

# Rare skink busy but still hiding

Docker River rangers have combined with rangers from the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park to help discover 14 new burrows of the threatened Great Desert Skink or Tjakura.

The three day survey in March in the Pitalu area and selected sites in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park uncovered promising signs for the future of the Tjakura.

Tjakura specialist, Steve McAlpin, was flown in from NSW to supervise the surveys, which followed up surveys initiated in 2007.

Six previously identified burrow-sites showed continued use and 14 new burrows were found.

The ranger groups recorded vital information on habitat, scat and traces and recorded the burrow locations by GPS.

This information will be used to address further management of the area to protect and preserve this threatened species.

The overall biodiversity of the area was also recorded, including the presence of more than 25 bird, 14 reptile and seven mammal species (including the mulgara and spinifex hopping mouse).

Docker ranger Dennis Hunt said the collaborative activity "is great



Above: Docker River Rangers record burrow site information

to get out on country and work with other Ranger mobs and talk about what we are doing and what we can do together.

"We got to look after animals like the Tjakura or they might end

up being gone forever and that's not right"

The Docker River Ranger group was supported by CLC ranger and threatened species staff and six Anangu rangers.

The UKTNP team was headed by Josh Quamby (Workplace Development Officer) with four rangers from the Mutijtulu community.

# Mentoring plays crucial role for young cattlemen

The Aboriginal stockmen involved in a joint Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association, Central Land Council and Indigenous Land Corporation course are receiving mentorship from more experienced Indigenous cattlemen.

Mentors Les McLaughlin and Richard Kopp, are experienced Aboriginal stockmen in Central Australia.

Richard said the young men are learning the latest in stock and horse handling techniques.

"It's excellent, seeing them work with Geoff because it's a completely different method to what they're probably used to," he said.

"All the station people are wanting more station workers now and this is a good program to do and is spot on. What they've been taught

here is it's easier than the old ways and it's a lot quicker and a lot simpler and it's a lot safer."

Mr Kopp said the trainers and mentors are thrilled when their students progress to jobs.

"Whoever does (gets work), it's a feather in our cap I suppose," he said.

Mr McLaughlin said he'd had his father as a mentor and even though he is now a mentor for young Aboriginal stockmen, he also learns from them.

"I sort of left home and went out on my own when I was 14 or 15, I started working on stations and yeah just jumped from here to there and what not and learnt a fair bit working with older fellas too," he said.

"Got the job at NTCA now and it's good and it helps me understand myself as well to understand other people and the way they work and



Participants in the recent horse handling workshop in Alice Springs

also to help these young fellas get started is a big thing for me and seeing them go somewhere with it."

Mr McLaughlin said any theme or message he has for aspiring young

stockmen is simple.

"I suppose more just trying to show them that if you get out there and give it the best you've got you'll get rewarded at the end of it."