

# LAND TALK

Newsletter of the 'Centralian Land Management Association' (CLMA)

## CLMA on line!!!

[www.clma.com.au](http://www.clma.com.au)

The CLMA crew has decided to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century in true style, and have now got fast internet access, and a much more efficient email system. Please note our new email addresses, and have a look at our web site later this year (it is still under construction.) If you would prefer this newsletter to come to you via email, let us know and we'll add you to the list.

A BIG thanks to Jo (our CLMA tech guru) and her mate Victor for all their efforts in getting us set up.



## Please note our NEW email addresses:

Andrea Johnson, **Coordinator:**  
[clma@clma.com.au](mailto:clma@clma.com.au)

Dionne Walsh, **EMS Project:**  
[ems@clma.com.au](mailto:ems@clma.com.au)

Peter Barker & Michael Wood, **Weeds Project:**  
[weeds@clma.com.au](mailto:weeds@clma.com.au)

Joanne Rodney, **GLM Project:**  
[jo@aglingo.com](mailto:jo@aglingo.com)

## Calici Virus active in the south.

Recent reports from stations south of Alice, indicate that following the cool spell over July/August, Calici is active again and successfully killing rabbits. Reports of activity around old warrens on Eirdunda station and several properties in the southern region in late July / early August, indicate that rabbit numbers had increased over this years' main breeding season. A recent spotlight at No. 7 bore on Eirdunda in the last week of August, proved to find NO RABBITS over the 10km of transect checked. This transect has been spotlighted regularly since 1996 to check for presence and number of rabbits. The absence of rabbits on this transect would indicate to us that Calici has been active in the area in the last 3-4 weeks.

Reports of dead rabbits near homesteads, and an influx of big blowfly activity in the southern region also suggests that calici virus is working! Whilst checking rabbit numbers, we have seen and had reports of large numbers of roos around the region.

If you have observations of rabbit activity you would like to report, give CLMA a call.



### **G'day from the weeds guys!**

Now in our fourth month of the Sandover Weed Project, both Michael and I have covered hundreds of kilometres of your wonderful country, which should be mentioned is looking stunning at the moment. We have now managed to map almost the entire upper catchment of the Sandover. The Ongeva, Annamurra, Gillen, Mueller, Edwards, and Waite Creeks have been searched for weeds and everything found has been treated. Many thousands of weeds have been mapped and poisoned, with follow up visits to a number of sites indicating Rubberbush and Parkinsonia plants are showing signs of dieback. Let's keep our fingers crossed!



*CLMA Quad bike & spray tank hard at work*

We now find ourselves at the beginning of the Sandover River in Mt Skinner and Utopia Aboriginal Community (Angarapa Aboriginal Lands). With the assistance of CLC, Urapuntja Council and Batchelor Institute, it is here for the next couple of weeks that we will be focusing our efforts on training indigenous CDEP participants in weed identification, occupational health and safety procedures, and in the safe use of chemicals. This, all while we continue our mapping and control program.

Presence of both weed species begins to thin out near this section, so hopefully the enthusiasm shown for the project by all will ensure that progress through the much more extensive

eastern section of the Sandover Region will be quicker. Before you know it we will be visiting you!

Finally, we would like to thank landholders of the stations we have visited thus far for their assistance. Without the valuable local knowledge they have provided, in addition to many litres of diesel and occasional accommodation, it is unlikely we would have made it this far. In the meantime, keep your eyes open for the weeds, so that when we do make it to your property we know where to focus our energies.



### **Weeds Field Day**

Because everyone has been so busy with mustering over the last month or so we have had to postpone the field day (which was meant to be on the fourth of September). We will organise a date for when things quieten down a little and are not so busy. We will keep you posted.

