**Chairperson’s report to Gilbert’s Potoroo Action Group Annual General Meeting**

GPAG members,

We have again had an exciting and encouraging 12 months. I will summarize our activities under three goals we have set for GPAG.

GPAG members have given volunteer support to trapping on Bald Island, at Waychinicup and at Two Peoples Bay. Where needed, work has been done on the maintenance of various sites. The tracking tents we purchased should assist in more comfortable tracking experiences in the future.

Our fund raising continues to focus on wine sales, the sale of caps, cards, stickers, “A Potoroo’s Tale” and calico bags etc. We have had a presence at markets such as Denmark, the Albany Show and thanks in particular to Bev and her helpers at the cruise ship visits. We are looking at increasing our range of “souvenir” type items suited to ship and other visitors.

In terms of awareness raising, it has been a very busy year. There have been the usual talks with high and primary schools and they have continued to generate interest. In the case of Mount Barker Community College, this culminated in them raising $501 for the potoroo recovery. We have been able to secure an appearance at the UWA Skywest Lecture Series and hope that this taps into a more academic interest group. Tony will present his talk to this audience on Thursday May 24th.

GPAG was represented at the Noisy Scrub Bird celebrations and we continue to meet as members of the Potoroo Recovery Team. GPAG sent a letter supporting the need for caution in prescribed burning at Two Peoples Bay. We have also been able to see progress on the production of a logo for the Potoroo Recovery Team.

We are hopeful that we can make progress with our aim to have documentary material produced which can be used in public forums, schools etc. If our grant submission to DEC is successful, Grey Eyed Films will produce a documentary which has the potential to be aired to a wide audience. We have already seen a sample of Graeme Orr’s work; a short footage starring Gilbert, Steph and Ken Blechynden. Footage that Ken has made will also help show the range of activities in recovery work.

Con’t page 2
It was very exciting to see the vision from the motion activated infra-red cameras that GPAG purchased for DEC. These 20 cameras will help increase the knowledge of habitat and behaviour of the potoroo.

**The Future:** We look forward to assisting Tony and his team in increasing the knowledge of the potoroo and in particular, the habitat necessary for it to continue its rate of recovery. We also look forward to supporting the activities to control feral pests and hopefully one day, reintroduce Gilbey to the wild environment.

In conclusion, many thanks for the tireless work from Val as Treasurer, Barbara as Secretary, Neil as Publicity Officer and Bev for Vice Chairperson. A special mention should be made of the work done by Steph in producing our newsletter; work which she does willingly on top of her “real job”. Our project to produce our brochure “Mark 2” is also well under way. Thank you to Tony and the team at DEC [Tim, Steph etc] for allowing us to work towards this exciting project.

Ron Dorn
Chairperson, Gilbert’s Potoroo Action Group

PS I think I would be wise to thank Merrilyn for her work as unofficial social secretary and typist of all of my e-mails and notes!

**Gilbert’s Potoroo Recovery Program Update**

So much has happened in the Gilbert’s potoroo recovery program since the last newsletter, in August last year. At that time Steph was heading off to South America for six months for a very well-deserved long service leave break. The first big event was the October translocation of another 12 potoroo from Bald Island into the Norman’s Beach enclosure. Numbers in the enclosure had fallen after a fox found a way in and, probably in a matter of days, we lost more than half of the potoroo present. Increased frequency of inspection and baiting inside the enclosure should prevent anything like this happening again. A night’s trapping on Bald Island was enough for Tony and Tim to capture 12 suitable potoroo and helicopter them directly to the enclosure and release them the same day. All were fitted with transmitters so we could get a good idea of where they settled down.

Although two fell prey to carpet pythons in the first month, the other 10 potoroo were alive when their transmitters fell off after 4-8 weeks. We followed up with trapping in December and caught six potoroo (including our first second generation pouch young!) but the Bald Island animals had dispersed all over the 380-hectare enclosure and checking them by trapping presented a monumental task. We came up with the idea of using motion-activated cameras in conjunction with microchip readers to remotely monitor the potoroo in the enclosure. GPAG most generously funded the purchase of 20 cameras to the tune of $12,770 and after delivery they were placed in the field by Tim and Steph in February at sites across the enclosure. The first run was very successful, with potoroo appearing at 10 of the 20 cameras. The scanning plates are presenting some technical issues but promise to enhance the value of the cameras as they will identify the photographed potoroo or let us know if they are not microchipped and are therefore new animals.

