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ACTHA Inc. News

Aug - Sept '18

Newsletter of the
ACT Herpetological
Association Inc.

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ACTHA Meeting Tues, 19 June '18:

'Meet a reptile Keeper!' Skott Williamson talks about his Morelia and Aspidites pythons with some good advice, page 3.

Guest Speaker - Our main Guest Speaker for our June meeting was Dr Ben Scheele, ANU College of Science, who gave a presentation on developments on the chytrid fungus battle.

[NB The summary of Ben's presentation will appear in our next Newsletter, Oct-Nov '18.]

Nature Photography Workshop during September - Damien Esquerre is running a second version of this comprehensive theory and practice Workshop at the NatureArt Lab in Griffith, Canberra. Details page 4.

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'**the reptile doctor**', this Ed. has found an excellent internet site which shares the journey of vet practice pet reptile admissions. Just some of the posts can be found from page 9.

Reptiles and frogs found on Black Mountain, our very own Anke Maria Hoefler will be presenting a paper co-authored with Will Osborne at the Black Mountain Symposium 2018, details on page 11.

Lacey spottings and Wagga Landcare lizards, page 12.

Diary date

The *bi-monthly* meetings of the Association are held on the **third Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm.**

Our usual venue is:

Belconnen Soccer Club, HAWKER
(cnr Belconnen Way & Springvale Drive)

**Upcoming Meeting:
Tuesday, 21 August 2018**

Reptiles galore!

This meeting will be an opportunity for members to see some wonderful reptiles owned by their fellow enthusiasts. **Are any of your reptiles awake?** Then please consider bringing one along, snug in a carry bag of course. We can spend the whole evening sharing interesting aspects.

As a special treat, **Allie** will be bringing in two subspecies of shingleback skinks. *Tiliqua rugosa rugosa* from the Goldfield-Esperance region in Western Australia and *Tiliqua rugosa asper* from South Australia. Allie will also be giving a small talk, reviewing the different types of *rugosa* subspecies found around Australia, including their description, distribution and habitat.

Don't miss this meeting!

Your Committee for 2017 - 2018

President	Scott Keogh
Vice President	Ric Longmore*
Secretary	Dennis Dyer
Treasurer	Margaret Ning
Newsletter Editor	Mandy Conway
Webmaster	Angus Kennedy
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Committee Members	Jason Spurr Iris Carter Greg Flowers Roy Chamberlain Peter Child
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* Denotes Life Members

Vale *Fingers*, our *Snakes Alive!* python legend

It is with much sorrow that we announce the passing of *Fingers*, ACTHA's Snake's Alive! python legend.

Greg has owned *Fingers* for 20 years and is understandably devastated; they had a special bond which was clearly evident when Greg handled *Fingers* at our exhibitions.

Fingers will be greatly missed by both ACTHA's membership and all those children at Snake's Alive! each January.

Fingers passed away after a battle with a serious heart condition, her age may have been a contributing factor.

Our heartfelt condolences Greg.



ACTHA meeting held Tuesday, 19 June 2018

Meet a reptile keeper!

Skott Williamson from The Canberra Reptile Zoo was our guest reptile keeper and he spoke on the ups and downs of owning pythons.

[NB images on this page are not from the meeting.]

Skott undertakes some research of a species before he acquires one, a sensible approach. Determining the temperament of a potential pet is also very important.

Defensiveness, whether inside or outside an enclosure, can sometimes be confused with the smell of food. Hands reaching into a cage, which have handled rodents, are likely to receive a bite, so lifting the snake out of the enclosure with a snake hook is generally advisable. Skott added that if you are bitten then thoroughly washing the area will help prevent infection. Teeth can sometimes be 'left behind' by some small species.

Picking the right snake for your household is important, especially if young children will be handling it. Consideration as to the adult size is very important too: a full grown Scrub Python, reaching over 6m, is a case in point. Owners need to consider how big their snake will reach to cater for future housing requirements. An escape proof enclosure is critical.

