



O.F.F. NEWS



Published by
**OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA
CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.**

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

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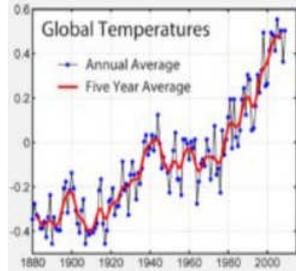
Issue: 2010/4

OFF's Website: <http://off.oatleypark.com>

April/May 2010

GLOBAL WARMING

CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology, Australia's leading climate science agencies have published a snapshot of the state of our climate. It shows highly variable rainfall across the country, increases in the north and centre, and decreases across much of south and east. From 1993 to 2009, sea levels rose by 1.5cm to 3cm per decade in the south and east, and 7cm to 9cm in the north.



About half of the observed reduction in winter rainfall in south-west Western Australia is associated with greenhouse gas. <http://www.csiro.au/>

BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Australia's government department dealing with the environment has a plan to address biodiversity conservation over the next decade. The plan identifies the main threats to our biodiversity as: a) climate change (with conditions such as prolonged drought), b) invasive species, c) loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat, d) unsustainable use of natural resources, e) changes to the aquatic environment and water flows, and f) inappropriate fire regimes. It calls on all Australians to play an active role in protecting biodiversity currently in decline. www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/

THE PAST CONFRONTING THE FUTURE

In April 1990, *OFF News* noted Biology Professor Charles Birch's comments on his living in a unique period of human history. The earth's population had grown by a thousand million in 13 years, 200,000 hectares were disappearing every day under concrete and asphalt, reducing the size and number of natural areas, and the original countryside. He called for planning to preserve remaining rainforests, sand dune vegetation, coastal wetlands, estuaries, and mangrove areas, coastal lakes, and lagoons. It seems that not much has changed!

DESTRUCTION OF RIVER RED GUMS

The Wilderness Society continues to campaign hard to change the current NSW government decision on the Murray River Red Gums, a reversal of its promise to create a new National Park. The eastern half of the area is now open for logging for five years, and ostensibly then to become a National Park. It is habitat for 13 threatened species, including Squirrel Glider, Koala, and Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail Bat, and is the most drought resistant and important environmental refuge in the region. www.lists.wilderness.org.au/

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

"Contrary to popular belief, Australia is not a land of largely untapped and underutilised resources. It is one of the driest continents in the world with ancient soils leached of nutrients. Our native vegetation has grown a remarkable diversity to cope with these conditions but we ourselves have not yet learned how to live within the natural constraints of this continent and to develop a truly sustainable lifestyle".

[Prof Dexter Dunphy]

BIODIVERSITY: ECOLOGY AND ECONOMY

According to Urban Ecology Australia a more diverse ecosystem is better suited both to withstand environmental stress and to support the economy by providing us with crops, livestock, fish, fruits and vegetables, fibres, wood for shelter and warmth, and the wide range of products derived from plants. www.urbanecology.com.au

POWER FROM THE TIDE

Darwin-based Tenax Energy plans to progress a tidal energy project worth up to \$500 million in the Clarence Strait between the Northern Territory and the Tiwi Islands. Located many metres below the ocean's surface, tidal energy turbines are strategically located to maximise the tidal flow to turn the turbine blades to generate 100% green energy. Generating tidal energy means: - more accurate energy planning; no visual impact as the turbines are not visible, greenhouse gas emissions reduced; and existing resources utilised. www.tenaxenergy.com.au/

CLIMATE SCEPTICS

The fierce argument continues in the popular media on the existence, nature, causes, and impact of climate change. Sceptics argue heatedly that any increase in heat is within normal variations, the human contribution is irrelevant, and any gloomy predictions are inaccurate.

Then we have *Requiem for a Species* by Clive Hamilton. As Tim Costello expressed it, "[This book] magnificently captures the idea that, by and large, none of us wants to believe that climate change is real. It explains our inability to seriously weigh the evidence of climate change, and to take appropriate action to ensure our own survival."

DIFFICULTIES IN THE OATLEY PARK AREA

OFF is discussing with the appropriate authorities, sediment build-up in ponds around Lime Kiln Bay, the landslip on Frog's Hollow Rd and street trees under threat of removal in Oatley Park Ave.

EMAIL COPY OF O.F.F. NEWS?

There are advantages in receiving the newsletter by email - you receive it a little earlier, save postage costs for the Society, and you have instant access to the precise places in the websites mentioned. You can arrange it easily by contacting Robin on 9580 5663 or John at oatley2@optusnet.com.au

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. .

Visitors and are welcome to all meetings and excursions

COMING EVENTS:

April 15th (Thursday) Field Day: Exploring the environs of Ultimo/Broadway. **Leader: Keith Robinson.** The walk starts at cnr Broadway and Harris Sts at 9.30 am, and then moves on to visit various buildings and points of interest in the area, including The Peter Johnson building, the ABC building, TAFE catering college, Harris Community Centre, and the Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre. It should finish about 2.30- 3 pm.

