



O.F.F. NEWS



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AMAZING LIFE DOWN UNDER

Last year Dr Penny Berents was a member of a scientific expedition to an underwater mountain range in the Tasman Sea where some quite amazing animals were discovered. She will present a pictorial account of this expedition at our next regular monthly meeting on 28th June (see over). Penny is head of Aquatic Zoology and Collection Manager for Marine Invertebrates at the Australian Museum, and was responsible for establishing the Museum's marine invertebrate database. We are very fortunate to have her speak at our meeting and look forward to gaining some fascinating insights to relatively unknown species and ecosystems.

BARRENJOEY LIGHTHOUSE WALK

On Saturday, May 29, eighteen OFF members set out from the bus stop at Palm Beach for a leisurely two kilometre walk to Barrenjoey Lighthouse. The track was flat and relatively easy until the last 400 metres which ascended quite steeply through remnant coastal forest. We were rewarded at the top, however, by breathtaking views of waterways, coastline and bushland in every direction. Our leader, John Blake, had arranged for the area Head Ranger, Mark Watt, to address us. After speaking about the history of the lighthouse in the adjoining keeper's cottage, Mark led us up the stairs of the lighthouse tower to inspect the equipment and views 113 metres above sea level. John's more detailed report of this interesting, educational and enjoyable outing, with photographs of the magnificent scenery, may be seen on our website at off.oatleypark.com

IDEAS FOR 50th ANNIVERSARY ?

O.F.F. was established in 1955 and we will celebrate our 50th Anniversary next year. The Committee would like to mark such a special event in an appropriate manner and invites members to submit their ideas on this.

KOSCIUSZKO PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

The many members who have enjoyed OFF's annual summer trips to the Snowy Mountains will be particularly interested in the Kosciuszko National Park **draft plan of management** now on exhibition at The Rocks and Hurstville offices of the Parks and Wildlife Division (formerly National Parks and Wildlife Service) of the Department of Environment and Conservation. The plan can also be inspected at www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au and downloaded in sections (the complete version is available in a 9.8MB file if you have a fast internet connection). Public submissions have been invited up to the closing date on **August 20**.

A number of conservation groups consider the plan favours commercial interests and does not provide adequate protection for some of the natural qualities and wilderness values of the area. They have therefore prepared an environmental 'response kit', outlining their concerns and with suggestions for submissions. This may be obtained from **Colong Foundation for Wilderness**, Level 2, 362 Kent Street Sydney 2000 for \$5 (including postage).

WAR ON PLASTIC BAGS

The May/June issue of OFF News mentioned that Kangaroo Valley is now 'plastic shopping-bag free'. Other communities that have banned plastic bags include Coles Bay in Tasmania, Huskisson and Mogo on the South Coast, and Oyster Bay just across Georges River. Oyster Bay, with 2000 homes and 12 shops claims to be Sydney's first plastic bag free suburb. Its campaign to achieve this involved:

- a committee of two enthusiastic residents,
 - help from *Planet Ark* which organised talks to local shopkeepers, residents and school children,
 - help from Sutherland Shire Council which voted \$1500 to cover costs of calico bags and promotion.
- Perhaps something similar could be done for Oatley West which probably has about the same number of homes and shops ? Any comments or expressions of interest in this would be welcomed by the Editor.

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

Coming Events

June 28 (Monday) Regular monthly meeting at 7.45pm. **Dr Penny Berents**, Australian Museum, will speak on **Deep Sea Fauna of Sea Mounts**.

July 3 (Saturday) Field Day. **Barren Grounds Nature Reserve**. Meet at 9.45am at the Barren Grounds Nature Reserve car park. Morning tea will be at Cooks Nose Lookout with stunning views over Kangaroo Valley. We will then continue on along the Griffith's Fire Trail to a lunch spot near the Saddleback Trig. This has great views to Lake Illawarra and Port Kembla. Wear sturdy shoes/boots as parts of the track are rocky and wet. The full walk is approximately 13 kilometres, with a shorter option just to Cooks Nose and return, of approximately 6 kilometres. Barren Grounds is located on Jamberoo Mountain Road, approximately 20 minutes drive from Jamberoo. Allow a good 1 hour 45 minutes travelling time from Oatley. Leader: Lesley Cox, tel 9579 3782.

July 26 (Monday) Regular monthly meeting. **Robyn Pethebridge**, **AWARE**, Wildlife rescue in the local area.

PORT BOTANY INQUIRY DELAYED

The Port Botany Commission of Inquiry (see last OFF News) has been adjourned for several months because of a late change in the terms of reference requested by Minister Knowles. Three OFF members, Graham Austin, John Watters and Fred Bell, are scheduled to address the Inquiry.

HELP STOP BIRD EXTINCTIONS

At the June OFF Committee meeting an appeal for **donations to Birds Australia** was discussed. Information with the appeal indicated that 25 Australian bird species have become extinct in the past 200 years and a further 155 species are now officially listed as threatened. These include 32 critically endangered species such as the Orange-bellied Parrot and Rufous Scrub-bird. Birds Australia is apparently working effectively with business groups, land managers, and government agencies to protect as many of the threatened species as possible through habitat reservation and restoration, monitoring, research and education. The Committee agreed that the organisation is worthy of support and that it would be appropriate to use some of our Society's funds for this purpose. A collection box will therefore be provided at the next monthly meeting for members to donate directly to Birds Australia if they wish, and a matching amount up to \$50 will be donated from the President's fund.

VERY BRIEFLY

ADI Site update: The sale of the contentious ADI site (see last OFF News) has now been completed but development consent has yet to be given by the NSW Government and local councils.

Bushfire Conference: Influences of political and social changes on management, 24-25 June, at University of Sydney. Nature Conservation Council of NSW. Details and enrolment forms, 9279 2466, fax 9279 2499, or email msparks@nccnsw.org.au

Up Close and Spineless: invertebrate photographic competition for children and adults. Good prizes. Australian Museum, 9320 6202. Closes June 28.

Development Assessment Forum: this group, formed by 32 government and industry agencies, is now seeking submissions before June 30 on ways to improve the planning and development system across Australia. Many submissions are expected from developers and it is hoped these will be balanced by submissions from environmentalists. See www.socompr.com.au/daconsultation/index.html

DID YOU KNOW ?

A very thorough scientific investigation, published recently in the journal *Nature*, concludes that **at least 15%** and possibly as **many as 37%** of the world's existing plant and animal species will become extinct **through global warming by 2050**. This is **in addition to** the species likely to become extinct through habitat loss and other causes.