

Malleefowl Matter

Edition 54: November 2011



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Bird surveys in wildlife corridor

The newsletter of the
**Malleefowl
Preservation
Group Inc.**

Office: Yongergnow Centre
Jaekel St, Ongerup
Postal: PO Box 29 Ongerup
Western Australia 6336
Phone: (08) 9828 2007
Fax: (08) 9828 2018
Web: malleefowl.com.au
Email: malleefowl.wa@wn.com.au

Malleefowl Matter

Editor: Leonie McMahon
Email: malleefowlmatter
@westnet.com.au

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140 at Renmark for Malleefowl forum



Western Australian representatives at the Fourth National Malleefowl Forum were (clockwise from top left) Professor Stephen Davies, Dr Blair Parsons, Gordon McNeill, Burt Cail, Wally Cail, Sally Cail, Carl Danzi and Susanne Dennings. Photograph courtesy Sally Cail.

In late July this year the small South Australian town of Renmark was inundated by Malleefowlers from across the country, there to attend the Fourth National Malleefowl Forum. Sharon Gillam, forum coordinator and recently appointed Chair of the National Malleefowl Recovery Team, provided the following overview of the event.

The Fourth National Malleefowl Forum was held over the weekend of 29th July to 1st August this year in Renmark; fittingly located in the heart of South Australia's Malleefowl Country. More than 140 delegates came from all corners of southern Australia and from all backgrounds –

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Above: conference attendees and below: the banks of the Murray at Renmark. Photographs courtesy Susanne Dennings



Renmark forum continued from page 1.

landholders, volunteers, community groups, government (including Commonwealth) and non-government agencies, researchers and academics. The venue was the Renmark Hotel, located on the banks of the majestic Murray River.

The two-day forum was deemed a success by all. It was an excellent networking opportunity. The jam-packed agenda brought together interstate and local speakers and there was a range of topical and inspiring oral and poster presentations.

Peter Copley presented a performance evaluation of the objectives outlined in the National Recovery Plan since the last forum in Katanning. While excellent progress has been made in the areas of research, particularly fire and genetics, monitoring, and development of a national database, improvements could be made in a number of other areas, he said.

There were five keynote presentations and more than 20 other interesting and thought-provoking presentations. These included:

- updates on the workings of various Malleefowl community groups;
- insights into predator and competitor control programs run by dedicated

Keynote presentations

National Malleefowl monitoring database: Dr Joe Benshemesh

The National Malleefowl monitoring database is web-based and was developed partly because of an urgent need to store and analyse up to 20 years worth of monitoring data. The database is now up and running and providing a range of very useful functions including: improving data management; maintaining consistency and standards in the monitoring process; reducing unnecessary duplication; and increasing transparency and accountability. The system is secure and safe, and available to all involved in monitoring.

Adaptive Management: Dr Joe Benshemesh and Dr Michael Bode

Adaptive Management takes an experimental approach to management through “learning by doing”, evaluating the effectiveness of management actions through continuous monitoring. An Adaptive Management strategy for Malleefowl has been proposed, with funding currently

community land management groups over periods spanning 20 years;

- research into the effects of locust control on Malleefowl nesting success;
- a captive breeding program run by Zoos SA at Monarto;
- helicopter surveys in NSW;
- Habitat 141: a large scale landscape restoration project; and
- captivating video footage captured on cameras mounted at nests in the arid zone and a local reserve in SA.

Presentations from WA included updates on the WA Malleefowl Network by Professor Stephen Davies; the North Central Malleefowl Preservation Group by Sally Cail; the Malleefowl Preservation Group by Susanne Dennings; and a keynote address by Dr Blair Parsons.

Vicki-Jo Russell (with over 15 years experience in Malleefowl conservation), diligently compiled the feedback into a specific list of Forum Resolutions, which was delivered in the final session. These resolutions will be drafted into an Action Plan through the National Malleefowl Recovery Team, and will be used to guide and drive specific Malleefowl recovery initiatives over the next three to four years.

Proceedings of the Forum are currently being collated and will be provided in due course.



being sought. If successful, the program would use all of the current and accumulated knowledge, research and monitoring to vastly improve Malleefowl conservation.

