



## Donations



Visitor numbers have been up again in recent weeks and all have donated to our Box. Just short of \$200 has been placed in the box since the last edition of our newsletter.

Also a donation of \$600, made through our website, has been received from a member of the public. The donors have made this as part of their 'carbon offsetting' for the year and have asked that it be used for 'strategic vegetation'.

## Visitors

We have had visits from both Murray Bridge and Mt Barker U3A walking groups and a Mt Baker bird watching group. These groups have generously donated. There is also interest from the Strathalbyn U3A walking group to visit in the future. Bird SA are scheduled to do a field trip at the end of July. Requests for visits from groups or individuals can be made through our website 'Contact us' page.

and from Interstate

Matt Smith, one of our unit holders, who lives and works in Victoria dropped in recently. Matt was showing his little daughter Zoe around the wetland. Zoe was being very quiet, perhaps not wanting to draw attention to the bunny on her beanie after her dad explained our feral rabbit policy.



## Water Levels

We are well and truly into winter and the level of the river is rising — the inlet to the wetland was shut on the 8<sup>th</sup> June. The river levels were expected to drop in April to about 0.55 AHD but this did not happen. Our plan was to hold the pond level to the same as the river so that, when the level dropped, there would be an outflow from Paiwalla. We did get some outflow but not as much as anticipated.

Salinity in the big pond is around 1500 uS/cm, the small pond 3000 uS/cm and the river 600 uS/cm so we still have the salt issues to deal with.

We are getting together a water management plan and included in it are several options for dealing with the salinity.

## Wooly Baa Baa

Farewell to our feral Sheep.

We have finally got rid of the sheep that has been living at Sunnyside for the last two years. There were two years worth of wool on the animal. It was completely wool blind and relied on hearing to survive.

## Grants



Last newsletter we mentioned two grants that we had applied for. We were unsuccessful with the NRM Connecting

Communities Grant and as yet no notification has been received re the Riverine Recovery grant application.

*(See Stop Press—received today 4/7)*



Paiwalla in conjunction with Conservation Volunteers Australia have received \$15,500 for the purpose of working with Community Volunteers to explore and restore Paiwalla and Sunnyside Wetlands.

Six to nine community members for 8 days for on-ground restoration, a community discovery day, 500 plants, guards and stakes, signage and co-ordination, and hosting of a BBQ when all is completed.

## Turtles

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> Steve met with Mike Thomson from Sydney University and his PhD student, Claudia Santori, who recently received a grant from the Nature Foundation SA to conduct research on turtles in the lower Murray. They are looking to study the turtle populations along the Murray and wish to use Paiwalla as one of their sites. They are looking at several aspects of the turtle populations along the Murray and will trap and take blood samples for DNA profiling. Claudia will be commencing work in the area within a couple of months.

While discussing turtles Steve requested information from the last turtle trapping the university undertook as preliminary work for the project — an excerpt from the report below.

....."FYI, from when we trapped over 24-27 February, we caught 8 *Emydura macquarii* (6 female, 2 male) and 14 *Chelodina longicollis* (sexes unconfirmed). We caught the *E. macquarii* only within the Paiwalla paddock wetlands\* (i.e., within the weir), and caught them fairly evenly at each of our sites there. We caught the *C. longicollis* both within the paddock wetlands, and also outside of the paddock weirs, in those heavily-vegetated areas open to the Murray channel. These are low numbers but they are some of the higher catch rates we experienced in all of our trapping in South Australia this year, particularly for *C. Longicollis*....."

\*Interpret references to "paddock wetlands" as meaning within the bounded area. (*C. Longicollis* is an Eastern Snake-necked Turtle or Long-necked Turtle, and *E. macquarii* is the Murray River turtle or Murray Short-neck. Ed)



Long-necked Turtle

## New Signs at Paiwalla



The new bird signs, funded by Birds SA, have been installed and look good.

There are 4 signs in the carpark, and an additional 4 signs (repeats) around the wetland. These signs by no means cover all birds at the wetland but are an indication of the variety of birds you might see.

Thank you to Birds SA.

## Canoe Trail

The signs for the canoe trail are installed in Paiwalla North and we now need to get the map onto our website. We are currently developing the technology to allow us to put a QR code on the signs so a person can download the map onto their phone. (If they are brave enough to paddle with their phone on board.)



## The Tractor



In compliance with the OH & S review the tractor now has a seat belt. USE IT!

This great photo of one of our resident Barn Owls was provided by Neil Cheshire



## Wetland Restoration on the Lower Murray, South Australia

Paiwalla Wetland owned by Wetland Habitats Trust and managed by Paiwalla Pty Ltd  
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