



Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (Qld) Inc.

Hunting and Conservation Division

"Preserving Australia's Heritage"

SSAA (Qld) Inc Hunting & Conservation Division
Office: Queensland Indoor Range
Postal Address: Office: 266 Brisbane Street, West Ipswich, Qld 4305
Phone: (07) 3202 2111 Email: handc@ssaaqld.org.au



HUNTING & CONSERVATION NEWS

September 2008 Edition

Old State Co-ordinator's Note

Dear Members,
Welcome to our September newsletter. I trust you have had a great last few months.

One of the outcomes of our feral animal control is that we shoot many hares and rabbits. These are not always used, as not everyone eats them. During this last quarter one of our members has found a use for these. Lone Pine sanctuary has a number of small and large raptors who now benefit from our efforts. This also led us to thinking that other such sanctuaries could also benefit from this. After a few quick phone calls, we found that Currumbin sanctuary has a *Save the Tassie Devil* project that would be very grateful for our donations. As places like Currumbin and Lone Pine rely on donations (both money and goods & services) we are only too pleased to help.

I would like to welcome Bob Pardon onto the management committee in the form of state Administration Officer. Bob's responsibilities will be general office administration and database maintenance.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the phone survey. Your input has been very helpful in assisting the organisation to move forward. It was also good to speak to you all one on one, as quite a few of you come from the more remote areas.

Regards
Mark Woods
Old State Co-ordinator

Northern Regions Visit

Mark Woods and Geoff Sloman will be in Cairns on the 18th to the 22nd of October for the Queensland Pest Animal Symposium. As we don't get up that way often, Geoff and I would like to take the opportunity to meet with members and interested parties from Cairns and surrounding areas at 2:00 pm Saturday the 18th at the Wangetti Range, Captain Cook Highway. Look forward to catching up with you all.

Mark Woods

Wanted - Hares

This is more for the members of the SE Area. If you shoot any hares or rabbits on your own hunting properties and don't have a use for them, it would be appreciated if you could freeze them down whole and call Mark on 0438 098 469 to arrange delivery to either Lone Pines Sanctuary or Currumbin Sanctuary. Please do not skin or gut them!

The Committee

Bridled Nailtail Wallaby Population Report

By Lisa Kingsley BSc

Recent studies have shown that Bridled Nailtail wallaby, or flashjack, populations are declining in both Taunton National Park and Idalia National Park, but little is known about the translocated population of flashjacks on Avocet Nature Refuge. The aim of my research on the flashjacks is to determine whether their translocation to Avocet NR was successful. For my study, I am basing success on an expected population size given the number that were released from 2001 to 2005, a high reproductive rate, and an overall healthy population based on body conditions of individual wallabies. I am also using spotlighting data to examine whether the population has expanded into different habitats within the refuge, or if they are confined to a certain area of Brigalow forest. My fieldwork consisted of three trips to Avocet with a total of nine weeks spent collecting data on the flashjacks and the habitats within the refuge with the use of trapping and spotlighting techniques.

Currently I am analysing the data I collected, along with data collected from previous years of trapping and spotlighting of flashjacks on Avocet, and have found some intriguing results thus far. The population size, although smaller than expected, is extremely healthy, which is a likely result given the high amount of rainfall and vegetation growth early this year. I trapped a total of 37 different wallabies over 22 nights of trapping, and microchipped a total of 12 males and 13 females. Previously unchipped wallabies accounted for 68% of all the wallabies I trapped, while a total of 33 of the 37 trapped were 'wild-born'. The flashjacks also appear to be breeding to their full potential, with nearly 85% of females that I trapped carrying joeys. Lastly, I trapped many young wallabies during my last trip in July, which indicates that joey growth and survival rates are high. This result also suggests that predator control within Avocet is having a positive effect by lowering predation pressures on the young, small wallabies that are normally preyed upon.