Malleefowl Genetics: Taneal Cope

Many Malleefowl populations now exist in small, isolated pockets of remnant vegetation due to extensive land clearing over the last 100 years. This typically results in reduced genetic variation due to inbreeding.

Taneal investigated the genetic structure of Malleefowl by extracting DNA from samples Australia-wide. No population structure was found, suggesting no races or subspecies. Taneal also studied mating systems, reproductive behaviour, genetic variation within populations and chick paternity. Her research is still in progress, with final results to be published in 2012.

The role of fire in Malleefowl Conservation Dr Blair Parsons

Blair spoke on his research into fire regimes in small and large patches of remnant vegetation in the wheatbelt of WA, and the implications for

Malleefowl. The study showed how the management of fire should be modified to suit the specific habitat occupied by the species, acknowledging the remnant size and surrounding land use. In small remnant patches of Malleefowl habitat, it may be necessary to implement controlled fires (patch burns); while in large remnants and reserves, preventing or reducing the scale of large wildfires should be a management priority.

Mallee Fire and Biodiversity Project Dr Simon Watson

This extensive research exercise is conducted through La Trobe and Deakin universities. The project was developed to investigate the influence of different fire ages on the flora and fauna in a study area covering over 100,000 km² across the Murray Mallee region of SA, Victoria and NSW.

Key results include a range of new information for the region on the distribution of different fire-age classes, and post-fire changes in vegetation structure and fauna diversity, which will assist in the continuing management of mallee-ecosystems and Malleefowl habitat.

Introducing the MPG's new membership database management team



Photograph courtesy Alan Thompson

MPG members Robert and Bev Clare have jointly taken on the role of managing the group's membership database. Lack of time and resources have meant this extremely important role has not been given the attention it requires in recent years so their offer is a very welcome one. Bev and Robert's objectives will be to keep the membership

database up-to-date, send out membership renewal notices and provide a personal contact point for members.

Robert and Bev are farmers from Koorda in the WA wheat-belt. They have been MPG members since 2002. They monitor a Malleefowl site located in a crown reserve that borders their western boundary. The birds leave the reserve to feed in their paddocks.

Bev said she and Robert have always wanted to contribute to the MPG in some way but have felt restricted by the ways they could assist because they are so far away from the office base. "The membership database however is something we can do with support from Claudine at the office", she said.

Robert and Bev can be contacted via email on rbclare@bigpond.com or by phone on 96848029.



Malleefowl Monarto grants successful

Rachel Westcott is one of the driving forces behind Malleefowl Monarto, the interest group formed in 2010 and operating out of the Monarto region of South Australia. She has provided an update of the group's recent activities.

I was delighted to receive a Malleefowl 'Get Well' card from MPG following my open heart surgery in June. It was such a lovely and thoughtful surprise and I'd like to send a very sincere thank you to MPG. I had a congenital heart defect that needed repair and I elected to have the procedure in winter, so that I could be fit for spring farm work [Rachel is a veterinary surgeon]. This meant that Emilis and I missed out on the National Malleefowl Forum and the survey in the Ferries McDonald Conservation Park in late August – but you can't have everything! We did catch up with Susanne Dennings as she traveled to Renmark, which was a lovely bonus. Malleefowl Monarto has enjoyed some success in the last few months and has some small projects in the pipeline for 2012. Raising funds to survey the whole of Ferries McDonald CP is proving to be a work in progress but the smaller projects we are undertaking are all positive transitional steps towards achieving that goal and are all producing good outcomes in their own right. As our young group continues to successfully complete these, support in South Australia will build. As long as we are able to contribute to Malleefowl conservation meaningfully, these are steps in the right direction.

Writing grant applications kept us busy in June and July. We are pleased to report some success.

In July we received \$1000 from the **Murray Darling Basin Commission**. The **Eastern Hills and Murray Plains Catchment Group** received funding to establish 2000 plant species used by Malleefowl for food on properties between Monarto CP and Ferries McDonald CP, on Ferries McDonald Road. Project Officer Steve Coombe has ordered the seedlings for planting in May/June 2012. The two parks are about seven kilometres apart. Some of the private property in between is well vegetated but some is not, and there is plenty of room, and need, to re-establish food plants.

