WELCOME TO MALLEE REFUGE

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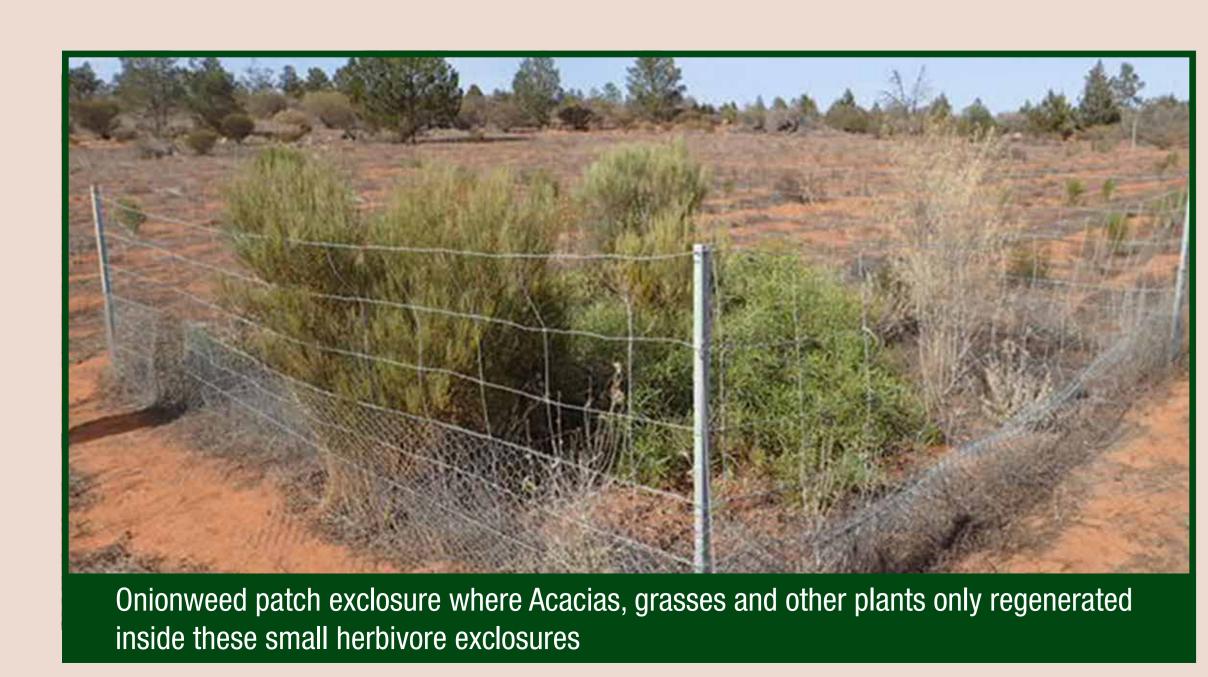
This granite outcrop and its rock holes were important sources of water and food for the Barngarla people and the explorer Edward John Eyre, who named it Refuge Rocks. This area, now known as Secret Rocks, has also been an important watering site for pioneering pastoralists and a picnic location for locals and travellers alike. The lessees of this A Class Nature Reserve are John Read and Katherine Moseby from Ecological Horizons who are proud to manage this special country.

VEGETATION IMPACTS

Unfortunately, the rock holes that provided refuge for wildlife and people also made this area a focus for livestock and then feral goats, rabbits and kangaroos. Overgrazing by these animals removed many palatable native plants, which were replaced by weeds. Similarly, off-road tracks around and over the rocks led to erosion gullies that stripped valuable rain runoff from long-lived pines and other trees. Several rare plant species that used to occur in the area have become locally extinct. Feral cats and introduced foxes also caused the local extinction of many wildlife species that used to live here including bandicoots, numbats and bettongs.



Revegetation of this area through weed control and direct seeding in 2014 was hampered by kangaroo grazing and to a lesser extent goats and rabbits. Successful recruitment of native plants only occurred inside several small herbivore exclosures. The success of these exclosures provided the impetus for building the larger 900ha 'Mallee Refuge' exclosure in 2017-18.



WILDLIFE IN TROUBLE

This area is important for the malleefowl, a threatened bird species that builds a large earth mound to incubate its eggs. Prior to 2012, active malleefowl mounds were frequently encountered in this area but in recent years numbers have declined significantly. Similarly, the nationally endangered sandhill dunnart, a small carnivorous marsupial weighing 45g, also declined over this period. Declines are thought to be due to overgrazing (mainly by western grey kangaroos, euros and goats) removing food and cover plus predation by feral cats and foxes.

MALLEE REFUGE

The Mallee Refuge exclosure was built to provide a refuge for native plants and wildlife from overgrazing and protection from predation by cats and foxes. It is now a key site for the National Malleefowl Recovery Team Adaptive Management Project which is studying the response of malleefowl to herbivore exclusion and predator control. You may notice some of their monitoring cameras in the Refuge.