Skott added that the number of reptiles being relinquished due to size, either to the zoo or for re-sale, is increasing. "More information as to the final average size of an animal needs to be made clear at point of sale".

The **Morelia**, and the **Aspidites** species which has just two members - the Black-headed Python [below] and the Woma [below right], that Skott keeps have different temperaments and require different care regimes. He added that Jungle pythons are quite temperamental



and can present a challenge, and his Bredli is only just becoming handle-able now that it has reached adulthood.

Carpet [above] and diamond pythons are generally docile as pets and easily handled. Being arboreal they require an enclosure with height so sturdy branches can be installed. Skott has found that the *Morelia* species shed more often and with relative ease, however *Aspidites* can be problematic.

Diseases do occur in animals for sale and it is most important to quarantine all new acquisitions. Skott gave the Sunshine Virus as an example. This pathogen is believed to have a 1 year incubation period and affects the brain and balance, and is highly contagious. Neurological symptoms include a head tilt, loss of right reflex, tremors, uncontrolled head movements and respiratory problems.

Mites can be a particularly difficult parasite to eradicate once established within an enclosure. Proper hygiene protocols is essential. Internal parasites such as nematodes are best treated by a suitable vet.

Shedding can sometimes be problematic, again housing and husbandry plays a part. The enclosure could be too warm, not enough access to water to bath, etc. A warm bath combined with gentle massaging can be helpful to remove retained shedding.

Finally, Skott said that owning snakes over the past 20 years has been fun and an adventure, and grumpy animals can have their rewards. Many in the audience could relate.



Workshop

The Theory, Art and Practice of Nature Photography

By Damien Esquerre (www.desquerre.com)

NatureArt Lab
Learn - Be Inspired - Love Your Art



Learn all the basics of photography and to successfully shoot wildlife (from insects to mammals), landscapes, and nature in general! Learn how to be technical and creative in nature photography.

Four three-hour long sessions covering in detail: camera equipment, exposure, lenses, getting sharp images, light, composition, macro and close-up, flash, approaching animals and digital editing.

Includes practical session in the field to learn techniques hand-on

Dates for theoretical sessions: September 6, 13, 20 and 27 from 18:00 to 21:00 hrs. Practical session: September 23, 8:40-15:00 hrs.

Place: NatureArt Lab, M16 Art Space, 21 Blaxland Crescent, Griffith, ACT.

Limited to 10 students. For requirements, details and bookings please visit natureartlab.com.au or write to esquerre.damien@gmail.com

Dear ACT Herpetological Society,

I am running a second version of my Nature Photography Workshop at the NatureArt Lab in Griffith, Canberra during September. This is a comprehensive theory and practice workshop that covers all topics in nature photography, starting from the basics, and taking you into the technical grounds of wildlife, close-up, landscape and flash photography and digital post-editing, composition and light among many other subjects.

Here are the links with more information and where to book:

<http://www.desquerre.com/workshops.html>

<https://natureartlab.com.au/collections/adult/products/the-theory-art-and-practice-of-nature-photography-with-damien-esquerre#>

I am also attaching the flyer and the program for further information.

The cost is \$350, a very cheap price for all that is included (have a look at other similar workshops online). Limited to 10 students.

Please feel free to share around.

Kind regards,

Damien Esquerre

The Australian & International Scene

Baby snake fossil found trapped in amber offers clues on evolution

By Nicholas St. Fleur, *The New York Times*,
18 July 2018



The skeletal remains of a new species of prehistoric snake preserved in amber found in Myanmar.
Credit Ming Bai, Chinese Academy of Sciences

In 2016, Lida Xing was combing the amber markets of Myanmar when a merchant enticed him over to his booth with what he said was the skin of a crocodile trapped in amber. When Dr. Xing inspected the specimen through its honey-colored encasement and noticed the diamond-shaped pattern of its scales, he realized what he was holding was actually a 99-million-year-old snakeskin.