Con’t page 3
Gilbert’s Potoroo Recovery Program Update (con’t)

Meanwhile at Two Peoples Bay the population is doing quite well, with 20 individual potoroos gracing us with their presence in traps in November 2011. Only 14 showed up in March, but we expect that some of the missing animals will be back in June/July for the next round of trapping. Our volunteers happily get up at ungodly hours and come out to help us capture and record details of potoroos on Mount Gardner. The views at morning tea time are fabulous. If you would like to be involved, trapping is on Tuesday to Friday mornings for the four weeks starting 19th June, so just let Steph know by email stephanie.hill@dec.wa.gov.au or phone 9842 4547.

A six-night trip to Bald Island by Tony and volunteer Luke Kealley in early February produced a haul of 52 individual potoroos, a good result even compared with the 58 captured in 12 nights in July 2011. The new population there is still growing rapidly, presenting a probably short window of opportunity to move animals to establish other population sites.

The next big event was the “Two Peoples Bay Boot Camp” that replaced the planned radio-tracking fortnight that Tony unfortunately had to cancel as the year’s funding was running out. Instead, a number of the people intending to come radio-tracking agreed to carry out much-needed maintenance work around the potoroo facilities at Norman’s Beach, Two Peoples Bay, Ryedene and the Gull Rock cross-fostering facility. Ken Blechynden gives a very good account of that trip in this newsletter. We are so grateful for all the hard work put in that week; it was a great illustration of how willing people can achieve so much for a cause they believe in. On top of that, it was actually great fun! Many thanks to boot camp attendees Ken, Neil, Jonica, Russ, Doreen, Val, Bev and Charlotte for your willingness, hard work and good company.

The close and fruitful relationship between the DEC Gilbert’s Potoroo Recovery Project and the Gilbert’s Potoroo Action Group continues to produce great advances for the conservation of the world’s rarest marsupial. Thanks GPAG!

Tony Friend, Steph Hill and Tim Button
FUNDRAISING

MOUNT BARKER COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUPPORTS GILBERT’S POTOROO

Year 7 students (2011) from Mount Barker C.C. responded to a talk given by Ron Dorn on the plight of the Gilbert’s Potoroo by raising money to help the Recovery Program. Through car washes and food stalls, students raised $501 which was donated to GPAG. Ron congratulated the Year 7 class and teacher, Sarah Hancox for the wonderful support and for their excellent preparation, knowledge of biodiversity, conservation and marsupial breeding concepts. Their questions reflected a high degree of understanding of threatened species issues. A very special thank you to Sarah and the Year 7’s of 2011.

Ron Dorn

BUNNINGS SAUSAGE SIZZLE: January 14th 2012

Want to lose weight? Pay to use a sauna? There is another way! Volunteer to assist at a Sausage sizzle outside Bunnings on a hot, hot day.

My friend said “You’ll be busy. Everyone will be going to the garden centre on a day like today.” Busy I thought, we’ll make more money! And busy it was. I arrived for my stint at 10am and found sausages and onions already sizzling, some hungry people already served. “Boy is it hot” said the chef. “Better since we found you could roll the tent sides up.” Being a fool I volunteered to cook and quickly discovered he was right. Slowly I felt my face start to glow and the rivulets of perspiration flowing down did nothing to alleviate it. After an hour I felt my face might explode from pressure – what a mess that would make – sausages would be ruined! So I gracefully allowed someone else to take over as chef and I took over collecting the money. From now on I have nothing but admiration for those cooking at sausage sizzles! The queues got longer but folk seemed happy to have to wait. The soft drinks ran out early, but the huge pile of sausages surely would not be needed. Well, yes they were and after the last hot dog was paid for, some very hot, wet, exhausted workers could rest. Was it worth it? There had been humour, gossip, laughter with the work, and the knowledge that the money raised would go to helping the Gilberts Potoroo survive. It was worth it! Did I lose weight? I don’t know about the others but any weight I lost alas came back with the fluid I replenished myself with when I got home!! What a worthwhile way to spend a hot day.

