



A GREENER PLANET

The *New Scientist* reports that our planet is getting lush, and we are responsible. Carbon dioxide generated by human activity is stimulating photosynthesis and causing a beneficial greening of the Earth's surface. For the first time, researchers claim to have shown that the increase in plant cover is due to this "CO₂ fertilisation effect". However, it remains unclear whether the effect can counter negative consequences of global warming, such as the spread of deserts. Recent satellite studies have shown that the planet is [harbouring more vegetation](#) overall, but identifying the cause is difficult. Higher temperatures, extra rainfall, and an increase in atmospheric CO₂ could all be boosting vegetation. www.newscientist.com/

THREATENED FLORA AND FAUNA

Australia is estimated to be home to more than 500,000 animal and plant species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. Over the last 200 years, more than 100 animal and plant species have become extinct. In fact, more mammals have died out in Australia than in any other continent. In NSW, there are more than 850 animal and plant species at risk of extinction, including the [koala](#), [humpback whale](#) and [Wollemi pine](#). Our ecological systems and some populations of plants and animals are also threatened.

There are numerous threats to our native plants and animals in NSW and more broadly across Australia. Loss of habitat, weeds and feral animals, pollution, disease and climate change all play a role. The NSW Government is working with local communities, farmers, landowners and community groups on local and large scale projects to help reduce these threats, restore habitats and populations of threatened species. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/>

BIOSECURITY STRATEGY

Biosecurity is the protection of the economy, environment and community from negative impacts associated with pests, diseases and weeds. The NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021 was launched on 22nd May. The Strategy is based on the principle of shared responsibility and has been prepared to increase awareness about biosecurity issues and provide a framework for biosecurity management. It identifies key goals, and strategies to manage risks effectively. www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/biosecurity-strategy

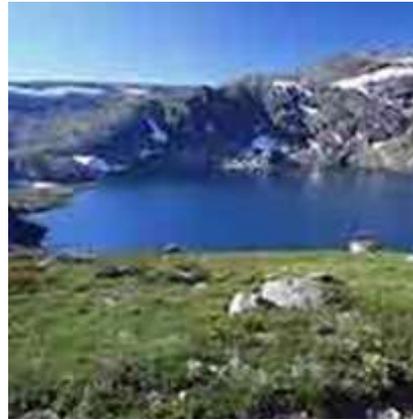
VIEW OF THE STARS

Once a source of wonder, the star-filled nights are vanishing in a yellow haze. The light of cities, as pictured, mars our view of the stars. [The International Dark-Sky Association](#) (IDA) notes that the obscuring of stellar lighting threatens astronomy, ecosystems, and [human circadian rhythms](#); and the lighting energy so wasted costs billions of dollars per year. IDA's mission is to preserve and protect the night-time environment and our heritage of dark skies through environmentally responsible outdoor lighting. www.darksky.org/about-ida



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PARKS

Australia has over 500 national parks. Over 28 million hectares of land is designated national parkland, accounting for almost 4% of Australia's land. A further 6% is protected including state forests, nature parks, and



Blue Lake, Kosciuszko NP

conservation reserves. National parks are usually large areas of land protected because they have unspoilt landscapes and a diverse number of native plants and animals. This means that commercial activities such as farming are prohibited and human activity is strictly monitored. Like

[zoos](#), national parks have several purposes. The foremost of these is to protect native flora and fauna. But national parks are also there so Australians and foreign visitors can enjoy and learn about our unique environment, heritage and culture. <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/national-parks>

HEALTH AND COAL AND GAS

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) argue that Australians are suffering ill health and the country is incurring economic loss because of grossly inadequate assessment and management of harm to health from major developments. The rapid expansion of the coal and unconventional gas industries has created widespread community concern over health and environmental issues, but it has also exposed the inadequate government processes in permitting developments assumed to be in the interests of the economy. <http://dea.org.au/images/>

PLANNING REFORMS?

"With new planning reforms for NSW, the State will become a developer's paradise. No more DAs held up by a neighbour's objections, no more developers' appeals quashed by the Land and Environment Court. Anything can be built anywhere in double-quick time. A private certifier, the developers' best friend (after the planning minister), will approve whatever goes up. Once again, infrastructure is not part of the deal, nor is pesky heritage or green space."

[So wrote [in part] Jeannette Tsoulos of West Pymble to the editor SMH 24th June]

The EDO NSW, in its comments on the reforms notes a number of positives, but that two central issues of a) community participation and b) protection of the environment must not be overlooked.

EDO considers that the proposed reforms do not address ecological sustainable development [ESD], and imply a contrast [or conflict] between economic prosperity on the one hand, and environmental values & community rights on the other. Its recommendations are at <http://www.edo.org.au/edonsw/>

GOOD NEWS FOR EDO

The Commonwealth Government has announced that it is allocating \$300,000 this year in support of EDO NSW, compared to some \$100,000 previously.

COMING EVENTS

July 22nd (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Sharyn Cullis and Phil Andersen speaking on Travels through Three National Parks in Patagonia.

July 27th (Sat) Field day to Thirlmere Lakes. The walk encircles three of the lakes; distance about 9 km with a well-marked track and no hills. We pass through interesting woodland, with many plants not common in Sydney, and good views of the lakes and birdlife. Go down M5 to Picton turnoff; through Picton, and turn left onto old Hume Hwy. Proceed about 3km to a large roundabout, and turn right towards the Thirlmere Railway Museum (signposted). Take the right turn across the railway crossing and then left to the Museum. Meet at 10am in the park opposite the Museum. The only public transport available is a train to Tahmoor where we could arrange to pick you up. Wear sturdy footwear, hat and sunscreen; bring snacks, lunch and water.

Leader: Graham Fry ☎ 9580 6621 for further details or if you need a lift.

Aug 26th (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Alan Fairley speaking on Exploring the Galapagos Islands

Aug 31st (Sat) Field day to Muogamarra Nature Reserve between Cowan, and the Hawkesbury River. **Leaders: J Cockayne & S Pearson ☎ 9570 8559**

Sept 23rd (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Dave Kirshner, "Goanna Man", speaking on Monitor Lizards.

Sept 28th (Sat) Field day to La Perouse - Leader: Jennifer Whaite ☎ 9580 7343 [details in the next newsletter]

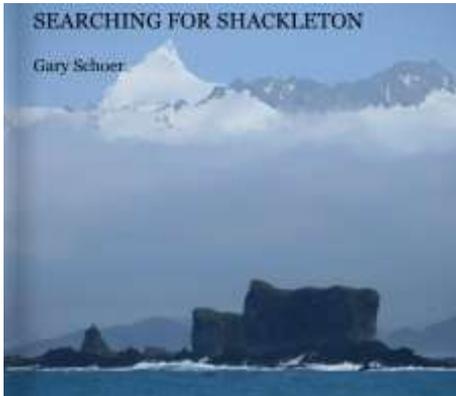
Oct 28th (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Christine Guthrie speaking on Hidden Treasures: Places & Plants in Sutherland Shire.

Nov 2-3rd Weekend Field Trip to Hassans Walls Orchid Sanctuary, Lithgow. Leader: John Watters ☎ 9534 1096

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SHACKLETON: JUNE 24TH

Oatley resident and NPA stalwart Gary Schoer came in from the cold on Monday night to present *In the footsteps of Shackleton*, a spectacular pictorial ode to the heroic polar adventurer.

Having been to the Antarctic region on four separate occasions, Gary, on his more recent voyage, took full advantage of the 20 or so hours of sunlight each day to capture breathtakingly beautiful slides of the icy landscape, its stoic fauna and historical relics.



Elephant Island and South Georgia Island, so critical to the survival of the shipwrecked crew of the *Endurance*, impressed both with their beauty and desolation.

Gary's love and admiration for the polar area was well evident on the night, and his concern for its future was punctuated with anecdotes of drastically shrinking glaciers and crashing Adelie penguin rookeries.

On a positive note, he talked of the efforts of scientists to protect albatross populations from the perils of long line fishing by instructing fishing fleets to modify their practices with simple techniques that appear to be working.

ROYAL NATIONAL PARK FIELD DAY: 6TH JULY

The postponement of the walk for a week because of constant rain proved a good decision as the day turned out to be a magical winter's day, with blue skies and little wind. Sixteen adults and four children met at Wattamolla car park. A number of whales were seen spouting from the first cliff lookout, and others were seen at a distance as we continued on. At Curracurrang we headed upstream to view the hidden waterhole and falls. One hardy boy, Dashiell, even took a swim. After all the rain, the track was muddy, wet in places and badly in need of repair; this made progress much slower than normal. Lunch was taken on the rocks overlooking Eagle Rock and Curracurrang Creek - a lovely spot. In all, it was another enjoyable OFF walk. [Report by Trip Leader, Alan Fairley].

HUMAN PROGRESS!

The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed, lest Rome become bankrupt. [So wrote Cicero in 55 BCE].

BACKYARDS FOR WILDLIFE



Magpies eat a variety of insects, moths, spiders and grubs that can be a nuisance in our lawns or houses. Willie Wagtails eat thousands of flies and mosquitoes each year. Ducks help to cycle nutrients through our waterways, eating pest grubs and applying fertilisers through their droppings. Honeyeaters help to pollinate

hundreds of plant species and owls keep down pests such as locusts, mice, rats and even snakes! These are just a small number of reasons why urban wildlife can help make our lives easier, but in the end, many people believe that a backyard without furry, feathered (and even scaled) friends would be far less interesting. www.bathurst.nsw.gov.au/images/stories/environment/

FOR NOTING

Bird sighting. On 1st July a group of white-headed pigeons were seen in Myles Dunphy Reserve feeding on the seeds fruit of privet. Other animal sightings <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

Free tree giveaway day Hurstville City Council is hosting this at Olds Park (next to Penshurst Branch Library) on Sun 28th July, 8.00am to 2.00pm. Details ☎ 9330 6222 www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/

For Art's Sake 2013 is a **FRANS INC.** fund raiser [for its services for disabled people] with this title. It is an exhibition of photographs and prints - at Sydney College of the Arts, Rozelle. Photographers are invited to submit an entry. For information, call FRANS ☎ 9799 4333. Submissions close 13th Sept, the Exhibition opens 31st Oct. www.forartsake.org.au/

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, testing the creek lines flowing into the Georges River next meets 9am on Tues 23rd July. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (☎ 0425 291 879).

National Tree Day Sun 28th July & Schools Tree Day Friday 26th provide an opportunity to do something positive for the environment and reconnect with nature. <http://treeday.planetark.org>

Oatley Lions Festival Saturday Oct 19th

OFF Annual Dinner Nov 15th [details later]

