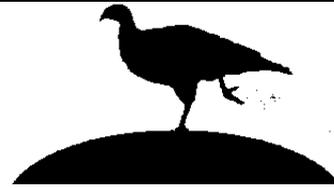


Victorian Malleefowl Recovery Group

25 Belfast Street
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Newsletter January 2004

At the Annual General Meeting held at Wyperfeld National Park during the Training Weekend on October 11, the following

executive was elected-

President, Neil Macfarlane (03) 9439 6808

Vice-President, David Thompson

Secretary, Ann Stokie (03) 5229 8648

0409 356 426, annos@iprimus.com.au

Treasurer, Ralph Patford 5275 3019

Committee members

Noel Hayward

Shelley Heron - Conference Convenor

Ross Macfarlane - Safety Officer

Peter Stokie - Equipment Coordinator

Ron Wiseman

The amended constitution was approved and will be distributed after it is accepted by the Department of Consumer Affairs.



TREASURER'S REPORT by Ralph Patford

Last Financial Year

Financially the VMRG ended last year in good shape. We were left with a balance of \$4579, having spent \$5136 of our \$9715 income. Almost \$3000 of the balance is set aside for database redesign and will be spent in the not too distant future. Copies of the more detailed audited accounts were distributed at the Training Weekend but I can forward additional copies on request by email r_patford@hotmail.com

This Financial Year

Parks Victoria has approved a grant in excess of \$7000 for this financial year and memberships are up around 50 already. Consequently, we will have enough funds to meet our modest requirements during this financial year. Establishment and on-going expenses related to the new website were not budgeted for but will be met from last year's surplus. We will also use the surplus to fund Ron and Gwyn Wiseman to complete a magnificent malleefowl video.

National Malleefowl Forum

We have opened a separate account and established Merchant Facilities with our bank, allowing us to accept credit card payments. Sponsorship is now approaching \$20 000. A number of promotional items will be available, some for the National Forum and some for the VMRG.

Special Status Applications

We will continue to press our claims for Tax Exempt status and Deductible Gift Recipient status. The former may be more easily gained than the latter, but we will persist.

New Members

If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining VMRG let me know and I will send them a form. Annual membership is \$25 per household or \$15 per individual, and Membership and General Interest Brochures are currently being produced and will be available before the National Forum.



Peter Stokie working to secure a monitoring stake.

Photo – Ann Stokie

VMRG Website by Ralph Patford

The website, developed through a community provider, now has its own address www.malleefowlvictoria.org.au. I am very grateful for the large amount of material that has already been supplied by a number of wonderful people, but if there is anything out there that can be added please forward to me at the website or r_patford@hotmail.com. I am going to develop a page of 'bits and pieces' – anything to do with the Mallee or the malleefowl that does not fit into any other category, so if you have any material please forward. I am also going to develop a page or two on flora of the Mallee and, again, contributions gratefully accepted and acknowledged.



Peter Morgan rising to great heights to make radio contact with PV Rangers. Photo by June Brown

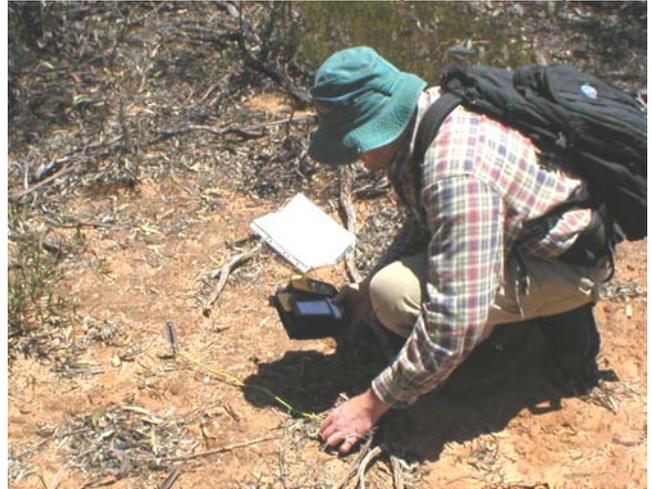
Notes on Monitoring by Ann Stokie.

All of the data is now in.
The number of active mounds is up on last year but they are patchy.
Bronzewing and Wandown are very good.
The Sunset grids do not show the same results. There are far fewer fox scats than in the recent past and the herbs have become 'lots' in many cases.
Thanks to everyone for the great data. It is all stored safely on my computer and backed up on compact discs.