Dr. Xing, who is a paleontologist from the China University of Geosciences in Beijing, had previously recovered a feathered dinosaur tail and a baby bird in the amber markets. But he said that of the hundreds of thousands of amber pieces discovered in the area, no one had ever before found a snake.

He purchased the snakeskin and set up a meeting with Michael Caldwell, a snake paleontologist at the University of Alberta. A few minutes before Dr. Xing boarded his flight to Canada, a different colleague alerted him to another recently discovered snake specimen that was more amazing than the first: entombed in a silver-dollar-sized chunk of amber was a baby snake.

"The fossil is the first baby snake and the oldest baby snake to yet be found," said Dr. Xing. Before this finding, paleontologists had not uncovered a fossilized baby snake even in the rock fossil record, said Dr. Caldwell.

Dr. Xing and Dr. Caldwell reported their findings from the two specimens in the journal 'Science Advances'. The work provides insight into the evolution of snakes, their early-stage anatomical development and their prehistoric spread across the globe.

Only the bottom half of the baby snake's sinuous body was preserved in the amber, which is fossilized tree resin.

Because the skull was missing, the people who found the fossil thought the tiny creature inside was either a centipede or millipede.

But closer inspection revealed its bones. And through the use of a micro-CT scanner and a synchrotron, scientists confirmed that the specimen was a baby snake, a new species they named *Xiaophis myanmarensis*. It resembles existing species of pipe and grass snakes.

The researchers determined the fossilized snake was either an embryo or a newborn based on the development of its spinal cord. Like modern baby snakes, the preserved baby had tiny vertebral bones but a large spinal cord tube, according to Dr. Caldwell. That's a telltale sign that the snake was still developing, as well as the first direct evidence that the developmental processes seen in a baby snake's spine were established at least about 100 million years ago and have remained relatively unchanged since then.

The researchers could not say whether or not the shed snakeskin belonged to the same species as the baby snake.

Ryan McKellar, a paleontologist from the Royal Saskatchewan Museum in Canada and an author on the paper, said the fossilized snakeskin was trapped along with plants, cockroaches and insect droppings. Those clues indicated that the ancient snake lived in the forest. That may seem like a likely locale for a slithering snake, but before this discovery, paleontologists did not have direct evidence of



Vertebrae and ribs of the baby snake preserved in amber.
Credit Lida Xing, China University of Geosciences Beijing

snakes living in forests during the Mesozoic Era.

Scientists aren't sure where snakes originated from and how they spread throughout the world. The new specimens offer clues for one potential pathway for their prehistoric movement around the planet, said Dr. McKellar.

Some 100 million years ago when the snakes became trapped in tree resin, Myanmar was part of a migrating island between present-day Asia and Australia. That island eventually floated to the coast of Laurasia, a supercontinent that then included present-day Europe and Asia.

"These snakes would have been along for the ride," he said.

Farmers call for more snake antivenom at regional hospitals

By John Ellicot, The Land, 9 August 2018

Farmers are pushing to have more anti-venom available for snake bites in strategic regional hospitals after a number of 'close calls' exposed flaws in the system.

At least two farmers have been left with no treatment for brown snake bites after local hospitals didn't carry ampoules of anti-venom or trained staff to perform pathological testing of patients.

One of the hospitals was Dubbo Base hospital, that according to one farmer didn't have trained staff to administer the right dosage of antivenom.

Tenterfield farmer Bronwyn Petrie said it was disturbing that many country vets carried antivenom ampoules in regional areas, but not regional hospitals. Ms Petrie said it was lucky Tenterfield was one of those hospitals that held ampoules of anti-venom and supplies definitely saved one man's life.

"Going on the supply of antivenom, I'd just like to know if animals' lives are valued more than a human's?," she asked. "The cost of the ampoules is cited (about \$1500-\$2000) but that would hardly seem a major impost for hospitals if a life is at stake.

"We had a snakebite victim attend Tenterfield Hospital and if he didn't get the anti-venom they say he would have been as dead as a doornail." The man received two ampoules and needed a third ampoule when the rescue helicopter arrived.

