



Australian Government

Department of Defence

Quail Island Air Weapons Range Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Hazard Reduction Project, Stage Two

Newsletter No. 8
Monday 27 August 2012

WELCOME

The month of August brings us to the eighth newsletter for the Quail Island Air Weapons Range Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Hazard Reduction Project.

Since the June newsletter there has been more digital imaging completed and data processing and investigation has commenced.

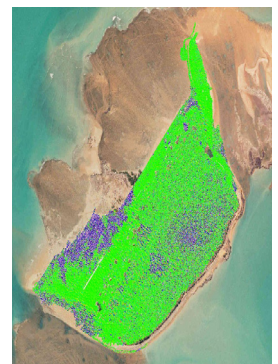
In this edition we will provide an update on current and future activity and hear from a volunteer who has just returned from the Austurle research project on Bare Sand Island.

The project team has advised that unauthorised entry into the QIAWR Exclusion Zone is reducing. We would like to thank you all for your assistance with this matter and appreciate the contact people have made when enquiring about permission to enter the exclusion zone. The exclusion is in place to ensure the hazard reduction project is completed safely.

Anyone wishing to visit the exclusion zone needs to contact either:

David Thomas:
M 0427 680 685
E davidthomas45@bigpond.com

Greg Guthrie:
M 0418 977 424
E gguthrie@g-tek.biz



PROJECT UPDATE

The beginning of the second stage of the project saw the deep imaging (total magnetic imaging) data collection survey on Bare Sand Island completed.

The same activity has now been completed on Quail Island with 108.8 hectares surveyed. Digital imaging equipment was set up on an ATV/trailer and was towed around the Island. The investigation collected 1.7 billion data points.

This data will now be processed and interpreted. Identified anomalies (likely targets) will be located and investigated to determine the nature of the irregularity.

All likely targets on Quail Island will be investigated and then the team will return to Bare Sand Island to investigate anomalies discovered through the already complete data collection survey.



THANK YOU

The implementation of the Quail Island Hazard Reduction Project would not be possible without the help of local businesses in Darwin. The success of the project is due to their assistance, flexibility and support of the project.

The Defence contractor, G-tek Australia Pty Limited has been fortunate to have the help of a number of local people throughout the duration of the project. In particular the project team would like to thank:

- Larry Tessman and the pilots, mechanics and staff at Jayrow Helicopters (NT) for their diligent work transferring equipment, filled and back loaded water and fuel and workers between the mainland and the islands. They have flown nearly 300 hours throughout the project.
- Rhana and Kevin Thomas from We Sell Fun, Berrimah, who have supplied trailers, tentage and field living supplies. Their ability to source a variety of odd items at short notice is greatly appreciated.
- Jim Smith from Seadarwin for his ongoing marine logistic support and transporting and feeding the demolition team during the 2011 activity. Jim is a great promoter of UXO safety through his turtle viewing eco tours to Bare Sand Island.
- NT Motorcycles for supplying the ATVs used during the project and permitting us to transfer mechanics, tool and parts to the island to service and maintain the vehicles.

The support we have received for the hazard reduction project has been greatly appreciated and the project team looks forward to working with you all as we continue this important work to make the islands safe for future use.



ADVENTURE ISLAND; A RECOLLECTION FROM AN AUSTURTLE VOLUNTEER'S TIME ON BARE SAND ISLAND

Betty Franklin

The year 2010 was a great time of change for me. One of the most important things I did was finally live a long-standing dream and take a chance on travelling as far north from Melbourne you could go, without dropping off the continent, to the glorious city of Darwin.

It was my big adventure and even better I was able to fulfil my dream and work as a volunteer with a great organisation called AusTurtle. AusTurtle researches the magnificent Australian Flatback Sea Turtles (*Natator depressus*).

There on a tiny spec of an Island, in Port Paterson some 50km south west of Darwin, called Bare Sand Island, I rocked up with eight other volunteers and our team leader Mick Guinea. Together we spent seven days measuring, GPSing, counting and tagging these magnificent creatures. Well, one visit was not enough. Not on your life!

In 2011 I headed back up again for another stint of volunteering but something was different this year. Strange helicopters were landing at 7am while we were out nest and hatchling searching. There was an invasion on the island! People dressed in fluoro shirts and work gear and waving strange electronic devices had invaded our island hideaway.

They were ordnance recovery contractors, G-tek Australia Pty Limited and the Department of Defence, on board and doing their stuff. And what a great team of guys they were. Yes we did have to sign on the dotted line to say we'd abide by the rules of the ordnance recovery job, but that hardly impacted on our camping spot or our research work with the turtles.

The team bosses joined us for lunch one day and brought us yummy fresh, helicopter delivered wraps and sat for a chat at our wonderful but modest camp. They were great, explained the rules and we got to see what real UXO's looked like – just another great, new experience for me!

In 2012 I was back again, living in Darwin and doing my usual volunteer work with AusTurtle. The G-tek team were also back on the Island not only doing their magnificent (and scary!) work, but were now also totally conversant with turtle habits.

One situation saw G-tek rescue that one in 1000 hatchling flatback who had wandered off to the wrong side of the island. The hatchling was desperately struggling up one of the huge sand dunes, its only prospects being death by heat, bird or ghost crab! With cheeky threats of eating him for breakfast the G-tek contractor delivered the hatchling into our welcoming hands. Great rescue effort! Not only clearing dangerous ordnance but like the lone ranger coming to the rescue of a lost orphan! The watercolour painting here is his portrait (the hatchling not the rescuer!)

Thanks guys and girls, it's like coming home to friends hearing your helicopters flying in at 7am. We'll miss you when you've finished!



Photo: Betty Franklin (think N ink 2011)



Photo: Betty Franklin (think N ink 2011)



Photo: Betty Franklin (think N ink 2011)

CONTACT THE PROJECT TEAM

If you have any questions regarding the project or would like to speak to someone regarding permission to enter the exclusion zone please contact David Thomas:

M 0427 680 685 **E** davidthomas45@bigpond.com

If you have any information you would like to put forward for our next newsletter or if there is any part of the project you would like to read more about, please send your contributions or queries through to Sophie Morrison on:

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