



3rd Curlew Summit

20th and 21st August 2014



Local Land
Services
Murray



Australian Government



Photo credit: Raoul Slater

WELCOME

Nature Conservation Working Group (NCWG) and Murray Local Land Services (Murray LLS) are pleased to welcome you to the 3rd Curlew Summit.

NCWG is a group of like-minded landholders with a keen interest in the environment, and in particular the plight of the endangered Bush Stone-curlew.

For the last thirteen years the group has been involved in conservation programs for this iconic bird.

Murray LLS, and in the past Murray Catchment Management Authority, have been involved in a wide range of Bush Stone-curlew conservation programs. This has included partnering with NCWG to deliver a range of education and awareness projects, and assisting in the delivery of their successful captive breeding program.



The 1st Curlew Summit was held in Albury in 2004 and brought together landholders, researchers and government staff from across southern New South Wales and north east Victoria.

The 2nd Curlew Summit, held in Rutherglen, Victoria in 2006, and hosted by Charles Sturt University, brought together those involved in Bush Stone-curlew conservation from across southern Australia including Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. This Summit provided attendees the opportunity to further build on the knowledge shared at the first Summit, share experiences in curlew conservation and develop ideas for new approaches.

We are excited that this 3rd Curlew Summit, although a long time coming, is reaching further afield to researchers, community groups, landholders, government staff, zoos and fauna parks from every mainland state and territory except the Northern Territory. As curlews disappear from more areas, more and more passionate people are getting involved, bringing with them new and innovative ideas to try. As a result of this ever increasing interest Bush Stone-curlew conservation continues to grow with every passing year.

We thank all of you for making the effort to attend this Curlew Summit, and in particular those who have agreed to give presentations on their curlew work.

We look forward to this opportunity to share what we have learnt, gain some new ideas and meet new people as passionate about curlew conservation as we are.

DAY 1 WEDNESDAY 20th AUGUST 2014

Banksia Room, Commercial Club, 618 Dean Street, Albury

9.00 am	Registration
9.30 am	Welcome & Acknowledgement of Country Alex Anthony, Chair, Murray Local Land Services
10.00 am	Curlewing the Landscape Neville Lubke, Nature Conservation Working Group.
10.30 am	Morning Tea
11.00 am	Lessons from 10 years of studying Bush Stone-curlews Elisa Tack, Murray Local Land Services
11.45 am	Trialling Release Protocols and Thresholds of Predator Presence for the Reintroduction of the Bush Stone-curlew to Southern Australia Leah Kemp, Australian Wildlife Conservancy
12.15 pm	Kaya, the Artistic Dingo Raising Money for Bush Stone-curlews Kate King & Lia Reeve-Parker, Oakvale Farm and Fauna World
12.30 pm	Lunch
1.30 pm	Reintroductions of Captive-bred Bush Stone-curlews in South-West Western Australia Dr Peter Mawson, Perth Zoo
2.00 pm	Bush Stone-curlew Monitoring and Nest Site Protection, Brisbane Water, NSW Central Coast Alan Morris, Gosford Friends of the Bush-stone Curlews
2.30 pm	Our last Curlew? How Community Volunteers are Providing it with a New Family Judy Crocker, Mid Loddon Landcare Network & CMN
3.00 pm	The Status of Urban Bush Stone-curlews Scott O'Keefe, Griffith University
3.30 pm	Afternoon Tea
4.00 pm	Why, When and How to Control Foxes Now and New Control Options for the Future Professor Linton Staples, Animal Control Technologies
4.30 pm	Open Forum, Questions and Discussion
5.15 pm	Close Glen Martin, Chair, Nature Conservation Working Group
5.30 pm	Summit Finish

DAY 1 DINNER

Paddys Crown Lounge, Kiewa Street, Albury

6.30 pm Pre-dinner drinks & refreshments.

Pre-dinner cocktail food will be provided. All drinks are at attendee's own expense.

7.15 pm Dinner.

Dinner is to be ordered from the Bistro menu. Pre-orders will need to be placed in the morning.

DAY 2 THURSDAY 21st AUGUST 2014

Bonnie Rise, Lubke Lane, Table Top NSW

9.30am – 12.00 noon Visit to Captive Breeding Facilities. Morning tea provided.



DIRECTIONS & PARKING

Commercial Club – Banksia Room

618 Dean Street, Albury.

Entrances on Dean Street and Elizabeth Streets.

