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New members are welcome to ~~meet~~ Jennifer Gardner, Manager Waite Conservation Reserve, above

President Bage

DEAR OH DEER

Feral deer have the distinction of being the hated of Australia's mangrove forests. So says the latest survey of community attitudes posted by the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre. It is easy to see why, judging by this photograph taken recently in Wild Dogs Glen. Like politicians, you get a head start in life if you happen to be good looking! Conversely the not so handsome Cane Toad was voted the most hated pest in the same CRC survey! But I digress.

Eight Fallow Deer have been in the reserve lately and, while they certainly make a cute picture, the damage they cause through browsing, thrashing and rubbing is not clearing. Our planted Sheoaks (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) seem particularly palatable. Repeated browsing by the deer has whittled 2-3 year old saplings down to knee high sticks to the point that they will likely die if browsing persists. Thrashing is where Fallow bucks use their antlers to flail and trash shrubs as a territorial signal to other bucks. The plants are not usually killed but can take a fearsome battering, as illustrated by shredded young *blowies* (*Dodonaea viscosa*) seen on Netherby Spur and a chopped up Twiggy *Daisy* (*Olearia ramulosa*) seen on Urrbrae Ridge.

Rubbing is also used to delineate territory. Bucks rub their antlers against the trunks of saplings both anointing the tree with a scent mark and creating a blaze by exposing the light coloured wood beneath the darker bark to physically advertise their presence. They target young trees of a certain diameter which are very susceptible to ring barking. Examples of this case in Leafhopper Gully where several young Sheoaks have completely ring barked and will almost certainly die over the coming summer. Elsewhere they have damaged a number of planted Sheoaks and Golden Wattles (*Acacia pycnantha*) as well as naturally occurring Native Cherries *Exocarpos cupressiformis*. Two Native Cherries have been killed on Pultenaea Hill already. This is unfortunate because these elegant and biologically important small trees are already uncommon.

We have attempted to protect susceptible trees by guarding them with fallen tree branches dragged in from nearby. Ultimately however we are probably reliant on neighbouring landholders to develop a taste for venison.

Peter Bird



Fallow Deer, WCR (Photo: P Bird)

Friends of Urrbrae House

2011 will not only be a significant year for South Australia in celebrating its 100th birthday but the Friends of Urrbrae House will celebrate 20 years since the inaugural meeting on 17 April 1991.

The main aim of the FOUH is to use Urrbrae House for events that fit in with the history and atmosphere of this splendid 1892 family home of Peter Waite and his family and raise money for specific projects to assist with its restoration and conservation.

As well as arranging functions for all associated with the Waite Campus and Historic Precinct, the FOUH enjoy such opportunities to have people visit Urrbrae House for the first time. Their usual response is that I did not realize that we had such a splendid mansion in Adelaide

The most successful and long running activity in the FOUH program is the Twilight Concert in the Drawing Room. Since 1998 these have been run in

New addition to fauna Working Bee dates

This beautiful Little Whip Snake *Parasuta flagellum* found recently at the top of Wild Dogs Glen becomes the fifteenth reptile species added to the reserve list. This species was always a possibility for the reserve based on records from nearby Cleland and Belair parks, but hope waned when it was not recorded during the intensive fauna survey in 2008.

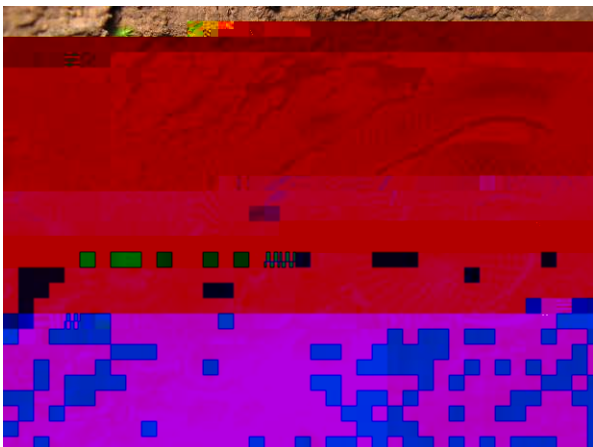
Interestingly I had turned the under which it was located many times before but had only ever found small skinks. Skinks just happen to be the favoured food of whip snakes which they hunt simply by waiting under a likely rock until joined (for lunch) by an unsuspecting lizard seeking refuge.

