

Potoroo Postings



Issue # 2020/4

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CALENDAR

& Two Peoples Bay.

NOTE: All volunteers undertaking field work require a DBCA Dieback Green Card. See details on

Further details on all upcoming volunteering opportunities are provided on pages 3-4

November 16-22, December 1-13, 2020: Assisting DBCA with radiotracking and searching for pythons, Waychinicup Enclosure

November 18-22, 2020: Vegetation surveys, Two Peoples Bay.

Week of November 23, 2020: Fungi survey, Two Peoples Bay.

December 3-4, 2020: Assisting DBCA with servicing of motion cameras, Two Peoples Bay.

December 12, 2020: Ellenbrook Together -Festival & Pageant 2020. See upcoming emails & social media posts for details.

December, 2020: Christmas event. Still in the planning stage. Date & details to be confirmed.

FROM THE CHAIR

Join Us

GPAG is an extraordinarily active small group of people. On October 30 and 31 we saw 3 members and a supporter abseil down a 43-storey building in Perth, raising over \$5,400 for the potoroo project. On November 8 we organised an event in Albany where a DBCA scientist gave a talk on his work to reduce predation on the potoroo by pythons, work that is funded in part by GPAG and is vital to potoroo conservation. Reports on these and our other activities appear in this newsletter. A small group of members is doing extraordinary work in keeping GPAG going and maintaining a public profile and a supply of funds and volunteers to the DCBA potoroo project.

We know that many supporters are unable to give practical support to the potoroo project for a range of reasons. But whatever your situation, you can render great assistance just by being a member of GPAG.

Our tax-deductible status as a charitable organisation requires us to have at least 50 members and we must report to members regularly on our activities, which we are very happy to do. But if we have too few members we cannot satisfy these requirements and GPAG will not survive.

If you are unable to contribute to the survival of Gilbert's Potoroo in any other way, please make your contribution by joining GPAG or renewing your membership. The cost of membership is modest and the potential reward is great: no less than the saving of a species! I am also sometimes asked by active supporters why they should join; they are, after all, freely providing their time and effort. My answer is that unless we have members we will simply cease to exist. Through both our own projects and by helping fund DBCA recovery actions we directly provide or help fund many of the opportunities they enjoy. Without members we would no longer be able to do so.

https://www.potoroo.org/join-us

Best wishes

Alan



Visit us: www.potoroo.org







RECOVERY PROGRAM UPDATE

By Tony Friend, DBCA

Trapping to monitor Gilbert's potoroo numbers at Two Peoples Bay and on Bald Island has been carried out recently, under the Gilbert's potoroo recovery project run through DBCA. On Mt Gardner at Two Peoples Bay, trapping has focussed on traplines both in areas burnt in 2015 and at unburnt sites. Monitoring these areas with camera traps earlier in 2020 had recorded potoroos in burnt areas, and potoroos fitted with transmitters in unburnt areas have been active in burnt areas. Unfortunately, however, recent trapping at burnt sites (Hakea and East Firebreak traplines) did not produce any potoroos and in fact only one animal was captured in the unburnt sites (South Firebreak and Burn Block traplines). Deployment of camera traps and microchip scanning plates will continue this investigation.

A new population of Gilbert's potoroos was established on Bald Island between 2005 and 2007 by transfer of 10 animals from Two Peoples Bay. The existence of that population contributed greatly to the persistence of this species when the original population was devastated by the 2015 fire. Monitoring had been carried out in most years since the beginning, but although some trapping was carried out on the island in 2018 and 2019, the full monitoring program had not been completed since September 2017. To update knowledge on the status of the island colony, two trapping trips were conducted in September and October 2020. Tony Friend led each trip, with fantastic volunteer assistance from Chris Gunby in a fournight trip and from Jim Campbell and Di Carmody in a nine-night trip. While lots of potoroos were caught, the overall tally of 35 individuals was only 50% of the capture totals when the new population peaked in 2014 and again in 2017. Low rainfall in 2018 and 2019 is most likely responsible for these low numbers, but the presence of many young animals bodes well for the future of the island population.



Above: Bald Island from the air. Photo by Ken Bushell from a previous trip.

