



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Working to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment locally and globally, since 1955

LGA-WIDE BIODIVERSITY STUDY

Following on from the Local Planning Panel's rejection of GRC's Draft LEP2020 proposals to remove over 2300 houses from the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area, Georges River Council has engaged consultants Total Earth Care to undertake a Biodiversity Study of the entire LGA. This study aims to identify areas of high biodiversity value and importance to the LGA to ensure its protection. TEC want to hear from residents to share their knowledge and experience of biodiversity in their neighbourhood. A questionnaire is available on Council's Your Say page here:

<https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/biodiversity-study-for-georges-river>

The questionnaire closes on 11 December. OFF, along with other community groups, will also be participating in a Webinar on 26 November to discuss and contribute to this project. Residents can sign in to follow and contribute to the open discussion segment. In addition residents can forward their collected data and information to the consultants by email. OFF actively encourages all members of the community to contribute, by these means, as much information as you can on your observations and experience of the biodiversity in our LGA. It is only through extensive community participation that we will be able to protect our suburbs and precious environment.

MORE BIRD NEWS

Talking magpies, grieving tawny frogmouths and canny galahs, a Conversation with Sarah Konowski on ABC Radio November 2019:

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/conversations/gisela-kaplan-rpt/12294122>

Many assumptions about the nature of birds and their behaviour are completely wrong when applied to Australian birds.

Gisela Kaplan was a professor of sociology when a magpie nestling she was hand raising bonded closely with her, followed her about, and learned to speak. Her curiosity about birds became so strong she switched careers to become a field biologist and animal behaviourist. Based in Armidale NSW, Gisela has conducted extensive research into avian behaviour. Her second PhD was a study of the songs of Australian magpies.

Gisela's many books on Australian native birds have changed the way these creatures are understood. Along with her teaching, writing and research in ornithology, Gisela has been a wildlife carer for 25 years, raising countless birds of all ages.

She has written *Bird Bonds: sex, mate-choice and cognition in Australian native birds* and *Bird Minds, Tawny Frogmouth, and Australian Magpie*. Gisela is Emeritus Professor of animal behaviour at the Univ of New England.

Bird brains are more brilliant than anyone suspected

Although bird brains are tiny, they're packed with neurons, especially in areas responsible for higher level thinking. Two studies published last month in *Science* explore the structure and function of avian brains—revealing they are organized similarly to mammals and are capable of conscious thought.

Watch this video to learn how "bird brain" is becoming an insult of the past:

https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/10/why-bird-brains-are-more-brilliant-anyone-suspected?utm_source=newsfromscience%3Dflipboard%3Dflipboard2479552

If you want to read more about bird intelligence Jennifer Ackerman has written 2 good books: "The Genius of Birds" and "The Bird Way".

EXPLORING THE NATIONAL PARKS OF THE BOURKE AREA

Further to the report in last month's Newsletter, you can now read a more comprehensive report in the Brewarrina News! Debbie Andrew wrote a wonderful account of our trip and the Brewarrina Shire Council agreed to publish it in their monthly newspaper. You can find it at:

https://view.joomag.com/brewarrina-news-november-2020/0994038001604367832?short&fbclid=IwAR2qSqODFO9YbQ2ICPrwcqSQPq-f0VkdaxDXWCr3qgiUWN4SV_k09P9Nh0Y (page 10)

The Brewarrina News reaches Brewarrina, Gongolgon, Goodooga, Angledool, Weilmoringle and the World Wide Web. In other words, the real outback, as well as the world.

WALKS IN THE CENTRAL COAST

Intrepid walkers joined 2 walks on Sunday and Monday 1 & 2 November in the Central Coast area.

The first walk in the Brisbane Waters National Park from Patonga to Pearl Beach is part of the Great Northern Walk. 6 trekkers joined for this 6 km round trip. The initial part of the track leaving Patonga Beach was quite steep however the reward was a level walk along the cliff tops on the northern side of the Hawkesbury River with great views across Broken Bay to Kuringai National Park. The highlights included sighting a lyre bird, spring flowers, grand trees and impressive overhanging rock formations. After lunch in Pearl Beach, we visited the Pearl Beach Arboretum (Crommelin Native Arboretum). This natural botanic garden, established in 1976, is a sanctuary for rare and threatened plant species. On the return trip, 2 walkers carried out some bush regeneration, when they removed the flowers off 2 invasive Ochnas. This well shaded walk is recommended at any time during the year.