Undercover parking entrances on Elizabeth Street and Stanley Street.

commercialclubalbury.com

Paddy's Crown Lounge

First floor, 491 Kiewa Street, Albury.

Easy walking distance from the Commercial Club. Kiewa Street is currently closed for roadworks but Paddy's can be accessed on foot from either Dean Street or Smollett Street.

There are two entrances on the ground floor – one leads directly to the stairs and elevator up to the first floor, the other enters the main bar. Staff at the bar can assist with directions to the first floor.

Undercover parking is available in the West End Plaza Shopping Centre Carpark or in the Volt Lane Multi-storey Carpark. The entrances to both carparks are on Smollett Street.

paddysalbury.com.au

'Bonnie Rise', Table Top.

Get onto Hume Freeway in Albury and head north for 13.5km.

Turn left into Tynan Road.

At the end of Tynan Road (3.1km) turn right onto Gerogery Road.

Follow Gerogery Road for 5km and turn right into Lubke Lane (private road).

'Bonnie Rise' sign is on the gate.

Follow Lubke Lane past the first house and sheds to the end.

If you have any issues finding the property call Nev or Jan on 02) 6026 2282.

ABSTRACTS

Curlewing the Landscape.

Neville Lubke, Jan Lubke

Nature Conservation Working Group, C/- 'Bonnie Rise', Jindera, NSW 2642

njlubke@skymesh.com.au

Neville Lubke is primarily a farmer who, with his wife Jan, operates a property in the eastern Riverina of New South Wales. They are also an integral part of the Nature Conservation Working Group (NCWG), a non-government organisation working within the Murray Catchment of New South Wales. This group has been involved in several different conservation projects over the years, however for the last twelve years their prime focus has been on actively promoting the conservation of the iconic Bush Stone-curlew (BSC), a nocturnal, ground-dwelling bird that is now officially listed as endangered in the New South Wales and Victoria, and rare in South Australia.

During this time they have undertaken a number of extensive education and on-ground works programs, including the development and operation of a successful licensed BSC captive breeding and release program. The aim of the BSC captive breeding and release program is to help reverse the decline of the BSC within the Murray Catchment by supplementing the diminishing wild population with young captive bred birds. The program's first release occurred in the Moulamein district of New South Wales in 2008 when 15 BSCs were released into the wild. Since then six further BSC releases have been undertaken, bringing the total number of captive bred BSC they have directly released to date to 66.



Lessons from 10 years of Studying Bush Stone-curlews.

Elisa Tack

Murray Local Land Services, 421 Swift Street, Albury, NSW 2640

elisa.tack@lls.nsw.gov.au

In 2004 I commenced a PhD on Bush Stone-curlews in southern NSW and north east Victoria. This work was the beginning of 10 years of working with landholders, community groups, researchers and government agencies on a wide range of Bush Stone-curlew conservation programs. A large part of my own research has focused on habitat preferences of Bush Stone-curlews in agricultural areas. I have also been involved with the Nature Conservation Working Group's successful captive breeding and release program through assisting with monitoring of released Bush Stone-curlews and navigating through lengthy bureaucratic processes.

In my presentation I will outline some of the key things I have learnt in my 10 years working on Bush Stone-curlews. These include evidence of the significant and recent declines in curlews in this region, detectability of curlews using call playback, the challenges of radiotracking curlews, and the important, and often overlooked, role that food availability is playing in this species' decline.



Trialling Release Protocols and Thresholds of Predator Presence for the Reintroduction of the Bush Stone-curlew to southern Australia.

Leah Kemp, D Roshier, L Steindler, N Riessen

Australian Wildlife Conservancy, SE region. Scotia Sanctuary via Wentworth, NSW 2648

Leah.Kemp@australianwildlife.org

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy conducted a trial reintroduction program for Bush Stone-curlew at two of their properties, aiming to trial soft-release protocols and to test whether these captive-reared ground-nesting birds could establish in feral free and feral controlled areas. At Scotia (NSW), 10 Bush Stone-curlews were reintroduced inside a 4000 ha fenced predator free area and 10 in a predator controlled unfenced area, while at Yookamurra (SA), 12 were reintroduced inside the fenced predator free area. Birds were released in relatively equal sex ratios groups, and all were fitted with leg-band transmitters prior to release.

