



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print-Post-App. No. PP-255003/03239

Since 1955

OFF website: <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

Issue 4/11

April/May 2011

DHARAWAL STATE CONSERVATION AREA

Good news is that Premier O'Farrell has replied to OFF's query to indicate that his government will establish a new 6,000-hectare National Park south of Sydney to protect the sensitive DSCA. This will be in addition to the existing 600-hectare Dharawal Nature Reserve. He wrote that this announcement forms part of his plan to protect and rehabilitate the Georges River.

THE ATLAS OF LIVING AUSTRALIA

Following national collaboration between CSIRO, Australian museums, herbaria, other biological collections, and the Australian Government, the Atlas is online. It has millions of records about the distribution of Australian flora and fauna, and even records in our own suburb. <http://www.ala.org.au>

BARANGAROO

EDO notes that Australians for Sustainable Development Inc ("AfSD") will argue in the Land and Environment Court against the former Minister for Planning's last minute approval of the fourth modification to the Concept Plan for the Barangaroo site. The most controversial change in the latest modification is the hotel proposed over Sydney Harbour.

MYRTLE RUST ALERT

Myrtle Rust is a serious new plant disease that is spreading in both home gardens and in the bushland. It produces masses of powdery bright yellow spores on infected plants. Older lesions may appear dark brown (hence its rust name). It affects plants of the Myrtaceae family that include some of our best-loved native species – Eucalyptus, Angophora, Callistemon, Leptospermum, and Melaleuca. It is easily spread on infected plants, clothing and dirty equipment, including pruning shears. Everyone should learn to identify Myrtle Rust and report any sightings to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881. For precautions and images of the disease, visit the web site. www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/

EARTH HOUR 2011

On Saturday 26th March, Earth Hour swept around the globe as people switched off their lights. With a record-breaking 134 countries participating, the global community showed a significant commitment to a sustainable future, in spite of wide spread scepticism about both the goal and the means of achieving it. www.earthhour.org.au/

Correction On the March 5th field day to the Dharawal State Conservation Area, as an OFF initiative, the walkers disinfected their footwear against Phytophthora, using a mixture of 70% methylated spirits and 30% water. Unfortunately, two uninvited letters, "n", and "o", crept into the spelling of **methylated** in some copies of last month's OFF News!

HARRY WHAITE

On behalf of Harry Whaite's family, I would like to thank the members of OFF for their kind words of sympathy and consolation on his death, and for all they did for and meant to Harry during his life. Harry joined OFF in the early 1950s when he moved to Oatley, and it was always an important part of his life. In his final years, as his contemporaries died, OFF became his only social outlet. The warmth of the welcome offered, the stimulation of the talks, and the friendships gave him a connection with the wider community that he valued greatly. We would like to thank those who attended his funeral, and those who held the session in his memory at Smiggins. It was very comforting to know that our Dad had so many friends who appreciated him and will miss him. [Message from Jennifer Whaite]

Jennifer on behalf of the Whaite family has donated some of Harry's extensive collection of books to members of OFF. They include a number on flora, fauna, national parks, and similar topics. They will be available, free of charge, at the back desk at the April OFF meeting, on a first come, first served basis.

WATTLES BEGIN TO BLOOM

Most think of wattle blossoms as announcing the arrival of Spring. However, a visitor to bushland parks around Oatley will see wattles flowering as early as April or May. Of the ten species of Acacia (wattle) found in Oatley Park, at least four flower in late Autumn. Three species are common; they are 1) Sweet-scented Wattle (*A. suaveolens*) [photo], with long flat phyllodes ("leaves") to 12cm, 2) Sunshine Wattle (*A. terminalis*) with bipinnate leaves, and 3) prickly Moses (*A. ulicifolia*) with needle-like phyllodes. Number 4), (*Acacia hispidula*), is less common, occurring in small patches beside the track above Lime Kiln Bay. My mother used to comment, "the wattles are early this year", but if Spring is the peak season then there are always some "early" wattles in flower. [Note by Alan Fairley]



BIRDS IN BACKYARDS WORKSHOP 26 March

Our first workshop included participants from four council areas. Dr Holly Parsons showed the ways of restoring bird friendly habitats. Armed with their share of 160 plants given by the Menai Wildflower Group, the work shoppers returned home very keen to create bird friendly gardens. Our next workshop, already booked out, is on 16th April at Carss Park. Other workshops will be in August or September. Those interested in taking part should contact Jason 9570 8559 <mailto:jay.shaz@hotmail.com> or Liz 9580 6621 <mailto:lizc@pacific.net.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 accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS [Including some additions not in the published program]

April 17th (Sunday) Field Day: Bird walk in Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands. Meet at the wooden steps in Waterfall Rd, Oatley West. The walk will start at 8 am and take 1-2 hours. Bring binoculars, walking boots and hat to see what wildlife you can spot. Contact Jason Cockayne phone 9570 8559 or just turn up.

