

Activity Update June 2024

This activity update is for the month of June 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, made a few edits to the booking page, cleaning, watering, pump operations, weeding and collection from seed production areas, and general maintenance of facilities, had the septic and soakage emptied again.
2. Kept neighbors informed of any camp bookings - we had twenty-four bookings for June, ninety-five adults and forty-five children, eight of the bookings were for the astronomy paddock. There was also a Marne Saunders Water Meeting held in the recreation hall.
3. We had Mt Barker Scouts camp at Meldanda for two nights, they were engaged in many activities including a talk about the bat boxes on Bat Island and we did some inspections with the camera.



Figure 1 Mt Barker Scouts camp set up and flag.



Figure 2 Mt Barker Scouts bat talk and box inspection.

4. Shared a social media post on the hand-made card from Trinity Gardens Primary School.
5. We also had a lovely card sent to us from Cambrai PS thanking the volunteers for supporting Meldanda and the mural garden at the school, which was lovely.

Community Nursery

6. Supported thirteen landholders or groups with plants, plant selection, projects, including providing 300 Cockies Tongue (*Templetonia retusa*) for planting at an Almond Orchard to increase year-round flowering of natives and biodiversity on the site.
7. Volunteers have been sowing *Acacia* species and *Pittosporum angustifolium*, *Cyperus gymnocaulos*, *Lotus australis*, *Convolvulus remotus*, *Templetonia retusa* and potting on *Atriplex semibaccata*. Have still been getting plant orders together for landholders.
8. Volunteer Cryss did the annual stocktake for the nursery and we have sent that out to some interested landholders.
9. Site visit with new landholders that have purchased a Heritage property off Sleeper Track, to provide some advice on priority weeds and native plants.
10. Site visit with Keyneton Progress Association to discuss possible plant species and ideas for the main street of Keyneton.
11. Site visit to Keyneton Nature Reserve to see what support can be provided in managing the reserve, mainly for the invasive grass species.

Committee & other

12. 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. End of financial year mayhem with invoicing and paying invoices to finalise budgets.
13. Sent out agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for the month to the Committee. We held our June meeting at the Cambrai Library. Got some new Landcare stickers for the work ute.

14. Supported the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's Mallee Bioblitz at Yookamurra Sanctuary, topics covered included the MD Carpet Python, Mallee Looper, Fungi, Moss, Lichens and how to use iNaturalist app for logging sightings.



Figure 3 Nature Walk at Yookamurra.



Figure 4 Participants looking for fungi, moss and lichen.

15. Attended the online workshop presented by Trees for Life on 'Native Vegetation Feral Cat & Fox Control'.
16. Meeting with Maisie Byrne who has an internship with MRLB about a future community bat monitoring project along the Marne and Saunders Catchment.

Feral Scan

17. We had four landholders submit feral goat sightings, including one new contributor with approximately 100 goats seen.
18. We held the Marne Region Landholder Field Day on goats and weed control. We had nine landholders attend the event, Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's Compliance Officer Ian Hunter spoke about regulations for keeping goats and what the rules are for ferals. MRLB District Officer Rob McGregor spoke about how to manage feral goats, what options there are and demonstrated how to control Wheel Cactus, *Opuntia robusta* and African Boxthorn, *Lycium ferocissimum*. We had the days event filmed and will hopefully create some YouTube Videos for the landholders who were unable to attend. We also promoted the use of FeralScan and the value of using this mapping tool to help manage goats and other ferals in the region. One of the attendees said the field day was

"A very good well-structured 2 hours. All was relevant to me and our property".



Figure 5 Field Day talk about goats with Rob McGregor.

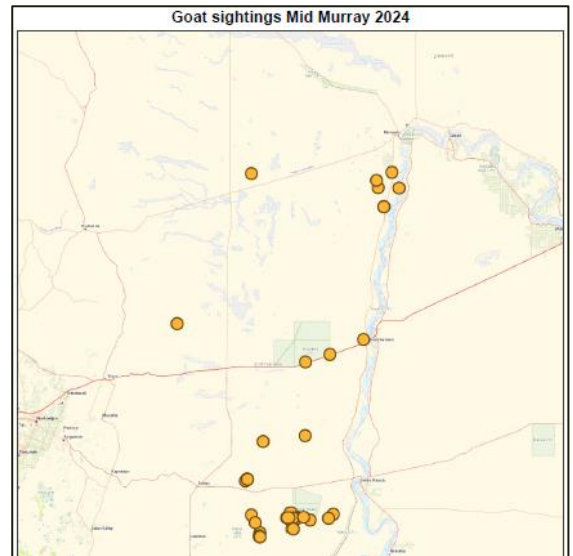


Figure 6 Map to date of goat sightings in the region.