Kathy Bell
COMMUNITY AWARENESS

GILBEY THE POTOROO VISITS THE ALBANY AGRICULTURAL SHOW

Visiting the Albany Show is a very important part of Gilbey’s annual jaunt out into the public arena to help continue and expand human awareness of the vulnerability of her species. She also raises more money for the Gilberts Potoroo Action Group (GPAG) to contribute in various ways to DEC’s Gilbert’s Potoroo Recovery program.

The 2011 show was yet another successful outing. Gilbey was very encouraged with the level of awareness of who she was amongst show patrons. There was also a keen interest from many people who were not yet aware of the Gilbert’s Potoroo. GPAG were lucky to have a great location in the DEC display and Gilbey did her usual hops/walks around the grounds talking to people at every chance she had. Many copies of “A Potoroo’s Tale” were purchased as were numerous other items. As usual, there were many people who, when they saw Gilbey and studied the brochure, were convinced they had seen potoroos but eventually admitted after the potoroo’s unique features were explained that they had probably seen a quenda.

It was very encouraging to overhear parents tell their children that Gilbey was a potoroo when they were asked “Mum, what is that?” The message is gradually getting out. Gilbey always has a minder at these outings because there is always someone, usually a youngish male, who wants to sneak behind her and pull or tread on her tail. Even some adults think it is fun to try. I am sure they wouldn’t like part of their body trodden on, but it does still make them think of “the creature” so hopefully somewhere in the back of their mind something registers ready to re-surface in a positive note at a later date.

One very touching moment this year was when a young lady of about 12 came up to Gilbey’s minder and said she had heard at school how endangered Gilbey’s species were and opened her small purse and pulled the only note she had in there, a $10 note, and squeezed it into the donation container. She was told she didn’t need to contribute that much but she said “she would love to be able to help them out”. It was touching that a young lady would choose to help Gilbey instead of spending her money in sideshow alley.

Keep up the good work Gilbey! 

Ken Blechynden
A JOURNEY TO BALD ISLAND
In the last newsletter we had an excerpt from the diary of Bev Davis’ trip to Bald Island in 2005. Here the diary continues….

Tuesday 16th August 2005

Awoke to a perfectly fine morning, not a cloud in the sky and had breakfast to the serenade of noisy scrub birds. The petrels have pushed off. Potoroos male 99 and 72 and female 98 were all found by radio tracking. The potoroos really have such fantastic real estate it is no wonder they take their time choosing where to settle. This afternoon at camp was bitterly cold, I ended up with gloves, balaclava, thermals, fleecy shirt, woollen jumper and jacket plus jeans and waterproof pants and was still cold. The cup-o-soup put an end to that feeling. After dinner (pasta) we checked the traps around camp for quokkas we caught 3 all previously known to us. Tonight there is the occasional petrel but much less racket than last night.

Wednesday 17th August 2005

We awoke at 0525 hours, had breakfast and set off to check the traps we set yesterday. All three potoroos were captured! The wind is biting cold on the granite outcrops and was wearing all the layers from the night before and was warm enough when walking, especially carrying all the potoroo trapping paraphernalia. Back at camp I sit in the sun to write this. I can hear the wind in the trees rushing through in gusts but the camp site is fairly sheltered and the sunshine delightful. One can just glimpse the sea through the trees from here, today a beautiful deep blue.

Bev Davis

A GREAT WEEK WORKING OUT FROM TWO PEOPLES BAY.

February 2012 was going to be the first major 2 week tracking program at the Norman Beach enclosure however the Gilberts Potoroo Recovery Program funds were running too low. Tony Friend still had a lot of jobs which needed to be done so he arranged a one week working bee program in its place. This was a very productive week for the total of 8 volunteers: Doreen, Neil, Russ, Jonica, Val, Bev, Charlotte and myself, Ken and the 3 DEC staff: Tony, Steph and Tim. Five volunteers plus Tony Friend stayed out at the Research Centre and the others travelled out from town. I, Ken, organised the catering as well as joining in with the daily tasks. A special thank you goes to Elaine from Perth who couldn’t come down but donated a huge range of goodies and cakes to help keep our energy levels up. With a lot of hard work by everyone including blood and sweat (but thankfully no tears) much was achieved.