The **Monarto Residents Association** also received a small grant to run a series of surveys on private properties in the area. There was

enthusiastic support from the land owners approached. Some properties are in excellent condition, with Heritage listed original mallee scrub. This project came about because these properties have never been formally surveyed, despite birds being sighted there, and because we were having difficulty attracting the necessary permit approvals from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to survey in Ferries McDonald CP. We felt it was important to keep the ball rolling and maintain interest and enthusiasm while we tackled the issue of permits.

This was eventually overcome by the valiant efforts of Jenny Clift, who through sheer determination managed to secure a permit to survey in the park for a small window of opportunity in August and September. Because I was recuperating from surgery I handed over to Jenny who managed a survey in the northern area of the park in a section behind her own property, ably assisted by fellow stalwart Pam Jacob – herself recovering from surgery. A few Malleefowl mounds not previously recorded were located. This has served to strengthen the group's relationship with DENR, and will hopefully simplify future permit applications and approvals. Many thanks to Jenny for this. One of our members, Debbie Thompson, attended the National Malleefowl Forum, courtesy of the **Murray Mallee Local Action Planning Association**. She described the event as a great success.

It is pleasing to see a variety of our members taking on parts of the overall tasks. We believe that these together will make a substantial contribution to preservation of Malleefowl in the Monarto area.



Above: John Spiers (left), MPG Committee member, Susanne Dennings, MPG Project Coordinator, Emilis Prelgauskas, MPG member, photographed after their meeting when Susanne was en-route to the forum. Photograph courtesy Rachel Westcott.



Great turnout for monitoring workshop



The Merredin Malleefowlers once again played host to the annual monitoring workshop on the weekend of the 9-10th July this year. There was a great turn-out of 36 people (pictured above). Key outcomes of the workshop included changes to the WA monitoring data sheet, a review of support for Carl Danzi's volunteer role, agreement to encourage more volunteers into the monitoring program and to increase membership of the groups. A big thanks to AngloGold for sponsoring the weekend, to the Merredin Malleefowlers for hosting the event, to the Merredin Pistol Club for use of their venue and to the Merredin Bowls Club for catering. Photograph courtesy Susanne Dennings.

Tis the season to be... monitoring mounds

Not only is it the season to be jolly, it is also the season to monitor mounds. For all volunteers who have taken on the monitoring of specific sites, a friendly reminder that the time has arrived for your work to begin...

Also, please be advised that June Meredith has taken over the role of managing all monitoring equipment. She may be contacted on 9444 1488 after business hours, or by email on junemere@gmail.com. Many thanks to June, and to Carl Danzi who has looked after us for the past few years.

Should anyone need assistance with monitoring, if you would like to take another person with your team or you are interested in becoming involved, please call Susanne Dennings on 08 98282083 or contact her via email at sdennings@bigpond.com.

*Season's
Greetings...*



The Malleefowl Preservation Group takes this opportunity to wish its members a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.



Corackerup site breeding population plummets

In the July edition of Malleefowl Matter we revisited the MPG's first survey site; the Corackerup Nature Reserve near Ongerup in the south west of WA.

In this edition Dr Joe Benshemesh provides an analysis of the data collected since monitoring began at this site.

Joe is a consultant and a member of the MPG and the National Malleefowl Recovery Team.

He has overseen the establishment of the National Malleefowl Monitoring Database and is a proponent of the adaptive management approach to conservation.

The Corackerup Nature Reserve was one of the first sites set up by the MPG to monitor Malleefowl breeding numbers. The reserve is not large at 4,334 ha but it is of great importance for the conservation of Malleefowl and many other species. One of several patches of remnant vegetation in the area, Corackerup also forms a crucial part of the Gondwana Link project that locally aims to connect the Stirling Range and Fitzgerald River National Parks.