Random jottings from field notes

Bronzewing: -nest 45 – active with branch on SW side of mound. Small bird's nest in adjacent shrub at ground level lined with malleefowl feathers. Nest 73 – a massive active nest covered in large pieces of limestone and debris (Neil & Ross)

Colignan: -There is a beautiful lost lerp tool just inside the grid near the 0.5 baseline red reflector. If found, please return to Peter Stokie. (Ann Stokie)



Tim Connell surveying lerp tools in Dattuck Photo Anna Bunbury

Torpeys: -We camped in Wathe just near an active nest, (outside our grid). We were fortunate to witness egg laying on two occasions early in the morning before we went out to monitor. (Ann & Ron)

Washing Machine: -Last year's promising nests were untouched with the litter rotting and collapsing. One lonely malleefowl walked across a nest on the morning we visited it. The grid appears to be suffering due to the drought. We noticed an increased number of goats. (Noel & Anne)

One Tree Plain: -No lerp tools were observed on the ground at any of our stopping points, and only a few lerp tools were observed on the leaves of some trees. (Peter & June)

Wathe: -What a nest is no. 32. The birds have shifted this nest giving it the appearance of a double nest. As we were preparing to leave, a large bird came rushing by. We moved away and up he came to the nest. Never seen so many lizard tracks on malleefowl nests. (Ron & Gwyn)



Anne Thompson's malleefowl impression Photo by Ron Thompson

Powerline: -Goats seen in this grid
(David & Peter)

Mt Hattah: -Lots of triodia flowering on west
side of grid. (David & Peter)



Peter Hackett using Palm for monitoring
Photo by David Thompson

Dattuck: -Spectacular flowering triodia in
many places in this grid. (Ralph & Wendy)

Dumosa: -Sighted a friendly malleefowl on a
nest only 30 metres from our camping site.
Birds fantastic – king quail, rainbow bird,
white naped honeyeater, willy wagtail,
masked wood swallow, bronzewing pigeon,
and white browed babblers. (Liz & Gil)

Dennyng: - We met Graham Hannig
(Walpeup) trucking wheat from the family
farm. He gave us the location of a new nest
in the grid, which he had shown us last year.
Whilst I was talking to him, Wendy took a ride
in the new \$300,000 harvester down and
back the length of the paddock. (Ralph)

South Bore: -Would take an elephant to
make a dint in the crust of this mound.
(Karina, Jason & Jane)

Newsletter

This is the fourth Newsletter of VMRG and
these are published twice each year.
The success of the Newsletter depends on
your input, so please send stories or photos
to giliz@netconnect.com.au, or RMB 7451,
Horsham 3401, ph 5383 8207.

Gil Hopkins

Thoughts on the training weekend by Neil Macfarlane

Given that the members of our group are few
and widely scattered, the annual training
weekend is our best opportunity to gather
socially and get to know one another.

Most of our formal business and organization
is carried out by a smaller group, or by
phone, mail or e-mail. Our main activity –
monitoring – is a rather intense exercise
carried out by small individual groups.

For that reason the short time given to
training, refreshing, reviewing and modifying
our research skills each October is, in many
ways, our most vital activity of the year. We
get together, meet and welcome newcomers
and old friends, relax together and exchange
ideas and news. This is important to ensure
that all continue to feel part of the group.

Of course, we must also devote a lot of the
weekend to shop-talk, the obligatory
business, and the actual training in the theory
and in the field. We do well to fit so much
into such a short weekend, especially as
many travel long distances and have work
commitments to meet.

Have we got the balance of this weekend
right? Is it too intense? Should we aim for an
extra day to allow extra time as a group; to
get a look at other aspects related to
malleefowl such as botany and habitat; or just
to relax for a day in the bush?

Or perhaps we should consider another
weekend at a different time of the year as a
more relaxed gathering to visit different grids
or malleefowl areas and encourage local
support.

As it is, the training weekend is our yearly
chance to relax, as a group, as well as learn
and work.

Please send your thoughts to our President
or Secretary so they can be considered.

National Malleefowl Forum Conservation through community action Mildura Victoria, 6 -9 February 2004

Have you registered for the forum yet? The closing date (with a few
days grace) is Monday 19th January. The complete program will be on
our web site this coming week.