VOLUNTEERING

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

All volunteers require a DBCA Dieback Green Card

DBCA have advised us that all volunteers working with GPAG on our various field projects are required to complete training in order to obtain a Dieback Green Card. The training is relatively straight forward, can be done at home and takes about an hour to complete. It involves reading through some PDF documents, answering 5 multiple choice questions, completing a checklist and signing a Code of Conduct document and then returning the questions and Code of Conduct document to DBCA for approval. The card can then be either posted out or collected at the DBCA office in Albany. If you think that you might be interested in volunteering sometime in the future, even if you are not planning to immediately, it is a good idea to complete your training and get your Green Card as soon as possible so that you are able to participate at short notice when opportunities arise or you are available. Please email Jackie Courtenay on mail@potoroo.org if you want to undertake the training and she will email you the training materials.

Upcoming Volunteering Opportunities

If you are interested in any of the following volunteering opportunities, please email us on mail@potoroo.org with details of your availability. Some of the work relies on availability of consultants and appropriate weather conditions on the day and dates may have to change at short notice.

November 16-22, December 1-13, 2020: Assisting DBCA with radiotracking and searching for pythons in the Waychinicup Enclosure & at Two Peoples Bay

What's involved?

Morning searching (walking around granite areas looking for basking pythons and checking on those that already have transmitters to see where they are) and afternoon tracking surveys (tracking known animals to try to get a sighting of them and/or see if any other snakes without transmitters are nearby). There may be opportunities for evening python spotlighting at Two Peoples Bay on warm nights from November 18-24.



Female carpet python. Photo by David Pearson/DBCA

November 18-22, 2020: Vegetation surveys at Two Peoples Bay What's involved?

The surveys involve walking through the bush in a straight line for 340 m along a compass bearing using a tape to measure different vegetation patches and recording the dominant species. It can be quite hard work in sections of thick vegetation. Volunteers will help with rolling out the tape, recording data and/or helping with plant identifications depending on interest and experience. Each survey takes 2-3 hours and we have 10 more to do so all help gratefully appreciated.



Botanist Dr Ellen Hickman identifying plants along the tape. Photo Leigh Whisson.

Week of November 23, 2020: Fungi surveys at Two Peoples Bay What's involved?

We have 8 transects each 50m long, four in burnt and four in unburnt vegetation. We use special fungi rakes to search along the transects within about 5m of the tape to see if we can find any truffle-like fungi. The work is overseen by fungi expert Katie Syme. Each transect takes about 1 hour to complete but some are in extremely thick vegetation so are quite hard work to get through. We expect to complete the surveys over 1 to 2 days.



Val Hack & Kate Brown searching for truffle-like fungi. Photo: Ken Bushell

December 3-4, 2020: Assisting DBCA with servicing of motion cameras at Two Peoples Bay

What's involved?

This project involves walking over quite a large area of Mt Gardner at Two Peoples Bay to change the batteries and SD cards on the 15 cameras and bring them back for recharging and analysis. Weather permitting the work can be completed in about 2 days. This task will be repeated approximately every three months until mid-2023.

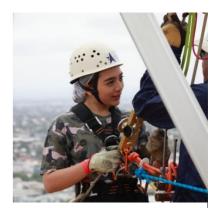
Right: Ken Bushell setting up a camera. Photo by Jen Merritt



Edith Cowan University (ECU) Work Integrated Learning Student

The impact of COVID-19 on universities meant that the numbers enrolled in the 3rd year Natural Sciences Project unit at Edith Cowan University were much reduced this year. As a result we only had one Work Integrated Learning student working with us - Nushin Tanowidjaja - but she may as well have been three people as she completed an extraordinary amount of work in the 12 weeks of her placement helping GPAG with data entry for the vegetation project, drafting a communications strategy, researching different social media audiences and posting strategies (she persuaded us to start an Instagram account!) and helping promote, and participating in, the QV1 fundraising abseil. We are going to miss her enthusiasm, energy and efficiency! Thanks Nushin for all your work. In the profile below, Nushin introduces herself, explains why she chose GPAG for her work integrated learning placement and reflects on her placement:

I am Nushin Isabel Tanowidjaja and I am currently completing my Bachelor of Science in Environmental Management at ECU. I was recently given the opportunity to do a work placement with Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group (GPAG) alongside Jackie Courtenay as my supervisor. I decided to do the work experience with GPAG because after conducting thorough research about Gilbert's Potoroo through past journals and the GPAG website, I felt an urge to be able to help and be involved in raising awareness of Australia's rarest mammal. I also had the chance to join the QV1 Descent 2020 in October to raise funds to support Gilbert's Potoroo. It was an amazing adrenaline-rushing experience. I am hoping that the work I have been doing for the past 12 weeks can give me a deeper knowledge and understanding about Gilbert's Potoroo and also to help support the GPAG project for the recovery of the species.