### **HR (Heavy Rigid) License and Chemical User's License**

CLMA, in conjunction with Alan Harrison from Charles Darwin University, are organising to put aside a week for people interested in obtaining their Heavy Rigid (HR) license or chemical user's license. We are also hoping to organise a time for Grader license certificate. It is yet to be decided when and where the course will be held. Anyone interested in attending can fill out the form provided and return it to:

Peter Barker, Centralian Land Management Association. PO Box 2534, Alice Springs, NT. 0871  
**by Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup>.**

### **KIDMAN SRPINGS FIELD DAY**

Dee & Andrea recently traveled to the Victoria River District to attend the Kidman Springs Field Day. Dee gave a presentation to northern producers about the EMS project involving the central Australian pastoral industry.

The topic of the field day was **“Cattle, Customers, Community and Cowboys – keeping them all happy.”** Everyone enjoyed a feed of AACo’s ‘1824’ aged beef – not bad at all, and heard an interesting range of topics presented, including:

- Improving herd profitability
- Competition between the woody and pasture layer
- Improving heifer fertility
- Top end multibreed composites
- Work of the North Australian Beef Research Council
- Grazing Land Management Course – a participant’s response
- NLIS in the NT
- Electronic identification used for production on Willeroo station
- Satisfying customers of live export market

*If you would like a copy of the field day proceedings, give us a call.*

### **A Grazing Land Manager – an effective combo of Forage Farmer & Beef Producer!**

Lux Lethbridge, manager of Killarney Station and a Katherine GLM Workshop participant wrote an article for the recent Kidman Springs Field Day. Here is an excerpt from it:

*“Grass is one of our most valuable assets, and without this asset we cannot produce kilograms of beef! I believe we have to become grass farmers or growers from which we produce beef. I liken this to a person who grows apples, he has healthy trees which produce prime apples, or unhealthy trees which produce poor apples... We are no different, whereby a healthy grass ecosystem, means maximum kilograms produced. A poor grass quality and quantity greatly reduces kilograms produced.*

*...Sometimes more is not always the answer to making money. Remember our grasses are free feed for our cattle so we have to look after them.”*

For your thoughts on Grazing Land Management, contact Jo Rodney  
GLM Project.

### **KIDS IN LANDCARE**

It’s great to see young people in the NT and QLD involved with landcare on cattle stations.

A recent interview on the Country Hour with 10 year old Hayden Riggs from Lakefield Station near Mataranka proved it’s never too young to start thinking about managing the land and its plants and animals.

*“Living here means green plants and plenty of water. Its bush and its fun out here, we go to the Lake, we can go to lots of places and the day before yesterday I went down a road I have never been down before and my Dad pointed out some caves so I look forward to seeing them again. We have some bad weeds, one that kills horses and we must make sure we water trees. Our lake is huge and it’s important to preserve because there is a lot of wild life on the lake.”*

Photo copied article  
not available on  
digital copy of newsletter

SOURCE: QLD County Life, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 04  
Mt Isa School of the Air Student project

**WILDLIFE SURVEYS  
IN THE BURT PLAIN BIOREGION**

Helen Neave (Ph – 89518227)  
**Biodiversity Conservation Division**  
 (used to be Parks and Wildlife).  
 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and  
 Environment (DIPE)

**The Burt Plain Bioregion to the north of Alice Springs covers an area of 73,798 square kilometres in the Northern Territory. Very little has been documented about the biodiversity of the Burt Plain Bioregion, and there are many gaps in our understanding of the distribution of plants and animals across the bioregion. Our team is interested in carrying out wildlife surveys across the Burt Plain Bioregion, and would like to contact landholders in the near future to discuss the possibility of conducting wildlife surveys on their properties. We have made a start so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those landholders we have already contacted.**

*I look forward to talking with more of you in the near future and please feel free to contact me anytime. We are always happy for landholders and their families to be involved in the wildlife surveys so why not come out and see what we do and what critters we might catch.*