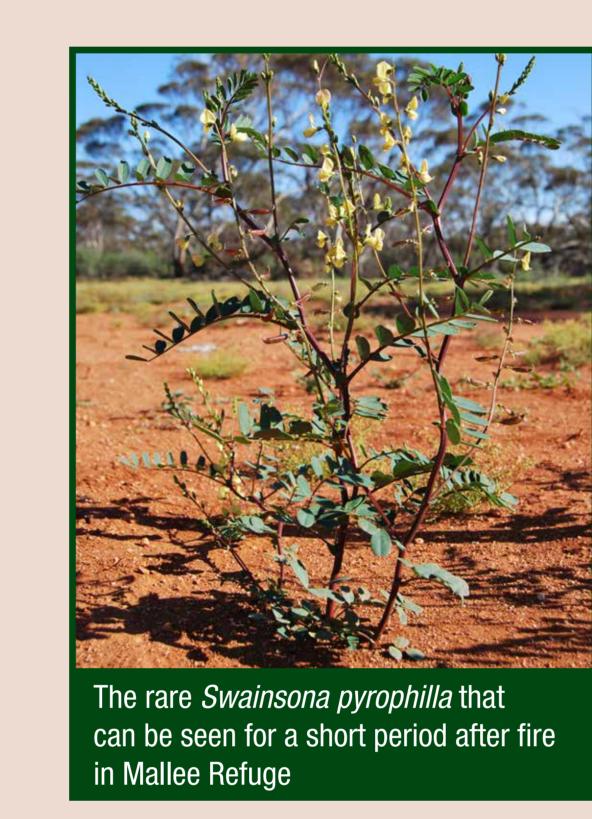


The 14km Mallee Refuge Fence protects 900ha of mallee habitat and was funded by Ecological Horizons, Department of Environment and Water, Australian Government (Greencorps and Landcare programs) and the Community Fund for the proposed National Radioactive Waste Repository. It was constructed from 2017-2019. Ongoing support is provided by the Middleback Alliance, a partnership between the SA Department for Environment and Water, Ecological Horizons and GFG Alliance.

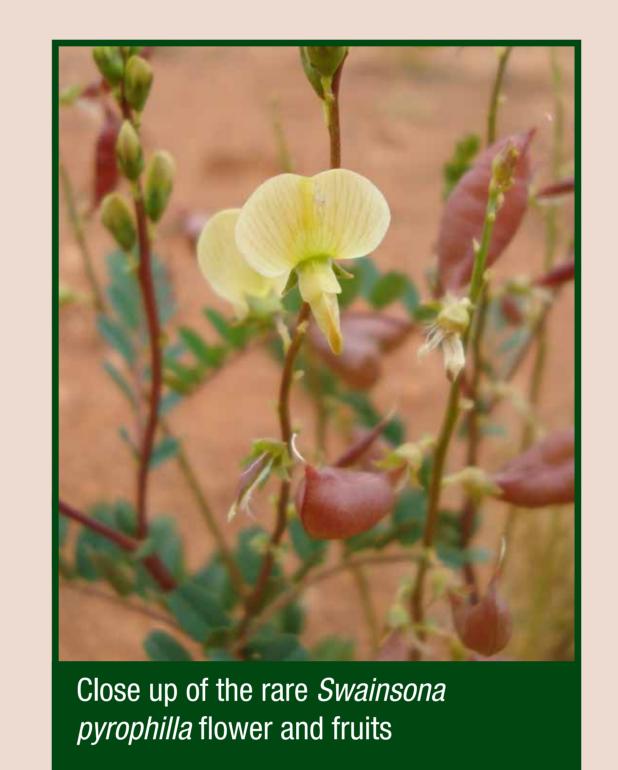


RE-ESTABLISHING LOCAL FAUNA AND FLORA

Re-establishment of native rare plants commenced in 2019, using species collected locally and germinated at the South Australian Seed Conservation Centre. Some of these plantings represent the only protected populations of the species and they may eventually become a source population for other conservation work. It is also hoped that locally extinct wildlife such as numbats and bandicoots can be reintroduced to the area once the plants have recovered. Updates on these conservation successes are available at



www.ecologicalhorizons.com











WALKING TRAILS

We have marked out two walking trails to showcase the rare plants and natural features within Mallee Refuge.

The short Red Walk (about 20 minutes) is an easy walk on fairly flat ground that follows the edge of the rock and turns around at a rare sandalwood tree.

The longer Blue Walk (about an hour) circles the rock outcrop and is suitable for stronger walkers. It passes two exclosures where rare plants have been established.

Note that surveillance cameras and sometimes baits and Felixer Grooming Traps that control feral cats and foxes with poison operate in this area. Please keep your pets on leads and don't interfere with monitoring or feral animal equipment.

Please take your rubbish with you, make sure the gate is shut behind you and let us know via our website www.ecologicalhorizons.com if you see any rare plants, birds or other wildlife in our restoring patch of mallee.

You are welcome to follow these walking trails but you do so at your own risk. Mobile phone reception is not reliable. Please take water, sunscreen and a screenshot of the map with you.