The second walk started on a cool sunny Monday at Putty Beach in the Bouddi National Park for one of the most beautiful central coast walks, part of the Great North Walk. Our party of 12 walkers enjoyed sweeping coastal views, shady rainforest and a walk across Maitland Bay beach. Two creek crossings meant we had a refreshing toe dip in the water. The spectacular coastline of headlands, rock platforms, bays, beaches, dunes and lagoons provided opportunities to see geology in action, including intriguing tessellated pavements between Putty Beach and Bullimah Beach. A well-earned lunch was taken at Maitland Bay, named after the S.S. Maitland paddle steamer, wrecked on 6 May 1898. Low tide provided a good view of the Maitland Bombora, a rocky reef area which produces distinctive waves, valued by some surfers. It is part of a marine national park. Our return was interrupted by a Diamond Python and Goanna on the walking track.

INAUGURAL 'RE-GREENING COUNTRY' EVENT AT MOORLANDS

Since the mass planting in September, random checks in October/November indicated 100% survival rate of the tube stock at Moorlands. Regular rainfall, the planning and preparation by Vince Heffernan, the care of our team when preparing and planting the 1800 tube stock, the tree guards and weed mats, all contributed to healthy and vigorous plants. With more rain forecast, growth next year should be fantastic. Plans are on track for planting approximately 2000 tube stock in September 2021. With the cooperation and support of the Menai Wildflower Group lead by Lloyd Hedges, we have commenced small scale trials with acacia and eucalyptus seeds gathered by Vince. We plan to commence full scale germination of seeds in February or March 2021 so tube stock would be 6 months old when planted. This project would need support from a number of OFF members at 2 critical stages: preparation of seed germination trays and transfer of seedlings from seed tray to tube stock.

NEW WEBSITE

Sharp-eyed readers may have noticed that the website address in the Newsletter footer and the link to the OFF program has changed: <http://www.oatleyflorafauna.org.au/>. That's due to the hard work of Melina Amerasinghe and Michael Korber over the last few months developing a friendlier site, particularly on mobile phones. This new website is still under construction and comments are welcome. The old site remains accessible while some of the information on it will be moved to the new site.

Coming OFF Events in November/December 2020

OFF Full Year Events Calendar at: <http://www.oatleyflorafauna.org.au/index.php/progam/>

OFF will continue with the monthly guest speaker program for 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we must conduct these meetings on-line, using the video conference application Zoom, which you can download for free via this link: <https://zoom.us/> or from Play Store (Google) or App Store (Apple). You should run a test before meetings to ensure you can connect on the night. You will receive an invitation prior to meetings or use the link below.

Note that some OFF presentations and earlier movies can now be found on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd_PLK8og40D0ekuYAys3lQ

23 November 2020 — Keeping mining out of water catchments

Dr Ian Wright will talk on the impact of extensive groundwater contamination at coal-ash sites and subsequent pollution of waterways and bio-accumulation. Ian is an expert in water quality and water management, environmental planning and environmental regulation. His research interests include freshwater ecology, water chemistry and water pollution. Ian has a long standing interest in the impact of urban development and mining on streams and rivers, and is an enthusiastic participant in community engagement activities in water science and management projects.

Please login before 7.30pm: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3742141020?pwd=i_daK5memiUVeVb7bERgr5WgKybj2w

OFF 2021 Activity Program (2020 program is complete)

We are at that time of the year again when we are planning our 2021 activity program and we would like our members to consider leading an activity next year. Our program for the first half of this year was disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak but fortunately our activities resumed mid-year and they have been well received. An activity can range from a 15km walk to a cruise on Port Hacking, so please consider; it is an important component of OFF. Please contact Graham Fry on fryg45@gmail.com or 9580 6621 with your ideas for an activity. The program has to be finalised by late January to be included in the 2021 printed program.

