

LIMITED
SPECIAL
EDITION

The Yongergnow Centre

Ongerup's Yongergnow Centre includes Yongergnow Australian Malleefowl Centre, the Yongergnow Sanctuary and the Yongergnow-Ongerup Community Resource Centre (CRC).

Our vision: community culture conservation

"For Yongergnow as a community owned and operated interpretive centre to be recognized as a centre of excellence for environmental awareness and education, with special focus on conservation of the mallee and its endangered flagship species, the magnificent Malleefowl."

Opening Hours

Open:

Tue - Sat 9am to 4pm

Closed:

Sun, Mon, **Australia**

Day, Good Friday,

Christmas (24th-27th



Yongergnow
AUSTRALIAN
MALLEEFOWL CENTRE

NICE TO MEET YOU!

A VERY WARM WELCOME TO
YONGERGNOW'S NEWEST INHABITANTS



We are thrilled to announce that after their hard work on the mound this year Drei & Maggie currently have 15 chicks & counting!

The Yongergnow Board:

Chairman
Ken Pech

Vice Chairperson
Tony Sands

Treasurer
Jan Savage

Secretary
Emily Jaekel

Board Members
Barry Savage
June Meredith
Andrea La Page
Emma Reid
Shane Woods

**THE BOARD OF
YONGERGNOW IS
LOOKING FOR
NEW MEMBERS!**

Contact us now for more
information!

15 AND COUNTING...!!!

REPORTING FROM THE AVIARY, OUR BIOLOGIST VICKY BILNEY AND SUPERSTAR VOLUNTEER SANDY VAUX, CONFIRM THE GOOD NEWS

At the time of going to press, we had a staggering 15 chicks accounted for!

The girls at the centre have been monitoring the chicks since the first three appeared over the Christmas break, with their food being increased each time another chick was spotted. On approaching the aviaries, extra vigilance has been taken to ensure that no sudden movements or loud noises spook the young.

Once the official report came from Vicky, we were all thrilled to find that all of our chicks seem to be happy and healthy. Vicky reported that there are “no obvious deformities visible and the birds felt right at handling”.

At the time of reporting our 15 chicks had an age range of one or two days old, to approximately one month old.

Furthermore, Vicky had even more exciting news for us;

“A quick and superficial check of the mound (heat did not allow longer investigation) revealed that there are at least two more eggs in the mound. Both eggs looked pink and had no obvious scratch marks, so are quite fresh. I did not come across any obvious signs of dead or decaying chicks”.

So that brings Yongergnow’s Malleefowl tally to a staggering 25, with possibly another 2 on the way! A far cry from the original pair we started with, a credit to all the hard work Yongergnow’s team and all it’s supporters have put in.

Incidentally, it was perhaps the perfect end to the year in which Yongergnow celebrated it’s 10th Anniversary and saw Country music star John Williamson declare his patronage to the organisation.

Vicky is currently in talks with various organisations to determine the future of our little miracles, while the team at Yongergnow ensure they are getting the best possible start to life.

Smile for the Camera

Our resident photographer Dani Fuller managed to capture a few of our chicks amongst all the chaos and the results were stunning.

Nightwell
PHOTOGRAPHY



An up-close glimpse of their beautiful feathering. Naturalist John Gould called the malleefowl the 'spotted egg-leaver', a term which describes its appearance and curious breeding habits.



Two chicks taking in their surroundings



On the hunt for some dinner



Not to be mistaken for a bundle of fluff!



visit us at
www.yongernow.com.au

Development of the website
was supported by the
Great Southern
Development Commission
and
Regional Development Australia

Site design by Alan Thompson /
Warped Time Productions

You can also find us on:

 @YongernowMalleefowl

 yongernow_malleefowl

 @YongernowFowl

OR LEAVE A REVIEW
OF YOUR EXPERIENCE ON

 tripadvisor

Simply search for
'Yongernow Australian Malleefowl
Centre'
on Tripadvisor

**We would like to take this
opportunity to
thank our members,
supporters, staff
and volunteers
for the difference you're making
to Yongernow, Ongerup and
conservation in our area.**

THE NEWS TRAVELLED FAST...
WITH SOME WONDERFUL FEEDBACK!!



Yongernow
MALLEEFOWL CENTRE

Makes the News!



ABC Great Southern added 10 new photos.

23 January at 14:35

HOPE FOR THREATENED MALLEEFOWL 

Maggie and Drei from Onergup's Yongernow Australian Malleefowl Centre breeding program have given birth to five chicks!

"We were noticing that there was a fair bit of activity around the mound, and we weren't sure whether they were being teenagers and just practicing" vice chair Jan Savage said.

"But no... it appears they were actually 'doing it' and as of Friday, we have five chicks!"

This is the second successful clutch for the breeding program.

