



# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 7/15

July/Aug 2015

### SEEKING POWERFUL OWLS

The Powerful Owl [POWL] breeding season is now in full swing on the Georges River, and there are volunteers from Campbelltown to Connell's Point following up to 20 pairs of POWLS. This is the easiest time to find them but, as with the fledglings in a few months, it is also one of their most vulnerable periods, as too much disturbance can lead to abandoning the eggs. If you see a POWL or evidence such as pellets, whitewash etc., or you want to get involved, please send an email off to [chris.lloyd@wivanga.com.au](mailto:chris.lloyd@wivanga.com.au)

### THIRLMERE LAKES UNDER THREAT

Rivers SOS [an alliance of over 40 environmental and community groups] notes that water has gone from the Thirlmere lakes and what were once vibrant wetlands have disappeared, leaving mud and very little else.

The Lakes are special because they have survived 15 million years without being fed by an active river system. They are sourced from surface water and register the local water table. They should have recharged by now, as after previous severe droughts, but the water levels continue to drop. Something other than drought is causing the loss.

Mining has possibly caused fracturing of the local aquiclude (rock barrier) beneath the lakes, facilitating hydraulic connectivity between the lakes and the deeper aquifers affected by mine impacts. Water may now be migrating through a fracture network (permeability paths) extending both vertically and laterally to the level of the mines.

The NSW Government appointed a committee of four independent scientists and a community representative to evaluate possible causes for the low water levels in the lakes. Their overall finding, delivered in 2012, hid behind the usual apology for inaction - more research must be done. [More at <http://riverssos.org.au/> & <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>]

### POPULATION GROWTH

The Australia Institute [TAI] notes that we have the fastest population growth among the major developed countries. Announced new infrastructure spending needs to be seen in the context of the population growth, as reduced per capita spending on infrastructure amounts to a cut in services, and puts huge pressure on major cities. We are now adding 400,000 people - more than a new Canberra - every year. ABS predicts population will be around 40 million in 2061 and 70 million by 2101 <http://www.tai.org.au/>.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF BIG TREES

Australia's largest trees of each species are recorded in a [National Register](#). Points are awarded based on a formula that includes circumference, height, and crown spread. The Register is an integrated list of Australian native trees, and naturalised exotic/alien trees. It is constantly changing as people nominate trees they have found. It is assembling an integrated list of Australian native and naturalised trees with the objective of locating and recording the largest specimen of every species.

[www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au/](http://www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au/)



Big tree, Royal National Park, Sydney, Australia

### HEALTHIER ASPHALT

Engineers Australia notes that Renewable asphalt is being pioneered in Australia using items such as toner from print cartridges and used tyres. Current best practice in Australia is for asphalt to include 30/40% renewable materials. These contribute to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and the recycled materials, innovative product mix, and design increase the life of the asphalt. <http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/news/>

### BACKYARD BUDDIES

There is a free education program run by the [Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife](#) giving simple tips to make your backyard safe and inviting for native animals. Backyard Buddies are the native animals that share our built-up areas, waterways, backyards and parks. Backyard Buddies value native animals and plants and want to protect them.

You can [sign up](#) to receive a free email newsletter about "buddies" you are likely to see in your backyard. B-mail is emailed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Look up [July B-mail](#)

### GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS

[The Conversation](#), an impressive academic website, notes that Australia could reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% of 2005 levels by 2030, using existing technology and while still growing the economy. This follows an analysis by [ClimateWorks](#), an independent, research-based, non-profit organisation. The Federal Government is [considering](#) what Australia's post-2020 emissions target should be. Many other countries have made their [pledges](#), and groups in Australia are calling for commitment to a strong target. <https://theconversation.com/new-analysis>

### PROPOSAL TO MOVE MEETINGS TO OATLEY RSL

It has been suggested that OFF monthly meetings be moved to Oatley RSL, and we want to know what you think about the proposal.

On the positive side [pros], the Club has better acoustics, a clearer sound system, a better projector and screen, and an easy Internet connection. There is no charge to use the meeting room, more comfortable seating, and air-conditioning. Many of us are already RSL members; it has a large car park and few activities on Monday nights.