**WHAT IS A BIOREGION?**

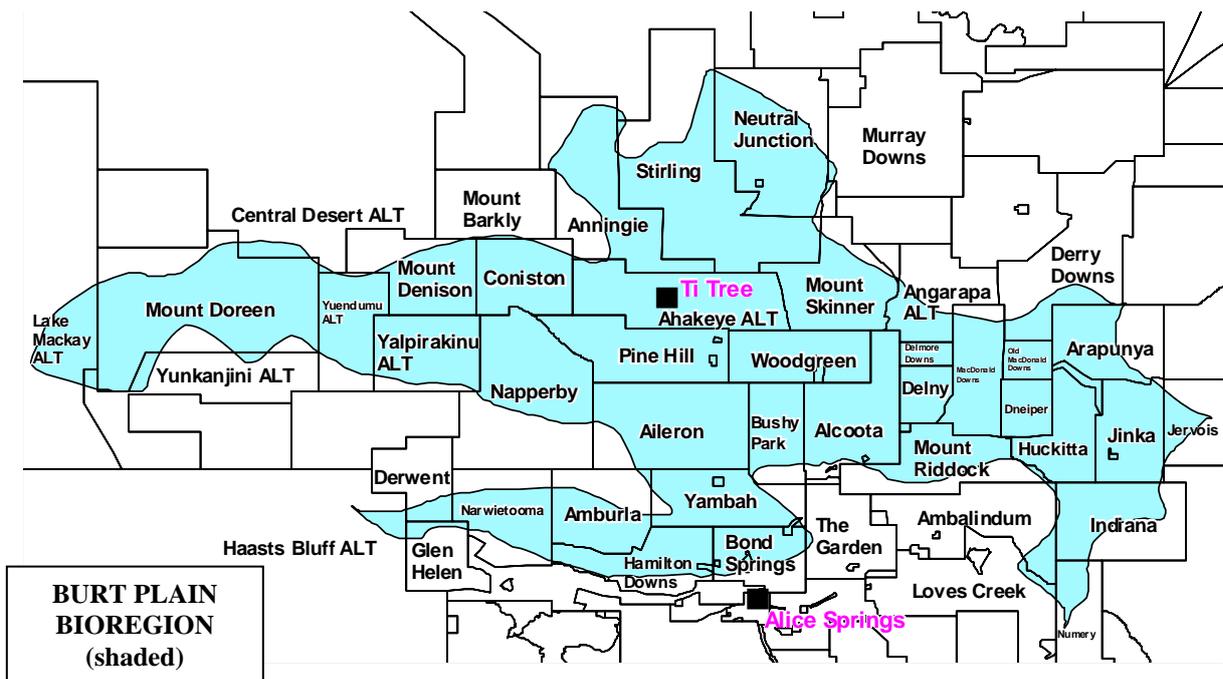
A bioregion is simply a large area of land with generally similar climate, landforms, geology, soils, vegetation and animals. Land management issues also tend to be the same across a given bioregion. Therefore, bioregions are a useful and practical unit of land in which to look at wildlife, which includes both native plants and animals, and other land management issues.

**What can bioregional surveys mean and do for pastoralists?**

Bioregional surveys gather information on plants and wildlife. This information can be used to assist with the development of:

- Property management plans – planning for infrastructure and grazing management
- Environmental Management Systems
- Conservation plans

DIPE use the information collected in bioregional assessments for future planning and allocation of funding to conserve, monitor or protect particular habitats or species. Landholder input is greatly encouraged.



## EMS Project Update

For more information contact Dee Walsh (08) 8953 4230

**What is sustainable grazing management?** Here are some opinions from some of the EMS participants. What's clear is that sustainable grazing management means different things to different people! Have a read and see whether you agree or disagree with the opinions below. We'll have similar articles on water and soil management in future newsletters.

