



# Potoroo Postings

Issue # 2020/1



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## CALENDAR

**February 2020:** First of the quarterly fungi surveys at Two Peoples Bay. Dates to be confirmed but volunteers needed so if you are interested, keep an eye out for updates and calls for volunteers

**February 29 - Mar 14, 2020:** Two weeks intensive radio-tracking at Waychinicup NP. We need 12 volunteers each week for this (as per previous intensive radio-tracking for those who remember it from a few years ago) so if you are interested please contact us as soon as possible to secure your place or register for further information.

**March 2020:** First of the quarterly checks of motion cameras at Two Peoples Bay and subsequent checking of SD cards to see what species have been recorded. Volunteers will be needed so if you are interested keep an eye out for updates and calls for volunteers.

**April 30-May 2, 2020:** QV1 abseil. The abseil was by far our best fundraiser in 2019 so hopefully it will be even more successful in 2020. Registrations and donations open the week of January 20. See below for more details

## FROM THE CHAIR

With a string of successful events now behind us such as the Trivia & Truffles Quiz Night, our annual wine labelling, & the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend of events, it is now time to thank all of our generous supporters. The Gilbert's Potoroo has gained valuable public awareness & added financial support.

No time to rest however, as work has already started on planning activities under a recently approved large Community Stewardship Grant from the State NRM. This grant commenced on 27 November & will provide funding for a significant number of events, activities & citizen-science projects supporting DBCA & the Gilbert's Potoroo Recovery Plan over the next 3 years. Plenty of volunteer opportunities coming up for those who want to be actively involved.

My best wishes to all for a happy New Year in 2020.

**Ken Bushell**



Contact us: Email: [mail@potoroo.org](mailto:mail@potoroo.org), Mail: PO Box 654, Albany, WA 6331

Visit us: [www.potoroo.org](http://www.potoroo.org)

Follow us:  @gilbertspotoroo  @GilbertsPotorooActionGroup

## RECOVERY PROGRAM UPDATE

By Tony Friend and Steph Hill, DBCA

Since the last update in the Autumn 2019 newsletter, the DBCA team has continued to monitor the Gilbert's potoroo populations at Two Peoples Bay and in the Waychinicup National Park enclosure.

Trapping at Two Peoples Bay is focussed on following the recovery of that population after the disastrous fire of November 2015. Prior to the fire, we monitored eleven separate traplines three times a year. As the habitat for Gilbert's potoroos had been removed from all but two of those traplines, the regular trapping round became much quicker! The potoroos captured each round are fitted with tail transmitters and often with tiny GPS loggers that collect and store the potoroos' locations. The recent data collected this way have shown us that the potoroos living in the unburnt habitat are now venturing out into the burnt areas.

In July this year, the logger attached to the "old lady" of Two Peoples Bay, female 339, collected 50 nocturnal fixes in the burnt area and only 32 in the unburnt area over 14 days. All her daytime nest locations were in the unburnt area, however. We can conclude that while the scrub in the burnt area is not yet dense enough to provide good nesting habitat, this potoroos seems able to find enough fungi in the area recovering from the fire to make it worth her while spending a lot of time there. Further information on the fungi of the burnt and unburnt area will be collected under the citizen science project to be carried out soon under the State NRM project (see below).

The other exciting news at Two Peoples Bay has been the appearance of an unknown potoroos at a camera trap set on Hakea, one of the burnt traplines over a kilometre from the unburnt area. This potoroos was first seen on the camera record in late July 2019, then turned up again in September, October and November. We ran the Hakea trapline for 4 nights in late November but no potoroos showed up. These findings indicate that the recovering habitat may be able to support potoroos much sooner than was thought.



Above: The unmistakable profile of a Gilbert's potoroos investigating a bait canister, captured by a camera trap on Hakea trapline, Two Peoples Bay.