NSW Farmers want it as a condition that all stocks of antivenom (two for brown, two for black snake) are kept at strategic regional hospitals, with medical staff trained to detect and administer the antivenom if needed. The proper administration of antivenom is vital in a snakebite case as the wrong dosage or wrong type of antivenom could be lethal.

Ed Colless, from Walgett, said one worker on his farm was bitten and was taken straight to Coonamble hospital, but it had no antivenom. He then went to Dubbo Base Hospital but there wasn't anyone qualified to test the victim for what antivenom was required.

Earlier this year the head of the Australian Venom Research Unit David Williams said there would be a rise in snakebite fatalities if hospitals didn't keep stocks of antivenom.

Dr Williams told the ABC that he was surprised "regional hospitals were being complacent regarding stocks".

"Historically, it's a product that has been available in hospitals even in the most remote corners of the country," he said. "And, as a result of that, we have a very low fatality rate — one or two a year on average."

Mrs Petrie said brown snakes were aggressive. One had come at her in her garden without warning. Brown snakes are one of the world's most venomous snakes.

Meanwhile the Royal Flying Doctor Service has changed the way it treats snakebites.

"In 2017 there was a new, comprehensive study released on snakebites in Australia. Over 10 years of research and 1,500 snakebite patients were studied. As a result, the Royal Flying Doctor Service has changed the way it views and treats snakebites," its website says.

'Fantasy documents': recovery plans failing Australia's endangered species

Lisa Cox, *The Guardian*, 20 February 2018

Full article available at: [https://](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/feb/20/fantasy-documents-recovery-plans-failing-australias-endangered-species)

www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/feb/20/fantasy-documents-recovery-plans-failing-australias-endangered-species

Extract from article

Less than 40% of Australia's nationally-listed threatened species have recovery plans in place to secure their long-term survival.

And close to 10% of listed threatened species are identified as requiring plans to manage their protection but the documents are either unfinished or haven't been developed, according to data published by the environment and energy department.

Other critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable species have plans that are years or decades out of date and contain no detail on what actions have been taken to ensure a species avoids extinction.

Conservationists want an overhaul of Australia's national environment laws – the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) act – to bring transparency and accountability to the country's opaque system of species management.

... Under the current national system for species protection, the environment and energy minister has the power to determine whether a threatened animal, plant or ecological community should have a recovery plan.

Changes to the EPBC act in 2006 put plans at the discretion of the minister, whereas before they had been mandatory for any species that received a threatened listing under the act.

Species without a recovery plan are now expected to have what is known as a conservation advice, which is typically a shorter document. It has no legal power to compel Australian governments to protect a species, they only have to consider it when making approvals under the EPBC act.

Conservation advices offer weaker legal protections than recovery plans. A recovery plan is binding on decisions made by the minister, a conservation advice is not.

Yet for those species that do have a recovery plan in place, there is no obligation on Australian governments to actually implement or fund it.

Research by Guardian Australia found fewer species were being granted the stronger protections of a recovery plan and some of our critically endangered animals were not receiving this level of protection.

The environment and energy department's annual report for 2016-17 shows that of 1,885 listed threatened entities in Australia, just 712, or 38%, were covered by recovery plans that are in force.

A further 176 species and ecological communities were identified as requiring recovery plans but didn't have them.

In the last financial year, only two new recovery plans were adopted, compared to 159 conservation advices.



Above: The vulnerable green and golden bell frog has been listed as requiring a recovery plan since 2009 yet no plan has been adopted. Image: Gerald & Buff Corsi/Getty Images/Visuals Unlimited.

Documents on the environment and energy department's EPBC database raise further questions about how much is being done to protect some Australian species.

Examples are:

- None of the recovery plans for Australia's five critically endangered frogs are current. Two are more than five years old and three are more than a decade old.
- Some recovery plans are languishing in draft form. The grey-headed flying fox, listed as vulnerable under the EPBC act, has been

identified as requiring a recovery plan since 2001. A document still hasn't been finalised. **The vulnerable green and golden bell frog** has been listed as requiring a recovery plan since 2009 and no plan has been adopted.

