

## SUMMARY OF NCSSA MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

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### Background

A survey of Nature Conservation Society of South Australia (NCSSA) members was conducted between January 13 and March 17, 2014. The aim of the survey was to collect information from our members about 3 key areas, namely:

1. What environmental issues members consider important and think NCSSA should be involved in,
2. How best to communicate with our members, and
3. What sort of NCSSA activities members are interested in being involved in.

The survey recognised that ongoing support and engagement with our members and the broader community is vitally important so that we can continue to achieve the Society's goals.

### Methods

The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey – an internet based survey program with hard copies of the survey also sent out to members with the Summer 2013 issue of *Xanthopus*. Responses received via hard copy were entered manually to Survey Monkey by NCSSA's regular office volunteer Keith Lloyd. Responses were collated and analysed using the Survey Monkey analysis tools, including a summary of all responses and assessment of individual responses and comments.

### Results

#### 1. Information about NCSSA members

Questions 1-3 addressed the gender, age and work status of NCSSA members. A total of 62 responses were received from 200 surveys (31%) comprising 30 males and 31 females. Figure 1 shows the age groups of members that responded to the survey. Most members that responded were either working full time (38%) or retired (36%) with smaller numbers in part-time work (20%) or currently studying (7%).

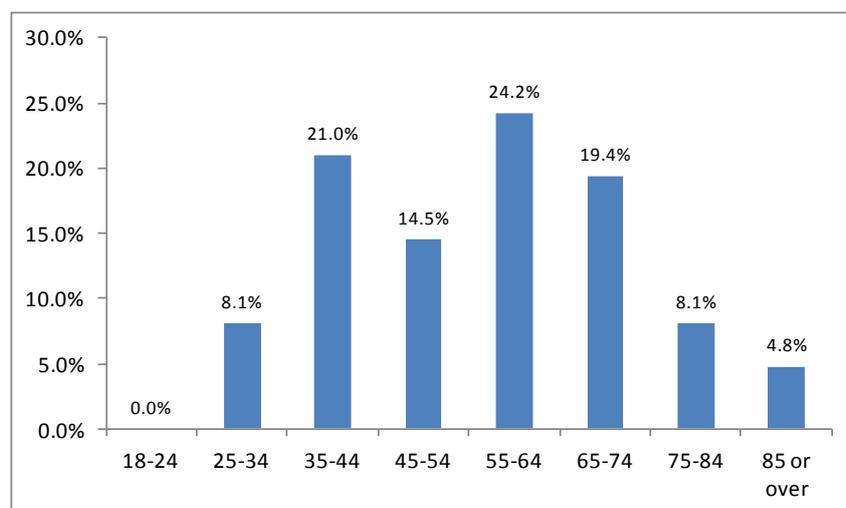


Figure 1: Percentage of NCSSA member responses by age group

## 2. Members' reasons for joining NCSSA

Question 4 of the survey asked members to indicate their main motivation for joining NCSSA from a list of possible reasons. The largest number of responses to this question was "To learn more about SA flora, fauna and ecosystems" (62%) followed by "Stay in contact with topical environmental issues through NCSSA's communications and networks" (61%). Slightly fewer members (56%) responded that "Get involved in nature conservation" and "Contribute to educating and raising awareness about the SA environment" were their main motivation for joining NCSSA.

## 3. Priority nature conservation issues for NCSSA members

Question 5 asked members to rank a range of nature conservation issues as high, medium or low priority. The highest priority issues based on number of responses were "Input to State Government legislation and policy" (90%) followed by "Threatened species management and conservation" (82%) and "Local biodiversity conservation issues" (80%). Comments on referrals under the Federal EPBC Act were considered to be a medium priority by 52% of members surveyed and a high priority by 45%.

## 4. Communication with NCSSA members

The survey responses showed that a large proportion of members surveyed (76%) would prefer to receive an electronic version of our newsletter *Xanthopus* in the interest of saving paper. We are currently investigating options for this to occur while still providing a printed copy to those members who want to receive it in the post. We will be sending out an email (to members that we have current email addresses for) in the next few weeks to confirm which format of the newsletter you would prefer to receive.

