



THE BABBLER



News from Gluepot Reserve Winter 2024

Award for our Patron.



Duncan MacKenzie

At the AGM for Birdlife Australia on May 25th 2024, Duncan MacKenzie was made an Honorary Life Member of Birdlife Australia. This award recognizes his outstanding contribution to the organization.

Duncan was the Chairperson of the Gluepot Management Committee for 23 years, stepping down in 2020. He is currently the Patron of Gluepot Reserve.

His vision for, and steadfast commitment to Gluepot Reserve, has taken conservation management into a new era.

He spearheaded the creation of the Gluepot Reserve Foundation which has secured the long term future of the Reserve, and was the driving force behind the over 40 awards, both State and National, that Gluepot received in the areas of environmental management, ecotourism, landcare, leadership and science.

He has always been a strong advocate for embracing the idea that the Reserve be managed entirely by volunteers. Inspired by his enthusiasm, these dedicated, multi skilled volunteers have established an Education Centre, Visitor's Centre, Library, Accommodation block, multiple bird hides, and electric fencing to help with feral animal control.

Duncan continues to contribute to many other conservation organisations, all of which benefit from his expertise. He has more than earned the level of recognition an Honorary Life Membership affords.

Our congratulations and thanks go out to Duncan.

Students at Gluepot

Since 2020, Gluepot has partnered with the Adelaide University to offer 3 week internships for their students. This program is working well, and students have done research on a range of topics including ecotourism and the damage that the Looper moth has done to the Mallee environment.

As well as their research commitments, an internship at Gluepot gives them first hand experience of the day-to-day running of a Conservation property. Two of our Interns have returned to do another Internship for their Masters Degrees.

Recently, Gluepot hosted Davis Lau Chi Ki, a student from the University of Queensland. Davis is helping to analyse the data from 25 years of bird atlassing at Gluepot. This is part of a larger project being overseen by Professor Hugh Possingham, a board member of Birdlife Australia. While at Gluepot, Davis was shown all the 78 atlassing sites, and took many photos to take back with him.

He gave 2 interesting presentations regarding this project to volunteers who were also at Gluepot for bird banding and revegetating.



Davis giving a presentation in the Library

Revegetation Project

Landscapes SA approached Gluepot recently with an offer to provide 550 plants native to the Mallee area, enough wire netting to be made into tree guards, as well as 36,000 Litres of water to be delivered over 6 months.

With the help of 11 volunteers, and under the supervision of Toby Galligan and Priya Spencer from Landscapes SA, these plants were put in the ground at the end of July. Four sites were chosen i.e. between the Visitors Centre and the new Toilet block: in bare areas around the Homestead Dam: near the Whistler picnic shed: near the Solar panel array.

Large basins were dug, and 2 plants were put in each. Plants not already in an enclosure were guarded, and all plants were watered in.

The water provision was interesting. The week prior, Rangers Dave and Di Georg, helped by the firies who were at Gluepot doing the annual prescribed burn, emptied a 21, 000 Litre tank on the Birdseye Block that was not being used. This tank held about 11,000 litres, and the water was carted in 1,000L cubes to the Homestead area. Some of this water is being temporarily stored in cubes, and an old milk tanker.

Then, the large tank was also transported back to the Homestead area on a trailer. This will then be filled with the water donated by Landscapes SA and used for future waterings.



Photographs provided by Dave Georg, Andrew Humpage and Sandy Dickson

Fire Management at Gluepot

Fire is a natural and important process in Mallee ecosystems. Large fires, now more common, pose a major threat to biodiversity. The aim of the fire management program is to prevent large-scale fires by using prescribed burns.



Every year a group of experienced fire-fighters, led by Chris Grant, carry out prescribed burns on Gluepot. The 2024 burn program commenced on 31st May, and was completed on the 21st July.

The burns took place in the Birdseye block, and the strategy is to break the block into compartments separated by areas of low fuel which are at least 100m wide. Low fuel areas are areas of gypsum, bluebush, black oak, with no spinifex.



