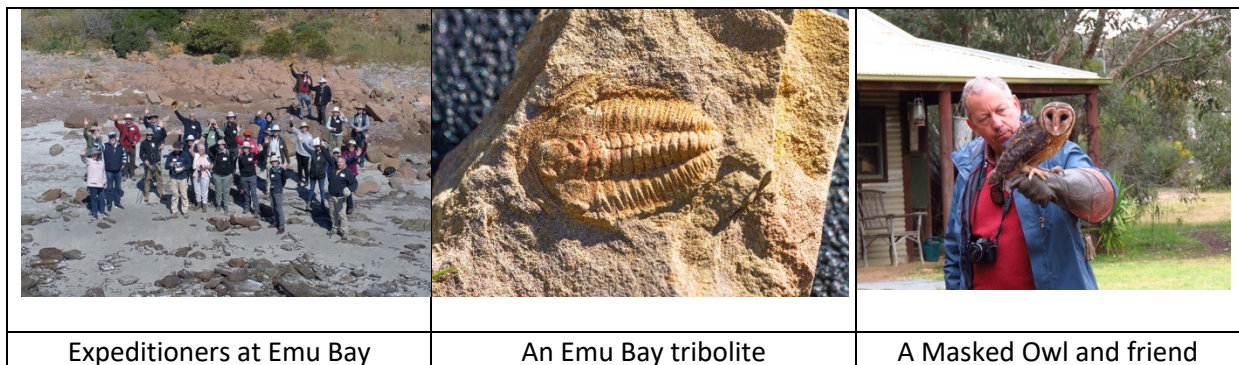


ROCKS, FOSSILS, FEATHERS AND FUR

Waterhouse Club Expedition to Kangaroo Island 11-14 October 2019

Having a Wedge-tailed Eagle or a Masked Owl perched on your arm is not something that many people experience in their lifetime but for the lucky expeditioners on the 'Rocks, Fossils, Feathers and Fur' it was just one of their amazing experiences on Kangaroo Island, South Australia.



The expedition also explored the world renowned geology and palaeontology of the island, heard expert talks on endangered species such as the Little Penguin and Australian Sea Lion, and learned about how these and other animals will be protected in the future.

One of South Australian Museum's resident 'rock stars', Dr Diego Garcia-Bellido opened proceedings on the Friday evening with a fascinating talk on the Emu Bay shale layers and its globally significant fossil discoveries. Recent discoveries have continued to expand understanding of life in the early Cambrian period. We then visited Emu Bay on the Saturday morning to identify the three crucial geological layers, and though careful searching guided by Diego, unearthed evidence of fossils and tracks preserved in the rock surfaces.

While at Emu Bay we were joined by Dr Diane Colombelli-Negrel of Flinders University, who introduced us to the Little (Fairy) Penguin population. Diane's research has focussed on the colonies of these endearing little birds across South Australia. We identified a total of 38 active nest sites during the day and in the evening Diane gave us a fascinating talk about her Little Penguin research, in particular the threats they face, their different types of vocalisation and how the colonies vary across South Australia.

Another highlight was our visit to Cygnet Park, a revegetated grazing property which has been converted to a dense and diverse habitat over the past 15 years. We observed several Glossy Black Cockatoos feeding in the Sheoaks, planted specifically to provide habitat for this rare and endangered species, demonstrating that the recovery program is starting to work.

At Seal Bay we enjoyed a guided walk through the Sea Lion breeding colony, and then visited Raptor Domain for a private presentation of some of the impressive birds found on KI. Most of the birds have been injured or orphaned and cannot be released, but the opportunity to get up close and

personal with a Wedge-tailed Eagle or have a curious Masked Owl happily sitting on your knees was very special.

Our expedition finished with an afternoon at Pelican Lagoon. This is a unique area, where research into such diverse aspects as Tiger Snakes, goannas, coastal vegetation, mosses, termite mounds and, of course, Echidna has been pursued for over 40 years. Dr Mike McKelvey's encyclopaedic knowledge and boundless enthusiasm could have kept us there for several days!

The Waterhouse Club is very grateful for the support and input provided by Dr Diego Garcia-Bellido, Dr Diane Colombelli-Negrel, Dr Mike McKelvey, Craig Wickham and Michelle Haby, and the teams at Seal Bay and Raptor Domain. Your enthusiasm and vision is inspiring.

The expeditioners were based at the Mercure KI Lodge American River.