Above: Dr Tony Friend rebaiting the lure for that sensor camera in the foreground. Photo: Ken Blechynden

Our results from Waychinicup are also encouraging, with 23 individuals captured in November, including 7 new animals. While we don't catch every animal every time, by trapping regularly we build a more accurate picture of the population. We know that during 2019, the total number in the enclosure has been at least 27. At 380 hectares, the Waychinicup population compares well with the Mt Gardner peninsula at Two Peoples Bay where, in the years before the fire, the 1000-hectare area supported at most 40 animals, admittedly in the presence of foxes and cats.

## VOLUNTEERING

Text and photos by Ken Blechynden

Spring heralds another trapping and monitoring program for the Gilbert's Potoroo recovery program. As a regular volunteer I look forward to helping during this period of trapping. I am sure the Potoroos themselves look forward to it too, getting an easy feed of oats and peanut paste enhanced with pistachio oil. They must think it delicious because when they are trapped they are weighed, poked measured and prodded all over, have their most private parts examined, suffer the indignity of having their mouths held open for a dental examination and if they are a "new" animal have microchips inserted, ears snipped for DNA samples and usually tail transmitters attached to their tails. After all that they often come back the next day for another free feed and surely must expect the treatment again. Luckily for them re-trapped animals don't have the full treatment again during the same trapping period.

This spring, 2019, there was a certain extra anticipation because after earlier helping collect SD cards from sensor cameras in the devastated burnt area at Two Peoples Bay I was told a Gilbert's Potoroo had put in several appearances on the SD card from the camera in the severely burnt out Hakea trap line. By coincidence, that is also the trap line that they were rediscovered on 25 years ago. It is a great trap line with fantastic views and Dr Tony Friend and I were there only 1 day short of the 25 years since the Gilbert's Potoroo rediscovery by Elizabeth Sinclair.



Above: Following Dr Tony Friend down the gully on Hakea trap line.



Above: Ken on a more open area of that trap line with views across to Coffin Island.

Trapping this animal would be the only way to find out whether it was one of the four known remaining animals living at Two Peoples Bay which had survived the fire in an unburnt area some distance away or whether it was in fact another animal from another smaller unburnt area.

Unfortunately the animal didn't appear in any of the traps during the trapping week so we still don't know just who it was. The camera is still set so the checking the camera SD card before the Autumn trapping period should be interesting.

Meanwhile, Biodiversity and Conservation Science, Albany Research Technical Officer Stephanie Hill and GPAG volunteer Val Hack checked traps on an unburnt trap line where the known surviving Gilbert's Potoroos frequent, and had success. They also caught a furred baby Quenda who unfortunately had become separated from its mother so took it to be raised by an experienced carer.

One week earlier we caught over a dozen individual Gilbert's Potoroos in the Norman's Beach enclosure, so the enclosure is going

Right: Stephanie Hill with the baby Quenda.



very well. Although we were drenched one day, the next day revealed sunshine with heaps of flowers and a great rainbow. It is a great place for our "office".

Carrying a small backpack full of the "tools of the trade" over both these locations is always very rewarding and I recommend it to anyone who wants the opportunity to get up and close with a range of wildlife and help contribute to animal research in a very special location which is closed off to the general public. I certainly greatly appreciate the opportunity to get out there.



Above: Val, Tony and Ken enjoying a cuppa after our 4.30 am start and checking the traps.

### **Edith Cowan University Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Students**

This semester's three Edith Cowan Work Integrated Learning students all worked extremely hard and made a great contribution to GPAG communications over their 12 week placement. They assisted with finding online links to reports and journal articles for the "Knowledge Base" section of the new website and built on the work started by Lu Lu in 2018 developing ideas for social media posts that could link the Potoroos to both international awareness days and Edge Pledge challenges. They also went through over 1000 grants from various websites and created a calendar of grant opportunities that GPAG may be eligible to apply for with links to the website, a summary of the types of projects each grant will fund and the approximate dates that the grants open and close. This will be an invaluable resource for GPAG going forward. Thank you to Dinuo, Rebecca and Zora for all your efforts.

