

Activity Update April 2024

This activity update is for the month of April 2024. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke at the above email address, or view it on our webpage. These projects are from varied sources of funding including the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's Grassroots Grants, other small grants, and contract work.

Meldanda

1. Continued with managing the volunteers, camp bookings, provision of materials and equipment and all necessary administration managing the booking page, cleaning, watering, pump operations, weeding seed production area, astronomy paddock and maintenance of facilities. Kept neighbors informed of any camp bookings - we had twenty-six bookings for April, ninety-one adults and five children, nine of the bookings were for the astronomy paddock.

Community Nursery

2. Supported thirteen landholders or groups with plants, plant selection, projects, including donating fifty redgum seedlings to Black Hill Hall for their fundraising auction.
3. Volunteers have been weeding and potting on *Banksia*, *Acacia*'s and *Senna*'s, we have also been getting plant orders together ready for the planting season.



Figure 1 volunteers potting on plants.



Figure 2 volunteers weeding plants ready for orders.

Committee & other

- Managed the office, volunteers and all necessary administrations including monthly payment of bills, reports, invoicing, managing webpages and social media posts, scanned all receipts and reconciled monthly accounts in XERO.
- Sent out agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for the month to the Committee. We held our April meeting at the Cambrai Library.
- Supported the **Australasian Bat Society** Conference that was held in Adelaide, it was a three-day conference at Adelaide University with an array of interesting presentations from all over Australasia including conservation, health, monitoring, roosting ecology, morphology, and physiology. There were also some great posters, including one on the role of insectivorous bats in agricultural pest control: opportunities for research in a vegetable agroecosystem by Rani Davis from Queensland.
- Supported the **Australasian Bat Society** post conference field trip to Calperum Station. There were about fifty people who took part in the field trip, this included setting up harp traps and mist nests (all with the proper ethics approvals), with the intent of collecting more reference calls. We trapped twenty bats on the night which were all identified by bat expert Lindy Lumsden, with six different species. They were all released, and the calls captured to assist with acoustic monitoring surveys. One of the highlights was trapping *Chalinolobous picatus*, Little-pied bat, the attendees were most impressed at getting to see this species, it is also the featured bat species on the conference program.



Figure 3 poster on bat boxes.

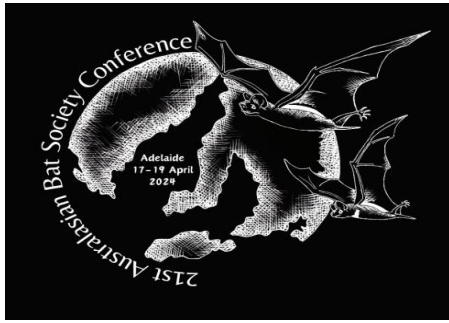


Figure 4 Bat Conference Little pied bat.



Figure 5 Setting up harp traps and mist nets at Calperum Station.

River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve - Chris Tugwell

8. Dark Sky committee discussions on equipment for Observatory.
9. Presentations by Torrens University student of business case, branding, and technical requirements of Observatory/Planetarium (CJT & Greg Stirling.)
10. Site visit to Cambrai School re ASSA's Science Week telescope event at the school in September (Andrew Cool & Ken Grant).
11. Meeting with local MP Tim Whetstone and architect John Byleveld seeking support for Observatory proposal.
12. Meeting with Peter Buckley and CEO Andy Spivey (Buckford Illuminations re dark sky lighting brochure for Council development applications.
13. Buckford Illuminations bus tour of dark sky compliant lighting in Salisbury Council area.

Feral Scan

14. We had three more goat sightings added to Feral Scan, all in the same area south of Sleeper Track.
15. Site visit to property where goat traps set up to move it to another location where there is more goat activity. We saw goats on the day we moved it and had also noticed they had been grazing on skeleton weed at the site.
16. Local landholder had taken some photos of the goats which we used to upload to FeralScan.
17. Discussed the idea of a field day with local landholders and Landscape Board Officer Rob McGregor.