- Species such as snails, shellfish and insects are largely listed under conservation advices. Twenty-five of the 28 critically endangered species in this category have a conservation advice instead of a recovery plan

Also unclear is which of the national recovery plans that have been developed have been authorised and funded at either a federal or state level. There is no requirement on governments to implement plans once they're developed, something which is a source of frustration for conservationists.

Scientists, conservationists and environment organisations are pushing for a return to mandatory recovery planning and greater coordination and transparency from federal and state governments on what is being done to ensure species survival and whether it has been successful. They also want an independent watchdog that can oversee environmental policy and force parliaments to take action to protect species if they aren't already doing so.

Analysis by the Australian Conservation Foundation found it would cost about \$200m a year to implement every recovery plan in Australia.

Turtle Time at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

Park Care, May 2018

Bruno Ferronato, Waterwatch Coordinator, Ginninderra Catchment Group, has talked to visitors at the reserve and showed turtles, research gear and information on turtle ecology and conservation. A video was recorded for more information on the natural history of Eastern Long-necked Turtles in the Canberra region.

Video available at: <https://vimeo.com/263285579>

How many reptiles are killed by cats in Australia?

CSIRO Publishing, Published: 15 June 2018

<https://www.publish.csiro.au/WR/WR17160>

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Wildlife Research 45(3) 247-266 <https://doi.org/10.1071/WR17160>

Abstract

Context: Feral cats (*Felis catus*) are a threat to biodiversity globally, but their impacts upon continental reptile faunas have been poorly resolved.

Aims: To estimate the number of reptiles killed annually in Australia by cats and to list Australian reptile species known to be killed by cats.

Methods: We used (1) data from >80 Australian studies of cat diet (collectively >10 000 samples), and (2) estimates of the feral cat population size, to model and map the number of reptiles killed by feral cats.

Key results: Feral cats in Australia's natural environments kill 466 million reptiles yr⁻¹ (95% CI; 271–1006 million). The tally varies substantially among years, depending on changes in the cat population driven by rainfall in inland Australia. The number of reptiles killed by cats is highest in arid regions. On average, feral cats kill 61 reptiles km⁻² year⁻¹, and an individual feral cat kills 225 reptiles year⁻¹. The take of reptiles per cat is higher than reported for other continents. Reptiles occur at a higher incidence in cat diet than in the diet of Australia's other main introduced predator, the European red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). Based on a smaller sample size, we estimate 130 million reptiles year⁻¹ are killed by feral cats in highly modified landscapes, and 53 million reptiles year⁻¹ by pet cats, summing to 649 million reptiles year⁻¹ killed by all cats. Predation by cats is reported for 258 Australian reptile species (about one-quarter of described species), including 11 threatened species.

Conclusions: Cat predation exerts a considerable ongoing toll on Australian

reptiles. However, it remains challenging to interpret the impact of this predation in terms of population viability or conservation concern for Australian reptiles, because population size is unknown for most Australian reptile species, mortality rates due to cats will vary across reptile species and because there is likely to be marked variation among reptile species in their capability to sustain any particular predation rate.

Implications: This study provides a well grounded estimate of the numbers of reptiles killed by cats, but intensive studies of individual reptile species are required to contextualise the conservation consequences of such predation.

**Advice from 'the reptile doctor',
veterinary care for reptiles and
amphibians, Karingal Veterinary
Hospital, Frankston, Victoria**

<http://www.thereptiledoctor.com.au>

This Ed has found an interesting website/Facebook page that shares the journey of vet practice pet reptile admissions through images and videos, with the vet also explaining diagnosis and treatment regimes of animals at their facility. Site 'followers' are encouraged to help initially identify the problem, with a vet giving hints which draw to a conclusion.

Recent posts

"There are 10 snakes in the photo (below) and it represents half of someone's collection.