Overview of Malleefowl trends

Malleefowl numbers have been monitored in Corackerup since 1993 and these data provide invaluable insights into how Malleefowl are doing. Unfortunately, the news is not

good and dramatic declines have occurred over the past 18 years (Figure 1). When monitoring began in the reserve in 1993, five breeding pairs were counted and this seemed fairly stable over the next few years (although the reliability of the data declined, see below). However, breeding numbers appeared to increase markedly in 1999 and 2000, possibly in response to large scale fox baiting programs; one a ground baiting program which was

'...Adaptive management can transform monitoring into an efficient, dynamic and powerful form of enquiry...'

instigated in 1994 and carried out by MPG volunteers for about a decade, another the Government-run Western Shield aerial baiting program that began in 1996 and continues today. Unfortunately, whatever positive effects this management intervention might have had initially, Malleefowl numbers plummeted in the early 2000s and have yet to recover.

What went wrong?

We don't really know why Malleefowl breeding numbers plummeted at Corackerup, despite the introduction of extensive baiting in the mid-

1990's. One possibility is that the decline may be related to the failure of winter rains over the past decade or so.

Although annual rainfall shows little trend over the past 20 years (BOM data from close by Nalyerlup), winter rainfall (May-August inclusive) has declined significantly and suggests a 40% decline over this period. Malleefowl are especially sensitive to May-August rain as this is when they prepare their mounds and rainfall at this time is also essential for the food plants that the birds depend on (as farmers well know).

The worry here is that drier winters are what are expected under climate change, although it's too early to say whether these changes are in fact caused by climate change. In the short term at least there is some cause for hope as declines in SA and Victoria during a recent decade-long drought were halted, and in Victoria bounced back, when the drought ended three years ago.

How good are the data?

While I have taken the Corackerup data at face value, it should also be noted that there are a number of issues with the quality of the data that make a more rigorous analysis more difficult and less certain.

Firstly, because not all listed mounds were visited each year that monitoring occurred, there are many unknowns (see Figure 1). Overall, only three out of four mounds were visited in the 14 years in which



monitoring occurred, and many of these missed mounds were known to have been active in other years.

Secondly, in the early days especially, little information was collected that could be used to check that people were making the right call in recording a mound as active or inactive. Additional data were often collected, but not of the type that could be used to check that people were accurate in their determinations.

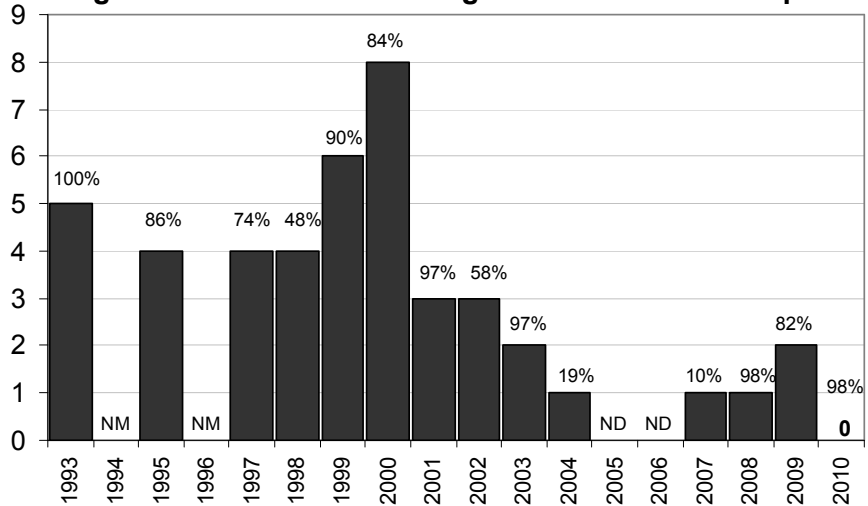
Moreover, exactly what was meant by terms such as 'active' was often loosely defined - I know of cases elsewhere where people have thought that a few Malleefowl prints on a mound meant it was 'active'. Given the wide variety of people that collect monitoring data, we need precise definitions of our terms so that data are correctly recorded and interpreted.

Finally, data that was collected in the 1990s was often left uninterpreted for many years and, when it was at last vetted and entered into databases, so much time had passed that it was not possible to correct any mistakes or errors.