Most members also responded that they would like to see *Xanthopus* continue to be published four times per year (77%). Only twenty-six percent of respondents considered the NCSSA website as way of receiving information about the organisation. Despite this low response we are currently redesigning our website to make information more interesting and accessible for both members and non-members. Less than thirty percent of members that responded were interested in joining NCSSA's Facebook page but this is probably a reflection of the older demographics of the group surveyed.

## 5. Member contributions to publications and submissions

A large majority of members were not interested in contributing articles to *Xanthopus* or NCSSA's website (66%) or assisting with submissions (74%). Due to the way the survey was sent out we are unable to identify those members that are interested in contributing information or assisting with submissions so we will be sending out a follow up email to confirm those members who expressed an interest in doing so in the near future. We received a large number of additional comments in relation to the content of *Xanthopus* and the NCSSA website. These comments will be reviewed and where possible incorporated into the redeveloped website and new-look newsletter.

## 6. Member involvement in previous NCSSA activities

Figures 2 & 3 show responses to the questions about the number of NCSSA activities or events that our members have been involved in and distance they have travelled to participate in these. The results show that over forty percent of survey respondents have participated in ten or more NCSSA activities or events since joining with an additional ten percent participating in between six and ten events. A high proportion of members had travelled considerable distances to participate in these activities, most likely a reflection of the remote locations where past annual biological surveys have been conducted.

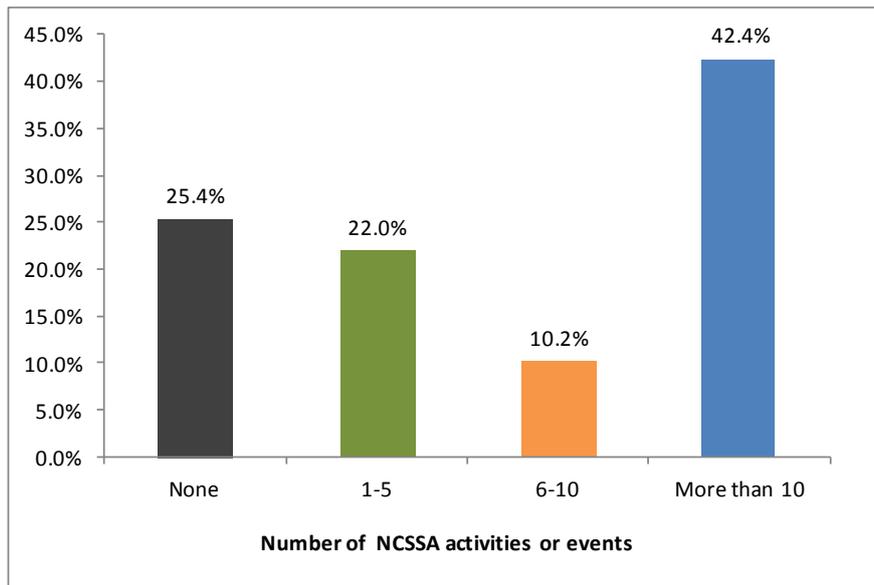


Figure 2: Percentage of survey respondents involved in previous NCSSA activities or events

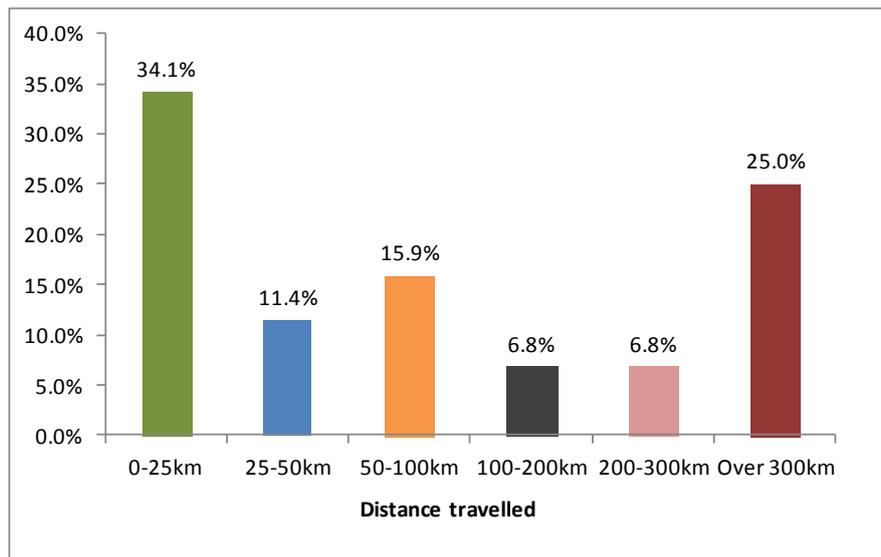


Figure 3: Distance travelled by NCSSA members to participate in activities or events