A second bird walk will be in Poulton Park, on Sunday 8th May - [details below]. These walks complement the Birds in Backyards workshops sponsored by OFF as a 'getting greener' project, and funded through the Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative.

April 18th (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Matthew Mo speaking on Sydney Region Lizards

May 4th (Wednesday) Planting Day Along Kimbers Creek. Lime Kiln Bay Wetland Volunteers have organised a planting day to complement last year's plantings and to complete the work set out under the Communities Water Grant funding from 2005. So far, the work has fortified the embankment with sandstone boulders and removed the large willows from the creek. The aim is to increase the habitat value along the riparian zone adjacent to the creek. Previous plantings have been very successful in creating greater diversity and giving opportunities for fauna to use the area for habitat. Come along with trowels, gloves and appropriate sun protection and footwear to help complete this worthwhile project. Meet at scout hall on Glen Road at 8am to conclude at 12pm. Morning tea will be provided. Contact Jason on 0411 744 715 for catering purposes.

May 7th (Saturday), Field day Upper Lane Cove Valley, Lane Cove National Park. 5-6 kms. Meet at Cheltenham Station car park (Sutherland Road) at 9.55 am. Drive or take the 8.26 am train from Mortdale to Town Hall, then the 9.08 am train to Cheltenham. We will walk down Day Rd. to no. 56 for morning tea and a visit to Ahimsa, the National Trust Wildlife Sanctuary; continue along Byles & Devlins Creeks, then the Step track & part of the Great North Walk before walking back to Cheltenham Station. Possible sightings of Eastern Water Dragons, Turtles, and Eels. Bring lunch and water. Wear sturdy shoes and a hat. **Walk leader Janet Austin** Tel. 9579 2375 & mobile 0448833811 on the day. [Note May 7 is the correct date; last month's "Coming Events" was incorrect]

May 8th (Sunday) Additional Field Day: Bird walk in Poulton Park, Hurstville Grove, looking at some small birds that need a dense understorey of shrubs for shelter, food and nest sites. We hope it will inspire you to plant bushier gardens and attract these birds to your backyards. The walk will start at 8 am and take 1-2 hours. Meet at the steps in Whitfield Parade that lead down to Poulton Park (approx. opposite No. 38). An hourly bus service stops in the next street (ask for details). **Leaders: Liz Cameron & Graham Fry.** Tel. 9580 6621; lizc@pacific.net.au

May 23rd (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Brendon Bell, Education Officer, Sutherland Astronomical Society.

May 28th (Saturday), Field day: Barren Grounds, Robertson - Cook's Nose with Leaders: Liz Cameron & Graham Fry

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

Louise Egerton publisher and co-author of "Wildlife of Australia", spoke at the 28th March meeting on Biodiversity in Australia. She referred to Australia's unique wildlife, its colourful parrots, venomous snakes, its abundance of hopping marsupials, and the strange, egg-laying Platypus, as just some of the players in a marvellous story beginning hundreds of millions of year ago, and only here. With pictures of the subjects and of the continents combined in the supercontinent, Gondwanaland, Louise spoke of the process of evolution in Australia, geographically isolated from the rest of the world for so long, with its animals developing in response to the changing climates and habitats. She described some of the influences on their day-to-day life, of finding partners, caring for their young, protecting themselves, and obtaining food and shelter.

LA PEROUSE TO LONG BAY - Sat April 2nd

Strong southerly winds only slightly dampened the enthusiasm of the 15 people on this coastal walk. The compensation was the spectacular crashing waves stirred up by the winds. We visited the fortifications on Henry Head dating back to 1880s, the rusting wreck of the *Minmi*, washed up on the rocks one night in 1937, and the forlorn Coast Cemetery, burial place of over 2000 people many of whom were infectious disease patients from around 1900. We were blessed with the sight of a lone bull seal resting on the rocks; also seen were a Reef Heron, a White-faced Heron, a Blue-tongue Lizard and a couple of Ravens stealing golf balls and flying off with them in their beaks. Lunch was below a protected cliff line on the shores of lovely Little Bay. [Report by Leader Alan Fairley]

Briefly**Books of interest**

Dharawal: The story of the Dharawal speaking people of Southern Sydney. Available from the Authors, Les Bursill, or Mary Jacobs, 10 Porter Rd Engadine 2233 for \$22 posted.

Kurnell. A 58 page colour booklet available free from Kurnell Visitor Centre or Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority, T 9895 7898.

Field Guide to the Bushland of the Lane Cove Valley, by John Martyn, www.step.org.au/books.php

Henry Gold's Images of The Wild A photographic exhibition is at the Bondi Pavilion Gallery, Bondi Beach, May 31 to June 12. See the Wilderness Gallery at www.colongwilderness.org.au/GoldGallery/



Biodiversity under threat