At Scotia, survivorship was lower for birds in the feral-free area, with five of the 10 birds dying in the first six weeks compared to one bird in the feral-control area. These deaths were attributed to starvation. While at Yookamurra, survivorship in the feral-free area was greater than at Scotia with the first death recorded eight weeks post-release. Radio-tracking and camera trap data from the aviary gates at Scotia showed that birds released in the feral-free area remained further from their group mates, had lower site fidelity, and did not return to the aviary as frequently during the first two weeks post-release (while free feed was available) than birds released in the feral-control area. The less aviary visitation and use of supplementary feed by birds in the feral-free area could be explained by the brush-tailed bettongs, bilbies and bridled nailtail wallabies (observed on the motion-sensor cameras) exploiting the free feed and excluding the wary Bush Stone-curlew. Site fidelity and survival data will be presented from this reintroduction program across both properties.



Kaya, the Artistic Dingo Raising Money for Bush Stone-curlews.

Kate King & Lia Reeve-Parker

Oakvale Farm and Fauna World, Salt Ash, NSW 2318

www.oakvalefarm.com.au

Oakvale Farm & Fauna World is located in beautiful Port Stephens just North of Newcastle NSW. Now in our 35th year of operation, we are a small wildlife park committed to making a big impact towards the conservation of many native species.

Join Kate and Lia in their short presentation to hear the amazing tale of how one of our Dingos “Kaya” is contributing to Bush Stone-curlew conservation; our partnership with Jan and Nev from Nature Conservation Working Group; the value of networking and our ambitious plan to help our local wild Bush Stone-curlew population.

Find us on Facebook and see highlights of Kaya’s video on YouTube (Oakvale Farm dingo painting).



Reintroductions of Captive-bred Bush Stone-curlews in South-West Western Australia

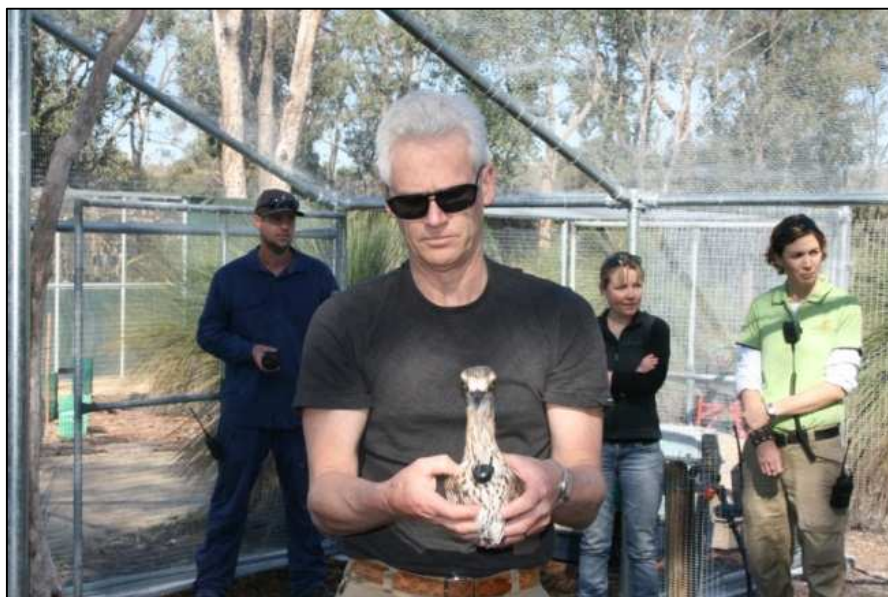
Dr Peter Mawson

Director of Animal Health and Research

Perth Zoo, 20 Labouchere Road, South Perth, WA 6151

Peter.Mawson@perthzoo.wa.gov.au

Captive-bred Bush Stone-curlews from Perth Zoo and a private wildlife park located in metropolitan Perth have been used to provide founding stock for two reintroduction projects in south-west Western Australia since 2012. The release sites have consisted of a 560 ha fenced water reserve in the wheatbelt of WA, managed for fauna conservation and a 4000 ha unfenced urban reserve 15 km only from the Perth CBD. Just as the release locations have been very different, the problems associated with the release and subsequent monitoring have varied with sites. This presentation will describe the methods used, the results to date and the plans for future reintroductions of Bush Stone-curlews in Western Australia.