Table 1 shows responses to the question about the types of NCSSA activities that members have participated in. It is worth noting that only forty-four people answered this question and it was skipped by eighteen people.

Table 1: Proportion of members that have been involved in various NCSSA activities.

Activity	Percent Response
General Meetings	84.1
Management Committee Meetings	50.0
Biological Surveys	47.7
Walks with Nature	47.7
Combined Meetings with the Biological Society of South Australia	43.2
Threatened Plant Action Group Projects	22.7
Bushland Condition Monitoring	20.5
Declining Woodland Bird Surveys	11.4
Other*	40.9

\*Included office based assistance, writing submissions and articles for *Xanthopus*, plant identification, revisions to publications, involvement in steering committees, computer support and lobbying government.

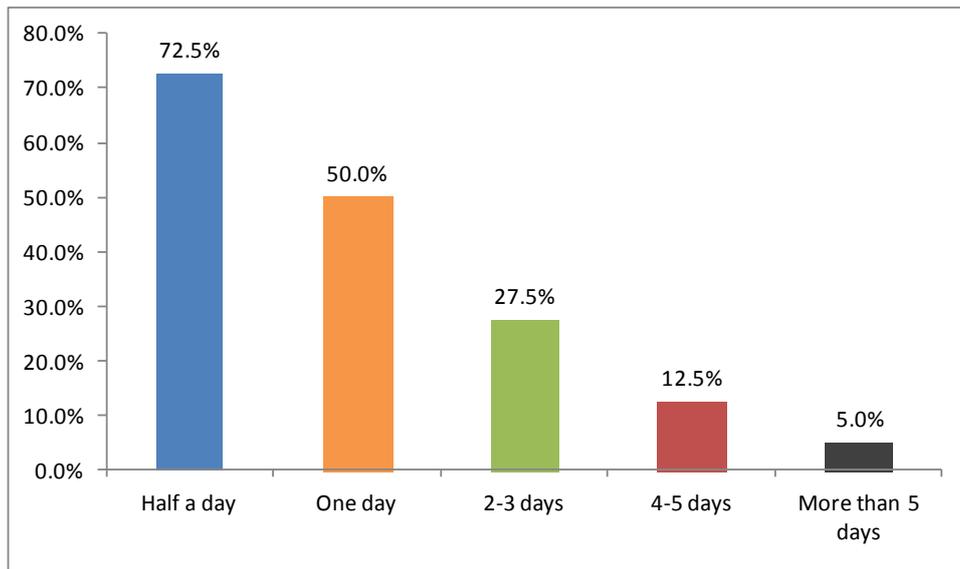


Figure 4: Duration of activities or events that survey respondents preferred.

The results in Figure 4 indicate that a large proportion of the members surveyed prefer to participate in activities or events that are a half in duration with slightly fewer preferring a full day activity/event. It is also worth noting that only forty people answered this question and it was skipped by twenty-two people. Despite this, the results suggest that shorter duration activities are preferred by those members surveyed.

Eighteen additional comments and ideas about the types of activities that NCSSA members are interested in being involved in were also received and included the following suggestions:

- Joint activities with other environmental non-government organisations;
- Half-day field-based activities suitable for family participation & accessible to Adelaide
- Biological surveys that involve both helping and learning;
- Practical workshops (e.g. plant and bird identification) that will develop the skills of members or improve their employment prospects;
- Walks with Nature type activity, but for members only and with a focus on a particular topic (e.g. orchids, birds etc.); and
- Talks by recognised environmental campaigners.

These responses and suggestions will be further considered in designing and planning future program activities/events.

