



LANDSCOPE EXPEDITIONS

Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management,
Locked Bag 29, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983
in association with
UWA Extension, The University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6907

Beyond the Dreaming - Project Eden 1997
***LANDSCOPE* Expedition Report No. 20**

FROM THE EXPEDITION LEADERS

On behalf of CALM and UWA Extension we would like to thank all members of the Project Eden Expedition for your support. The success of these trips can be measured by the data collected and the gain in knowledge that results. Thanks to Terry Harrison for driving and his excellent culinary skills and combining with Pete to entertain us with many jokes. We hope all participants have gained from this experience and we look forward to having the pleasure of your company on future expeditions.

Graeme (Tub) Liddelow, Per Christensen, Keith Morris, Pete Speldewinde, Ray Smith and Steve Triton.



Members of the Beyond the Dreaming - Project Eden *LANDSCOPE* Expedition 1997

EXPEDITION ACHIEVEMENTS

- Feral track counts in two circuits on four mornings
- Trapping in all 6 grids on four mornings
- Setting up 2 new trapping grids in the south
- Trapping of 2 cats for radio tracking to further estimate home ranges of feral cats on the Peninsula
- Assessment of vegetation exclusion plots
- Opportunistic bird list for the Peninsula
- Road markers painted, numbered and placed around the Woylie and Mallee Fowl release area
- Drying meat baits for aerial baiting
- Radio tracking feral goats and cats.

EXPEDITION MEMBERS

Kathleen Fisher, Ross Green, Olga Green, Lex Hansen, Shirley La Planche, Anita Lawford, Joe Manera, Ruth Prior, Judith Rowan, Jeremy Talbot*, Val Talbot and Kaye Vaux. (*Sadly Jeremy Talbot died in August.)

DIARY OF THE BEYOND THE DREAMING - PROJECT EDEN *LANDSCOPE* EXPEDITION 1997

Saturday May 3 Landscape Expeditioners arrive at Peron around 7 pm. Bed sites claimed and evening meal consumed (Snapper entree) then discussion of next days activities, then into bed.

Sunday May 4 Divide into three groups, one with Pete (complete with note from his Mum) head north to open up grids already in place. The other two groups prepare new traps which we start to install in the afternoon. Then back to camp for hot tub, evening meal and bed.

Monday May 5 Early rise to check the traps and the drag lines for feral tracks. This takes care of the morning then back to camp for lunch. Afternoon sees one group with Pete and Keith preparing the road markers whilst the others go with Tub to the new southern trap line to complete its installation.

Tuesday May 6 Traps and drag lines again take care of the morning and after lunch Pete's group head off to put the road markers in place, Per and Keith's group check distances for the radio tracking towers, and Tub's group head off to start on the vegetation plots. In the evening a small group went to see the mallee fowl in their enclosure.

Wednesday May 7 Again traps and drag lines this morning plus Lex and Ross went with Steve to check on traps set for cats. They caught one in the last trap. This animal was fitted with a radio collar and released that evening. The afternoon saw more road markers placed out and the happy band of vegetators went vegetating again. Also, in the afternoon 6000 baits were prepared for the aerial drop on Friday. Another group went to the mallee fowl enclosure this evening. The hot tub is a welcome end to a long day.

Thursday May 8 Today its closing all traps, after checking them of course, and the last day for the drag lines. A mini revolt occurred on the northern trap line (led by "I'll get lost by myself" Anita) and Pete in true form (with a note from his Mum) gave in to majority rule. After lunch it is up to Cape Peron for an evening of fishing, seabird watching, beach combing and camping on the beach. What a wonderful night under the stars by the sea.....

Friday May 9 After a beach breakfast it is off to Herald Bight to explore the mangroves for birds, crabs and spectacular views for those who climbed up Herald Bluff. The afternoon saw more vegetation assessments and radio tracking of the goats and the cat. Pete flew home today (I think he ran out of notes).