My spotlighting surveys of various habitat types within the refuge show that the population is almost strictly confined to a small area of Brigalow forest. This result is in consensus with the recent results of both Idalia and Taunton population surveys, where populations at these two sites are contracting rather than expanding to new areas of Brigalow. It is expected that the population should grow over the next 6 to 12 months, due to the good vegetation conditions this year, so later surveys will hopefully show that the population has expanded and dispersed into new areas of the refuge.

The intensive predator control on Avocet and its surrounding properties, I believe, has significantly contributed to the success of the translocation of the flashjacks. This species is extremely vulnerable to predation by feral animals. The high number of wild-born wallabies and unchipped wallabies that I trapped, and the large proportion of young wallabies in the population, indicate that the removal of feral predators has allowed the population of flashjacks to take hold on the refuge. Continued management of feral species on Avocet is an integral part of the survival of this extremely important population of flashjacks.

My study on the flashjacks will be completed later this year, and the results will hopefully help in the future planning of translocations of this species on to other private land areas in Queensland and New South Wales. Thank you to all who helped me on my initial trip to Avocet in March, and I wish you good luck on your trip to Avocet in September!

Lisa Kingsley BSc

Data Collection

The last thing most of you want to do when out hunting is to fill out another form but consider the following.

In the article above Lisa Kingsley has drawn on some of the Wallaby trapping and feral control data that we have been collecting on our trips to Avocet. Data from other projects is also used by people outside of H & C for studies, reports and grant proposals.

Also the data we gather is used both internally and externally.

Internally we use it to:

- identify areas of high feral animal activity
- understand behavioural patterns
- identify areas of need
- quantify return on investment
- add to our knowledge and understanding of our threatened native species and their threats
- apply for grants and other funding

Externally it is used for the same purposes as we do, and additionally:

- in research programs
- to guide management planning
- to direct resources

As you can see by the above points the information on the data sheets is an invaluable tool to us and others. With this in mind, I ask you all to take the time to do this task and most importantly of all – hand it to your team leader.

The last thing most of you want to do when going hunting is fill out another form.

So remember when you get that sinking feeling when it comes time to fill out a data form – there are a great many benefits.

Pig Project Report

In the June trip the members took 10 pigs and trapped 5 pigs. This has been some of the better results shooting wise due to the amount of water on ground although there is still at least two very large pigs (200kg plus) in the area. No foxes or cats were taken this trip for which Bob Pardon is extremely remorseful.

The Committee

Avocet Report

Our next Avocet trip is on Sept 27th till 5th Oct. Hugo has had the cattle grazing in the reserve for about 2 months. This should greatly reduce grass height and he's reported that there has been a lot more pig and feral dog activity than usual over the last month or so.

Lisa Kingsley has finished doing Nail Tail Wallaby trapping for this year with excellent results. This means that our next trip's sole focus will be feral control. Apart from the 2 neighbouring properties that we have access to, the owners of Goonderoo have given us the green light to control feral animals on their property as well.

This now means that we now have a fairly large area (in the vicinity of 25,000 hectares) to cover, requiring a number of members to maximise the results from this trip.

I would like to thank Graham Lightbody from Fitzroy Basin Association for making available to us 2 topographical maps (of Avocet & Goonderoo) at no charge.

As we are a not for profit organisation these gestures make our job easier and more efficient & effective.

The Committee

Future Projects

The three new projects we have been working on for some time now are in their final stages and should be up and running by the end of the year.

All three are targeting feral pigs and clean skin cattle. Two of these are in the Central region and one in the Northern region. The Northern region project should be running by mid October with the exact date to be advised.

The Committee

Stewartdale Report

Over the last 3 trips 22 hares and 1 fox have been taken. Two pigs were also seen on the July training day. The hares were donated to Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary to feed their Birds of prey and Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary for the Tasmanian devils.

The pigs were seen at the northern end of the property around where we have seen pig rooting in the past.

David Gottschalk

Training focus

General range practice is a good time to work on your technique whether you are new to shooting or an experienced shooter.

Practice your freestanding technique with a .22.