In 2010, there were believed to be 95,000 malleefowl in the wild across Australia, and they remain on the state and Commonwealth threatened species lists.

"They used to extend from about Shark Bay to Esperance and then across to South Australia and Victoria; now there are isolated pockets only.

"In the wild the mortality rate is very high - only 1-2% survive because they have no parenting skills at all.

"The male is very diligent in maintaining the mound and he does that for 9 to 10 months of the year... and the female mostly supervises.

"When the young are born, they are left to dig themselves 1 metre out of the ground - they have to find shelter, they have to find food and the parents kind of ignore them after that!

"Interesting they are the only bird that can fly within 24 hours of hatching."

Credit: Yongernow Australian Malleefowl Centre & Cafe



 My spirit creature - wonderful news!

Like · Reply · 3d



 Well done what a great brood!

Like · Reply · 3d



Love this! Brilliant program. 1

Like · Reply · 2d



What is the diet for Mallee fowl and their chicks?

Like · Reply · 3d



Janet Savage Grass, seeds, insects mainly. Yongergnow supplements their diet with birdseed and mealworms

Like · Reply · 3d



How terrific, well done mallee fowl centre

Like · Reply · 3d



Great

Like · Reply · 3d



Love your work!

Like · Reply · 1d



Congratulations Yongergnow ... your diligence and perseverance paying off ...

Like · Reply · 18h



Thats good to hear. I grew up in Gnowangerup and we had a strong connection to the Mallee fowl.

Like · Reply · 3d



Thank you everyone for all of the wonderful messages of support we have had since our chicks arrived! For the latest updates visit our social media sites or website:

www.yongergnow.com.au



@YongergnowMalleefowl



yongergnow_malleefowl



@YongergnowFowl

The National Malleefowl Recovery Team is working with the South West Catchments Council (SWCC) to find out if any Malleefowl are still living in the South West!

If you've seen this elusive and fascinating bird in the South West, the National Malleefowl Recovery Team wants to hear from you!
<https://swccnrm.org.au/community-call-find-malleefowl/>



SIXTH NATIONAL MALLEEFOWL FORUM

Mildura, Victoria
17-20 August 2018

Call for Abstracts

The Information Station



For those who would like to know a little bit more about the Malleefowl...

Information credit:
www.nationalmalleefowl.com.au/

Like what you saw in this newsletter?

Become a Yongergnow member today!

Free entry to Yongergnow centre for the year and the membership fees go straight towards the conservation of Malleefowl and educating the public on their plight!

Contact us on 9828 2325 for more information today!



Our Maggie, 2014

Maggie and Drei's Story

Maggie, our new mother, has been a resident of our smaller aviary for a few years now. Drei however, is one of the chicks from Yongergnow's first hatching of captive bred Malleefowl in 2015.

Following the untimely loss of Happy, the father of the chicks born at Yongergnow in 2015, we moved Drei in with Maggie mid-2016 in the hope that they would pair but, with no real expectations.

In March of 2017, surprisingly, at least three unfertilized eggs were found in Maggie and Drei's mound. With this in mind we paid a little more attention to the mound they had both been working hard on, with the sneaky suspicion we may see some hatchlings in the near future!

Malleefowl Breeding



Drei & Maggie on mound, 2018

The Malleefowl are one of only three species in Australia who build mounds, these birds are also known as megapodes. The Malleefowl is the only megapode in the world that lives in a semi-arid environment with the rest living in tropical and subtropical climates.

Housing eggs is the mound's sole purpose, acting as a very natural and effective incubator. The sand and soil, which is collected over the Autumn and Spring months, is kept warm by the sun. There are also masses of wet leaf litter collected, which in turn decomposes and exerts more heat, keeping the mound at the optimum temperature of 33° during breeding season.

During this time, the male is left in charge of the 'housework', spending several hours of the day maintaining the mound and regulating its essential temperature. To do this, he sticks his beak in the mound and fascinatingly, it is thought that he



Drei on his mound, 2018

then tests the temperature with his tongue! He adds or removes sand and leaf litter as required. During the Spring months at dawn, Drei would have dug down near the eggs, allowing some of the heat from the rotting leaves to escape. He would then fill this hole with cool sand.

When summer arrived, Drei's focus would have switched to protecting the eggs from the heat of the sun. Adding more and more sand to absorb the sun's warmth, Drei would have been up bright and early again in the cool of the morning, removing the sand and scattering it in the colder air. Once the sand cooled down he would have put it all back again.

Finally, during Autumn Drei would have dug almost all of the soil away in the morning, spreading it out to be warmed by the sun throughout the day. During the warmest part of the day Drei would have placed hot layers of sand on the mound so that the nest is warm, cosy and rebuilt for the night! Mound building is an arduous task, with Drei surpassing all expectations and beginning a couple of seasons earlier than normal. Males normally only build test mounds for the first few years and begin building viable mounds in their fourth year. Naturally, the structure of the mound isn't quite as impressive as one built from an older, more experienced, male. The early practice Drei has snuck in means he will produce some fine looking mounds in years to come!