Normans Beach Enclosure: Probably the hardest task was clearing the fence line along a steep rugged part of the Normans Beach enclosure. This involved ripping all the vegetation out by hand. Additionally the enclosures 8 kilometres of fence line was circumnavigated by two teams and re-pegged where it was lifting and re-stapled where various animals had attempted to bash their way through. The fence line was circumnavigated another time with a measuring tape and location plates attached every 200 metres. A set of dibbler nesting boxes were also removed from the bush so they could be returned to the Perth Zoo.
A GREAT WEEK WORKING OUT FROM TWO PEOPLES BAY con’t

Ryedene also had all its 2 kilometres of internal and external fences cleared of debris and repaired where necessary.

The Two Peoples Bay former captive breeding enclosures were given the “once-over” with the laboratory/kitchen thoroughly cleaned after a long period of spider and dust invasion, the bush inside all 14 pens was given a huge haircut and the pens cleaned out ready for any future use. After all the enclosure maintenance, the floors were given a new coat of paint. Additionally, several large garbage bags of weeds were removed from around the Research Centre at the Bay.

The now abandoned Gull Rock facility enclosures were given a very thorough clean out by hand on a hot day with kikuyu up to a metre high and the extremely thick very dusty layers of potoroo mulch/sawdust was cleared off the concrete. All equipment was packed and removed and the food preparation area cleaned out of all its large collection of dirt. Even the 12 volt wiring was all removed for use elsewhere, maybe out at Bald Island one day. The property owners now have a clean building and pens for their own use.

Of extra interest was the presence of a reporter and photographer from the Australian Geographic on assignment to produce an article on the Gilberts Potoroo. They were with us for two days photographing everything and everyone, interviewing staff and volunteers and even laying hands on a mattock to help. Tony Friend set traps at the Ryedene enclosure in the hope they would get a potoroo to photograph. The early morning visit was very rewarding for everyone – we all went for a look. A mother quenda was caught with two young at heel in the same trap. Most of us had not seen that before. Of course a bush rat didn’t miss out. Most importantly, the resident potoroo was caught and co-operated magnificently for the photographer. Instead of doing the usual quick dash for thick bush when released she posed for several seconds in the open then very slowly wandered off. We look forward to seeing the article sometime in the future.

The weather was quite hot for the tasks we were doing so the waters of Two Peoples Bay provided great relief at the end of a each day’s work.

Ken Blechynden

Working hard clearing the fence line. Photo: Ken Blechynden

Tony Friend and Gilbert’s Potoroo F216 having their picture taken by Australian Geographic photographer. Photo Ken Blechynden
UP AND COMING EVENTS

A MUST DO!

Dr Tony Friend is to speak on May 24th, at 5pm , at UWA.

Why is this a must do?

I had been a member of GPAG for a couple of years, been to meetings, been out to help with the trapping, asked questions thought I knew all there was to know about the Gilber's Potoroo. But they say pride comes before a fall and how right that is!! Steph Hill gave up a precious evening to speak to a small group I belong to - I learnt more! Then I heard Tony give a talk and he not only talked about this small endangered mammal, but also about the complexities of trying to increase their numbers to a viable level, and about the time and effort involved trying to establish them in different areas to protect against any unforseen disaster. He had everyone's attention. And that is why it is a must do. No matter how much you know there is always more, and different was of looking at it.

Kathy Bell

GILBERT'S POTOROO ACTION GROUP MEETINGS

All members and non members are welcome to attend the GPAG Meetings. The meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings start at 1900 hours and usually finish at 2030 hours. The meetings are held at the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), 120 Albany Highway, Albany. Entry to the DEC car park is via Moir St. We hope to see you at the next meeting! For more information on these meetings please contact Val Hack on 0409443331 or email Val at valh@omninet.net.au

We look forward to seeing you there!
MEMBERSHIPS & DONATIONS

Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group is open to anyone who wishes to help save Gilbert's Potoroo from extinction and our annual membership subscription is currently only $10 OR $150 for a lifetime membership (Australian dollars). The group currently meets once a month in Albany, Western Australia, however all members have access to our Potoroo Group mailing list where we post group meeting agendas and minutes, notices and news. Opportunities for volunteer work with the recovery program are generally first notified to the group through the list and members can also use the list to discuss ideas and proposals for group activities and strategies. Lack of funding is one of the greatest difficulties now facing the effort to save Gilbert's Potoroo and so fund raising is one of the three key objectives of our group. Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group is a not-for-profit community volunteer organisation; none of our members or officers are paid by the group, so if you make a donation to our group you can be sure that the money will be used directly to progress actions identified in the Gilbert's Potoroo Recovery Plan.

