



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 3/16

March/April 2016

GEORGES RIVER HEALTH MONITORING

The 2014/15 [GRCCC](#) Report Card on the ecosystem health of the Georges River provides a 'snapshot' of the ecological health of the Georges River catchment. It indicates the overall ecological condition of the freshwater reaches across the River remains a B 'Fair'. Large parts of the catchment areas, particularly in the upper reaches, have intact native forest and remain in good to excellent ecological condition.

However, the middle to lower catchment areas, are highly urbanised and home to over one million people. Urban stormwater flowing into the river, combined with degraded and fragmented riparian vegetation corridors, negatively affect the ecology of the river. In urban creeks, such as Bunbury Curran, Cabramatta and Prospect Creeks and the Lower Georges River tributaries, the diversity of water bugs present was low and dominated by pollution tolerant species such as snails and worms. This contrasts with the results for the creeks with intact native forest, where there was higher diversity, and pollution sensitive animals were present.



PLASTIC POLLUTION AND MARINE LIFE

The Australian Marine Conservation Society [[AMCS](#)] notes that plastic pollution is a growing threat to marine life and is having a devastating impact on our oceans. CSIRO researchers predict that by 2050, 99% of all sea birds will have plastic in their gut. AMCS is asking the public to encourage the State government to implement its *cash for containers model*, that could reduce litter by 40% by 2020. Petition at <http://www.marineconservation.org.au/petitions/>



ABORIGINAL BUSH FOOD TRAIL

The NSW branch of the Scout Association [[SA](#)] is building a trail in the area around the Scouts [Camp Coutts](#), south of Waterfall, to show people the bush food and medicine plants used by the Dharawal people. The bush in the area is full of amazing plants used by the Dharawal people for food and medicine, but few people know anything about this. The Scout exercise will identify and label the plants, and indicate their traditional usage. There are several "environment" camps at Camp Coutts each year; and the trail will be constructed by Scouts in camp during 2016. It will serve as a lasting legacy of their work, and will be available to anyone passing through the area. The SA is seeking to raise \$2,000 to purchase engraved name plates and other items so the plants can be easily identified, using the common name, the Dharawal and scientific names. A detailed listing of the plants will be available on the campsite signboard and from the camp wardens from the end of May, but the trail signposts, with the engraved labels, are not expected to be in place for some time. <https://chuffed.org/project/camp-coutts-bush-food-trail>

WORLD HERITAGE LISTING THREATENED

Detailed plans for future flight paths over the Blue Mountains have sparked fears that the region's hard-won *world heritage*



listing will be under threat from the proposed airport at Badgerys Creek. Plans for flight paths in the airport's first years of operation, indicate that they will pass over a

point to the north-west before making final approaches to the runway. And it is the skies above the town of Blaxland that have been earmarked as the "merge point" when the airport is opened in 2025.

Locals fear the Blue Mountains National Park's world heritage listing is at stake. Several merge points further up the Mountains, closer to Woodford and Wentworth Falls will occur as the Western Sydney Airport becomes busier when a second runway is built in the following years.

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/badgerys-creek>

AGAINST THE SPRINGVALE MINE EXTENSION

The [EDO](#) is acting for community group *4nature*, challenging a decision by the NSW Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) to approve an extension to the Springvale coal mine underneath the Newnes State Forest in the Blue Mountains. The State's laws require decision-makers to refuse developments in Sydney's drinking water catchment unless the development will have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality.

The mine will discharge up to 19 million litres of mine water every day into Sydney's drinking water catchment –almost 7 billion litres a year. This level of discharge must have a negative effect on water quality, as the water is extremely saline and high in nutrients, contains heavy metals, is harmful to aquatic life and degrades Sydney's drinking water.

<http://www.edonsw.org.au/currentappeal>

CARRYING CAPACITY IN ALPINE RESORTS

The NSW Government is looking at better ways to measure and regulate the environmental carrying capacity of alpine resorts in Kosciuszko National Park. Currently, carrying capacity is addressed using 'bed limits'. The "carrying capacity" of an area is the scale of human activity that can occur without degrading the environment. This may lead to an amendment of the Kosciuszko National Park plan of management. A community reaction will be sought.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/alpineresorts/>

EARTH HOUR 2016

During **EARTH HOUR**, hundreds of millions of people around the world turn off their lights for an hour to show a commitment to helping the planet, a *symbolic reminder* that environmental issues do not have to overwhelm us. So please, turn off your lights and show you will do your part to protect our planet. On 19TH March turn out your lights from 8:30pm for one hour to show your commitment to a better future. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/earth-hour>

Meetings of the Society held at the [Oatley RSL & Community Club](#), 23 Letitia Oatley from 7.30 to 9.30pm, usually on the fourth Monday. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Mar 21st (Mon) regular meeting at 7.30pm with Andrea Lawrence speaking on *There is more to a flea than its bite*. Itching to know more?**
- April 3rd (Sun) Field Day A walk around Oatley highlighting the historic buildings #. Leader: Rodger Robertson**
- April 18th (Mon) regular meeting at 7.30pm with Tony Wales speaking on *Georges River Keeper Working with Aboriginal Bush Carers and the Green Army*.**
- May 1st (Sun) Field Day Picnic at Cordeaux Dam protesting mining in water catchments. Leader Sharyn Cullis**
- May 19th (Thurs) Celebrating OFF Dinner.** For details see the box below. *
- May 23rd (Mon) regular meeting at 7.30pm with Deb Andrew speaking on *Regent Honeyeaters and other threatened woodland birds*.**
- May 29th (Sun) Field day Curra Moors - walk across heathlands to the coast, whale sightings a possibility. Leader: Graham Fry**

FEB 22ND CLIMATE CHANGE AND SCIENCE

Our first meeting for the year at our new venue attracted 68 members and guests who were eager to hear the case for *Climate Change being supported by science*. Our speaker, Dr Dennys Angove, a former CSIRO Atmospheric Scientist and a very active member of the Citizens Climate Lobby reviewed the opinions of 97% of climate scientists with graphs and charts that seemed to show one thing in common – an upward trend that links the rise in carbon dioxide levels with the rise in global temperature.