Saturday May 10 This morning is a late start and after a leisurely breakfast it is off to Monkey Mia to meet the Dolphins. Joe went with Steve to check the cat traps as he had seen the Dolphins before. It was then back to camp for lunch, more vegetating and start to pack up for tomorrow's departure. Last hot tub, then into the *Old Pearler* for our last supper.

Sunday May 11 Up early and after breaky the serious packing starts. Vehicles loaded and on the road by 7 am. Well done all. Numerous stops along the way and lunch at Port Denison then on to Perth, friends, loved ones and home. Farewell new friends. Thank you everyone for your tremendous efforts, I hope to see you all again.

Graeme Liddelow

TRAPPING AT PERON PENINSULAR 1997

Each morning for four mornings a team of enthusiastic expeditioners led by Keith Morris and Pete Speldewinde checked the traps set in 6 trapping grids that are used to monitor the abundance of small vertebrates in the park. Duplicate grids have been established in three different dominant vegetation associations: *Acacia* Heath, *Spinifex* Scrubland and Coastal Heath. Each grid consists of 16 trap points in a 4x4 pattern with 20 m between each trap point. An Elliot trap and pitfall trap with 5 m of collecting fence was set up at each point. The groups were rotated to allow everyone the chance of being on the trapping and a total of 4 native mammals, one introduced species (the house mouse) and 7 species of reptile were recorded.

The information collected from this trapping session will be added to previous data collected in 1995 and 1996 and used in the longer term to see whether cat and fox control leads to an increase in abundance of small vertebrates.

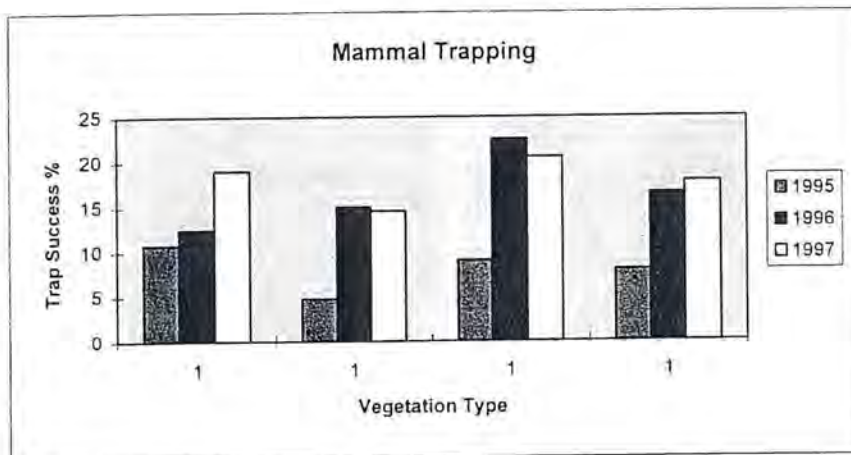
Mammal numbers are higher on all grids when compared with those of 1995 and 1996, however, reptile numbers were lower. Seasonal conditions just prior to and during the trapping sessions influence results considerably and it is only after collecting this type of data over long periods (5-10 years) that trends become apparent.

SMALL MAMMALS AND REPTILES TRAPPED AT PERON 1997

SPECIES	<i>Acacia</i> Heath	<i>Spinifex</i> Scrub	Coastal Heath
MAMMALS			
Spinifex Hopping Mouse	*	*	*
Sandy Inland Mouse	*	*	*
Hairy Footed Dunnart	*	*	*
Long Tail Dunnart		*	
House Mouse	*	*	*
REPTILES			
<i>Diplodactylus</i> sp.		*	
<i>Diplodactylus strophurus</i>		*	*
<i>Nephrurus levis</i>	*		
<i>Ctenophorus maculatus</i>	*	*	
<i>Aprasia</i> sp.	*		
<i>Lerista planiventralis</i>	*		
<i>Morethia lineocellata</i>		*	

MAMMALS

	1995	1996	1997
<i>Acacia</i>	10.75	12.5	19
<i>Spinifex</i>	4.75	15	14.5
Coastal	9	22.5	20.5
Combined	8	16.5	17.8