### **Administrative and Awareness Raising Volunteering**

GPAG volunteers also put in many hours of work on administrative tasks planning for all the work that will be involved in implementing our exciting new projects under the State NRM grants (see below) and organising and attending the South Coast Threatened Species forum and events celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rediscovery of Gilbert's Potoroo. There will be a lot more planning and implementation of new processes coming up in 2020 as the projects and events all get started. This behind the scenes work is critical to the smooth functioning of GPAG. Thank you everyone for all your hard work over the past few months, particularly our Compliance Co-ordinator Jen Merritt for all the work she has done making sure we are all on track with our processes ready to go with implementing the grants (see below for more detail).

## FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS

### Current and Upcoming Fundraisers

#### QV1 Abseil

After last year's amazing fundraising success with the QV1 Abseil in partnership with Urban Descent, GPAG are again putting together a team to abseil off the 40 storey QV1 building in Perth to raise money for Gilbert's Potoroo. You can find out more information about the abseil on the Urban Descent webpage <https://urbandescent.org.au/event/qv1-descent-2020/> and registrations and donations to support the daredevils will be opening in the week of January 20 (and the Team Gilbert's Potoroo page will be live as soon people sign up!). A few people have already expressed interest in participating and we are looking forward to another great event and hopefully our fundraising will be even more successful than last year!

If you want to be reminded of the 2019 abseil you can watch the video of the Saturday team's abseil created by participant Hamish Longbottom at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Aeo0Vld2RA>

### Recently Completed and Ongoing Fundraisers

#### Ellenbrook Community Christmas Festival

December 14 saw two of our committee members braving the 42 degree heat to participate in the Conservation Corner section of Christmas in Ellenbrook 2019 – the community festival organised annually by the Ellenbrook Community Collective. Unfortunately on such a hot day most people chose to stay at home so the stall was very quiet. It was even too hot for Gilbert to make an appearance! Despite the heat we still managed to make a small profit on the sales of our merchandise, Truffle and Wine Company Truffle product and Postcode Honey and more importantly, to talk about Gilbert's Potoroo to the people who visited our stall, many of whom had never heard of the Potoroos and were shocked that there were so few of them left. As always it was a delight to participate in an event alongside another of our members, Marnie Giroud, who was running her own stall doing conservation art with the younger visitors to Conservation Corner.



Getting set up... Photo Leigh Whisson



A beautiful soft sunset formed the backdrop to the pack up after a long, hot day. Photo: Jackie Courtenay

## Trivia and Truffles Quiz Night

On October 26, GPAG organised our inaugural trivia night with a truffle themed dinner held at Rigby's Bar in Perth to raise money to help save Gilbert's Potoroo. After a slow start to bookings eventually 47 people attended the night – most of whom were not GPAG members so it was also a fantastic opportunity to spread the word about Gilbert's Potoroo to new people. The attendees, in addition to buying their tickets, splashed out on the night on Truffle and Wine Company truffle products, GPAG merchandise, Potteroo ceramic merchandise, raffle tickets and cheat cards, and a number of people who couldn't attend made donations in lieu of buying a ticket so that altogether we raised just over \$1600! Prizes were generously donated by the Truffle and Wine company (who also donated truffle product for the dinner), Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Caversham Wildlife Park, Potteroo ceramics, and GPAG. Gilbey had a great time greeting people and presenting the prizes at the end of the night. Thanks to Rigby's Bar for their enthusiastic support of the event and for creating fantastic truffle themed platters and to Bamboozled Quiz Masters for making it a really fun night. We'll definitely be considering running another one in 2020 either in Perth or Albany.



Getting ready to start the quiz



Winners of the tower game



The overall winners!

All photos: Leigh Whisson

## 2019 Wine Fundraiser

The 2019 Wine Selection saw members and friends labelling 408 bottles of Riesling, Semillon Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Merlot, Shiraz and Port at Jingalla Winery. A great time was had catching up for a chat while labelling and packing the cartons of wine ready for dispatch. We all relaxed with a barbeque lunch and a complementary wine once all was packed. Wine was sent off around WA as well as to the eastern states. Thanks again to Shelley and Barry of Jingalla Wines for their continued support.