The Little Whip Snake is venomous but not considered dangerous. This has nothing to do with its small size. At a mere 28 cm the snake was already adult, yet a bite from a similarly small juvenile Eastern Brown Snake would be potentially fatal.

Because of this it is not a bad idea to know how to identify one from the other. The easiest way to tell them apart is by the black head and neck markings. The Little Whip Snake has one patch of black on the head while the deadly baby brown has two distinct separate black markings, one on the head and a separate black band across the neck.

If you can't be sure of your identification there is another pretty foolproof way to tell them apart. If it bites it will be a brown snake. Brown snakes are highly nervous and invariably try to bite whereas Whip Snakes are much calmer and almost never attempt to bite.

Peter Bird



Little Whip Snake, WCR (Photo: P Bird)

Sat Septh 4
 Sat Octnd 2
 Sat Novth 8
 Sat Decth 4
 Sundayth Sept 19
 Sundayth Oct 17
 Satth Nov 20

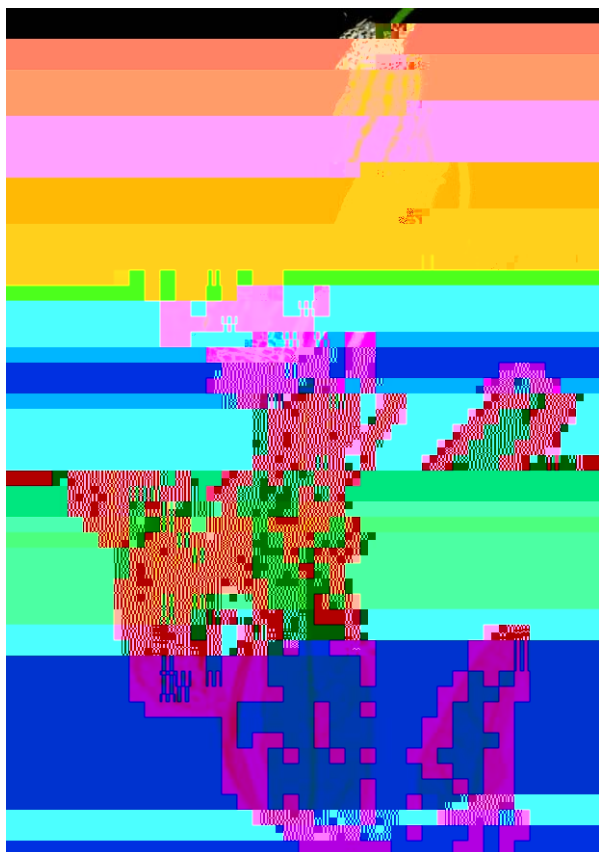
** Note: Both November working bees are on a Saturday. This is done to accommodate a presentation/workshop on grasses by Peter Lang Saturday 20th November.

For Sept, Oct, Nov working bees, meet at 9am at the driveway to Springwood Park property, first driveway to the right on the Eagle on the Hill Rd. For the Decth working bee meet at gate 82 entrance to the Reserve, in from the water tanks on Hillside rd, Springfield.

Entomologica:

The mysterious Eastern mist

A few years ago I photographed the caterpillar below on a Grassy Bindweed (*Convolvulus remotus*) in Wild Dogs Glen. Apart from identifying it as an *Aedia leucomela* I took it no further. Recently Stephen Wait reported that many of the new plantings of *Convolvulus* in the reserve were being eaten by a caterpillar which matched my recollection of this one, so I decided to do a little more investigation.



Aedia leucomela larva, Wild Dogs Glen, 30 Mar 2003,
(Phot R ng)