Planning the operation, from left Kaye, Tub, Lex, Ruth and Ross (photo: Ruth Prior)



Preparing drift fences (photo: Ruth Prior)



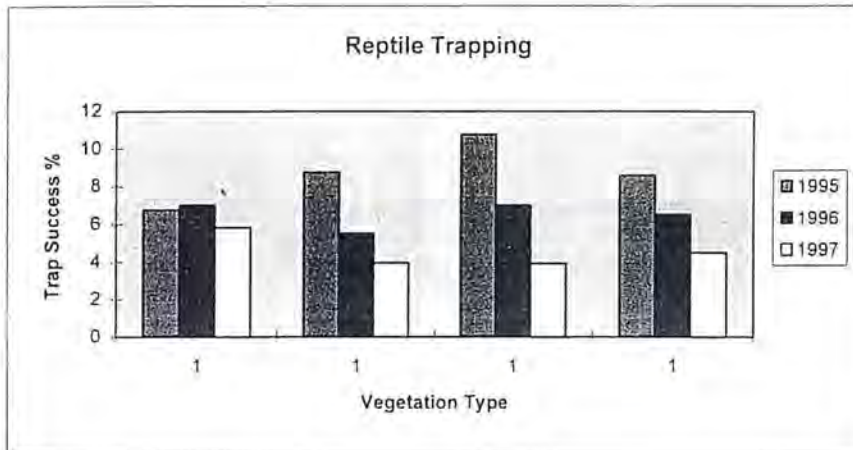
Tub checking for cat tracks (photo: Ruth Prior)



Setting up the drift fences (photo: Anita Lawford)

REPTILES

	1995	1996	1997
<i>Acacia</i>	6.75	7	5.8
Spinifex	8.75	5.5	3.95
Coastal	10.75	7	3.9
Combined	8.6	6.5	4.5



FERAL TRACK COUNTS

Two feral track count routes were covered each morning. The data collected on these counts is used as the base data for measuring reductions in numbers after the baiting carried out on 9 May. These were the baits that the group helped to prepare.

Both circuits were of similar distance and although the numbers in the central circuit (Per's run) are slightly higher than the southern circuit (Tub's run) the difference is too small to worry about. Both circuits had higher numbers on Wednesday 7th and the numbers dropped off again on Thursday 8th.

The interesting thing will be the number of tracks counted when we do these circuits after the baiting, and also next year after several baitings.

No foxes were detected on either circuit, which shows how successful the baiting carried out in 1995 for foxes has been.

CENTRAL CIRCUIT 28 km

Date	No. Cats	Cats/100 km
5/5/97	9	32
6/5/97	9	32
7/5/97	17	60
8/5/97	14	50
Av.	12.25	43.5

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT 29 km

Date	No. Cats	Cats/100 km
5/5/97	9	31
6/5/97	9	31
7/5/97	14	48
8/5/97	11	38
Av.	10.75	37

VEGETATION SURVEYS

Olga and her team of happy vegetators managed to complete monitoring 16 of the 26 exclusion plots set up on the Peninsula. As well as the 62 species of plants collected last year a further 21 species have been collected this year. This number will no doubt increase with further measurements and probably we will find some of our new plants could be variants of the original 62. Monitoring of these plots will continue annually, to measure the effect of grazing and the succession of plants after fire.