5.1 Km of fire breaks were burnt, and these link up existing fire breaks and low fuel areas, to protect the high fuel areas of spinifex habitat. The drone photo on the left, taken by Davis Lau Chi Ki, clearly shows how well the fire fighters contain the burn to a 100 metre path.



Prescribed burning photographs by Chris Grant

Seeding around Final Dam

As part of the Linking Landscapes Project, Gluepot received an allocation of funds to trial innovative restoration approaches in the mallee to support threatened mallee birds.

As numbers of White-browed Treecreepers are known to be declining in the area, it was decided to improve their habitat near Black Oak woodland. The area around Final Dam, which had been decommissioned in 2011, has a large patch of *Casuarina pauper* as well as much bare earth where the dam was closed.



The Seeder

Andrew Fairney, founder of Seeding Natives Inc., was engaged to seed the bare areas. He used a combination of native grass seed and chenopod seed. Photopoints have been set up to monitor the site.



The seed mix



Bare areas after seeding

Photographs by Andrew Fairney

Bird Banding at Gluepot

A group of 5 Bird Banders were at Gluepot on the same weekend as the Revegetation project.

Four of these Banders are training for their A Class licence , and were supervised by Jim Spiker, the leader of the flock.

They were banding at Picnic Dam in the mornings, and helped out with the planting in the afternoons. We were very pleased to have their help.

Unfortunately, the weather was not helpful, being cold, windy with a few drops of rain. Despite this, 31 birds were banded overall, mostly on the Saturday. The White-fronted Honeyeater was the most numerous bird. Others included the Turquoise Fairy-wren (previously Splendid Fairy-wren), Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and Red-capped Robin.



Photographs by Steve Francis and Betty Brezovskis

Education Courses

Introduction to Bird Banding	5-7 October	Getting to know Reptiles	2-3 November
Introduction to Birds and Birdwatching	12-13 October	Studying Insects at Gluepot	15-17 November
Painting Nature	19-20 October	Bats of Gluepot	22-24 November
Beginners Guide to Mallee Vegetation	26-27 October		

For more information on each Course, and to Book a Course, visit the Website– www.gluepot.org

A Call for Volunteers

Weed Blitz 17-18 August Contact **Dave Georg** dave.georg56@gmail.com or **John Glover** john.glover@hotmail.com.au

Malleefowl Nest Survey 16-18 September Contact Sue Nettlefold [jdsnett@gmail.com](mailto:jdsmnett@gmail.com)

Biodiversity Studies 21-24 October Contact Sue Nettlefold jdsnett@gmail.com

Watering There are now about 400 basins that will require regular watering for the next 18-24 months. If you would be prepared to help with this, please contact Sue Nettlefold - jdsnett@gmail.com or 0418839214

Spring is a wonderful time to visit Gluepot. The Mallee is awash with colour, and many birds find their way to Gluepot.

If you volunteer for any of these activities, we hope you will also be able to spend some time exploring this iconic Reserve. There is accommodation available for volunteers. Contact the Rangers by email or phone as below.

GLUEPOT RESERVE

Gluepot Reserve is a Reserve of Birdlife Australia. ABN: 75 149 124 774

Ranger Contact details: Email: gluepot@gluepot.org Telephone: (08) 8892 8600

Postal address: PO Box 345, Waikerie, SA 5330 Website: www.gluepot.org On Facebook.

Gluepot is a not-for-profit conservation reserve, managed and operated entirely by volunteers.

It is funded through donations and bequests from its supporters, and by grants for capital works and projects.

If you wish to support the Reserve by being a donor or providing a bequest, please contact the Chairman:

Ian Falkenberg E-Mail: hawknest2@bigpond.com Phone: 0428842873

This 'Gluepot' Newsletter is produced as an e-newsletter, and is not available as a printed version.

Contributions, comment, and feedback may be forwarded to the editors—Sue Nettlefold and Bronwyn Mart

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