Above: Nushin getting ready to start her abseil off the QV1 building. Photo by WinkiPoP Media.

Third Quarterly Fungi Survey

Our third quarterly fungi survey was completed on September 22 and 23 by fungi specialist Katie Syme assisted by volunteers Kate Brown, Val Hack and Ken Bushell.

The first six transects (two in an unburnt area and four in recovering burnt areas) were completed by all four participants on September 22. No truffle-like fungi were found in the unburnt area but examples of *Labyrinthomyces varius* and *Protrubera canscens* (photos below) were found in the burnt areas.







Photos from left: Kate Brown and Val Hack searching for truffle like fungi at the recovering burnt "Hakea" site (Photo by Ken Bushell). Centre: The truffle-like fungus *Labyrinthomyces varius* found at the burnt "Firebreak" site (Photo by Katie Syme). Right: The truffle-like fungus *Protrubera canscens* found in the recovering burnt "Hakea" site (Photo by Ken Bushell)

On September 23, Katie Syme and Kate Brown completed surveying the remaining two transects in the second unburnt site. They found two different species of truffle-like fungi, one of which may be a new species.





Photos: The two species of truffle-like fungi collected in the final unburnt site on September 23. Left: An unidentified species. Right: A species of *Hysterangium*. Photos by Katie Syme.

Thanks again to Katie Syme, all our volunteers & DBCA staff, especially Grantly Morton, Senior Ranger at Two Peoples Bay, for their help, and to State NRM for funding the project. The final survey is scheduled for the last week of November (weather permitting) and we will again require one or two volunteers per day for two days to assist Katie with the surveys. Exact dates are yet to be decided but if you are interested please let us know by emailing us on mail@potoroo.org and we will be in touch when we finalise the dates to confirm who is available. Remember that to volunteer for this project you do need to have completed a Dieback Green Card so if you are interested in volunteering for this or any of our other projects and have not done the Dieback training please contact us as soon as possible.

Feral predator monitoring

Our 15 new motion sensing cameras to help DBCA monitor feral predators at Two Peoples Bay were finally able to be deployed at the end of August. Because they are a different model from the ones DBCA had previously been using (the old model has been discontinued), the new cameras were put out next to the old ones to make sure that their sensitivity to movement is the same and so the images that they collect are comparable. The cameras will be checked and the batteries and SD cards



replaced on December 3 and 4 and volunteers will again be needed for this task as noted. We are also in discussions with DBCA to organise checking of the photos on the retrieved SD cards which will also require the help of volunteers.



Above: The old & new cameras shown side by side. Photo by Val Hack

Thanks to GPAG volunteers Jen Merritt, Ken Bushell, Dave Wettenhall and Val Hack for their efforts volunteering to help Steph Hill from DBCA to get the new cameras installed at the 15 sites. This project is funded by our Large State NRM Community Stewardship grant.

Left: Ken Bushell & Jen Merritt with a new & old camera. Photo: Steph Hill

Vegetation Surveys at Two Peoples Bay

The first six of sixteen planned vegetation transects, repeating work done by then Honours student Sarah Vetten in 1996, were completed in late October by botanist Dr Ellen Hickman with help from Leigh Whisson, Jackie Courtenay, David Wettenhall, Jessica Dyer and Jhani Margio. The results of the surveys will enable us to compare the vegetation as it is now, 5 years since the catastrophic 2015 fire at Two Peoples Bay, with how it was in August 1996 to see if the vegetation structure or species composition is different. This will provide some information on the recovery of the habitat since the fire. The results may also be compared with data collected by Sarah Vetten on the habitat use of the Potoroos to see how the current vegetation structure compares with that which the Potoroos were using in 1996.



