Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust Newsletter

July 2016 Edition
Issue 3

Busy year ahead for Trust

2016 is well underway and the Trust was excited to receive the final reports from the Malleefowl and Sandhill Dunnart projects. These projects set the foundation for future work that will be carried out in the Great Victoria Desert on these threatened species. The Trust also participated in the Goldfields Environmental Management Group workshop in Kalgoorlie, delivering a presentation on offset delivery types. Progress has been made on the Adaptive Management Partnership project – the Trust's largest project focussing on delivering on-ground benefits for threatened species at the landscape level.

Finally, the Trust would like to give a warm thank you to Ian Kealley who is retiring from the Department of Parks and Wildlife after 32 years as the Regional Manager in the Goldfields. Ian has been a key member of the Trust's Management Panel since its inception, providing extensive input and utilising his local knowledge and network to support the aims of the Trust to deliver benefits for biodiversity in the region.

Kathryn Sinclair

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GREAT VICTORIA DESERT

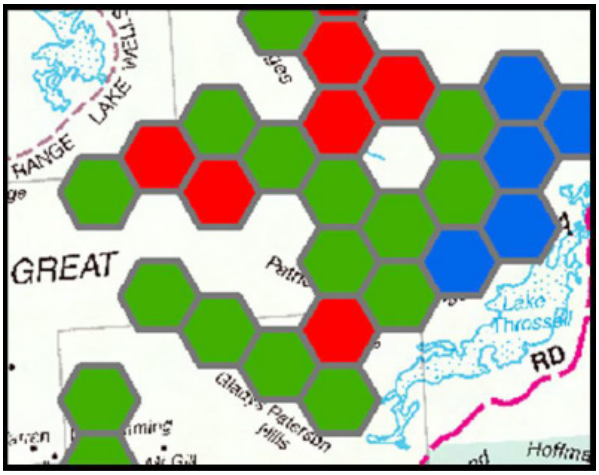
Project Outcomes

Sandhill Dunnart Projects

The combined Sandhill Dunnart project is complete with two key components — a Sandhill Dunnart survey and monitoring guideline and a baseline survey design.

The aim of this project is to allow anyone conductinThe Sandhill Dunnart survey and monitoring guideline is aimed at allowing anyone conducting surveys for Sandhill Dunnarts to conduct them in a consistent manner, which optimises the likelihood of detecting the species, if they are present.
The survey guidelines contains pitfall trapping protocols, a camera trapping protocol and monitoring guidelines.

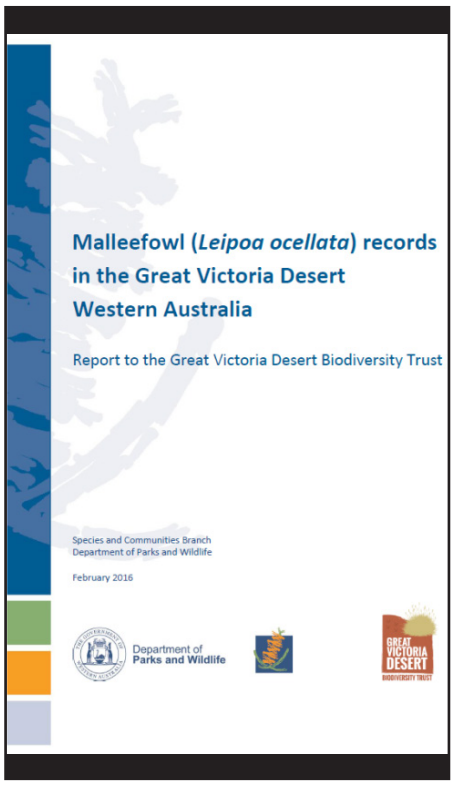
The second part of the Sandhill Dunnart study is a baseline survey design.
This survey design uses a multi-criteria model and stratified random sampling based on three dominant habitat types: low woodland, spinifex grassland; and tall shrubland.
The GVD was divided into a number of planning units based on their habitat types.
Factors were inputted to the model including road accessibility, fire age and mining activity.
In the end 20 sites have been selected representing an array of habitat types, spread across the region.
The next stage for the Trust is to fund Sandhill Dunnart surveys, using the survey guidelines, out to these selected sites.



Malleefowl Project

The Malleefowl records collation has been completed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

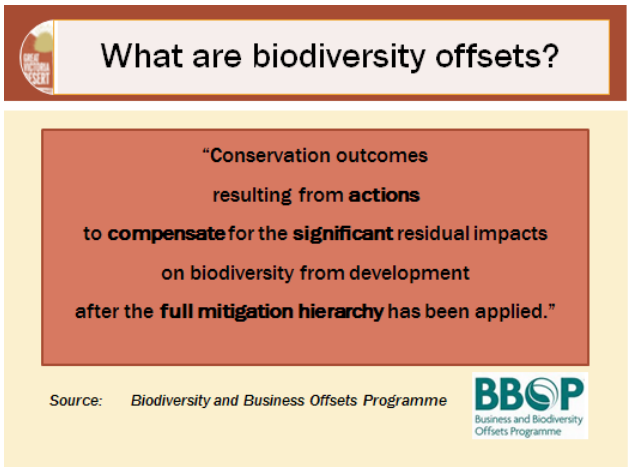
This project contacted many of the stakeholders in the region, attempting to obtain their records of Malleefowl mounds, sightings, footprints or any other evidence of Malleefowl in the GVD. The Parks and Wildlife team designed a database to capture and locate spatially these records. The project added 76 records to the 130 records already in the Naturemap database. The authors of the report highlighted that there has been a distinct lack of targeted species surveys for the Malleefowl and most of the sightings are opportunistic and are mainly limited to areas with built infrastructure such as roads. 177 records were captured in Level 1, Level 2 and targeted surveys. Parks and Wildlife also produced a full version of the Malleefowl sighting report form as well as a simplified version. These templates are designed to be updated by experts (for the full version) or by casual observers (simplified version). The two versions were designed to try and capture as many records as possible of Malleefowl detection in the GVD. Additional records will be added to the database as they come in.