Irongrass Native Grasslands Project

19. Supported the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board with a planting project at Poonthie Ruwe Conservation Park, there was a group of thirteen who all helped on the day. The species planted on the day was Scented Mat-rush (aka Irongrass), *Lomandra effusa*, they were planted in groups of four, some were treated with Kangaroo scats and others with no treatment. They all had small fencing exclosures placed around them that were designed to avoid trying to hit droppers into the sheet limestone. It was a very successful day and there will be follow up watering and monitoring done at the site.



Figure 7 Kate Graham demonstrating planting and watering.



Figure 8 Plants with fencing enclosure completed.

20. Site visit to mark out grassland trial sites at landholders' property near 3 Chain Rd, Cambrai. We will work with the landholders to set up two grazing exclusion trials over the coming years and monitor the response over time. Have been organising the purchase of the materials for the project before the end of financial year. We will trial some fencing material call Stiff Stay which has an inbuilt apron at the base of the wire to prevent animals from digging underneath.



Figure 9 Proposed grassland trial site near Cambrai.



Figure 10 Kate and Priya mapping and marking trial site boundary.

MD Carpet Python

21. Supported Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Boards Threatened Fauna Ecologist, Melissa Burford with starting the ethics permit to hopefully incorporate some radiotracking of MD Carpet Pythons to learn more about critical habitat components.
22. Prepared a habitat assessment sheet to collect data on places pythons have been seen.
23. Site visit to property along the Marne for a habitat assessment of where a verified MD Carpet Python scat was located. Provided assessment information and map to Melissa Burford.
24. Reviewed and provided comment on some promotional material that is being developed for the project.
25. Site visit to Moorunde Wildlife Reserve with Head Ranger Adrian Jones to look at the sites where the MD Carpet Pythons have been sighted and completed habitat assessments.

Supporting Biodiversity Across Conservation and Production Lands - Rowena Danks.

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

- 26. Discussions with producers to assist in the development of the forum. And follow up conversations to encourage people to attend the forum.
- 27. Continued in this reporting period to encourage participation in the forum.
- 28. We were glad to have representatives from Almond, Apple, Pear, Cherry, Strawberry, Lucerne and other Ag crop producers, at the Forum.

Maintain 2 x Seed Production Areas.

- 29. In June maintenance work was carried out at both Seed Production Areas. Weeding and checking irrigation at each site was carried out.
- 30. Both sites have *Leptospermum coriaceum* seedlings growing well which means they have survived a year since being planted at the sites. This gives a good start for these shrubs and should provide a good establishment for healthy shrubs in the future.

Harvest seed at two seed production areas as available.

- 31. Seed was collected at both sites, and Mid Murray Landcare Volunteers, Sheralee and Brenton helped to sieve the seeds for storage.



Figure 11 *Leptospermum coriaceum*.



Figure 12 *Lasiopetalum* sp. in sieves.

Maintain seed database.

32. The seed database will be finalised for the year once the *Billardiera cymosa* seeds have been processed – currently with Blackwood Seeds

Host 1 forum to support bee and bird management in productive systems.

33. The forum was held on June 18th at Swan Reach. It was a successful day with lots of great feedback from delegates.

34. Jerry Zimmer from The Branded Story has filmed the day for us and these videos will be made available on the new Mid Murray Landcare SA YouTube Channel.

35. Thanks to all our speakers and to Tony Clark and Tony Costa for the tour of the Costa Orchard and Cracking plant and Activated Carbon site.



Figures 13 and 14 Tony Costa and Tony Clark gave the group a tour of the orchard, cracking plant and activated carbon site.

36. Other speakers that presented at the forum included.

- 'Habitat design to support integrated pest management in orchards', by Phil Barron - Barron Environmental.
- The Future of Pollination in Horticulture Katja Hogendoorn - Senior Researcher at the University of Adelaide - specialising in crop pollination.
- Supporting beneficial insects in orchard crops Lizzy Lowe- Invertebrates Australia

- The presentations were held at the Swan Rach Hall and catered by the local hall committee who did an amazing job, as usual.



Figure 15 Phil Barron – Barron Environmental



Figure 16 Katja Hogendoorn – University of Adelaide



Figure 17 Lizzy Lowe – Invertebrates Australia (virtual presentation)

Disseminate fact sheet.

37. The fact sheet (species calendar) was promoted to all delegates at the Forum and is available for the public to access. A printable list is attached, and this contains a link to a web version that can be filtered to suit the grower.

Link local producers (honey and cropping/grazing) to National programs that support honey bee health or increased production.

38. A Pollinator update was produced and sent to the Pollinator Update list and shared on Facebook in June. This Update covered Varroa Update, a summary of the Pollinator and IPM in Horticulture Forum at Swan Reach, promotion of the Cambrai Community Nursery Catalogue, research on Clover for Bees and research on native bees in pollination.

Figure 18 *Templetonia refusa* seedlings grown for winter flowering planting at Aroona Almond Orchards.



River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

39. No update this month.