Above right: Botanist Dr Ellen Hickman identifying plants along the tape. Far right: Acacia thicket at the base of the granites. Right: It was hard work getting through the thick vegetation but the view was magnificent. Photos: Leigh Whisson







FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Current and Upcoming Fundraisers

Wine Fundraiser

Our annual wine fundraiser with Jingalla Wines is again underway. This is the 18th year we have been fundraising by offering GPAG labelled wine grown by Jingalla Wines in the Porongurup area of the Great Southern. As this is the last year of our partnership with Jingalla we wanted to ensure that there was a good selection to choose from so we included a Cabernet Rouge and a Liqueur Muscat as well as the usual two reds and two whites we normally offer. Shelley and Barry Coad have been staunch supporters of our cause and have given their time willingly to help us ever since 2003. We are very grateful for their long term support and wish them well in their future endeavours.



Orders closed on November 13 for dispatch on November 16 in plenty of time for Christmas. We had a very enjoyable, sociable day at Jingalla Winery on November 15 labelling approximately 34 cases and then sharing a potluck lunch (and for this volunteering no-one needed a DBCA Green Card (a)).





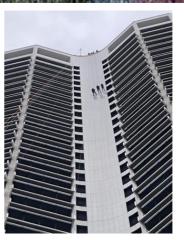
Above left: The team of GPAG wine labellers (with help from Barry Coad, front left & Shelley Coad, not in picture) Above right: Long time GPAG member & former Communications Coordinator Neil Houghton thanking Shelley & Barry Coad on behalf of GPAG for their fantastic support over 18 years & presenting them with a thank you card & gift. Photos by Leigh Whisson

QV1 Abseil

The QV1 abseil, originally scheduled for May and delayed due to COVID-19, finally happened on October 30 and 31. Four people completed the abseil to raise money for GPAG - three as part of "Team Gilbert's Potoroo" (GPAG committee members Leigh Whisson and Jackie Courtenay & our ECU Work Placement student Nushin Tanowidjaja) who abseiled on Saturday, and Emma Batten who signed up separately and abseiled on Friday (unfortunately we do not have any photos from Emma to include).







Far left: "Team Gilbert's Potoroo" (Leigh, Nushin & Jackie) with Gilbey immediately before their abseils. Centre: We're over the edge! Photos by WinkiPoP Media. Right: "Team Gilbert's Potoroo" on the way down. Photo by Alan Needham.

Gilbey didn't sign up to fundraise, but she abseiled on the day anyway!! Special thanks to Terry Hewett, CEO of Urban Descent, who wore the Gilbey suit on her descent and brought her safely to the ground.







Photos from left: (1) Nushin Tanowidjaja & Jackie Courtenay trying to help Gilbey into her harness. Centre: (2) Gilbey almost down at the end of her abseil Right: (3) Safely on the ground!! Photo (1) by Jacqui Lund, & photos (2) & (3) by Alan Needham.

Between Team Gilbert's Potoroo and Emma Batten we received \$5460 in donations which was a fantastic outcome in such a difficult year for fundraising. Congratulations to everyone for a great effort and thank you in particular to everyone who donated and/or helped us spread the word to help raise awareness and encourage donations.

Videos of Nushin Tanowidjaja (also known as Isabel online) and Emma Batten being interviewed after their training abseils can be viewed on Facebook at

https://www.facebook.com/GilbertsPotorooActionGroup/posts/1219209231775485 for Nushin/Isabel and https://www.facebook.com/GilbertsPotorooActionGroup/posts/1241216609574747 for Emma.

Ongoing Fundraisers

Containers for Change

As of October 1 Western Australia's Containers for Change program "went live". This means that Western Australians can now take some types of empty drink containers to a recycling point for a refund of 10 cents per container. This refund can be paid directly to you or to an organisation that you wish to support.

Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group has registered as an organisation that can be supported in this way and we would be very grateful if you donated your refund to our work. To do this, you will need to enter the GPAG Scheme ID at the drop-off point:



Hi Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group.

Great news! One of our Change Makers has returned 49 containers to and they've donated their \$4.90 refund to you. What a legend, right?

GPAG Scheme ID: C10289767.

Already in the first six weeks of the program, generous supporters have donated a total of \$27.70 in refunds (that's 277 drink containers!!). It may not seem like much, but small donations add up and in the battle against extinction every little bit counts. You can find information on drop-off point locations and on what types of containers are accepted for refunds at https://www.containersforchange.com.au/wa.