## Edge Pledge

Our ongoing Edge Pledge challenge-based fundraiser is continuously open for anyone who wants to challenge themselves and raise money for Gilbert's Potoroo at the same time. If you want to participate in an Edge Pledge challenge you can sign up at [www.edgepledge.com](http://www.edgepledge.com) (be sure to select Gilbert's Potoroo as the species you are supporting!) or donate to support other people who are doing, or have completed, challenges.



## Awareness Raising

### South Coast Threatened Species Forum and Rediscovery Celebrations

December 1 marked 25 years since the rediscovery of Gilbert's Potoroo at Two Peoples Bay and to celebrate this fantastic milestone, GPAG organised a weekend of events including a 1.5 day South Coast Threatened Species forum, a truffle themed Rediscovery dinner and a barbecue and afternoon event at Two Peoples Bay with Traditional Owners. The events were funded by a \$4000 grant from South Coast NRM through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, and \$2000 each from the University of Western Australia and Edith Cowan University. The theme of the Forum was Interaction and Collaboration and there were twenty two spoken presentations as well as a number of posters on a wide range of topics relating to south coast threatened species, citizen science and conservation actions. The full program for the weekend can be viewed at the following link <https://event-potoroo.webflow.io/program>.



Above left: The poster session at the forum Photo: Leigh Whisson. Above centre: Both days of the forum were well attended with about 65 people there each day Photo: Leigh Whisson. Above right: Forum Master of Ceremonies Ian Herford announcing December 1 as the inaugural "Gilbert's Potoroo Day" on the second morning of the Forum. Photo: Linda Botterill.

The Forum was opened by Traditional Owner Vernice Gillies with a beautiful Welcome to Country and short presentation on Noongar conservation values. This was followed by a group of children from Parklands Primary performing the Potoroo song that was written by Year 2 students in 2015 (words and art work in the program linked above).

The first day of the forum was followed by a delicious truffle themed dinner sponsored by the Truffle and Wine Company and prepared by the amazing Trenton and Rebecca Brennan from Ocean and Paddock and their team of staff, all of whom volunteered their time for the event. The dinner was held at the beautiful historic Albany Club.

As part of the night's events, and in keeping with the Collaboration theme of the forum, artist and dinner Master of Ceremonies Marnie Giroud organised a collaborative Gilbert's Potoroo artwork created from "glow chalks" which many attendees at the dinner contributed to. You can view a video Marnie put together about the creation of the glowing Potoroo artwork on our Facebook page at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2QFHOMq>.



The collaborative potoroo drawing in natural light. Photo: Jen Merritt

The collaborative drawing was “silent auctioned” the following morning at the second day of the Forum. Appropriately Elizabeth Sinclair, who rediscovered the Potoroos in 1994, put in the highest bid and got to take the artwork home, but the second highest bidder also donated their bid resulting in the artwork raising a total of \$450 for the Potoroos.



The collaborative potoroo drawing under ultraviolet light showing the glow of the chalks. Photo: Elizabeth Sinclair



Above: Gilbey, Tony Friend & Ron Dorn with their Gilbert's Potoroo photographs. Photo: Leigh Whisson

Another important part of the Rediscovery dinner was the acknowledgment of the contributions of GPAG's immediate past Chairperson, Ron Dorn, who retired from the position at the June AGM after over 17 years at the helm of GPAG, and of Tony Friend, DBCA Principal Research Scientist who has worked collaboratively with GPAG since its beginnings at a public meeting in November 2001. GPAG Deputy Chairperson Leigh Whisson, assisted by Gilbey, presented Ron and Tony with framed photographs of Gilbert's Potoroo taken by wildlife photographer Jiri Lochman.