Bush Stone-curlew Monitoring and Nest Site Protection, Brisbane Water, NSW Central Coast

Alan Morris

Gosford Friends of the Bush Stone-curlew

a.morris42@optusnet.com.au

The Gosford Friends of the Bush Stone-curlew have been continuously monitoring a small remnant population of 5 breeding pairs of Stone-curlews for almost 15 years. The birds live within an increasingly urban area under constant pressure from development and a growing human population. They inhabit private land, residential areas, bushland and foreshore reserves around the edge of the Brisbane Water, a tidal inlet with associated saltmarsh and mangrove habitats. Many of the foreshore reserves are heavily utilised by the general public and their dogs, and it appears that juvenile birds find it difficult to find suitable habitat as well as mates. This presentation highlights the challenges of conserving a small population of Bush Stone-curlews within a growing urban area, particularly conflicts arising from off-leash dog exercise areas, the control of foxes, and protecting nest sites in public spaces. This Bush Stone-curlew population is the most southerly on the east coast of Australia, and therefore significant, but may disappear if local and state governments remain relatively inert in their consideration of its requirements.



Our last Curlew? How Community Volunteers are Providing it with a New Family.

Judy Crocker

Facilitator

Mid Loddon Landcare Network and Conservation Management Network

jcroc22@gmail.com

The Upper Spring Creek and the West Marong Landcare and CMN members became aware in 2007 just how critically low our local Bush Stone-curlews numbers were - possibly only about six, and funds were raised to produce a Bush Stone-curlew Supplementation Program in Central Victoria Plan. We also became aware soon after the 'Plan' was completed that all the remnant protection, revegetation and fox control projects that had begun in 2000 and continued over an ever increasing area ever since, were not assisting with even the survival of the then population of curlews let alone supporting an increase in their numbers. So an extension to the plan was devised, to provide a multitude of safe curlew feeding and nesting habitats on private and public land, before beginning our breeding and soft release program. These actions are still ongoing and the original curlew population supplementation program is now about to begin.



The Status of Urban Bush Stone-curlews.

Scott O'Keefe

Environmental Futures Research Institute, Griffith University, Nathan, QLD 4111

m.s.okeeffe@optusnet.com.au

Bush Stone-curlews (*Burhinus grallarius*) have declined dramatically in southern parts of their range. The primary causes of the decline are said to be European Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) predation and habitat destruction/conversion, particularly urbanisation.

Bush Stone-curlews are still easily seen in much of northern Australia, including some urban areas. However, there is no significant monitoring of the species in urban or rural areas and, based on the slimmest of evidence, the species has been pronounced 'secure' in northern Australia.

Bush Stone-curlews in Brisbane and other northern urban areas are presumably exposed to many of the same pressures that are claimed to be responsible for the catastrophic decline of the species in southern Australia. Although there are some indications that Bush Stone-curlews are relatively common in some urban areas, and that they have some ability to adapt to the urban environment, there is no substantial evidence suggesting that Bush Stone-curlews in northern urban areas will survive better in the long term than they have anywhere else.

The author's research project aims to establish baseline monitoring procedures for the species in urban areas, produce a snapshot of the status of the population in greater Brisbane and discover the degree to which Bush Stone-curlews are able to adapt to the urban environment. The presentation discusses the significance of urban populations, and presents some preliminary findings about the ecology of urban Bush Stone-curlews.



Why, When and How to Control Foxes Now and New Control Options for the Future.

Linton Staples

Managing Director

Animal Control Technologies, 46-50 Freight Drive, Somerton, Victoria, 3062 Adjust

Professor of Animal Science at University of Queensland

lstaples@animalcontrol.com.au

Foxes have been a problem since first introduced in the 1860s. They are still extending their range and density and we are not keeping pace due to increased restrictions on control options. They have been, and continue to be, a primary cause of the losses of a continent of wildlife, so our record of species loss is considered to be one of the worst in the developed world over the last 150 years. Damage to profitable lamb and goat production cause a 10-20% loss in these livestock industries. We have not solved the problem and are not taking the comprehensive approach that is needed so we face an increasing threat despite all that has been done. Nevertheless, there are important reasons to continue the battle and it is essential to maintain landholder involvement in every habitat. A best practice approach is best based on a full understanding of the “enemy” and the strengths and weakness of the control options.

This talk will refresh the biology of foxes including their capabilities, their feed requirements, their density & distribution, their breeding and their vulnerabilities. The problems caused by foxes for stock and wildlife and the risks for spreading diseases will be refreshed. Current options and best practice approaches to control will be explained.

Possible new techniques being developed by ACTA with the IA-CRC will be explained with special emphasis on the mode of action of PAPP baits and the strengths and weaknesses of this new tool that is currently undergoing regulatory review for product approval.



NOTES

[illegible]