Thank you for any support you can give us & Gilbert's Potoroo.

Edge Pledge

With coronavirus restrictions starting to ease, if you missed the abseil and want to challenge yourself to do something different now opportunities are opening up again, why not visit the Edge Pledge website and choose (or make up) some challenges for yourself and raise some 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 (be sure to select Gilbert's Potoroo as the species you are supporting!) or donate to support other people who are doing, or have recently completed, challenges. If you do sign up for a challenge please email us at mail@potoroo.org and let us know so we can help promote it.



Awareness Raising

Potoroos and Pythons

On November 8 we had our third awareness raising event for the year – an afternoon talk by Dr David Pearson entitled "Curbing the impact of the appetite of Carpet Pythons for truffle-infused Gilbert's Potoroos" followed by a truffle-themed afternoon tea. Dr David Pearson is a Principal Research Scientist with DBCA and for the past three years he has been undertaking research in the 380 ha Waychinicup fenced enclosure in an attempt to learn more about the biology of carpet pythons and to find ways to reduce their predation of Potoroos. David and his assistants will be continuing the python research in November and early December and volunteers are needed to provide extra eyes on the ground when searching for pythons.

Potoroos and Pythons Curbing the impact of the appetite of Carpet Pythons for truffle-infused Gilbert's Potoroos



usly sponsored by The Truffle & Wine Company & Ocean & Paddock ent is FREE but BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL as spaces are limited







Despite having only one week to organise and advertise it, the event was fully booked and attended by 46 people, close to the maximum of 48 allowed in the venue under COVID-19 guidelines.





The event was funded by our Large State NRM Community Stewardship grant with generous inkind support from the Museum of the Great Southern for the venue and Ocean and Paddock (who produced the delicious afternoon tea and donated a door prize), The Truffle and Wine Company (who donated truffle product & the "Life's Little Luxuries" door prize), and Leeuwin Coast (who donated the oysters). Thank you everyone for your amazing support.



Top: Dr David Pearson speaking to a full house. Photo Leigh Whisson. Above left and right: A selection (but not all!) of the delicious afternoon tea. Left: Leeuwin Coast Oysters with Truffle and Wine Company truffle ponzu sauce. Above right: Brie with Truffle and Wine Company truffle honey, walnuts & sourdough bread with truffle butter (not pictured) and fruit skewers with truffle honey yoghurt dipping sauce. Afternoon tea photos by Trenton Brennan.

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

Save Gilbert's Potoroo EXTINCT IS FOREVER

www.potoroo.org



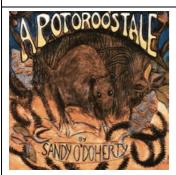
BUMPER STICKERS (left) \$2.50 BOOKMARKS (above) \$2.00 Bookmarks OUT OF STOCK



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.



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

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

MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

ABN 75 191 68 479 (Tax Invoice when paid)

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	OUT OF STOCK	
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	OUT OF STOCK	
A Potoroos Tale	\$15.00		
Peekaboo Potoroo & Fooey Rooey (set of 2 bks)	\$20.00		
		Product total	
		Postage & packing (<500g)*	\$10.00
		Add a donation?	
		Total Cost	

^{*} 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: Bendigo Bank BSB: 633-000; Account Number: 164 347 999

Please include your surname and "Merchandise" in the Reference line and email order form to

treasurer@potoroo.org

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

	WIEWIDENSIIII TONI	VI
	mber of GILBERT'S POTOROO ACTION GROUP INC, fill out in irect deposit and email the form to treasurer@potoroo.or	• • •
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Payment Metho	ods	
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CHEQUE: Please	make cheques payable to Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group	Inc
	The Treasurer Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc PO Box 654 Albany, WA 6331	
	e information you have disclosed other than your name and c e association is given access to your personal details without	
OFFICIAL	Nominated By:	Receipt No Date Paid//
USE ONLY	Membership Accepted: YES/NO	Register
	DONATIONS	
donation facilitie	egistered Environmental Organisation the Gilbert's Potoro s. To claim tax benefits , your donation must be a minimu Jonation Fund. Tax deductible donations can also be mad	m of \$2 and made payable to the GPAG Public
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	The Treasurer Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc PO Box 654	

Albany, WA 6331