The final event of the weekend celebrating 25 years since the rediscovery of Gilbert's Potoroo was a site visit to Two Peoples Bay with a fantastic barbecue – again catered by the amazing team from Ocean and Paddock - and some wonderful although unfortunately far too short cultural information sessions with Traditional Owners Vernice Gillies, Lyn Knapp and Larry Blight talking about bush foods and medicines, creation stories and stories relating to Mt Gardner and the threatened species that occur there. We are very much looking forward to some longer events with the Traditional Owners in 2020. Huge thanks to everyone who helped make the weekend's events such a success. We couldn't have done it without you.



Tweets from attendees Jessica Stingemore (far left) and Hannah Bannister (left) with some of their impressions of the Two Peoples Bay event.



## GRANTS AND SUBMISSIONS

### State NRM Community Stewardship Grants

We are extremely excited that in November the outcome of the State NRM Community Stewardship Grants was announced and our Large and Small Grant applications were both fully funded to a total of almost \$344 000 over the next three years. The Large Grant will fund four citizen science projects in collaboration with DBCA. These will include two weeks of intensive radio tracking of Gilbert's Potoroos at Waychinicup in 2020 and Two Peoples Bay in 2021, a vegetation survey at Two Peoples Bay in 2020 to compare the vegetation structure post-fire with how it was in 1996, quarterly surveys in 2020 for native truffles in the burnt and unburnt areas to see whether there are any differences in food resources for the Potoroos in the two areas, and an ongoing project to monitor motion cameras at Two Peoples Bay every three months to replace camera batteries and SD cards and to check for feral predators (and Potoroos!) to enable DBCA to fine tune their predator management. There will be a lot of opportunities for volunteering on all these projects over the next three years so watch out for emails if you are a member, or upcoming events on social media to make sure you don't miss out.

The grant also includes funding for four awareness raising events each year over the next three years, further work on the new website including an education package and a strategic plan to help increase our membership and fundraising capacity. The Small grant will fund a DNA study of all known Gilbert's Potoroos (as far as possible) from Two Peoples Bay, Bald Island, the Waychinicup enclosure and Middle Island to provide information on the genetic diversity of the Potoroos which DBCA can then use to help develop a population management plan for the species. More details about the GPAG projects, and all the other projects funded under the State NRM grants are available at the following link: [http://www.nrm.wa.gov.au/media/298565/2019\\_approved\\_projects\\_table\\_for\\_website.pdf](http://www.nrm.wa.gov.au/media/298565/2019_approved_projects_table_for_website.pdf)



Above: The GPAG radio-tracking tent will be pressed back into service for the radio-tracking project.  
Photo: Ken Blechynden

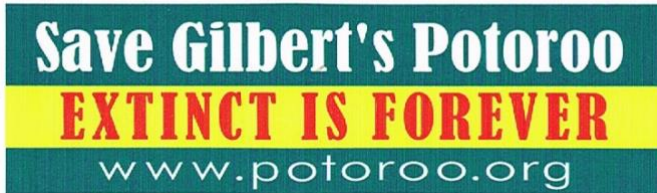
## MERCHANDISE



CARDS: Quality hand-made cards featuring a picture of Gilbert's Potoroo from a watercolour by Jann van der Helder. Blank inside.  
\$4 each or 5 for \$16.



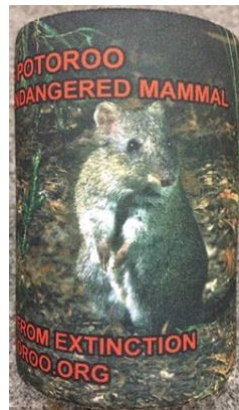
POSTCARDS: Featuring a photo of Gilbert's Potoroo by Dick Walker and information about the Potoroo on both the front and back  
\$2.50 each



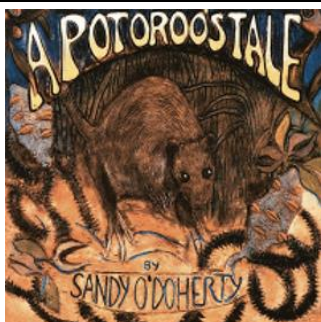
BUMPER STICKERS (left) \$2.50 BOOKMARKS (above) \$2.00