In amongst Drei's hard labours in the pairs aviary, Maggie would have been concentrating on feeding in the anticipation of egg production, offering help with the digging every now and then. Luckily for Drei, Maggie seemed to be a very pro-active mother-to-be and it was noted that Maggie was helping on the mound right up until her chicks appeared!

Maggie has become very brave at meal times and will usually go right up to the girls when dinner is served. Initially thought to have been a friendly gesture, it would seem she was actually being greedy! Getting to the dinner before Drei, to stock up on nutrients for the eggs!

Egg laying can be expected to begin in September with an egg being laid every 5-7 days until late summer—quite a drawn out process for young Maggie! But knowing this also explains the variation in Yongergnow's chicks ages, and the steady increase of chicks appearing from the initial three at Christmas. The eggs spend approximately 60 days in incubation and the prospective parents can expect about 80% of their 15-25 hatchlings to soon appear. The number of eggs produced directly correlates with the availability of food that season.

Malleefowl are extremely independent animals and once the mound is completed in early spring, the male and female tend to lead mostly separate lives. In saying this, Malleefowl are one of the few species who actually mate for life, so for Maggie and Drei at Yongergnow this could be the start of a wonderful life together. They certainly seem to be a great match, producing at least 15 viable eggs on their first try! From here on, breeding can occur annually.



Malleefowl egg in mound

The Information Station



For those who would like to know a little bit more about the Malleefowl...

Information credit:

www.nationalmallee-fowl.com.au/

Department of Sustainability and Environment—Flora & Fauna Guarantee Action Statement

The Life of a Malleefowl Chick

One of the most fascinating things about the Malleefowl is their resilience from the moment they hatch. Our little chicks had the epic journey of making it up to a metre to the surface of the mound completely unaided. This monstrous task for any newborn can take up to 15 hours and once they reach the surface, they will be greeted with no parental care at all, as in the wild, Mum and Dad abandon the mound and any remaining eggs once the temperature can no longer be maintained. An alien concept for us mammals but these tough cookie megapodes will remain unfazed as they can run and feed themselves almost immediately and are flying within a day!

The chicks emergence from the mound can be spaced over 4 months, starting in November. Most chicks usually appear before the end of January, which is certainly what we found to be true at Yongergnow. At the beginning of February we still have at least two healthy eggs in the mound which we are waiting to welcome. With the chaos of their 15 siblings arriving before them, is it any wonder they are taking their time!?

Sadly in the wild, the survival rate for chicks in the wild is a meagre 2%. This is due to predators and metabolic stresses such as starvation. However, being safely tucked away in Yongergnow's aviaries and 5ha predator proof sanctuary, along with the promise of constant access to water and a daily feeding routine, we are drastically minimising these risks and hopefully giving our temporary residents the best possible start to life!

Why successful breeding at Yongergnow means so much



A family shot captured by our Aviary's motion cam

The Malleefowl species is in dire trouble. The Malleefowl can be found in all states of Australia, except Queensland. On a national level, their status is known as 'vulnerable', however in Western Australia their situation is now known as "fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct".

The clearing of mallee habitat for agriculture has perhaps been the biggest contributing factor to the Malleefowl's conservation status. Introduced animals, such as rabbits, sheep and cattle, grazing the land would deter any Malleefowl from setting up base, which is thought to be because of the increased competition



for food supplies. Sheep & rabbits continually grazing the land will prevent the regeneration of herbs and seed bearing shrubs, so competition for food is not such a perceptible factor, when there is no food for the Malleefowl in the first place.

Of course, the most dangerous of all of these introduced species would be the Red Fox, which preys on Malleefowl without discrimination of their age. Even though a Malleefowl chick can usually run around and fly within a day of hatching, at such a young age they are heavily reliant on their camouflaging, not much of a deterrent for a wily fox.

Two studies conducted in Victoria by Benshemesh in the late 80s/early 90s, and Priddel in 1990, found that 40-60% of tracked chicks were taken by foxes. Both studies reported an 80% mortality rate during the first two weeks of release and in neither study were any of the chicks found to survive past a couple of months.

Perhaps the most unsurprising in contributing factors, is fire damage on the Malleefowl's preferred residing environment. It has also been discovered that areas which experience fire damage can affect Malleefowl breeding for up to a shocking 30 years.

With this in mind, should a Malleefowl make it to 'adult' age they are long-lived in the wild and can produce between 100-200 young in their lifetime, an incredible feat in reproduction!