On the "cons" side, the carpark is rather steep, attendees need to be RSL members, the Club closes at 9.30pm, but we could start earlier. We would not have exclusive use of the club, but the meeting area is enclosed.

Members are urged to speak to a committee member or email [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com) about their response to the proposal, and to do so by 30<sup>th</sup> September.

**LAND USE IN ROYAL NATIONAL PARK**  
 Friends of Royal National Park Inc.  
 Invite you to attend a Seminar  
 to be held in the Environmental Education Centre  
 159 Farnell Avenue AUDLEY HEIGHTS  
 Cost \$30 1pm - 5pm  
 Sunday 26th July 2015

Speakers: Dr Bob Young - *Views of Nature: what do we see in RNP*  
 Author of 'Understanding the Scenery RNP & IINP'  
 Judith Carrick - *Military History in RNP*  
 Author of 'History of Royal National Park 1879-2015'  
 Dr Ian Willis - *The Military and the Red Cross on the homefront*  
 Author of 'Ministering Angels: The Camden District Red Cross, 1914-1945'  
 Darren Robertson - *History of Youthworks*  
 Anglican Youth Camps, Port Hacking

RSVP before 20/7/2015 limited seating  
[jcarrick@ihug.com.au](mailto:jcarrick@ihug.com.au)  
 Ph. 4267 4380

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 22<sup>nd</sup> (Wed) Additional Field Day: Macleay Museum and Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney**  
<http://sydney.edu.au/museums/> **Macleay Museum** has a temporary exhibition, Dhaga Ngiyahni Ngan.Girra (Where We All Meet), with kangaroo-skin cloaks, headdresses, belts, and a possum-skin blanket made by two Indigenous artists: <http://sydney.edu.au/museums/exhibitions-events/where-we-all-meet.shtml>. Catch 9.28 am train (2<sup>nd</sup> carriage from the front) from Oatley to Redfern Station, and walk to Macleay Museum near University quadrangle (about 1 km). Or alight at Town Hall Station and catch bus to Footbridge on Parramatta Road (very short walk but some stairs). Meet in Science Road outside Macleay Museum at 10.30 am. Bring lunch or buy it on campus (it will be university vacation). **Leader: Liz Cameron** ☎ 9580 6621 (any time); 📠 0419 280 473 (only on the day)

**July 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Chris Lloyd speaking on Seabirds.**

**Aug 1<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day: Dharawal NP and the Illawarra Escarpment.** Meet at the eastern entry point Darawal NP, opposite the Apple Shack (Orchard) Darkes Forest Rd, Darkes Forest at 9.30am. Allow 50 mins from Oatley. Our first walk is a gentle stroll of 2kms, mainly on a boardwalk through a flowery swamp to the Maddens Creek waterfall, headwaters of the Georges River. We will then drive 8kms to Sublime Point lookout, with beautiful views of the northern Illawarra coastline. Bring thermos and snacks for morning tea - picnic or a cafe for lunch. A second optional challenging walk of 2 hours is over the cliff-top, and deep into the rainforest behind Austinmer, with some steep stairs and ladders. **Leader: Sharyn Cullis** [For more info and car-pooling options ☎ 9579 1262, 📠 0421 714 391, [emailgo\\_river@hotmail.com](mailto:emailgo_river@hotmail.com) ]

**Aug 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Leroy Gonsalves speaking on "Microbat predation on mosquitoes"**

JUNE 22<sup>nd</sup> TALK: A TRIP AROUND GUJARAT

Alan Fairley reflected on the trip he and his wife Chiew had around the West Indian State of Gujarat last January. The State is a curious mixture of coastal subtropics, with crops of sugar cane, bananas, rice and cotton, and barren flat salt plains running endlessly to Pakistan. Around the edges of the plains are traditional villages famous for their colourful dress and traditional crafts, especially embroidery. Reports of abundant migratory birds were not disappointing; especially interesting were the sightings of Painted Stork, Damosielle Crane, and Lesser Flamingo. Other natural highlights were a Blackbuck reserve, the last group of Asian lions left in the wild in Gir National Park, and the herds of Wild Ass out on the salt plains. The pictures shown reflect the diversity and variety that make this State different from any other in India.

JUNE 27<sup>th</sup> FIELD DAY: COWAN TO TAFFY'S ROCK

The walk had 12 participants and was probably the most challenging OFF walk in many years. Weather was very good and walkers were rewarded with fantastic views of Lion Island and Pittwater.

It started in the dark for some as they took the bus from Oatley Station to Central for the 7.45 train to Cowan. It was a pleasant, smooth trip with picturesque views of mist in the valleys after Berowra. The walk began on the eastern side of the station, over the freeway, and then into the bush and steady downhill towards Jerusalem Bay, with a short detour to visit some Aboriginal carvings. Luckily, our leader, Adrian Buzo, knew where they were! The walk down to Jerusalem Bay followed a creek line, passing some wonderful rock overhangs and large gnarled trees. The view at Jerusalem Bay was beautiful and the water very clear. We encountered many walkers going in the opposite direction who seemed to be in training for the 100km Oxfam Walk from Brooklyn to Balgowlah.



A steep and rough ascent took us to a ridge; then we took a sidetrack to a rest stop of tessellated rock, and continued to our lunch stop at [Taffy's Rock](#). [Report by Vicki Bolling] More at <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=4351>

OATLEY PARK WALKING TOUR: TUES 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPT

The Tour is on Wattle Day, from 10am to 12noon. Hurstville City Library Museum & Gallery will host this special event to enjoy the spring wildflowers in Oatley Park. The event will celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society's commitment to protecting the Park. Bookings are essential; visit the Hurstville City Library Museum Gallery webpage: [www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/img](http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/img)

## ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTROVERSIAL PROJECTS

*Engineers Australia* notes that [RepRisk](#), a global data provider on matters of environmental, social, and corporate governance, has issued a list of the most controversial projects in 2014.

First on its list was a Metal Production factory in China, with a dust explosion that killed 146 workers and injured 114 others. A mine in Mexico came in second, with a major spill of sulphuric acid into the Sonora and Bacanuchi rivers.

Australia's Abbot Point Port Expansion made equal third, with ecosystem and community impact, waste, and pollution linked to the project.

RepRisk screened data from a range of public sources in order to measure [ESG](#) risks and rate them using a [Reputational Risk Index](#). [www.engineersaustralia.org.au/](http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/)

## USED STAMPS - FUND RAISING

Many Churches now collect used postage stamps for fund raising, selling them overseas.

As you enter the hall for our monthly meetings there is a box where used stamps can be placed. Please cut the stamps from the envelope leaving at least 3mm outside the perforations. Stamp collectors want the perforations.

If you have an old stamp collection, Jim Nicholson (☎ 9580 4458), who attends OFF meetings, is happy to collect them and deliver them to the Uniting Church.

## FOR NOTING

**C**oastal Integrated Forestry Operations. Three reports have just been released. Much more at [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/forestagreements](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/forestagreements)

**D**orvanthes – Details about this Southern Sydney Journal of Art, Heritage and Natural History at: [dorvanthes.info/](http://dorvanthes.info/)

**G**reater Sydney Landcare Network is a network of community groups working to protect, restore and improve the natural environment. [Much more at <http://greatersydneylandcare.org/>]

**I**llawarra Aborigines before Colonisation, 1-2<sup>nd</sup> Aug Conference at the University of Wollongong <http://iabc2015.blogspot.com.au/>

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues July 28<sup>th</sup> [Details: Sharyn ☎ 9579 1262, Heather 📠 0425 291 879].

**N**ational Tree Day Sun 26<sup>th</sup> July – HCC - planting at Peakhurst Park, tree giveaway at Old's Park near Penshurst Library.

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. Next meeting 31<sup>st</sup> July "coffee & chat" at the Library. <http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/>

## A CONSERVATIONIST DILEMMA