TEATOWELS: Printed on 100% cotton with some key facts about Gilbert's Potoroo!  
\$10 each or 3 for \$25



STUBBY HOLDERS: Designed by GPAG members featuring a photo of Gilbert's Potoroo by Dick Walker.  
\$10 each or 2 for \$15



A POTOROO'S TALE: A delightful book written and beautifully illustrated by Albany artist Sandy O'Doherty. All profits from the sale of the book will go to the Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group.  
\$15 each



Beautifully illustrated by Laila Savolainen.  
\$20 for the pair

PEEKABOO POTOROO & FOOEY ROEY: Two gorgeous stories by Jackie Lomax about the adventures of Lyla a lost Long-footed Potoroo finding a new home with Gilbert's Potoroos at Two Peoples Bay.

## MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

Item	Cost/item	Quantity	Total Cost
Cards (ea)	\$4.00		
Cards (pk of 5)	\$16		
Postcards (ea)	\$2.50		
Bumper Stickers (ea)	\$2.50		
Bookmarks (ea)	\$2.00		
Teatowels (ea)	\$10.00		
Teatowels (3 pk)	\$25.00		
Stubby Holders (ea)	\$10.00		
Stubby Holders (2 pk)	\$15.00		
Fridge Magnets (ea)	\$2.50		
A Potoroos Tale	\$15.00		
Peekaboo Potoroo & Foey Roey (set of 2 bks)	\$20.00		
		<b>Product total</b>	
		<b>Postage &amp; packing (&lt;500g)*</b>	\$10.00
		<b>Add a donation?</b>	
		<b>Total Cost</b>	

\* Within Australia. Postage for larger and overseas orders will need to be costed individually depending on weight and destination. You will be contacted by the Treasurer with a final quote for postage if your order weighs more than 500g or you need the items sent overseas.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Methods

**DIRECT DEPOSIT:** National Australia Bank; BSB: 086-518; Account Number: 54-316-8395

Please include your surname and "Merchandise" in the Reference line.

**CHEQUE:** Please make cheques payable to **Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc**

Send To:     The Treasurer  
                   Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc  
                   PO Box 654  
                   Albany, WA 6331

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of the GILBERT'S POTOROO ACTION GROUP INC, fill out the form below and either pay your subscription by direct deposit and email the form to [treasurer@potoroo.org](mailto:treasurer@potoroo.org) or print out and return by mail with a cheque enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth if Under 15 Years \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Tax Invoice

### Annual Subscription \$10

Includes GST of \$0.91

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Please include your surname and "Membership" in the Reference line.

**CHEQUE:** Please make cheques payable to **Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc**

Send To: The Treasurer  
Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc  
PO Box 654  
Albany, WA 6331

**Privacy Policy:** The information you have disclosed other than your name and contact details is restricted to committee members. No one outside the association is given access to your personal details without your permission.

OFFICIAL USE ONLY	Nominated By: _____	Receipt No _____
	Membership Accepted: YES/NO	Date Paid ____/____/____
		Register _____

## DONATIONS

As a Nationally Registered Environmental Organisation the Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc. offers tax deductible donation facilities. To claim **tax benefits**, your donation must be a **minimum of \$2** and made payable to the **GPAG Public Tax Deductible Donation Fund**. Tax deductible donations can also be made through our website [www.potoroo.org](http://www.potoroo.org).

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

#### Payment Methods

**DIRECT DEPOSIT:** National Australia Bank; BSB: 086-518; Account Number: 57-064-2101.

Please include your surname in the Reference line and email this form to [treasurer@potoroo.org](mailto:treasurer@potoroo.org)

**CHEQUE:** Please make cheques payable to **Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc Public Tax Deductible Donation Fund**

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Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc  
PO Box 654  
Albany, WA 6331