"In the bags are snakes of assorted species and ages. They are much loved pets as well as being quite valuable. Some appear perfectly healthy. Some have mild "mouth rot" and one has a neurological disease. Shortly after I took this



Image: the reptile doctor

photo I had the very unpleasant task of euthanasing them all because they are infected with Sunshine virus.

"Sunshine virus is a viral infection of snakes that causes neurological and respiratory disease. It is thought to be transmitted by direct contact with an infected snake or on contaminated equipment. There is no cure and snakes can be infected and show no symptoms for at least 16 months. A test is available and can be done on live snakes.

"If you own snakes or are thinking about obtaining a snake then I URGE you to ensure any new snakes are quarantined appropriately to prevent this virus entering your collection. If you own snakes and don't practice any quarantine then look at this photo because this could be you.

"If you accept snakes on short term breeding loans then look at this photo because this could be you too.

"There are keepers who suggest that Sunshine virus is not a major issue. If you are one of those keepers then look at this photo and try and tell the owner it's not a major issue... and then look at your own collection and ask yourself how would you feel if half of your collection had to be euthanased?

"Protect your animals... quarantine and test!"

"Retained spectacles on snakes is a relatively common problem I see in practice. This young Diamond Python named Sage was in last week and I took this nice photo of her. It shows very clearly the retained skin on both her eye and around her head. The retained spectacle often get what I call a "soccer ball" pattern to them as they being to dry out.

"Retained spectacles can occur for a number of reasons including a lack of humidity, a lack of cage furniture for the snake to rub against and malnourishment.

"In most cases they should be left to come off when the snake next sheds. It can be helped at this time by increasing the humidity and the



Image: the reptile doctor

use of eye lubricant drops to soften the skin. Using tweezers or sticky tape to peel it off should be avoided."

A common condition that we see in our reptilian patients is gout.

"Gout can be caused by a number of things. If animals that are only supposed to feed on plants are fed too much animal protein they can develop it. Feeding too many pinky mice for

example. Kidney disease will also cause it. It can also occur because of chronic dehydration. It can also happen for no apparent reason!

"One of the ways of diagnosing this in animals

with swollen joints is to take a needle sample from the joint and look at it under the microscope to see if there are any gout crystals present. Sometimes they are difficult to see and so we need to send the sample to the pathology lab. They use a polarised light to highlight the crystals. The image shows what this looks like! The clear gout crystals can be clearly seen in the sample taken from a Central Bearded Dragon. Thanks to Dr Celia Hooper from Gribbles Veterinary Pathology for sending me this image of our patient!"

Eye problems are something we see quite commonly in turtles.

"Murphy the Macquarie Turtle was in last week because his owners had noticed that his left eye was not looking normal.

"He has a corneal abscess. You can see the small collection of pus on his eye. We have started him on antibiotic eye ointment in the hope it

will clear the infection. There is still the possibility we may need to sedate him and remove the pus. The risk with this though is that if the abscess is deep it may result in the eye rupturing. Slow and steady with this one..."



Image: the reptile doctor

Snake gout

"GOUT! A special mention to Clare for suggesting kidney failure because you were on the right track!

"The skin problem shown in the photo above is caused by the accumulation of gout crystals under the skin. These are technically called "tophi" and cause a nasty inflammatory reaction. These same tophi are what are the small white spots that are present in the mouth of the snake too. Gout is often associated with joints but this is not always the case. Tophi can form in any soft tissues such as skin, liver, kidneys, brain, heart and muscle.

"To diagnose this I used a small needle to open up one of the affected scales and touched the contents onto a microscope slide. When viewed under the microscope it was easy to see the gout crystals.

"One of the causes of gout can be kidney failure. A blood sample was taken to check for this. The results showed the snake had a MASSIVE level of uric acid in its blood indicating it likely had kidney failure. The snake died before these results were back but we would have been advising the owner to euthanase it anyway.

"This case highlights a couple of important things:

1. Snakes (and reptiles in general) are VERY good at hiding the fact they are sick, even when they are VERY sick.



Image: the reptile doctor

(The Australian & International Scene, the reptile doctor cont'd...)