April 19th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Kris Spike**, the NSW Branch President of Sustainable Population Australia, speaking on *Population & Sustainability*. [See note below.]

May 1st (Saturday) Field Day: Tour of Bulli Illawarra Grevillea Park. **Leader: Heather Mackey.** Catch Bulli train leaving Sutherland at 8.11 am. Train from Oatley is 7.48am, into Sutherland at 7.58, and change onto the Bulli train. By car it is about 55mins drive from Oatley, down the freeway, and to Bulli pass. Turn left into Grevillea Park Rd. Meet at the park gate at 9.15am. Entry \$5, children free. Bring lunch, morning tea.

May 2nd (Sunday) Oatley West Public School Tree Planting. There are a considerable number of young native plants for a planting. Members of the school community would be delighted to receive help.

May 24th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Holly Parsons**, who is the Sydney Project Manager, of the organisation Birds in Backyards, speaking on *Birds in Backyards, promoting urban bird diversity*.

KRIS SPIKE AT THE APRIL 19th MEETING

Kris is a composer, a pianist and an environmental campaigner. His interest in sustainability comes from his love of the outdoors and his concern for preserving our remaining wild areas for future generations to enjoy. His scepticism about the sustainability of growth-based economics goes back to high school days, and his interest in the politics of population grew on the reluctance of environment groups even to mention the issue.

FLYING FOXES

Peggy Eby's talk on flying foxes at the last meeting detailed their life cycle and behaviour. Her remarkable photos documented birth and changing social structure within a roost. Radio tracking has shown that some fly over 100 kms in a night between sites. Roosts are located in different places in different years, depending on the trees that provide good supplies of nectar, pollen, and fruit. Grey-headed Flying foxes are listed as a threatened species, but large numbers are still legally shot to protect agricultural crops. OFF has lobbied the NSW Minister for Environment to cease licensing these killings.

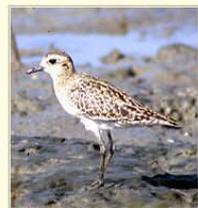
FIELD DAY MAR 28th - BONNET BAY WALK

We had eleven energetic walkers enjoy a leisurely stroll through the beautiful Glen Reserve, admiring canopies of paperbarks and glistening bay views. We were then lucky to find the hands cave. To end the morning we traversed Burnum Burnum Sanctuary and lunched on the edge of a small waterfall, such small oases so close to home.

[Report by Leader: Jason Cockayne]

BOAT HARBOUR SHOREBIRD EXCURSION

Twelve keen birdwatchers set off on March 6th from Potter Point walking to Boat Harbour. We observed the Black-fronted Dotterel at Potter Point, the very large Aboriginal midden on the cliff of the northern shore, and from the rock platform a large group (14) of threatened Sooty Oystercatchers with their stunning red bills and legs. We had some terrific views of the migratory Pacific Golden Plover (12), some Red-necked Stint (34) and Ruddy Turnstone (6), looking very attractive in their rich autumn breeding feathers. These migratory shorebirds are due to



Pacific Golden Plover.
Photo: Purnell Collection © Australian Museum

head off to the Arctic Circle in Siberia and Alaska in the next few weeks. We may also have observed a Double-banded Plover from New Zealand that usually arrives here for our winter leaving again in August. [Report by Leader: Debbie Andrew]

KEEPING VISITORS POSTED

SMH of Mar 31st reported the installation of artificial roosting posts at Towra Pt for the comfort of birds about to begin their annual 17,500kms round trip to the Arctic Circle [with a comment from Debbie Andrew.]

CANE TOADS

Scientific studies of the *Bufo marinus* show that very little is known about it, that there are many myths creating unjustified fear and loathing, and that better control methods [not including golf clubs] may be not far off. www.raci.org.au/chemaustr

BRIEFLY

Biodiversity (International Year of) - Details of what Australia is doing throughout the Year can be found at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/>

Community Garden Project: Narwee Public School is establishing an organic, no-dig vegetable garden within the school, and is seeking community members to participate and assist in running the project. [More at ph 9253 9756 or <mailto:narwee-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au>]

Time Kiln Bay Planting Day will be on 20th April at 8am. Meet at Glen Rd, Scout Hall. Bring a trowel if you can.

Salt marsh and crabs. Mia Dalby-Ball, a specialist in saltmarsh regeneration, is speaking at Field of Mars, Sat 17th April 2010 at 2pm on crabs in the saltmarsh, a critical link in the ecology of Sydney Harbour. A short walk around the saltmarsh area is also available, before or after the talk. Info: Cathy Merchant on 9817 4935 or <mailto:rhffps@optusnet.com.au>

Trees dying outside Coles in Mulga Rd Oatley West after a very short life are of concern. O.F.F. has written to Hurstville Council expressing its concern and requesting replacement with a more suitable tree, native to the area, e.g. Blueberry Ash.

World Heritage: Royal National Park: Sutherland Environmental Centre is continuing its campaign for a listing for the RNP. Next meeting is on Thurs 15th April at 6.30. [Enquiries: Bob Walshe ph 9528 0444]

Some useful signs from Australia, NZ and Canada