None of these historical data issues are unique to Corackerup or WA; in fact they typify the early years of Malleefowl monitoring right across Australia. It's been a learning curve for all of us! The monitoring system has evolved the way it has precisely because these sorts of issues were common and needed to be addressed. The system we have today (which includes manuals, training, electronic field devices, an interactive database, vetting procedures, automatic reporting, etc) is our collective solution to these and many other problems that undermined the quality of the

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Figure 1: Malleefowl breeding records at Corackerup



Number of Malleefowl breeding records at the Corackerup site over the past 18 years. The proportion of known mounds that were inspected each year is indicated above each bar; values much less than 100% suggest that the breeding number may have been underestimated. NM: Monitoring not conducted. ND: Monitoring conducted but data not currently available on National Database.



Above: MPG volunteers at an old Corackerup mound (circa 1995) that had not been completely dug out at the end of the breeding season. Below: Corackerup Mound No 5 (known to the group as 'Movie Star') was an active mound that was inadvertently damaged. The birds never returned to work it. Photographs courtesy MPG.





Bird surveys show rising number of species present in wildlife corridor

In the July edition of Malleefowl Matter we covered the MPG's decade-long endeavour to create a 63 km long wildlife corridor that connects key bush remnants.

The corridor originates from Kelly's Block in Ongerup, Western Australia and has been monitored for changes to vegetation and bird species ever since it was started.

In more recent times Rod Smith, a member of Birds Australia and MPG, has taken on the spring and autumn bird surveys at pre-determined monitoring sites along the corridor. Rod has provided the following article, covering the survey history and the changes to bird species numbers that have been observed.

Records of birds in the MPG's vegetation corridors have been recorded since May 1995. The first informal lists were made from time to time in Tieline Reserve. On about 20 occasions bird sightings, many of a single species, were recorded there until 1999. A list of 17 species was made during a Malleefowl monitoring day in September 1998 and five species were listed for the next day at O'Neill's Foster Rd block [Kelly's Block]. Last year, in October 2010, 33 species were recorded over two days during a Malleefowl survey.

Augmenting those records was a list of ten birds regularly seen which did not include 'common' birds.

In December 1999 Birds Australia member, Brenda Newby, produced a summary

of a structured survey she'd done at seven sites. The distance between the sites furthest apart (Foster Rd and the Rabbit Proof Fence Rd bushland) is about 14 km, as the Malleefowl flies. Habitats at the sites vary from undisturbed dense bushland to re-vegetated paddock boundaries. A total of 31 species was recorded. Four more surveys were carried out at the same seven sites until October 2003. The duration of each site visit varied but probably averaged 20 minutes. Other Birds Australia members, Geoff Burrow, Angela Sanders and Janet Traylen continued this system of surveying until October 2003. By then, the total number of species observed had increased to 50. With the development westwards (from Foster Rd) of the Malleefowl corridor came four more bird survey sites in April 2008. This increased the spread of sites by another 18 km, and road access was also significantly increased.

The first survey of these new sites produced observations of six more species since the 1999 surveys began.

Since 2008, seven surveys have been completed at all eleven sites up to April 2011. An attempt has been made to involve birders from BAWA to carry out the work as a partnership project with the MPG, the object being to survey all sites every spring and autumn.

Data supplied to MPG

would assist in the assessment of the vegetation quality for birdlife, while BAWA could use the data to contribute to the national Atlas of Australian Birds.

Rod Smith, Joyce Hegney, Vicky Bilney, David Secomb, Alex and June Morrison, and Graham and Gwen Goodreid have done the field work at the eleven sites.

Factors influencing the presence or otherwise of bird species include weather, rainfall occurrences, time of day, observer skill, and season, to mention a few. Additionally a strictly-observed routine is important to help gauge the effect of changes. It is not unusual to find that most sites produce more species observations early in the day. A sun-up (or earlier) commencement at a well vegetated site usually keeps the surveyor busy., though this is not always possible.

Another factor is the relationship between weather effects





locally and in other localities. Waterfowl, some insect dependant species, and seed eaters may find better opportunities in distant regions where rainfall has produced excellent conditions, then swell species numbers locally when that situation is reversed. Some are less able to take such advantage and are forced to make the best of their local habitat regardless of conditions.

Between 2008 and mid-July 2011 the species count for all eleven sites was 86. The greatest number on any one survey was 57 species; the usual number is about 45.

Malleefowl are rarely seen on surveys since most of the sites are not suitable as breeding habitat. The sites do however offer sufficient vegetation to use as cover for Malleefowl to move through en route to suitable breeding habitat: one of the main purposes of creating the corridor. We aim to keep the surveys going for many years.



