



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Since 1955

On line at <http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 6/12

June/July 2012

LAKE EYRE

Lake Eyre is the lowest point in Australia, at approximately 15 m below sea level. On the rare occasions when full, it is the largest lake in Australia, and 18th largest in the world. It is named after Edward John Eyre, the first European to sight it in 1840. The traditional owners of the lake, the Arabuna people, were recently granted native title over nearly 69,000 square kilometres of land, including all of Lake Eyre, and are seeking to change its name back to the traditional Kati Thanda. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Eyre

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is vital in supporting human life on Earth. It provides many benefits, including food, medicines and industrial products. It supplies clean air and water, and fertile soils. Australia is home to more than one million species of plants and animals, many of them unique. About 82% of our mammals and 93% of our frogs are found nowhere else in the world. Over the last 200 years, the Australian environment has been modified dramatically. Losing 75% of its rainforests, it also has the world's worst mammal extinction level. www.environment.nsw.gov.au/biodiversity/

SCOTSDALE RESERVE

This is a 1,328 hectare nature reserve on the Murrumbidgee River, 79 kms south of Canberra, north of Bredbo. Originally owned by Win and Norm Tonkin, OFF members and dedicated conservationists, it was purchased by Bush Heritage Australia with the help of the National Reserve System Program and private donations. The former grazing property, now managed by Bush Heritage, is vegetated with temperate grasslands and woodlands dominated by Eucalyptus melliodora (Yellow Box), and Eucalyptus blakelyi (Blakely's Red Gum). Scottdale is also home to a remnant of Australia's last ice age, the Silver-leaved mountain gum (pictured). Threatened animal species found on Scottdale are Platypus, Gang-gang Cockatoo, Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail, Speckled Warbler, Golden Sun Moth, Shoemaker frog [croaks like tapping nails into a shoe], and Rosenberg's monitor. Native fish in the river include Trout, Cod and Macquarie Perch. www.bushheritage.org.au/our_reserves/



BIRDS ARE LISTENING

Talking birds that can mimic human speech have varying degrees of intelligence and communication abilities. Some, like the crow, are only able to mimic a few words and phrases, while some budgerigars have a vocabulary of what may be more than a thousand words. Wild cockatoos in Australia seem to be learning human speech from escaped birds that escaped and joined their flock. <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

MOUNTAIN PYGMY-POSSUM

The tiny Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*) hibernates during winter in snow laden boulder fields on the



Mountain Pygmy-possum. Photo: Dr Linda Broome.

coldest slopes of the Snowy Mountains. It is the only marsupial in the world to hibernate for long periods under the snow. First found as a fossil, it was thought to be extinct until 1966 when one was discovered in a Mount Hotham ski resort in Victoria. Fossil evidence of relatives of the Pygmy-possum has been discovered in four

states of Australia. 20-10 million years ago *Burramys* species were present at Riversleigh in Queensland, and 24 million years ago, they were at Lake Palankarina in South Australia. In 1990 the total Mountain Pygmy-possum population was estimated at 2635, in 2010 there were 2075... www.fnpw.org.au/plants-a-wildlife/land-mammals/

LLOYD HEDGES - CONSERVATION AWARD

The Australian Plant Society [NSW] has granted its 2012 Conservation Award to Lloyd Hedges, Vice President of Menai Wildflower Group. The Award is in recognition of Lloyd's efforts over many years in fostering appreciation of Australian native plants, his planning and maintenance of the Illawong Rural Fire Services gardens, his work in bush care, and his extensive experimentation with propagation at the native nursery at Lucas Heights. It is most appropriate that his dedication and continuing interest in the local environment has now been recognised at State level.

THE SIMPSON DESERT

One of Australia's largest deserts, the Simpson, lies across three Australian states. It is home to many unique species of plants and animals. Much of the South Australian section of the Simpson Desert is classified as Regional Reserve, that is, multiple use parks that allow mining and grazing. The Wilderness Society would like to see this landscape formally protected. Prior to the 2010 South Australian election, the Wilderness Society received a significant commitment from both major parties to protect the Simpson Desert under the Wilderness Protection Act. Nevertheless, the South Australian Government has been processing applications to explore for coal seam gas over large sections of the desert. [Wilderness News]

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH

This is a regular testing program by volunteers of the creek lines flowing through to the Georges River. The Group gathers on the Tuesday after each OFF meeting, making the next at 9am Tuesday 26th June. For more detail ring Sharyn (9579 1262) or Heather (0425 291 879).

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

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

June 25th (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with John Davoren speaking on the likely social and environmental consequences of the heated **Climate Change Debate**.

June 30th (Sat), Field day: Walk from Wattamolla to Marley (Royal National Park), with whale spotting from the cliffs. About 10km return. Good track with some uphill. We will lunch at sand dunes overlooking Marley Lagoon. Bring water to drink. Meet 9.30am at Wattamolla car park. **Leader: Alan Fairley T 9570 8332.**

July 23rd (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Julian Sheen speaking on **Travels through Syria, Conflict and History in Syria and Jordan.**

July 28th (Sat), Field day: Wolli Creek: Two valleys walk - Leaders: Jay Cockayne & Sharon Pearson

Aug 27th (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Gary Schoer speaking on **Ecology of Botswana**

Sept 1st (Sat), Field day: Wonderful Wondabine - Leaders: Graham Fry & Liz Cameron

Sept 24th (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with David Kirshner speaking on Komodo dragons, the world's heaviest living lizards.

Sept 29th (Sat) Field Day has been relocated from the Blue Mountains to a walk from Collaroy to Manly. [Details later.] **Leader Julian Sheen**

Oct 13 - 14th Field Weekend of Menai Wildflower Group to Lithgow [see note below]

Oct 22nd (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Glenda Wardle speaking on **The Simpson Desert**

Oct 27-28th Field Weekend at Capertee National Park. - **Leader: Deb Andrew**

SUSTAINABILITY IN URBAN DESIGN Talk May 28th

Michael Mobbs attracted 56 members and guests to his talk on urban design. He is an entertaining and informed speaker with an environmental law background and a personal investment in energy and water-saving technology in his terrace house in Chippendale. He has written water-harvesting policy for Sydney Water, developed street agriculture and is now striving to cool our suburbs by convincing authorities to change the colour of our black road surfaces to a lighter more heat-reflecting colour. Michael is determined to make a difference. His book *Sustainable House* is prescribed in University and Technical College design courses across Australia.

Michael has developed the Sustainable Communities Plan, a free guide for making an urban area more environmentally sustainable through a series of community-led projects. Part common sense design and part council policy guide it is an approachable study of how a suburb impacts on our planet. Beginning in Chippendale, it is being used to guide innovation around the world. Michael is seeking our support in signing a petition for the practical application of the plan. Do look at the details in <http://theplan.sustainablehouse.com.au/>

COWAN TO BROOKLYN WALK on 2nd June

After due warning, and the threat of rain, most sensible people stayed home in bed. Only seven hardy souls took on the challenge of this beautiful bushwalk to the north of Sydney. We set off from Cowan station at 9:40am, heading across the freeway, and then following a path, mostly downhill, scrambling over rocks and along a watercourse, past some very impressive Angophoras, and many flowering banksias and hakias. After the descent, we travelled along the sandy shore of Jerusalem Creek (past a tent set-up in the middle of the track) to our morning-tea spot overlooking a very picturesque Jerusalem Bay.

We took shelter from the light showers for our lunch in a large rock overhang and watched the mist disappear over the hills. Our last descent to the Brooklyn station was rewarded with hot chips and coffee before we boarded the train to head back home. [Report by Lesley Wylie, walk leader]

OATLEY PARK FLOWERS IN JUNE

The website now has a full year of Alan Fairley's monthly blooms in Oatley Park. The pictured Black-eyed Susan (*Tetradlea neglecta*) is on the list for June. It is a small shrub with whorled leaves; flowers pink with 4 petals and a dark centre, found on the plateau near the lookout, but uncommon.



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

LIME KILN BAY WETLANDS

Following the concern about the stormwater and sewage damage, the local Streamwatch team has established a site

at Dairy Creek; water quality will be tested every two months. The worry is sewage overflow and *E. coli* levels during dry conditions.

MENAI WILDFLOWER GROUP TRIP TO LITHGOW

OFF members are invited to join this field weekend on Oct 13-14th to explore the Gardens of Stone National Park [GoS]. The plan is to meet early at Lithgow on the 13th; to spend the day exploring GoS, have a tour of the animal sanctuary at Secret Creek followed by dinner, and stay overnight at the Lithgow Caravan Park. Then on the 14th continue to explore GoS. [More detail later. Contact Jason Cockayne or Sharon Pearson at: <mailto:jay.shaz@hotmail.com>]

SHOOTING IN NATIONAL PARKS

OFF has written to the Minister for the Environment expressing its strong opposition to the proposal to allow recreational shooting in NSW national parks and reserves. The plan would open up 79 national parks and reserves, covering close to 3 million hectares or 40% of all of our parks and reserves. As the Nature Conservation Council stated, "National Parks are for the protection of nature and for the enjoyment of the NSW public, not for blood sport. This decision by the government shows complete disregard for public safety and for the purpose of our National Park system." <http://nohunting.wildwalks.com/>

BRIEFLY

Australian Plant Society provides great information about our native flora. Details from the East Hills Group of the Society are at <http://easthills.austplants.com.au/>

Sustainable Chippendale Add you name in support of Michael Mobb's vision <http://theplan.sustainablehouse.com.au/>

Think Global/Film Local film competition is about our local environment and what the community is doing to help it. It is open to anyone in the St George Council areas and prizes will be given to the two best films in a number of school and age categories

Landcare The National Landcare Conference is in Sydney this year, 3rd to 5th September, Convention and Exhibition Centre; theme *Landcare- The Future in Our Hands*.

Weeds Some of our major weeds, such as broad-leaf privet, blackberry, lantana and honey locust, began their Australian life as hedges at John Macarthur's Camden Farm. They were among the hundreds of exotics he imported. Who was to know?

Monkey puzzle