Agree	Disagree	
		Assess grazing pressure and feed levels every three months and adjust stock accordingly.
		Anything with indigofera is good country for cattle.
		Manage pastures and stocking rates to give 12 months breathing space.
		Determine the need to adjust cattle numbers by watching the development of cattle pads, the density and type of plants showing grazing pressure and the condition of the cattle.
		Determine the need to move or get rid of stock by looking at pasture condition, calf condition, amount of feed.
		Cattle condition is one of the last indicators, if you rely on cattle condition, it is already too late. You've left it too late if cattle can't walk somewhere or go on a truck.
		Indicators to determine the need to move or get rid of stock include plant growth, wind damage, predominant species being grazed, noticing what plants are left ungrazed, noticing what cattle go for and by comparing the season and growth to last year.
		Use some paddocks on a rotational or seasonal basis to allow spelling.
		In preparation for drought, look for country to agist or lease, preg test all females and dispose of dry/empty ones. Then lighten off - steers first, followed by cull heifers, then empty/dry cows of all ages. If it continues to be dry, sell the oldest cows regardless of pregnancy status.
		Know which country and bores will look bad first and keep an eye on these.
		As drought progresses, sell male cattle first, then young heifers (dry).
		Assess whether a drought is over based on the growth of the country rather than the condition of cattle.
		Whether a drought is over or not depends on the amount and timing of the rainfall event and the weather afterwards.
		After drought, retain females to get numbers up, and don't sell as many young stock in order to get weights up.
		To prevent erosion, slow up the water and use it.
		Ponding banks work better in open country than rocky country.
		Monitoring sites give a historical record to see increases in weeds or nip problems in the bud. It also shows changes in the country.
		Take photos of the country when the season changes.
		Pasture grasses such as buffel and Rhodes grass increase ground cover and hold country together and make it more productive.
		Seed buffel where there isn't much productivity, where it is barest and where it is likely to succeed (where it will take hold along fences and powdery country). Also at any new water sites.

**WHAT'S COMING UP?**



**Low Stress Stock Handling School**  
Narwietooma Stn. 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> October

**Lake Eyre Basin Conference** – “Working together & sharing knowledge.” Alice Springs 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> October

**CLMA AGM** - late Nov / early Dec this year

**Envirofund applications close before the end of the year**  
Access funds for small landcare projects (eg. Fencing off important areas, weed control, rehabilitation projects)

**EMS Get together** – March 2005

Call us at the CLMA Office for more information

CENTRALIAN LAND MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION  
PO BOX 2534  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871  
Phone: 08 89534230  
Fax: 08 89523824

**SURFACE  
MAIL**

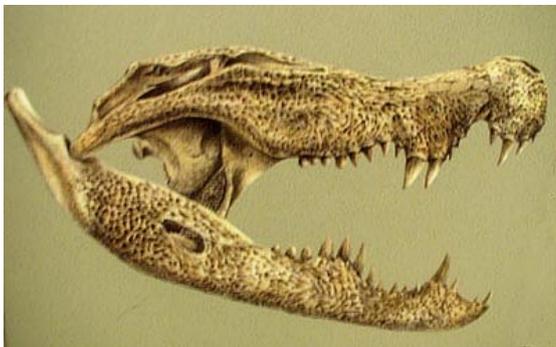
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For general enquiries, & to contact Andrea  
For info about EMS, & to contact Dionne  
For enquiries about weeds, & to contact Peter or Michael  
For enquiries about Grazing Land Management, & to contact Jo

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**CROCS IN THE CENTRE**



According to paleontologist Dr Peter Murray, five metre crocodiles once lived in permanent water courses in central Australia. A crocodile head found from an archeological site at Alcoota 2 years ago, is believed to be around 8 million years old and indicates the animal was more like an alligator than a saltwater crocodile. Crocs (in this region) would have lived on Diprotodon (hippopotamus sized

womats) and 300kg geese. Dr Murray believes that the bones and skulls found at Alcoota, indicate that most animals died within a short period of years, suggesting that the area was probably stricken by drought to cause the death of the animals found.