The surveys are carried out by BAWA members who volunteer their time and considerable bird identification skills and expertise: a great effort and one acknowledged with thanks by the MPG.



Above: Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater; below: White-cheeked Honeyeaters; and far left: White-fronted Chat. Honeyeaters are well represented in Ongerup. Their presence can be an indicator of vegetation health but some other local bird species' requirements are much closer to those of Malleefowl. All photographs courtesy Rod Smith.



AGM news

Eighteen members attended the AGM in September at the Yongergnow Centre in Ongerup. The meeting was followed by nibbles and dinner: organised by Claudine and catered for by Jane van der Maat, to the gastronomic delight of all.

The new MPG committee is as follows.

Executive

Don Smith: chairperson
Rodger Hall: vice chairperson
Don Sclater: secretary
Jim Laffer: treasurer

Committee members

John Spiers (South Australia)
Peter Speldewinde
Karen McKeough

Blair Parsons: advisory member to the committee
Len van der Waag: Chairperson of the Community Conservation Trust Fund.

Congratulations and welcome to the new committee members (Jim, Peter and Karen) and many thanks to the outgoing committee members (Justin Jonson, Yann Toussaint, Jessica van der Waag and Len van der Waag) for all of their hard work. Should you wish to contact any of the committee members please do so through the MPG office.

Membership fees to stay the same

It was decided at the AGM that all membership fees will remain the same this year. In addition, all members will receive a hard copy of the newsletter by post (at no additional cost) rather than by email. It is expected that this structure will simplify membership fees and the membership database management.



Fears live on in quake aftermath

The city of Tokyo is a far cry from a remote bush camp at Corackerup Nature Reserve. MPG volunteers who took part in a survey there in April 2006 will remember Hiromi Kishimura, who was visiting Australia from Japan.

Almost five years after that survey, on Friday 11th March this year, Hiromi was one of millions of people who felt the tremors of the strongest earthquake ever recorded in Japan.

The earthquake, which measured 8.9 on the Richter scale, occurred in the country's north east coastal area and was followed by a 7m high tsunami. More than 20,000 people are believed dead or missing, with many tens of thousands more still displaced.

Hiromi provides the following insight into life in Japan on the day of the earthquake and in the months following.

I live and work in central Tokyo, about 500 km south-west of the earthquake epicentre. When the main earthquake occurred I was in the office with my co-workers and we crawled under our desks immediately. I was very frightened since it was the biggest quake in my life. Luckily in my office just a printer was broken, and my house was just messed up, no injuries and no major damage. Life in Tokyo quickly returned to normal within a few days despite some confusion caused by power cut schedules and false rumours. However repeated aftershocks and fear of accidents from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant worried me for a while.



Above: Smoko during the April 2006 survey at Corackerup Nature Reserve in which Hiromi participated. Inset: Hiromi. Photographs courtesy Ruby Williams.

I think the accident at the nuclear power plant is a man-made disaster and is now the worst thing affecting our daily lives and the Japanese economy, especially manufacturing and tourism. Two big concerns are power cuts and radioactive contamination. I am very worried about the health of the people, especially children in Fukushima who are exposed to the radiation.

We need proper information about the implications of radiation and the dangers we face. Nobody knows accepted radiation ranges (how much is too much and how long will it be before it is safe) and I cannot completely believe information or standards supplied by the Japanese government.

In July 2011, only 16 out of the 54 nuclear power plants in Japan were working. Some plants cannot reboot yet

because safety check standards are higher than ever and there are objections from local people.

The push towards denuclearization is becoming stronger than ever. I agree to gradual denuclearization but am afraid that the current flow towards it is too fast and too emotional and not good for the Japanese economy.

In the worst tsunami-affected area, clearance of wreckage proceed at a snail's pace and fly and mosquito populations have been breeding in the wreckage.

Reconstruction is proceeding slowly because new city plans that take into account future tsunamis are really complicated.

After the March 2011 earthquake, I feel people's views on many things including power generation, power saving and quality of life have changed in Japan.



Corackerup breeding trends continued from page 7.

data collected by hard working volunteers. Seen in this context, the problems were just steps along the way.