2. The owner of the snake first took it to a well known reptile shop to be seen. This is not something I recommend doing because if the animal has a contagious disease it risks contaminating the shop! Thankfully the staff did the right thing and told her to come and see me straight away.
3. This could have been incorrectly diagnosed as a burn or septicaemia. These conditions are often treated with antibiotics such as Fortum. Problem is that Fortum can be a bit dangerous to use in animals with kidney failure or dehydration and so it could have made it a lot worse (not really important in this snake because it died so quickly but could have been if the kidney disease and gout were not severe.)
4. It is important to do the appropriate tests to get a diagnosis... antibiotics are not the magic thing to fix everything.
5. ... and most importantly my veterinary degree is intact! Thought this one might stump a few people:)"



The jolly green, slightly shorter, Giant!

3 August '18

"Mrs Oliver, the Olive Python (*right*) needed a bit of help to fix a tail issue this week.

Unfortunately the last 10cm of her tail had lost its blood supply, died and needed to be removed. Weighing in at 10.3kg and being 24 years old Mrs Oliver is a gentle big ol' snake and our treatment table was just big enough!

An incision was made about 3-4cm up from the dead part to ensure we had healthy tissue."



Friends of
Black Mountain

Anke Maria Hoefler and Will Osborne have just completed a paper entitled

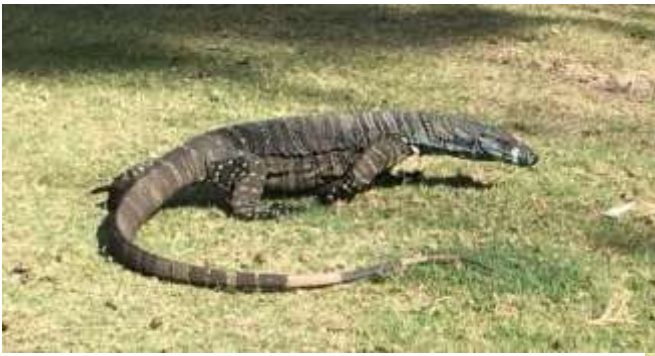
'Frogs and reptiles found at Black Mountain: fifty years of records, from museum collections to community-based photo mapping'

The paper can be viewed at <https://friendsofblackmountain.org.au/sites/default/files/Symposium2018/9-Osborne-Hoefler-herpto-Final-28Jun.pdf>

Anke Maria will be presenting a paper on the findings at the **Black Mountain Symposium 2018** to be held on the weekend of 24 & 25 August '18.

Full details of the Symposium, to be opened by Mick Gentleman MLA, can be found at <https://www.friendsofblackmountain.org.au/> including the program of events and on-line registration details.

The cost for the fully catered Symposium talks, at the CSIRO Discovery Centre, on Friday 24 Aug is just \$55 (wine and cheese option \$10) and the themed guided walks in Black Mountain Nature Reserve on Saturday 25 Aug is \$5.



Spotted!

Above and right:

RJ Nelson and his family were camping at Potato Point (just north of Narooma on the South Coast, NSW) in April when this visitor approached the campsite.

A Lace Monitor, *Varanus varius*.



AND another one, right:

Jim Smith took this pic of a lacey by the Naas Valley Road near Tharwa last February.

Landcare Lizards

A Wagga ACTHA member never loses an opportunity to promote reptiles and their conservation to the general population, and showed some of her pet reptiles at a school field day organised by the newly formed Eastern Riverina Landcare Group.

The reptiles were a star attraction and later made prominent appearance on the promotional flier for the Landcare Group. The bearded dragon was photographed (*below*) with a line-up of little hands patiently waiting to touch it, and hopefully changed a few young attitudes more positively towards reptiles. Photo of lace monitor in a tree hollow was also taken during the field day as it popped its head out during the warmth of the afternoon to watch the little kids scurrying around learning about nature.