Figure 6 new location for goat trap water point.



Figure 7 goat footprint.

Irongrass Native Grasslands Project

18. Aimee and volunteers have collected *Wahlenbergia* sp. by cutting plants back, *Lotus australis* and *Convolvulus remotus* by sucking up seed with the blower vac.
19. Aimee and volunteers have been cleaning seed, including *Wahlenbergia* sp. by rubbing the seed out, it is like fine dust, we also laid new harvested plants out to dry. We have also cleaned seed using sieves *Glycine* sp. *Eutaxia microphylla*, *Lotus australis*, *Bulbine bulbosa* and *Arthropodium* sp.
20. We also saw another insect that uses *Boerhavia dominii* in the seed production area, an instar of the *Hyles livornicoides*, the Australian Striped Hawk Moth. In central Australia it is a totem of the Aboriginal people, and they roast them up to eat.



Figure 8 collected seed laid out to dry.



Figure 9 Hawk Moth.

Supporting Biodiversity Across Conservation and Production Lands - Rowena Danks.

Maintain 1 partnership with Industry where Regent Parrot management is crucial to crop management.

21. Discussions with producers to assist in the development of the forum.

Maintain 2 x Seed Production Areas to support establishment and harvest of seed producing plants that contribute to the establishment of habitat for priority species in the Murray Mallee, Mid Murray, and Pastoral areas.

22. I had a planning meeting with Craig Gillespie on the 4th of April to discuss the ongoing management of the Seed Production Areas after this project.

23. Seed collection and maintenance work was carried out at the Whyte's Well SPA in April. *Lasiopetalum* sp. and *Billardiera* sp. seed collected, and netting removed from the *Billardiera* sp. plants. It was a very late seeding and there are still seeds ripening on these bushes but there was also new growth coming through the netting, so it was a bit of a balance between protecting the seeds and being able to untangle the netting before more growth occurs.



Figure 10, 11, 12 removal of netting from plants in the seed production area with volunteer Brian Teakle.

Harvest seed at two seed production areas as available.

24. *Lasiopetalum* sp. and *Billardiera* sp. seed collected at Whyte's well. This will be sieved and stored. Processing of *Billardiera* sp. seed will also need to be carried out before it is ready for sowing.



Figures 13 and 14 *Billardiera cymosa* fruit, some seed is still ripening after a mild summer.



Figure 15 *Kennedia prostrata* growing through mat.

25. Weed mat is deteriorating but this is allowing for *Kennedia prostrata* (as seen in figure 15) to shoot through and underneath the weed mat.

**Host 1 forum to support bee and bird management in productive systems.
Deliver forum to growers (40) to support establishment of functional and effective revegetation projects that support native and honey bees as well as native birds for integrated pest management.**

26. Planning has continued on the forum with a date range that suits most growers chosen for June.

Report on assessment of decoy crops and plantings to Regent Parrot Recovery Team (1 report) and source new funding for next phase of programs if relevant.

27. I presented the decoy crop and forage planting report at the Regent Parrot Recovery Team on 5th April.

28. I submitted a funding application to continue work on Regent Parrot Conservation work in the Riverland and Mallee areas.

Disseminate fact sheet.

29. I presented a draft of the fact sheet to the Regent Parrot Recovery Team and have a few changes to make as a result of the feedback from the group.

Attend Regent Parrot Recovery Team meeting.

30. I attended the Regent Parrot Recovery Team Meeting on 5th April as mentioned above, I reported on the Decoy Crop and Forage plantings for Regent Parrots, and I presented the draft fact sheet for Regent Parrots and Pollinators.

Grassroots Grant Application

31. I worked with Aimee and project partners to develop a grassroots grant submission to continue this work into 2024/25. This was submitted early in April, and we hope to hear news of the outcome before the completion of this current project.