



**KANGAROO ISLAND ROTARY CLUB
SEMINAR**

FERAL CAT CONTROL

**Some New Ideas for 2003
KANGAROO ISLAND / ROXBYP DOWNS**

PROCEEDINGS

**18th FEBRUARY, 2003.
KINGSCOTE, KANGAROO ISLAND**

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last 180,000 years, Kangaroo Island has been isolated from the Mainland on at least 4 separate occasions, the last time we parted company with South Australia was about 10,000 years ago. It would appear the island has had no human inhabitants for the last 4000 years until 1802.

Due in part to this isolation and in part to the lack of human predators Kangaroo Island has evolved an interesting array of bio-differences from the mainland that we 'KI-Landers' all too often take for granted.

We have not escaped, unfortunately, an array of ferals superimposed on our precious biosphere. This environmental vandalism began with Baudin and his chooks and pigs in 1802 and continues in to the present – both deer and goats being recent escapees. Some of these have positives (bees, platypus and perhaps koalas) but most do far more harm than good, such as goats, pigs, deer.... and cats.

It was reported at an Adelaide Veterinary Conference in 2001, that massive reduction of fox numbers in an area of inland Australia had lead to an explosion in the cat population. We have no feline predators on Kangaroo Island apart from chance encounters with man, his vehicle and his dog. A few intrepid individuals have made trapping feral cats their passion but all too often their successes are 'bloated' by focusing on rubbish dumps, haystacks and farm buildings.

If one reads what New Zealand learned from their experience with cat eradication on many of their islands, one can understand why the 'amateur' trapper on Kangaroo Island has focused on and had most success in those areas mentioned above. The New Zealanders demonstrated that cats frequenting man-made objects were easily trapped or baited but bush cats were largely attracted to their bush diet. Baiting and trapping became much harder and with their more 'man shy' nature were much harder game.

Today the Rotary Club of Kangaroo Island is bringing together a group of speakers whose knowledge and understanding of our feral cat is, dare one say, unsurpassed elsewhere in Australia. The collective time of their cataloguing (over 50 years) and the breadth of their research (in excess of 100,000 acres) is nothing short of breathtaking. We are very lucky to get these five speakers in one place today.

Rotarians are environmentally aware and present this Seminar

- because of our concern for the biosphere in which we live
- because we are aware that many, many KI-Landers are also concerned
- because we feel that we should bring new techniques and fresh ideas to the problem in the hope that people, and ultimately organizations across the Island will pick up the cudgel and run with it.

This may then encourage a community approach to the problem

This, we hope, is ROTARY MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

Jack Reddin,
Chairman,
K.I. Rotary Community Committee

SPONSORS

The Rotary Club of Kangaroo Island gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Sponsors who gave of their time or provided goods or money to support this project.

We also take this opportunity to thank the Speakers, all of whom gave their valuable time, and some of whom travelled some considerable distance, in order to provide both information and food for thought, for the benefit of Kangaroo Island as a whole.

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SPEAKERS

DR. PEGGY RISMILLER

and **Mike McKelvey**

Pelican Lagoon Research & Wildlife, Kangaroo Island, S.A.

Dr. Peggy Rismiller is an environmental physiologist and educator who studies the interactions of living organisms and environmental cues. Her special interest is body temperature regulation and reproduction, two topics of infinite fascination.

Peggy has lived, studied and worked on three continents with birds, reptiles and mammals. In 1988 she made Kangaroo Island her home. She spends her days documenting, writing, consulting, sharing and providing biological facts to the greater community.

Peggy is affiliated with the University of Adelaide, Visiting Lecturer at the Hanover School of Veterinary Science, Germany and is a Degree Supervisor for Graduate Students from around the world.

Mike McKelvey is a biologist, photographer and natural resources consultant and has worked in 21 different countries. He has lived on Kangaroo Island since 1972.

Author and contributor to book, journals, magazines and film documentaries, Mike has a strong working knowledge of native wildlife and environmental issues. He frequently teaches at Australian and International Universities.

DR. DAVID PATON

Dept. of Environmental Biology, Adelaide University, Adelaide, S.A.

Dr. David Paton is a graduate of the Adelaide University and Monash University where he completed a PhD on the ecology of the New Holland Honeyeater. After postdoctoral positions at the University of California, Irvine and the Aust. Museum, Sydney, where he held a prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Fellowship, he returned to South Australia and the University of Adelaide, holding various research positions until taking up his current appointment as a Lecturer and now Senior Lecturer in Environmental Biology in 1997.

Dr. Paton has over 100 publications and currently supervises the research programs of 20 postgraduate and honour students at Adelaide University. He is a passionate and objective environmental scientist who has contributed to the understanding and management of Australia's natural environment for nearly two decades.

His research at Adelaide University has focused on current environmental problems including water management issues and their influence on the Coorong, influences of fragmentation on honeyeater movement and pollination, effects of honeybees on native flora and fauna, the ecology and management of cats, ecology of koalas on Kangaroo Island, declining woodland birds, bird pests, revegetation benefits, responses of mallee-heath communities to fire and drought, Mundulla Yellows, and is heavily involved in the Arid Recovery Project at Roxby Downs.

He frequently provides informed comment and information on wildlife and environmental issues to politicians, the general public and the media and in 1999 he received the SA Great Award for the Environment in recognition of his contribution to understanding, protecting and enhancing South Australia's natural environment.

KATHERINE MOSEBY

Project Co-ordinator, Arid Recovery Project (ARP), Roxby Downs.

Katherine Moseby took up her current position of Project Coordinator with the Arid Recovery Project at Roxby Downs in 1997

Batchelor of Science, Adelaide University	1991
Honours (Environmental Biology) Adelaide University	1993
Research Officer, Adelaide University and the Department of Environment and Heritage	1992-95
Conservation Volunteer, Africa	1996
Part time Volunteer Biologist with WWF Solomon Islands	1999/2001
Director of “Ecological Horizons” environmental consultancy	2001 - present

She has currently ten scientific publications and reports on mammals, reintroduction biology, ecology and conservation biology to her credit.

BREE GALBRAITH

Project Officer ARP, Roxby Downs.

Bree Galbraith has been working at the Arid Recovery project since February 2002, initially conducting research on Bilby burrow use to develop population density estimates and more recently on the Aerial Baiting trials. Bree has coordinated the majority of the 2002 baiting trial and conducted the monitoring associated with all aspects of the affiliated uptake and comparison trials. Bree’s work as a Project Officer for ARP entails many other research, management and educational roles.

In 2001 Bree received her Bachelor of Applied Science, Protected Area Management at the University of Queensland in 2001 and was also Part-time TSN Community Grants Project Coordinator. Between 1999 and 2002, when she took up her current position. She had been a Volunteer on a number of projects including both flora and fauna monitoring in semi-arid Queensland and the Simpson Desert.

DR. GRAEME MOSS

Conservation Program Manager, Regional Conservation, Department for Environment and Heritage, Kangaroo Island.

Graeme Moss is a graduate of the University of New South Wales in Zoology. He gained his PhD through UNSW studying the reproductive ecology of Red Kangaroos, spending much of that time at Fowlers Gap Arid Zone Research Station, north of Broken Hill.

He has lectured for 5 years at the University of New England Armidale, in the fields of Ecology, Wildlife Management, and Statistics, and also has experience in Fire Ecology and Fossil Preparation.

He has held his current position with the Dept. for Environment and Heritage on Kangaroo Island for nearly 3 years, and in that time has been involved in many issues associated with biodiversity conservation, including pest, threatened and overabundant species management, fire management, and also including natural resource management.

His passion is marsupial behaviour.