GEMG Presentation

The Goldfields Environmental Management Group (GEMG) is a technical and professional group facilitating environmental excellence in the Goldfields region.

The GEMG holds a three day conference every two years. This year the Operations Manager of the Trust was the first speaker, following the welcome address from Governor General Hon. Kerry Sanderson. The presentation focussed on the historical and current trends in the offset practices focussing on the Trust's model as a case study. Many organisations expressed an interest in learning more about the Trust and understanding its delivery mechanisms. The three day conference was well attended with over 45 presentations.



Adaptive Management Partnership

On Friday 3 June the first meeting of the partners of Adaptive Management partnership project met to discuss how to work together to achieve benefits for biodiversity in the region.

The first meeting of the partners of the Adaptive Management partnership project.

The workshop centred on the question of 'What can we achieve together, that we can't achieve separately?.'
The participants included representatives from Pila Nguru Aboriginal Corporation, Cosmos Newberry Aboriginal Corporation, Rangelands NRM, Department of Parks and Wildlife and Conservation Management.
In addition members of the Trust's Management Panel including Dr Garry Middle, Ian Kealley, Norm Galli and John Millikan (representing Nerilee Rockman).

The meeting was a great opportunity for partners to understand the discussions that had taken place and how in the future the partners could work together, utilising the skills and experience of each group to achieve the best possible on-ground projects.
The groups each provided interesting information on projects they had completed, were undertaking or planned to undertake in the future.

One key topics coming out of the workshop was the importance of developing a collective monitoring and evaluation process to ensure that the knowledge and experience gained from each on-ground project could be documented.
This would ensure future projects utilised the strengths and weaknesses of previous projects.

Farewell to Ian Kealley

Thanks and farewell to Ian Kealley

Ian is leaving the Trust and the Department of Parks and Wildlife after 32 years as Regional Manager in the Goldfields region. Ian leaves behind a lasting legacy of environmental knowledge, expertise and action in the region.

Ian (second from left), together with Belinda Bastow, led a trip for the Management Panel to the Great Victoria Desert of key sites and nature reserves across the region.

Ian started working in the government for the Forests Department in 1976.
Different roles in the Forest Department took Ian across the southern region of the state including Busselton, Manjimup, Kirup, Bunbury and finally to Kalgoorlie in 1984 which would become his home for the next 32 years.
In 1985 the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) was formed and Ian was appointed Goldfields Regional Manager.

In this newly created department Ian established key programs of Nature Conservation, Recreation and Tourism, and Sustainable Utilisation of Resources.

CALM underwent a number of changes throughout Ian's tenure as Regional Manager, changing to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) in 2006 and to the Department of Parks and Wildlife in 2013.
Throughout these changes Ian remained a constant force, guiding the department to achieve strong outcomes in arid land management, flora and fauna knowledge and management, conservation reserve management, timber industry management (sandalwood and specialty timbers) and effective cooperative arrangements with Aboriginal communities in the region.

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Farewell to Ian Kealley

HIghlights for Ian have been developing Aboriginal joint management and the extensive work done with Aboriginal people across the deserts.

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Ian described one of the highlights of his time in Kalgoorlie as “developing Aboriginal joint management and the extensive work done with Aboriginal people across the deserts, the opportunity to travel extensively throughout the outback, conversion of 1.9 million ha of former pastoral leases to conservation management and the very successful adaptive management program at Lorna Glen and Earaheedy that has seen integrated land management and successful mammal reintroductions”.

Ian has worked tirelessly, not only in his role in the department, but also by sharing his knowledge with working groups, committees and Boards in the region.
He has published over 20 papers seeking to improve the wider public’s understanding of biodiversity in the region and the changes and impacts that are occurring within the landscape.
In recognition of his work, Ian has won numerous awards – the most recent of which was the ‘Service to the Goldfields Environmental Management Group and Goldfields Environment” in May 2016.

Following involvement in all aspects of the planning and environmental impact assessment in the GVD Ian Kealley has been on the Management Panel of the Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust since its inception in 2013. During this time he has been invaluable to the Trust and the development of projects. He has contributed his local knowledge and insights as well as sharing his expertise in achieving on-ground results in a vast and arid environment.
His expertise was especially appreciated when he led, together with Belinda Bastow, a trip for the Management Panel to the Great Victoria Desert, taking the Panel to key sites and nature reserves across the region. This trip greatly helped Management Panel members gain an understanding of the richness of the region as well as the complexities involved in implementing landscape scale solutions in a remote and vast region.
From all the Management Panel and me, we thank you for all your efforts in the Trust and wish you all the best in your next adventures!