Dennys carefully explained the role of the atmosphere and its many layers and outlined the various possible natural phenomena that may have had a role in elevating carbon dioxide levels. Unfortunately, the finger seems to point to the anthropogenic impact – i.e. since the onset of the industrial revolution at the end of the 18th century land use, energy and food requirements for the increasing human population have risen dramatically with the consequence of severe impacts on the Earth environment, especially to the Earth's atmosphere. In spite of the dire consequences apparently ahead of us and for future generations Dennys remains optimistic. But there must be a global paradigm shift in political will to reduce our reliance on coal and oil and foster clean energy to achieve a reduction in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. The solution: a price on Carbon. [Report by Matt Alison] See also [Citizens Climate Lobby Australia](#).

FIELD DAY: SCARBOROUGH TO THIRROUL 27TH FEB

20 OFF members and friends enjoyed a very pleasant walk along the lovely south coast from Scarborough to Thirroul. The walk which was capably led by Sharyn Cullis started out with coffee and finished in a hotel in Thirroul. In between we walked about 8km along beaches, across headlands, had a swim and had great views of 38 sooty oystercatchers (an uncommon bird of rocky headlands). Sharyn's local knowledge enhanced the experience. Unfortunately, the high seas prevented us from exploring a rock platform, but overall it was a great day in beautiful surroundings and in pleasant company. [Report by Graham Fry]

CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA DAY

On Sunday 6th March, 40 people registered at Jinna Reserve South Peakhurst for the OFF Clean-up activity. Numbers from the Society were boosted by a contingent from Mortdale Girl Guides and their parents, plus some individuals who had seen our notices around the suburb. Some OFF members took their canoes out onto Lime Kiln Bay to get access to what was lurking in the mangroves; the rest picked their way around the muddy foreshores of the bay on both the Peakhurst and Oatley Park side of the inlet.

Total rubbish collected was 36 bags, nearly half of it plastic bottles; also 9 car tyres, PVC piping and metal objects. This was an outstanding result, although real success should be measured by the absence of any rubbish in our bushland and waterways.

We thank all those who gave up their morning to contribute to this community event. [Report by Alan Fairley]

A WALK AROUND OATLEY: 3RD APRIL #

The Historical Walk commences at 9.30am at [Poveli deli cafe](#). If you want a coffee before we start, get there earlier. We will see and discuss the Clock, Old railway station, War memorial, railway cutting, plaque and trees for those who worked to get the old bridge for pedestrians, the Bridge itself, the track to Neverfail bay and oyster history. We will go up old Cecil Street and down to Charles Street, taking in the view to the east, to the Pleasure grounds and its interesting history. Then we focus on the Anglican Church, the old War memorial and brand new Plaque, down Letitia to the School of Arts, the Radio theatre, and discuss the Banks of Oatley. We should be back in Frederick Street by 1pm.

The toilet stops are in Oatley memorial park near station, and Oatley Pleasure Grounds. No shops on route except in Oatley centre. Bring your water etc.

The track along the water pipe to Neverfail Bay is flat but a little rough. The railway cutting is wet when it rains, but at this stage is dry. If there is a problem, we can go around it.

15 people is a good number and many more makes it harder to tell the stories and look at the laminated pictures, so we can take bookings and first in will make the number; we can repeat the walk in the future if necessary. [Leader: Rodger Robertson]

FOR NOTING

Lime Kiln Bay Wetland 3-5 pm Sat Mar 19th Free Guided Walk [Leader Kim Wagstaff]. See quality of storm water runoff, abundant native plants and wildlife. Meet at corner of Waterfall Rd & Acacia St.- sturdy shoes, hat, water and sunscreen.

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues 22nd March [Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎0425 291 879].

Oatley Flora & Fauna on facebook highlighting Oatley & Surrounds with latest news alerts <https://www.facebook.com/>

Plant a Tree for Me The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife's new online campaign <https://www.google.com.au/>

CELEBRATING OFF DINNER 2016 *

The dinner will be at the Macquarie Function Centre Mortdale RSL on THURS 19th MAY at 7pm. Cost will be \$33 pp. Final payment by MONDAY 9th MAY. A 2 course meal, bread rolls, celebration cake, tea/coffee. Buy your drinks at the bar. Ample parking in club car park. Check menu choices on the OFF website. Choices needed at March or April meetings, including any special dietary requirements - vegetarian, vegan, and gluten free or contact me at by phone before MONDAY 2nd MAY when the menu has to be finalised. Lucky table prizes and raffle. Donations for the raffle will be greatly appreciated. [Contact Sue Howard ☎9579 1718]