BIRDS OF THE PENINSULAR

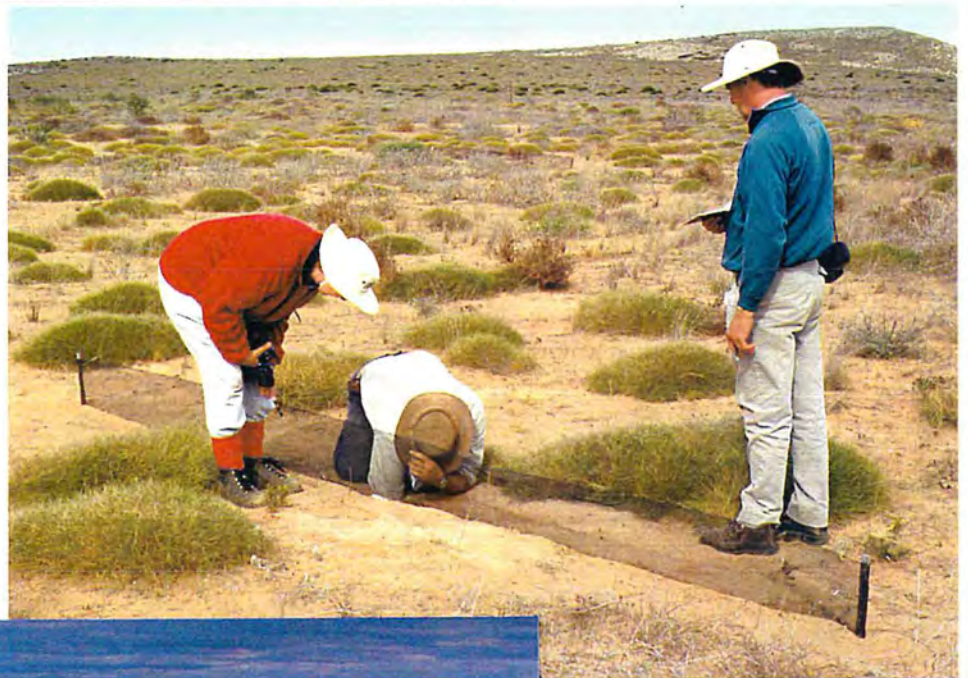
Even though we did not spend much time on bird observations, Val and Jeremy Talbot did manage to spend two mornings out and about on bird censusing. All other records were observational and the list below will be added to on each trip to the Peron. Although this list is not complete we did observe a total of 57 species, which is a considerable achievement given the limited amount of time we spent birding.

NO.	COMMON NAME	RAOU NO.	NO.	COMMON NAME	RAOU NO.
1	Emu	1	30	Tree Martin	359
2	Australian Grebe	61	31	Richard's Pipit	647
3	Australian Pelican	106	32	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	426
4	Pied Cormorant	99	33	Southern Scrub-robin	441
5	Striated/Mangrove Heron	193	34	Red-capped Robin	381
6	Australian Shelduck	207	35	Hooded Robin	385
7	Osprey	241	36	Rufous Whistler	401
8	White-bellied Sea-eagle	226	37	Grey Shrike-thrush	408
9	Wedge-tailed Eagle	224	38	Crested Bellbird	419
10	Brown Falcon	239	39	Grey Fantail	361
11	Australian Kestrel	240	40	Willie Wagtail	364
12	Australian Bustard	176	41	Chiming Wedgebill	865
13	Sand Plover	141	42	White-browed Babbler	445
14	Pied Oystercatcher	130	43	Brown Songlark	508
15	Red-capped Plover	143	44	Spendid Fairy-wren	532
16	Ruddy Turnstone	129	45	Variegated Fairy-wren	536
17	Greenshank	158	46	White-winged Fairy-wren	535
18	Grey-tailed Tattler	155	47	Thick-billed Grasswren	512
19	Bar-tailed Godwit	153	48	White-browed Scrubwren	488
20	Red-necked Stint	162	49	Inland Thornbill	476
21	Caspian Tern	112	50	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	481
22	Crested Tern	115	51	Singing Honeyeater	608
23	Silver Gull	125	52	Mistletoebird	564
24	Laughing Turtle-dove	988	53	Yellow White-eye	576
25	Common Bronzewing	34	54	Silvereye	574
26	Crested Pigeon	43	55	Zebra Finch	653
27	Galah	273	56	Black-faced Woodswallow	546
28	Sacred Kingfisher	326	57	Little Crow	691
29	Welcome Swallow	357			



Lex Hansen checks
pit traps
(photo: Tub Liddelow)

Ruth, Lex and Ross
checking pit traps
(photo: Tub Liddelow)



Cape Peron
(photo: Tub Liddelow)

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