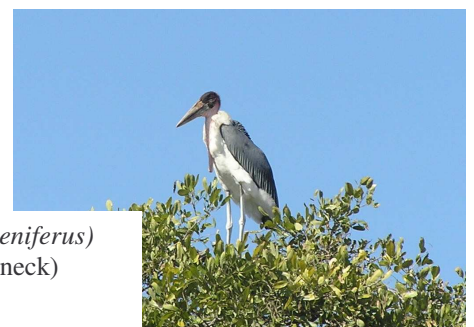
Signature of Nominee _____ Dated _____



The lilacbreasted roller (*Coracias caudatus*) Related to king fishers rollers like to sit up on trees. The sexes are alike in colouration. Photo Jenny Mead



African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) in last light. An elephant eats about 170 kgm of vegetation per day. Photo Chris Bunn



Marabou stock (*Leptoptilos crumeniferus*) Note the fleshy pouch on the foreneck Photo Chris Bunn

Australian Birdfair 13-15 November 2009

The Australian Birdfair 2009 will be held at the Yanco Agricultural Institute – Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre.

The village of Yanco is five kilometres south of Leeton, on the main Leeton-Narrandera road. The new venue offers a range of excellent facilities including on site accommodation.

The Australian Birdfair is to showcase our native wild birds, and the ecosystems of which they are part and dependent upon.

Australian Birdfair 13-15 November 2009

- ***Seminars and lectures about birds and other aspects of the natural world.***
 - Birding and Nature related organisations, Market Stalls
 - Exhibits of interest to the bird watching industry.
 - Evening events
 - Organised, and self guided birdwatching tours
 - Music, art, and varied cultural activities.

Ticket prices

- Adult One Day Ticket \$5 each
- Children (16 and under in the company of an adult) FREE

Tickets can be purchased at the entrance gate. We invite you to join us at the Australian Birdfair which showcases our native wild birds, and the ecosystems of which they are part and dependent upon. The Birdfair comprises a number of different events and exhibits all relating to birds and their environment.

Exhibitors

An invitation is extended to potential exhibitors wishing to be part the Australian Birdfair. For more information contact the Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands Trust.

Bookings and further enquires:

Australian Birdfair

Telephone +61 2 6953 2215 or
0407 262 496 or
0427 535 914

Email: coordinator@Australianbirdfair.org.au

or write to

Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands Trust
PO Box 357
LEETON NSW 2705

Email: trust@fivebough.org.au

Australian Birdfair Ramble

The York Optics and Steiner sponsored prize for the 2009 Australian Birdfair Ramble is a set of new birding binoculars.

Entry cards for the Ramble will be given with each entry ticket purchased to the Australian Birdfair.

The winner will be the first correct completed entry drawn, at the Australian Birdfair, 12.00pm Sunday Nov 15.

Who are the Field Naturalists?

The Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra (FNAC) was formed in 1981. Our aim is to foster interest in natural history by means of meetings and regular field outings. Meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of each month. Outings range from weekend rambles to long weekends away. Activities are advertised in our monthly newsletter. We emphasise informality and the enjoyment of nature. New members are always welcome. If you wish to join FNAC, please fill in the member application below and send it in with your subscription to the FNAC Treasurer at the address below:

President: Benj Whitworth

Secretary: Tony Lawson
fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

Website: www.geocities.com/fieldnaturalist/index.html

Newsletter editor: Chris Bunn <chris_b@webone.com.au>

Member contributions welcome.

Published and distributed by Bob Lehman



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, Australian National University. Park (occasionally the adjacent building 44). Meetings start at 7:30 pm and are followed by refreshments.



African fish eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*)
Noted for being very vocal photo Jenny Mead

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Family name: First name:

If a family membership, please include the first names of other members of the family:

.....

Postal address:

Suburb: State: Postcode: Home phone:

Work phone: Email address:

Subscription enclosed: \$.....(Single/Family \$20) Donation: \$.....

How did you hear about FNAC? Please circle: FRIEND? OTHER? Please specify: