



FROGS, REPTILES, AND TIMBER HARVESTING

At the 24th Feb monthly meeting local wildlife ecologist, Matt Mo spoke on *frogs, reptiles, and timber harvesting, the balance, and the bright side*, reflecting on his work with the Forest Science Centre. The FSC is the only research institution in New South Wales focussing on the sustainability and profitability of the state's forestry industry. Unbeknown to many, the practices for timber harvesting in New South Wales have been changing. Public perceptions of native forestry are often plagued with generalisations, and the outdated legacy of a former era. We all use forest and wood products, and the ecological sustainability of forestry is being realised through scientific research.

Matt explained how modern harvesting methods have moved into the age of selective logging, so that bushland remains post-harvest. He reflected on his experience with threatened frogs and reptiles in harvested native forests. He put the case that these lands are just as much a sanctuary for these species as are conservation reserves. The main point was that balancing biodiversity with timber harvesting can be a reality. www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/research/forestry

WORONORA RESERVOIR DRYING UP

As recently reported in the SMH and the Sutherland Leader, a group of academics and concerned community members visiting the Waratah Rivulet were deeply shocked by recent impacts caused by underground mining operations at the Metropolitan Colliery. The Waratah Rivulet



plays a critical role in delivering water to the Woronora Reservoir. Delivering more water than the Woronora River, it supplies some 30% of the inflow to the reservoir during good rainfall and 50% in dry conditions.

Most disturbing is the complete draining of a substantial permanent pool [pictured] referred to as Pool N by the mining company. With little recent rain, flow in the river is currently relatively low, but water still flows from upstream into the southern end of Pool N, normally some two metres deep. The water however is being lost through a crack in the bedrock of the river. Several substantial cracks are in the floor of Pool N clearly caused by underground mining.

"The loss of Pool N is deeply disturbing and emphasises the risks and consequences of mining beneath Sydney's drinking water catchment," said Dr Peter Turner, a representative for the Parks Association. "The mining company argues that the water lost from the Waratah Rivulet still makes its way into Woronora Reservoir one way or another, but the evidence shows this is incorrect."

Dr Turner commented, "There's an urgent need to update and improve water loss estimates; the government should ensure that the SCA has all the resources it needs to comprehensively assess the impacts of mining on Greater Sydney's water supply. To continue to allow mining in the absence of such knowledge is folly." www.theleader.com.au/river-bleed-dry-from-mining

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CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA DAY: 2ND MARCH

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society supervised a site for Hurstville Council at Jinna Rd Reserve Peakhurst on the day.

In spite of the grey and showery weather, nineteen keen volunteers assembled. Equipped with Gumboots, and various long grabbers, they removed much waste from the foreshore area and the mangroves. In all 6 large bags of recyclables and 4 of general rubbish were collected.



An energetic group cleaned the storm-water run-off area at the bottom of the golf course around the mangroves, where there was a serious amount of rubbish. O.F.F. will be lobbying Hurstville Council and Sydney Water to install a Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT)

there to prevent this in the future.

COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

Oatley Flora and Fauna members have participated in the Community Reference group formed to find a resolution to the Dairy Creek sewer overflows. The group has met three times since December, and at the last meeting noted that:

- 1) The option of a new overflow at Saltpan Creek was not an acceptable or effective measure.
- 2) Sydney Water has proposed to increase weir height at Dairy Creek increasing the storage capacity and preventing overflows. Sydney Water has undertaken that an environment Impact statement will be done before this is implemented. They will be required to monitor for effects. If there were any adverse effects in Dairy creek or Lime Kiln Bay from increased over flows at the northern arm of Lime Kiln bay the adjustment to the weir height can be reversed.
- 3) Sydney Water has agreed that the current overflow limit on their license of 40 overflows in 10 years is excessive for the wetlands. They are working with the EPA to reduce this to 20 overflows with requests from community group such as OFF writing to the EPA.
- 4) The group has requested that Sydney Water work with Councils towards the longer-term solutions of source control of storm water and treatment of sewer waste further upstream.

PROTECT MARINE SANCTUARIES

The NSW Government is moving to reduce protection for our marine life and coastal habitats by weakening the marine parks that protect them. Daisy Barham, Marine Campaigner for the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, is asking member bodies and individuals to join an online petition to protect marine sanctuaries from fishing. [Take action today](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/take-action/marine). Please look at the website and share the petition with friends. www.nccnsw.org.au/take-action/marine

STUART MURRAY AND MARINE DEBRIS

Some members of OFF, and other community groups welcomed and, farewelled Stuart, on his stand up paddleboard (SUP) at Sandy Beach Oatley on Mar 12th as he neared the end of his 2-week circumnavigation of Sydney. He paddled north from Manly, to the Hawkesbury River, upstream to Penrith, 70km overland to Liverpool and downstream on the Georges River, through the heads of Botany Bay and up the coast back to Manly. His cause is to heighten awareness of the huge problem of marine debris in the world's oceans, the toll on damaged wildlife, food chain threats, and the contribution to the problem of rivers like the Georges. More at <https://www.facebook.com/Supexplore>

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [near Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

- Mar 22nd (Sat) Field day watching Botany Bay Shorebirds.** Meet at 9am at the corner of Riverside Dr and Napoleon St, Sans Souci. Bring binoculars hats and cameras, thermos, snacks (and lunch if you want). We could end up at Botany Bay NP for lunch. **Leader Debbie Andrew** ☎ 9570 2695 / 📞 0490 172 501
- Mar 24th (Mon) 7.45pm meeting with Sandra Guy speaking on Friendly Flying Foxes.** [See the note below*]
- Mar 29th (Sat) Earth Hour 2014** This year the power of Earth Hour is aimed at helping save the Great Barrier Reef. www.smh.com.au/environment/earth-hour
- April 28th (Mon) 7.45pm meeting with Dr Tom Grant speaking on Studying the Platypus**
- May 3rd (Sat) Field day to Scotland Island, Leader: Julian Sheen -** ☎ 9594 4888
- May 10th (Sat) Rescheduled Field Day to Sydney Observatory** [see note below①].
- May 26th (Mon) 7.45pm meeting with Gary Schoer speaking on Red Rocks Blooming: Wildflowers in the Pilbara & beyond**
- May 31st (Sat) Field day to Kurnell, Whale watching. Leader: Graham Fry -** ☎ 9580 6621

THE OFF ANNUAL DINNER

FRIDAY 13th must be the time to CELEBRATE as no celebratory dinner for 18 months & we are returning to OFF's 50th ANNIVERSARY venue.

CELEBRATING 59 years of OFF.

Please join us for The OFF ANNUAL DINNER

FRIDAY 13th JUNE 2014

7pm - 10pm

THE GARDENS on FOREST

764 Forest Rd Peakhurst

Canapés on arrival

Two course meal served at your table (bread on table)
2 main dishes followed by 2 desserts served alternatively
iced water & soft drinks for the duration of the function

Bar available for individual alcohol purchases

Coffee, tea & chocolate mints

Special dietary requirements - halal, vegetarian, diabetic, gluten-free catered for on request.

Cost \$55.00 per person

Book your seat now - payment in full or by instalments.

Contact Sue Howard ☎ 9579 1718.

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GRAND RAFFLE

FRIDAY 13th JUNE will be lucky for some members as we hold our RAFFLE at the ANNUAL DINNER. Further donations will be gratefully received at meetings, picked up from your home or delivered to my home. Please check your cupboards for any unwanted gifts that you may like to contribute in addition to those donations kindly given last year. THANK YOU.

Again, contact Sue ☎ 9579 1718.

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* BATTY ABOUT FLYING FOXES

Sandra Guy, who will be our speaker at the March meeting, is batty about Flying Foxes. She understands first-hand the plight of these vulnerable flying mammals and her regard and affection for them is palpable. Sandra, amongst other things, is a wildlife rescue volunteer who takes in orphaned and/or injured flying foxes for rehabilitation before returning them (if possible) to the wild.

The life of a flying fox is fraught with fatality. Seen as noisy, smelly and a fruit grower's nightmare, many people have scant regard for them, but Sandra will convince the most ardent flying fox antagonist to grant them the respect they so truly deserve. [Note from Matt Allison]



① OBSERVATORY VISIT - MARCH 1ST

This was cancelled because of unfavourable weather. It is planned to rebook it for Sat night, May 10th. There are still some tickets available. Would those already booked please contact Alison, re their availability for that time. If they are unable to attend, there could be a refund if their tickets can be resold. **Leader Alison Gilroy** ☎ 9580 5557

REGARDING THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

[The Linnean Society](http://www.linnean.org.au) has produced an informative new book "Field Guide to Royal National Park." Each chapter covers a different aspect of the Park and is written by an expert on the topic. A copy of the book will be at the desk at next meeting. You can purchase it for \$10.00 (or order it at the next meeting and we will more from the publishers).

FOR NOTING

Earth Hour 29th Mar between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. "It is lights out for the Reef" www.earthhour.org/

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets 9am on Tues Mar 25th. Details: Sharyn ☎ 9579 1262, Heather 📞 0425 291 879.

National Parks Association South Sydney Branch Autumn Newsletter <http://branches.npansw.org.au/southern/sydney/>

Oatley Park Walking Tracks: OFF's walking guide to 7 walking tracks in the bushpark. <http://off.oatleypark.com>

Powerful Owl Training Workshop 10th May hosted by Menai Wildflower Group. Location: Illawong Rural Fire Brigade building on Old Illawarra Rd, Illawong. Time: 1.00pm to 3.30pm. Cost: Free. Register/questions david.bain@birdlife.org.au 📞 0421 337 545

Renew membership - Welcome New Members! Details of OFF Membership are on our [website](http://www.off.org.au).

Volunteer Planters: On Mar 30th volunteers are needed to add 2,100 plants at the Lysaghts Rd, Wedderburn edge of [Dharawal National Park](http://www.dharawalnationalpark.com.au). Please contact [GREA](mailto:GREA@off.org.au) members, Pat and Barry Durman, ☎ 4634 1359.

Prejudice is not uncommon!