OFF Annual Picnic

The annual Christmas picnic in Oatley Park is scheduled to take place on Monday 7th December from 5.30pm in the Castle in Oatley Park, so make sure to put that in your diary. After a year with very few OFF gatherings, this will be a nice opportunity to catch up with other members in person for a relaxed social evening. Arrive earlier if you would like to secure a car space close to the building. Note that the Castle closes at 7 pm. Hand sanitizer will be provided. BYO meal and Christmas cheer; in view of COVID precautions, sharing of food is not encouraged but individually-wrapped goodies, or use of tongs could overcome this problem. You might like to bring a comfortable chair and small table to supplement the tables and benches in the Castle.

1 February 2020 – OFF Annual General Meeting

Next year's first Monday meeting will be the Annual general Meeting. A reminder that this is the time when we are calling for members to form a new Committee for 2020. You are invited to nominate at the AGM. Next year the Society will be looking to fill a number of positions: Secretary, Vice-President, Activity Officer, Website manager as well as OFF News Editor. So, please consider stepping up and contributing to your society.

Meetings of the Society are normally held at the Oatley RSL Sub-Branch Hall, 25 Letitia St, Oatley from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and field days.

However, until the restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic are lifted, meetings will be held digitally using the Zoom application.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is normally on second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm. Next month it will be held on 12 December. Meet at the main entrance in Oatley Park Ave. New participants welcome, contact John Kensett - GRC Bushcare Officer, m: 0435 963 643

LOCAL BUSHCARE Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites each month on the Thursday after general meetings from 8.00 am to 11 am. We will be back on 26 November at Gannons Park, supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer. This year there will also be a session on December 17 at Boorrea Reserve (near Oatley station) (8 - 11am).

STREAMWATCH details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Myles Dunphy Reserve on 24 November.

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY meetings held at 2.30 pm on the second Sunday of every month. These meetings are now being held on-line using Zoom. The address is <http://zoom.us/j/7868786878>.

2021 CALENDAR.

The 2021 Oatley Calendar is now available. It is a happy and colourful calendar with beautiful Oatley vistas, flora and fauna. It is available for \$10 from select Oatley Cafes and businesses: 121 Cafe, Mulga Road Bookshop, Povelli Cafe, The Hungry Spoon Cafe, Mullane's Pharmacy, PRD Nationwide, Oatley Physiotherapy, St Kai and Lugarno Deli Cafes.

Calendars will also be available at the OFF annual picnic and at pre-Christmas stalls on Saturdays 5, 12, and 19 December in Oatley and Mortdale. Local contactless delivery can also be arranged if necessary: ring Vicki on 02 9580 3107.

POP-UP STREET STALLS

OFF will hold three stalls in December to sell the Oatley 2021 calendars. Oatley Lions will again join us to sell Christmas cakes and puddings. The stalls will run from about 8.30 to midday on the following dates:

- Saturday 5th December outside the former CBA site in Oatley
- Saturday 12th December outside the current CBA site in Mortdale
- Saturday 19th December outside the former CBA site in Oatley

As well as calendars, there will be some Christmas cards featuring local bird photos, home-made jams, and some native seedlings for sale. Volunteers are needed to run the stalls; please contact Liz Cameron on 9580 6621 or elsmere02@gmail.com to offer a time when you can help.

2021 MEMBERSHIP

Annual \$25 membership subscription is due on January 1st 2021. As our November Meeting will be held via ZOOM this can be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer: it is IMPERATIVE that you enter your name into the transfer document otherwise there will be no record of your subscription payment/donation. Bank Details: BSB: 062 206. Act Number: 901997. OR: POST: Cheque or money order mailed to address in the footer CASH or CHEQUE: At our annual Christmas picnic 7th December 2020.

CASH, CHEQUE or CARD at the annual Christmas Street Stalls
The annual Membership Fee of \$25 for individuals or households covers attendance at OFF events and activities. Membership support is vital for our continuing influence on local and wider conservation issues. We are pleased that we have not had to increase membership fees since 2005 but you are most welcome to add a donation to your payment. Donations will be directed to OFF's annual postgraduate grants, assisting research by University students on topics relevant to OFF's mission.