

## **POLLINATORS YORKE PENINSULA**

**19-21 October 2018**

The role of native bees and birds in pollination, particularly agricultural pollination, was the genesis for this expedition. It was also an opportunity for our Members to experience one of South Australia's best kept secrets, the Innes National Park on the tip of Yorke Peninsula.

Our scientific team comprised John Gitsham, former Innes Senior Ranger and President of Birds SA, Dr Remko Leijts, a world expert on Australian native bees, and Dr Katja Hogendoorn who is well known in agricultural circles for her expertise in both native and European bees.

The central theme of the Expedition was the role of pollinating native bees and native birds in nature and in agriculture. The leaders hoped to expose the Expeditioners to information about the native bees and birds of Yorke Peninsula, and to facilitate meetings with farmers who were trying alternative pollination and pest control methods.

We were convinced that the Expeditioners would enjoy the beauty of the regenerating bushland around the historic Inneston township site, enjoy birding with John and assisting Remko and Katja to trap and identify native bees.

Finally we were sure that the Expeditioners would enjoy the quaint, secluded accommodation at Inneston, the abundant bird, insect and mammal life all around the site, and the good food, wine and fellowship that the Club's expeditions are famous for.

The Expedition was booked out almost immediately with a healthy wait list.

### **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October**

Farmer Jane Greenslade suggested that we use her shearing shed as the Expedition gathering point. This turned out to be an inspired suggestion, as the shearing shed was a short walk from one of the bee hotels that we had erected earlier in the year, as well being close to a "Flow Hive" owned by Jane's partner Emma Leonard. The weather was windy and threatening and we were grateful for the shelter. The spacious shed also proved to be a useful lecture hall.

Jane and Emma gave a presentation on the challenges that they are facing on the Peninsula, and explained the cultural and historical forces that shape the agricultural practices which are placing the natural world under sustained pressure.

After lunch at Minlaton we convoyed to Inneston, a journey of about 90 minutes. Expeditioners checked into their Lodges and spent some time exploring the Inneston township area, before meeting for pre-dinner drinks and nibbles at the Engineer's Lodge (expedition HQ). We then convoyed to the Marion Bay Tavern.

We dined at the Tavern on both Friday and Saturday night.

### **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October**

On Saturday morning there were two 'bee' and 'bird' sessions, which the Expeditioners rotated through. A local caterer supplied lunch and some of the makings for morning and afternoon tea, including several enormous cakes. The amount of cake available on the Expedition became a shared running joke!

After lunch we convoyed into a closed section of the Park to observe stromatolites in a worked-out gypsum mine. This part of the Expedition was President Ant's idea and as well as seeing stromatolites we enjoyed the flowering plants and had a close encounter with a small snake. Despite this area being severely degraded by gypsum mining it had its own stark beauty.

In the late afternoon we convoyed to Stenhouse Bay Hall where John Gitsham and Remko Leijs gave presentations on birds and bees. For John it was a useful rehearsal for the public talk scheduled for Sunday. Remko gave a good general introduction to native bees, their characteristics and roles in the ecosystem.

The evening convoys through the Park to Marion Bay Tavern became short wildlife safaris of their own where we saw Emu, Mallee Fowl, Australian Native Hens and Tamar Wallabies amongst other creatures.

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>**

Sunday morning was a re-run of Saturday morning with Expeditioners rotating through bird watching and bee trapping activities. It was a superb day – perfect weather for both those activities. We were required to vacate the Engineer's Lodge after breakfast and with the help of some Expeditioners we moved HQ including all the morning tea food and equipment to the nearby Manager's Lodge where there was even more cake.

Late morning we convoyed to Stenhouse Bay Hall for a catered BBQ lunch followed by the Community Talk "The Buzz about Native Bees and Birds". The Community Talk was organised after a suggestion by Jane Greenslade. Rose supplied the Yorke Peninsula Times with an article, which was printed alongside an article about the YP 'rewilding' program. We were pleased that about 25 locals arrived to swell the overall numbers to about 50. Aaron Smith spoke about the re-wilding program (extensive fox baiting and the release of species formerly common in the area) and the future plans to build fences across the Peninsula south of Warooka, and to eliminate feral predators within the fenced area.

John Gitsham reprised his talk on the role of native birds in seed dispersal and insect control, and Katja spoke on the role of native bees in pollination in agriculture. All of the speakers were well received and there were plenty of questions.

We are very grateful for the help from President Ant Simpson, Hon. Secretary Margie Heylen, Expedition Coordinator Tim Tolley, and Administrative and Membership Liaison Officer Natalie Rollinson in making this idea a reality. We are also indebted to our wonderful scientists Remko, Katja and John, and to farmers Jane Greenslade and Emma Leonard.

**ROSE AND ALASTAIR DOW  
EXPEDITION LEADERS**

**November 2018**