Although volumes could be written on freestanding shooting, the following areas are always good to practise whether you are a new shooter or a seasoned shooter.

Stance

Keep your feet about shoulder width apart, toes turned out slightly and knees flexed rather than locked.

Trigger release

Remember gently squeeze the trigger – don't yank or pull it. Work on your breathing and remember holding a prolonged shooting posture will cause muscle fatigue which in turn leads to inability to hold a steady aim.

Body Position to Target

45 degrees to the centre line of the rifle.

Each person needs to work on their own technique as we will all vary slightly from these basics.

The Committee

Conservation Matters

Black-headed Python
Aspides melancephalus

Due to the appearance of someone having dipped its head in a tar pot, the black-headed python is more commonly known as a tarpot. In some areas they are also called a rock python.

While not endangered, they are both a beautiful and interesting snake which some of us have had the pleasure of getting up close and personal with on recent trips to our Central Queensland projects. As a result, we thought we would do our homework and find out a bit more about them.....

The home range for the black-headed python is across Northern Australia. They are found in a variety of habitats from humid coastal forests to the arid interior. They live in burrows made by other animals, although they are also able to dig their own.

Black-headed pythons grow up to 3 metres in length – the ones we have met measured around 2 metres! They have a distinctive black head and beige coloured body, with medium to dark stripes. The Queenslanders are considerably darker than those found in the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia.

Once they have reached 4-5 year of age, they are old enough to have babies. Mating occurs around late June to early July. Once pregnant the female fasts until October or November when she lays approximately 10 eggs. She then coils herself around them and cares for the eggs until they hatch. The eggs are about 8-9cms round, with an incubation period of 9-13 weeks. The newly hatched snake measures approximately 60cm and remains in the broken shell absorbing the leftover yoke for around 24-30 hours.

As noted in the name, they are a python and therefore non-venomous. They kill their prey by coiling around it and suffocating it! Preferred food includes the usual – small mammals and birds. Unlike other snakes though, their main diet consists of lizards and venomous snakes as well as other small reptiles.

Most snakes lie in the sun to warm up and are consequently exposed to a range of predators. The black-headed python is

fortunate - he only needs to stick his head out, keeping the rest of his body safely under cover amongst bushes or rocks. It has also been found that in the heat of summer, they will bury their heads in the sand to cool the head down and the whole body with it.

Another unusual feature of the black headed python is it is not very aggressive. If disturbed or agitated they have an unusual defence – they let out a roar (yes, I have witnesses!!) and then sit back and hiss like any other snake. If they do strike, it is more likely to headbutt you than bite. They do however have a strong set of jaws to hang on with if they choose to bite.

References

Wilson, Steve. *A Field Guide to Reptiles of Queensland*. New Holland Publishers (Australia) Pty Ltd. (2005)

<http://animals.jrank.org/pages/3843/Pythons-Pythonidae-BLACK-HEADED-PYTHON>

www.coolcompanions.com.au/animalfacts/blackheaded.php

www2.hunterlink.net.au

www.pilbarapythons.com/blackheadpython_m.html

Thoughts and hints

Take good care of your gear in dusty conditions. Remember that dust and oil mixed together makes a good abrasive. Cleaning your gear is essential and also take whatever measures you can to prevent dust getting into all your equipment (rifle scopes, GPS's, radios). Flip up scope covers, soft rifle case, scabbards, pouches for radios and GPS's will help to protect your gear. Camera stores and some camping stores have clear film to protect LCD screens.

Latex finger stalls or fingers cut from disposable gloves are good to put over

muzzles but be careful leaving them on in moist conditions.

Remember to use rubber gloves when handling carcasses. Some of the diseases we can catch are Brucellosis Hydatid and Q-fever. One or two sets of gloves in your backpack don't take up much room.

To keep your hands clean, without wasting precious water, consider carrying moist towellettes (baby wipes). They effectively remove dirt without using precious water and in an emergency, allow them to dry and you can use them as fire starters. Although another alternative is the latest Dettol hand cleaning product advertised on TV.