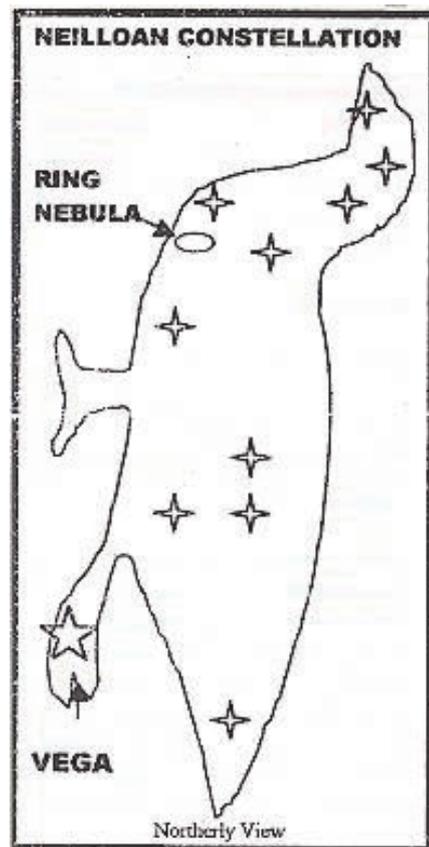
The Malleefowl has huge significance in Aboriginal Astronomy. The Boorong people in Victoria know that when the "Mallee-fowl" constellation Neilloan (Lyra) disappears in October, to "sit with the Sun", it's time to start gathering her (Malleefowl) eggs on earth. Neilloan appears in the southern hemisphere between March and October, coinciding with the mound building period of the Malleefowl. This is the first of a series of remarkable parallels between the bird in the sky and the bird on the ground.

The significance that relates back to us here in Ongerup, Western Australia; we are nestled in the Shire of Gnowangerup, which in Noongar language translates as "place of the Mallee fowl" ("Gnow" meaning "Malleefowl" and "up" meaning "place of").

The Malleefowl has wide popular appeal and is well known internationally for it's remarkable nesting habits. Usually known to be shy and elusive in the wild, these birds have the potential to be conditioned to the presence of humans, as we have seen with our Malleefowl at Yongergnow, especially so with Maggie and Drei! Our Malleefowl are happy to be quietly observed while they work away on the mound, or even just going about their daily business. A rare and up-close glimpse into the life of a dwindling species, safely contained in a large and accurate habitat to what they would live amongst in the wild.

Watching our birds will truly have you transfixed for hours. An incredible privilege for us to have, so we should not shy away from the fact that in generations to come, without conservation and education, our children may not be able to enjoy the same beauties that we have.

Therefore for all the many reasons successful breeding means so much to us at Yongergnow, maybe the most fundamental is staying true to this wonderful land we call home, which has a rich and beautiful history which should be conserved and celebrated for as long as possible!



Malleefowl constellation

Memberships help fund our mission to conserve the wonderful Malleefowl

MEMBERSHIP FORM & RENEWALS

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE IN DECEMBER EACH YEAR

Yongergnow Australian Malleefowl Centre in Ongerup is a community-owned and operated centre for community, culture and conservation focussing on the conservation of the mallee and its unique flagship species, the Malleefowl. Fees are subject to change without notice. ALL REGULAR ENTRY FEES ARE WAIVED FOR MEMBERS. Please post your completed membership form to Yongergnow Inc. PO Box 9, Ongerup WA 6336, fax it to 08 9828 2326, or email it to visitor@yongergnow.com.au.

| MEMBERSHIP TYPE <i>(Please tick)</i> | FEE (AUD) |
|---|--------------------|
| Single Adult [<input type="checkbox"/>] | \$35.00 |
| Family [<input type="checkbox"/>] | \$60.00 |
| Corporate [<input type="checkbox"/>] | \$120.00 |
| Concession* [<input type="checkbox"/>] | \$20.00 |
| Newsletter by email [<input type="checkbox"/>] | no charge |
| Newsletter by mail [<input type="checkbox"/>] | plus \$15 per year |
| Donation [<input type="checkbox"/>] | plus \$_____ |
| Amount payable | \$_____ |
| Please tick if you require a receipt [<input type="checkbox"/>] | |
| * Senior's card holders and children from 6 to 15 | |

PAYMENT METHOD

CREDIT CARD: please ring us with your details on 08 9828 2325 during opening hours. **CHEQUE:** please make out to Yongergnow Inc. **CASH:** please pay at the Yongergnow Centre or to a Yongergnow representative. **ELECTRONIC TRANSFER:** to BSB 306-056 A/C 006174-8, stating **MEMBER** and **YOUR NAME** on the transfer description. Please let us know once you have transferred funds. Thank you!

Last name: _____

First name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Postal address: _____

Post code: _____

Signature: _____

WITH THANKS FROM ALL THE TEAM AT
YONGERGNOW,

YOUR SUPPORT IS MOST APPRECIATED

Yongergnow is proudly supported by:

