



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 4/15

April/May 2015

GAIN FOR NATIONAL PARKS

The Drip gorge, a spectacular sandstone rock formation on the Upper Goulburn River, northeast of Mudgee, has been removed from the coal lease to Yancoal. The 50ha area will be added to the Goulburn River National Park. <http://www.nature.org.au/media>



WILDERNESS THREATS

The Colong Foundation notes that appreciating the value of wilderness dates back to at least the Bible, and probably much earlier. The Aborigines in Australia from long ago had their 'quiet areas'. Great progress has been made with wilderness conservation in Australia, but now some of our best-known wilderness is under the threat of extinction. The most startling example is the Tasmanian Government wanting to extinguish six wilderness areas, of over 1.3 million ha in the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area*. www.colongwilderness.org.au/

HAVOC IN SEWAGE AND WATER SYSTEMS

As mentioned at our Sydney Water Guided Tour on 2nd March, Australians are flushing thousands of kilograms of "wet wipes" down their toilets every year, causing havoc in water and sewage systems. This is apparently a common problem throughout the world.

Many of these wet wipe items are advertised as "flushable," but the [Water Services Association of Australia](http://www.waterservices.org.au/) strongly disagrees. "We know 'flushable' wipes, despite what the manufacturers may claim, do not break down by the time they reach sewer infrastructure." The wipes cause expensive and disruptive blockages, posing an environmental risk with sewerage overflows. Wet wipes are also disrupting the production of [biogas](http://www.biogas.com/), which has been an adopted at most major sewage plants. Sydney Water has removed about 1 million kg of wet wipes from its wastewater systems over the past two years. Labelling on products must be consistent and accurate; and people must be encouraged to put wet wipes in the rubbish, not the toilet. Some blockages cost up to \$1000 to clear.

www.theage.com.au/wet-wipes-causing-havoc

LISMORE TO INVEST IN FOSSIL FREE FUEL

Lismore City Council is refusing to back institutions investing in fossil fuels such as coal seam gas. The decision makes it the fourth council in Australia, and the second in NSW to take such a stand. Lismore has been at the forefront of the recycling and recovery field, and through its [Renewable Energy Master Plan](http://www.renewableenergy.com.au/) is committed to self-generate all its electricity from renewables by 2023. <http://www.echo.net.au/>

MORE CLEAN ENERGY

Scientists have developed a highly efficient oxygen-producing electrode for splitting water with the potential to be scaled up for industrial production of hydrogen, clean energy fuel. The new technology is based on an inexpensive, specially coated foam material that lets the bubbles of oxygen escape quickly. Unlike other water electrolyzers that use precious metals as catalysts, the electrode is made entirely from two non-precious and abundant metals -- nickel and iron. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/

CONSERVATION FUND GRANT

OFF is to receive a Conservation Fund Grant of \$4550 from the Environment Minister for its *Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands Community Education & Engagement Project*, aimed at raising community awareness and involvement with the wetlands, and helping to reduce environmental impacts.

POPULATE AND PERISH?

OFF News Sept 1995 published an article under this heading, questioning whether continuing population growth, long regarded as essential, should be reviewed. It noted that in 1992, the NSW Dept of Planning requested comments on Sydney's future, only to be swamped by responses that Sydney was already too large. A Federal Inquiry into [Australia's Population Carrying Capacity](http://www.population.com.au/) (1994) showed that 95% of respondents opposed further increase. Australia's population has grown by almost 5 million in the last 15 years, and [critics](http://www.critics.com.au/) continue to express concern about the pressure this places on resources, social and environmental costs. The debate continues.



China's population is now 1.372 billion [World=7.28 billion]. Tokyo, the world's largest city has 36.9 million; its < beaches do get crowded! Estimates of the world's long-term human carrying capacity vary widely. There is a long way to go before consensus.

PREVENT DUMPING

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) noting illegal dumping as an eyesore and a potential hazard to the environment, has dedicated \$58 million over five years to address the problem as part of *Waste Less Recycle More*. This is the second round of Clean Up and Prevention grants, with more than \$1.6 million awarded last year to 15 projects across the state. The initiatives included the clean-up of dumping hotspots and the installation of preventative infrastructure, such as fencing, lighting, signage, and CCTV cameras, to try to stop dumpers. www.epa.nsw.gov.au/

MAY BLOOMS IN OATLEY PARK



Sweet-scented Wattle (*Acacia suaveolens*) is early flowering, commencing in April and lasting until November. A slender shrub with flat phyllodes to 12cm long, with the buds enclosed by brownish bracts falling to expose yellow flower heads. It is widespread and common. The whole list of May blooms is at <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=2032>.

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Thursday 14th May 7-10pm

GARDENS ON FOREST

PAYMENT DUE APRIL 27th at OFF Meeting

\$65 pp

Lucky Door Prize Songs from Trevor

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

April 27th (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Birder, environmentalist **Graham Fry** speaking on "Bhutan: balancing conservation with development."

May 2nd (Sat) Field day: The Spit to Manly Walk is one of the most spectacular walks around Sydney, through [Sydney Harbour National Park](#). Bring morning tea and drinks; refreshments are available at the Clontarf Kiosk. Morning tea will be a picnic at Grotto Point. The walk is 10km, taking about 3-4 hours. We will lunch at Manly, and then ferry back to the city. Catch the 8.13am train at Oatley [8.15 Mortdale]; change at Town Hall for Wynyard. At Wynyard walk to bus [Stand D](#) for no 180 bus to Collaroy Plateau [prepay only]. Leave the bus at the [Parriwi Rd stop at Spit Bridge](#), and start the walk. **Leader: Erica Buzo.**

May 14th (Thurs) OFF's 60th Anniversary Dinner at Gardens on Forest

May 25th (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with [OEH](#) Officer **Ben Hope** speaking on **Vertebrate Fauna of North Sydney Reserves "trapped on camera"**.

May 27th (Wed) Field day: Kemps Creek SAWT Facility Tour - see waste turned into a resource. **Leader: Alison Gilroy**

June 22nd (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Alan Fairley, featuring "A trip around [Gujarat, Western India](#)."

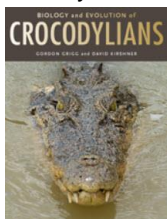
June 27th (Sat) Field day: Cowan to Taffys Rock via Jerusalem Bay, with stunning views of Hawkesbury River. **Leader: Adrian Buzo.**

CROCODYLIANS: MARCH 23RD

At our March meeting, David Kirshner, PhD [in crocodile studies] spoke to an audience of 40 about crocodiles, alligators, caimans, and gharials, known collectively as [crocodylians](#), the world's largest living reptiles.

He noted that the largest of them, probably the estuarine or saltwater crocodile, [Crocodylus porosus](#), could grow to almost 6m and weigh more than 1 ton. Crocodylians are creatures of great contrast. They can remain patiently still for ages, yet can also move like lightning to snap up a meal. They are formidably strong, active predators, with jaws that can tear apart large prey items, yet mothers can gently assist hatchlings out of the eggs, and carry them to the water between their teeth. Because large crocodylians can (and do) eat people, they invite fear and loathing, but they also inspire curiosity and admiration.

The book *Biology and Evolution of Crocodylians* co-authored by Gordon Grigg and David is a comprehensive review of current knowledge about the world's largest and most famous living reptiles. David is also an accomplished artist, and he produced all the illustrations, and most of the photos in the book. www.bookdepository.com/



BIRDWATCHING AND SPOTLIGHTING IN ROYAL NP

Many thanks to Deb Andrew for her expert help with identifying fauna on this outing on March 29th. Eighteen gathered at the lower causeway in the late afternoon and searched for the rather elusive birds. Highlights were a little Azure Kingfisher skimming along the Hacking River, a male Golden Whistler, and an abundance of Eastern Yellow Robins. As we had our picnic tea in the glade in dwindling light, the robins drew closer, piping softly and pouncing on insects in the grass. The spotlighting after dark illuminated only towering trees and spider eye shine, but Deb's keen ears alerted us to the calls of Boobook, Sooty Owl, and Sugar Glider in the distance, and a chorus of Green Stream Frogs by the river. The bright moonlight probably kept the mammals away, but it was a beautiful balmy evening for strolling through the forest.



EARTH HOUR 2015

On Saturday March 28th, 172 nations, territories, and around 1400+ iconic landmarks of the world switched off their lights as a symbol of their commitment to the planet. This was the ninth year of Earth Hour that famously started as an event in our Sydney, in 2007. Since then it has grown to engage more than 7000 cities and towns worldwide. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Hour

VALE MAMIE CLARK

Our long-time members will well remember Mamie Clark who died on 9th March in her 88th year. Mamie often expressed the pleasure and fulfilment she found in being an O.F.F. member for 23 yrs. Although never on the committee, she was very active and involved in Society activities. In the 1980-90s she represented O.F.F. on numerous occasions, including the long term National Parks bitou bush management project in the Kurnell area, and tree preservation meetings with Kogarah Municipal Council.

GEORGES RIVER 'SOURCE TO SEA' EVENTS

Greater Sydney Local Land Services are organising a number of events during National Volunteer Week (May 11-17th) for bushcare and other conservation volunteers to see what is happening on other sites, and what it is like upstream and downstream. The thought was to make this part of a large media event about the communities' investment in catchment health, water quality for recreation and fisheries, pest species management, bio-security, our urban bushland, and National Parks.

One event will be at the Georges River on 11&12th May, starting at Dharawal NP and finishing downstream on day 2, possibly at Towra Point.

An event is planned for Oatley Park around lunchtime on Day 2. This will be a gathering of Bushcare Volunteers, OFF and Oatley Swim Club members, with a BBQ and walk around to [Lime Kiln Bay](#) for an inspection, and discussion of bushcare activities, projects, and issues. All welcome and encouraged to join in. [facebook.com/pages/Hurstville-Bushcare-Volunteers-Network/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hurstville-Bushcare-Volunteers-Network/)

HURSTVILLE FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Hurstville City Council has commissioned an [Overland Flow Flood Study](#). Mayor, Cr Con Hindi said its purpose is to define flood behaviour under historical and existing floodplain conditions, and to address possible future variations in flood behaviour. Council is seeking feedback on the completed draft on public exhibition until 15th May at Council Chambers, the Library and on <http://www.hurstville.floodstudy.com.au/>

FOR NOTING

Colong Foundation, the successor to Myles Dunphy's National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, continues the battle for the wilderness. <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>

Membership of OFF Have you renewed yet? Details of Membership and means of joining are on our [website](#).

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues April 28th. [Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎0425 291 879].

Oatley Heritage & Historical Soc. April 24th 10.30am at Oatley Library with old photos and movies of Oatley.

www.oatleyhistory.org.au/