## 7. Volunteer involvement with NCSSA activities

Figure 5 shows responses to the question about our members' voluntary involvement in NCSSA activities and programs. Given the responses shown in Table 1 above, the survey review panel felt that some members may have misinterpreted the intent of this question, taking it to mean volunteering in the office rather than volunteer participation in more general NCSSA activities such as biological surveys. Despite this possible misinterpretation, we received a wide range of responses to this question with nearly forty-five percent saying they had never volunteered at NCSSA since joining while approximately twenty-seven percent had volunteered more than thirty times. We received a total of fifty-six responses to this question while six people skipped it. Most members that responded were unable to dedicate time currently to volunteering at NCSSA (55%) however a smaller proportion expressed an interest in volunteering for 1-2 hours per week (16%), 3-4 hours per week (7%), 1 day per month (9%) and 1 day per week (6%).

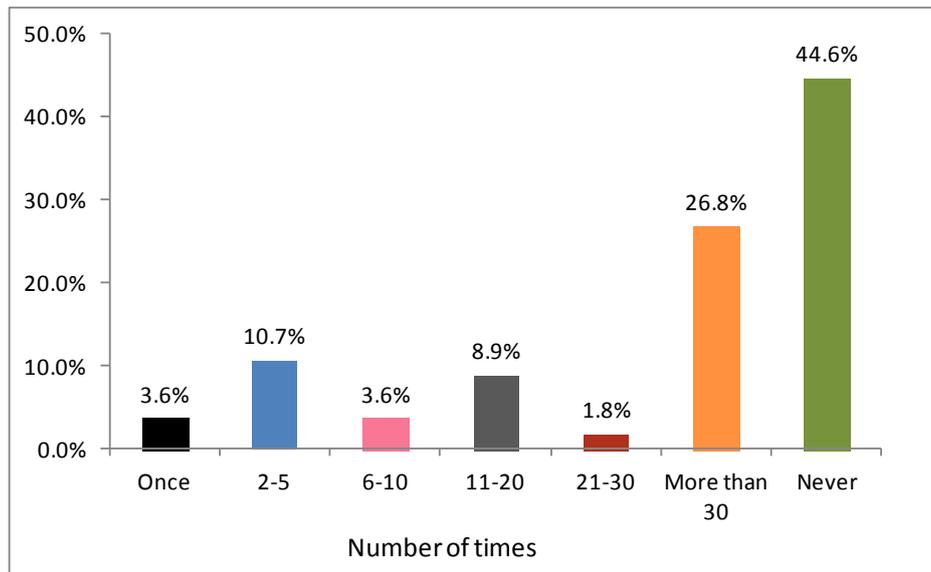


Figure 5: Number of times that members have volunteered at NCSSA since joining.

## Discussion

The high response rate for the NCSSA member survey indicates a strong interest from our members in continuing to be engaged in priority nature conservation issues and being involved in member activities. A key focus for the survey was to investigate ways of improving communication with members about priority issues and the most appropriate ways for this to occur. As a result of the survey responses we have started work on developing an electronic version of our newsletter that will continue to be sent out quarterly at the present time. Concurrent with the survey has been ongoing redevelopment of the NCSSA website to make it more visually appealing and provide more regular updates on our program activities and events. A steering group consisting of Amanda Stewart (NCSSA Administrative Manager), Ali Ben Kahn (NCSSA Management Committee Member) and Nicki de Preu (Conservation Ecologist) has been formed to co-ordinate communications with NCSSA members via our newsletter and website.

The comments received from NCSSA members in relation to their views on priority nature conservation issues indicate that the Society continues to address the key areas that our members consider important. We received quite a lot of specific comments on the types of activities that NCSSA members would like to participate in and will review this information as part of our broader strategic planning for NCSSA over the next few months. The issue of volunteer involvement in NCSSA programs and core business also requires further discussion as part of this process. We are particularly keen to hear back from members who expressed an interest and have time available to be involved with future volunteer opportunities. These may include a broad range of program activities or events depending on your area of interest or expertise. You can do this by either phoning the office on 71274630 or emailing: [ncssa@ncssa.asn.au](mailto:ncssa@ncssa.asn.au)

We would especially like to thank all those members that took the time to respond to the current survey and look forward to the ongoing involvement of all NCSSA members in the Society's future.

Nicki de Preu

Conservation Ecologist

May 30, 2014