Fortunately, over the past few years monitoring has been revitalized in WA and although the management of monitoring data continues to provide many challenges, all of the above-mentioned issues have been corrected. For example at Corackerup, only about one in 14 mounds have been missed over the past three years and the data collected has improved greatly as national standards and protocols have been adopted. These standards provide a wealth of data for checking the accuracy of records, as well as providing various other insights into factors that may affect Malleefowl.

Also, the need for regular retraining to promote consistency in monitoring is now widely acknowledged: training days help keep us all on the same page, foster links with and between communities and improve the data. Data is no longer allowed to languish unchecked: the new national database provides powerful tools for processing data so that it can be checked (and if need be corrected) and securely stored soon after its collection.

What good is monitoring?

There is a common misconception about monitoring that it is too passive, and that we need to do more than just watch. Corackerup is a case in point: if we know the population has declined, why monitor when we should be intervening with better management? The short answer is that we don't actually know what management works in reversing Malleefowl declines and that monitoring is the best way to find out. Monitoring

provides crucial information on trends and uniquely provides a way of measuring the success of management interventions. Without monitoring, management is blind and is slow to improve.

While monitoring is an essential part of the effort to conserve Malleefowl, it is also true that by itself it is not enough. We do need more on-ground action, but this action must be linked to monitoring if we are to identify what does and doesn't work.

Even so, if we were to link management and monitoring at Corackerup, it would take many years before we could amass enough data to be sure a management intervention was causing populations to recover. This is because there are lags in how quickly Malleefowl populations are likely to respond, and also because populations go up and down for all sorts of reasons.

The solution to this problem is to link monitoring and management at lots of sites in such a way that learning about what management works best is accelerated. This is what the Adaptive Management Project is all about [Ed: see page 2]. Because adaptive management can transform monitoring into an efficient, dynamic and powerful form of enquiry, it may be regarded as the crowning glory of a good monitoring program. Monitoring at a site such as Corackerup, while important in its own right for detecting local trends, can also make a huge contribution as part of a network of sites at which management is organised to both benefit Malleefowl, and to test different interventions. Collectively, we have pretty well sorted out how to provide authorities with high quality monitoring data, and our challenge is now to urge for more on-ground actions in a meaningful adaptive management framework.

Coming Events November 2011 to February 2012

Date	Activity	Where	Contact
Late November or early December (date to be advised)	National Database meeting	South Australia (location to be advised)	Sharon Gillam Ph: 08 82229459 sharon.gillam@sa.gov.au
Wednesday 30th November	MPG Committee meeting	Yongergnow Centre Ongerup WA	Claudine Deering Ph: 08 98282007 malleefowl.wa@wn.com.au
Wednesday 25th January	MPG Committee meeting	Yongergnow Centre Ongerup WA	Claudine Deering Ph: 98282007 malleefowl.wa@wn.com.au
Wednesday 29th February	MPG Committee meeting	Yongergnow Centre Ongerup WA	Claudine Deering Ph: 98282007 malleefowl.wa@wn.com.au



Chick Chat

Some most unusual (but diligent) mound builders

In 1995 a group of Ongerup Primary School students took on the challenge of building a life-sized malleefowl mound for the Ongerup & Needilup District Museum. Pictured left, is the group with their mound in progress.

The original mound was attacked by termites and eventually dismantled but a display mound - less defined than the original - can still be seen at the museum.

Photograph courtesy MPG.



The people you meet...

Two years ago the MPG conducted a survey in the historic PNC Track area, about 380 km east north east of Kalgoorlie. A number of volunteers waxed lyrical about the stunning beauty of the landscape but the rare and unusual also got a mention.

Pictured right are Alex Leighton (then three years old) and his brother Thomas McKenzie (then 14) checking out a dragon who was likewise checking out them. The dragon was a regular visitor to the camp site.

Thom, the youngest participant in the survey, walked the line for a whole week - and was rewarded for his efforts by discovering a Malleefowl mound. Photograph courtesy Sylvia Leighton.



The Malleefowl Preservation Group thanks

Dr Denis Saunders

for his generous support, advice and donations over the years, particularly relating to the

'Give a chick a chance' program