North Queensland Report

Since the last report we have been very busy. Our regular range practice has been well attended, with members getting familiar with their favourite rifle, completing their Practical Accreditations and getting valuable practice.

Two members have attended and passed their Accreditation Course and I look forward to them passing their Practical and joining us on projects.

In July a small team attended the wild dog control program at Hughenden. Although very little dog activity was seen, we accounted for two large boars, both about 70-80Kg.

This trip proved the training advantages of our organisation, in that a newer member, experienced in maritime GPS use, gained valuable experience in the use of GPS on land.

A new project has been set up, south of Collinsville, for a variety of pest animals which are having an adverse affect on the local soak and waterhole systems.

Both of the Townsville area projects have to be co-ordinated with the land owners to fit in with their management strategies and stock work, but hopefully we can get to them about every 2 to 3 months.

Our first visit to Collinsville is scheduled for early October, and the next trip to Hughenden planned for mid September.

With safety in mind we have looked at the use of high visibility clothing while in the field. We have decided to wear high visibility clothing during daytime operations and reflective safety clothing at night. Most animals are colour blind and will notice movement before colour differences, and high visibility clothes make our operations safer.

Geoff Sloman

Cairns Report

We have had an enthusiastic group, consisting two females and seven males attend an Accreditation course with all passing with flying colours.

We will be holding our first full H&C training day on the 11th of October at the Wangetti range. I would like to invite anyone in the region to come and join us for an informative and social day.

Central Region Report

The last quarter has seen two new members join our ranks, who are keen to get in amongst the ferals.

We had two trips to Avocet which both proved to be uneventful with no target animals seen, however we did see plenty of pig sign along one of the major creek systems. We had a good chat to Lisa Kingsley and helpers from the Queensland University who were conducting their studies on the population demographics of the wallabies.

They were very successful in the amount of animals they trapped and collected data from, with sometimes up to 30 animals a night being trapped. It was very interesting to talk to people who were at the other end

of the spectrum from where we were in relation to helping the wallabies.

During the Easter trip to Avocet the team from Totally Wild visited and filmed the wallabies and they also showed up at Kestrel Coal the following week, to do a documentary on coal mining.

Chock also attended the July cat and dog activity along with a heap of our southern region brethren. Chock enjoyed his time there renewing old acquaintances and making new ones, as well as doing a lot of miles checking out the lay of the land and speaking to neighbouring landholders.

With the recent change in management practices wild dogs have been added to the target species on a nearby stakeholder's property. Five of our members are planning a trip to this project in the next month.

That's all from the central region.

Bill Sandeman and Chock McLean

Southern Training Weekends

The attendance at the training weekends is pleasingly high with the shooting exercises exposing areas where we can all improve.

The focus of the shooting activities is offhand shooting and shooting from other rests normally encountered in the bush rather than sand bags. The rimfire shoot for September will be slightly different but highly challenging and I would advise that extra ammo may be needed.

Brett Marais

Accreditation Courses

Shooting accreditations - you can do your shooting qualification targets at any range as long as you are observed by a range operator or range officer and that they sign it as so.

Any members wishing to do the theory part of their accreditation should contact their Regional Training Officer as listed below.

H&C Contacts

H&C QLD Office

Office: 266 Brisbane Street,
West Ipswich, Qld 4305

Phone: (07) 3202 2111

Email: handc@ssaaqld.org.au

Mark Woods

State Coordinator and Acting State Training
and Logistics Co-ordinator

Phone: 0438 098 469 or 3808 4881

Email: markwoods2@bigpond.com

Owen McIntyre

State Activity Coordinator

Phone: 0417 615 505

Email: owenmcintyre@optusnet.com.au

David Gottschalk

Southern QLD Activity Coordinator

Phone: 0416 899 587

Email: dgottschalk@internode.on.net

Bob Pardon

State Administration Officer

Phone:

Email:

Brett Marais

Southern QLD Training

Phone: 0417 708 568

Email: bdmarais@iprimus.com.au

Colin Penfold

Southern QLD Accreditation Officer

Phone: 0438 457 452

Email: sallycolin@virginbroadband.com.au

Bill Sandeman

Central Co-ordinator and Training Officer

Phone: 49877855 or 0429 877 855

Email: bj sandeman@inet.net.au

Geoff Sloman

Northern Co-ordinator and Townsville
Training Officer

Phone: (07) 4723 8852

Email: geoffms@yourhub.com.au

Doug Harvey

Phone: (07) 4057 8868

Email: ross.harvey@originenergy.com.au

Joe Pezzotti

North QLD Training Officer

Phone: (07) 4062 5404

Email: joemauser98@bigpond.com

Gordon McGowan

Phone: 0438 175 833

Email: parkerhale58@yahoo.com.au

Lindsay Rogers

Cairns Training Officer

Phone: (07) 4053 3307

FOR SALE PAGES

FOR SALE

Genuine parts from a 2004 Hilux SR5 Dual Cab

- Aluminium Estate Roo Bar \$400
- Sports Bar 110
- Tub with plastic liner and tonneau \$250
- Rear Chrome bumper \$80

Please phone: 0416 899 587

Upcoming Activity Dates

Upcoming Activity Dates

Be sure to mark the dates on the following page in your diary and plan to come along. You never know – you might just be free on that date. We have kept the page separate so you can put it up on the fridge too!

Hunting Activities

Attendance at activities must be arranged with the team leader as most activities will have a safe operating limit.

Date	Activity	Region	Contact
September			
6 th - 13 th	Pig Project	Central	Mark Woods
12 th	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
20 th - 21 st	Training Weekend	Southern	Brett Marais
27 th - 5 th Oct	Avocet project	Central	Bill Sandeman
October			
18 th	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
19 th	Project training	Southern	Owen McIntyre
25 th - 2 nd Nov	Feral Cat Control Project	Central	Bill Sandeman
November			
7 th	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
15 th - 16 th	Training Weekend	Southern	Brett Marais
ATTENTION: THE FOLLOWING DATE HAS BEEN CHANGED!			
15 th - 23 rd	Pig Project	Central	Mark Woods
December			
13 th	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
14 th	Project training	Southern	Owen McIntyre
January 2009			
17 th	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
18 th	Project training	Southern	Owen McIntyre
February			
21 st	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
22 nd	Project training	Southern	Owen McIntyre
March			
6 th	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
7 th - 13 th	Pig Project	Central	Mark Woods
April			
10-19 th	Avocet Project	Central	Mark Woods
18 th	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
19 th	Project training	Southern	Owen McIntyre
May			
16 th	Stewartdale	Southern	David Gottschalk
17 th	Project training	Southern	Owen McIntyre
June			
13 th - 20 th	Pig Project	Central	Mark Woods
September			
26 - 4 th Oct	Avocet Project	Central	Mark Woods

Our Supporters

The businesses listed below support us in different ways, whether it is through direct discounts to members, donations to the Christmas Shoot, or items loaned for field use.

When purchasing items from these businesses please be sure to mention you are a Hunting & Conservation member for discounts where applicable.

Rebel Gun Works

Ph: 3391 6744
Fax: 3391 8835

Queensland Gun Exchange

Ph: 3393 0933
Fax: 3393 0711

Email: sales@qldgunexchange.com.au
www.qldgunexchange.com.au

Ron Gooley's***

Radiators	Air Conditioning
Mechanical	Auto electrics
Electronic Tuning	Alternators
Fuel injection	Starter motors
Brake & Clutch	Log Book Servicing

Ph: 3209 1033
Moss Street, Slacks Creek

Queensland Shooters Supplies

Ph: 3202 2111
Fax: 3812 8071

Emails: sales@qss.org.au
Or for the indoor range: sales@qir.org.au

Mercury Marine

www.mercurymarine.com.au

Go to the Dealer Locator for your nearest dealer.

***Ron Gooley's specialise in high output alternators and electronic fitouts.