To join Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group or to make a donation please fill out the attached forms.

“Gilbey” GPAG’s Mascot

INTERESTED IN A CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP?
PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST HERE

Yes, I/ We........................................................ ................................................................. Of

(C.E.O/ Manager’s Name)

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Wish to register interest in Corporate Sponsorship of Gilbert’s Potoroo. Please send information to:

ADDRESS...................................................................................................................................

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Please post this form to:

Val Hack (Treasurer)
Gilbert’s Potoroo Action Group Inc
P O Box 654
Albany, WA 6331

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of the GILBERT’S POTOROO ACTION GROUP Please fill out the form below and enclose your subscription.

NAME ........................................................................................................................................................................
ADDRESS ........................................................................................................................................................................
.....................................................................................................................................................................................
PHONE (Work) ...................................... (Home) ............................................
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☐ Annual Subscription $10 ☐ Lifetime Membership $150

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

Cheques make payable to Gilbert’s Potoroo Action Group Inc.
Send To: The Treasurer
Gilbert’s Potoroo Action Group Inc
P O Box 654
Albany, WA 6331

For more information contact: Val Hack 0409 443 331 OR Email treasurer@poroo.org OR www.potoroo.org

DONATIONS (TAX DEDUCTIBLE)

As a Nationally Registered Environmental Organization, the Gilbert’s Potoroo Action Group Inc. offers tax deductible* donation facilities.

*To claim tax benefits, please ensure your donation of $2 and over is made payable to the GPAG Public Tax Deductible Donation Fund.

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P O Box 654
Albany, WA 6331

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
By sponsoring a Gilbert’s Potoroo project you can help contribute to the survival of the species.

PERSONAL SPONSORSHIP - $50.00 (ANNUAL)

By sponsoring the Gilbert’s Potoroo your money will go directly to the three current projects, Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve, Bald Island and Norman’s Beach Enclosure involved in helping to save Gilbert’s Potoroo. With each sponsorship you will receive a “Sponsorship Certificate”, an annual subscription to the Potoroo Postings newsletter which will inform you of how the sponsored projects are progressing and items that have been contributed as a result of sponsorships. As a sponsor you will be invited to a “Meet the Scientist Day” where you will meet other sponsors and spend the day learning about potoroos and visiting recovery project sites at Two Peoples Bay and the Ryedene Enclosure.

SMALL BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP - $100.00 (ANNUAL)

With a Small Business Sponsorship you will receive a “Sponsorship Certificate”, an annual subscription to the Potoroo Postings newsletter which will inform you of how the sponsored projects are progressing and items that have been contributed to this project as a result of sponsorships. As a Small Business Sponsor two staff will be invited to a “Meet the Scientist Day” where you will meet other sponsors and spend the day learning about potoroos and visiting recovery project sites at Two Peoples Bay and the Ryedene Enclosure. Your Business will also be recognised in Potoroo Postings.

To become a SPONSOR of the GILBERT’S POTOROO PROJECT Please fill out the form below and enclose your subscription.

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Personal Sponsorship $50[ ] Small Business Sponsorship $100

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Gilbert’s Potoroo Action Group Inc
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Albany, WA 6331

For more information contact: Val Hack 0409 443 331 OR Email treasurer@potoroo.org OR
www.potoroo.org

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
MERCHANDISE

Please fill out the form and send it to the address below.

CARDS: Quality hand made cards featuring a Gilbert’s potoroo (blank inside, picture from a watercolour by Jann van der Helder). $3 ea
Quantity
Total amount …$ ………………….

CALICO BAGS: Made by GPAG members from calico with a potoroo stamp. $3 ea
Quantity
Total Amount…$……………….

STUBBY HOLDERS: Designed by GPAG members featuring graphics of Gilbert’s Potoroo. $10 ea
Quantity
Total Amount…$……………….

CAPS: Front of cap “Gilbert’s Potoroo” Back of cap “ save us.” $10 ea
Quantity
Total Amount…$……………….

A delightful book written and beautiful illustrated by Albany artist Sandy O’Doherty. All profits from the sale of the book will go to GPAG.
$15 ea
Quantity
Total amount…$……………….

TOTAL ………………….

Plus Postage & Handling…$7.20 (per 6 items)

GRAND TOTAL…

Merchandise can be paid for by direct deposit or cheque as per below:
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