



APPLYING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TO CAMERA IMAGERY TO IMPROVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT.

Jessica Tin-Ying Tam, an OFF research grant recipient presented a very interesting and easy to understand overview of her research into using computer vision to automatically identify species of wildlife in camera trap images. Artificial intelligence (AI) has opened many doors for the automatic analysis of large volumes of data and applications to analyse imagery data have exploded in the last decade. But these tools are emerging relatively slowly in the ecological space, especially for detecting threatened species and facilitating their conservation. Jessica explained various AI models which she trained and tested using different numbers of wildlife images. Research by Jessica and some colleagues will be useful to support the Wild Deserts project lead by Professor Richard Kingsford at UNSW.

Jessica's presentation can be viewed on OFF's YouTube channel [here](#)

RE-GREENING

1. Moorlands Bird Count

The second survey of birds in regenerated areas took place on 13th October. Despite cold windy weather (max. ~ 10°C), Graham Fry and Liz Cameron, with two South Australian birding friends, recorded 107 birds at 5 sites. This was fewer than the autumn count in April (246) but there were more species - 32 versus 27; recently-arrived summer migrants included Rufous Whistlers, Western Gerygones and a Shining Bronze Cuckoo. The difference may be that Oct is peak breeding season for many small birds and some would have been inconspicuously sitting on nests. In April, young birds had fledged and swelled the population; and a flock of migrating Yellow-faced Honeyeaters further bumped up our numbers. Unsurprisingly, the greatest bird variety was recorded in original woodland and older regenerated sites.

These surveys, to monitor one aspect of the success of regeneration on farms, are co-ordinated by the ACT and Yass team of BirdLife Australia's Birds on Farms program in partnership with rural landholders: <https://birdlife.org.au/projects/birds-on-farms>

2. Burradoo on the Wingecarribee River (near Bowral)



OFF members helped to plant close to 1000 trees and shrubs over two days at a property on the banks of the Wingecarribee River at Burradoo, along with [Adopt A Tree](#), [Southern Highlands Landcare Network](#) and [Caringbah Rotary](#).

The site of this planting links upstream and downstream plantings to provide a continuous corridor for fauna habitat and also stabilises banks and improves water quality, including for platypus.

RESTORATION AND CARBON CAPTURE

Bush Heritage Australia is also re-greening country on their reserves, but not including agriculture; they are fully restoring landscapes and capturing carbon as well on cleared, unproductive land. The first seeds of a world-class restoration project are planted and set the bar for future carbon projects

In partnership with [Greening Australia](#), Bush Heritage's restoration work at [Ediegarrup Reserve](#) is setting a new standard for carbon sequestration on. Ediegarrup Reserve 140km east of Albany on Koreng Noongar Country in south-west Western Australia. Read more [here](#)

2023 BANKS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

OFF's nominee, Geoff Francis, received a 2023 Banks Volunteer of the Year Award on 11 October. The awards were presented by David Coleman MP and Senator Jane Hume, in a ceremony to recognise and celebrate the wonderful efforts of volunteers in the many community organisations in the Federal electorate of Banks. More than 50 volunteers were nominated by their organisations. OFF's nomination read:

Geoff is a stalwart member of Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society and his specialist knowledge in many fields of natural science is valued by our organisation. He also generously shares his knowledge with the wider community, for the benefit of all. He has volunteered with councils and community groups (including Conservation Volunteers Australia - CVA) in a range of programs including Bushcare and Streamwatch, for more than 20 years.

Over that period Geoff has also dedicated many, many hours to studying vulnerable species, in particular the Grey-headed Flying-fox and the Koala. He loads his records onto the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's Bionet database, so they are available in the public domain. Since 2010, Geoff has monitored and reported on the Grey-headed Flying Fox camp in Myles Dunphy Reserve in Oatley. His valuable records of this threatened species and the food sources on which it depends, was acknowledged in the Draft Oatley Flying-fox Camp Management Plan 2021. He has also undertaken bushcare in this reserve, to enhance the flying-foxes' habitat.

Since 2016 Geoff has undertaken a range of activities to monitor Koala populations in the Southern Highlands and Sydney Basin; these include radio-tracking and canopy searches. Currently he is volunteering 2 days per month, just on Koala surveys. He is a champion for greater protection of local wetlands and Sydney's water catchment. He has liaised with Sydney Water to regularly report sewage overflows and to campaign for improvements to sewerage infrastructure.

Geoff has shared his deep knowledge and appreciation of our rich biodiversity with residents by leading them on Aussie Backyard Bird Counts (a citizen science program celebrating its 10th anniversary this year) and night-spotting walks. Recently he has been leading field trips for CVA's Rockdale Wetlands Project. Geoff is a quiet achiever who is dedicated to protecting our environment for the benefit and enjoyment of all in our community. This award is so well-deserved by Geoff and OFF members thank you for your huge contribution to the environment sustained over such a long period of time.

PASSING OF WENDY CORNISH

Long-standing OFF member and Oatley resident Wendy (or Claire) Cornish, OAM, also known as "the Raffle Queen" or "Mrs Raffle" passed away on 13th October. Wendy was a teacher and became an accomplished and popular principal at Hurstville Grove Infants School. She was often seen tending to her property in Yarran Rd, which was a wildlife refuge and probably had the first verge garden in the LGA.

Wendy dedicated her retirement to helping many causes including Oatley Lions, Country Women's Association and Riverwood Air League. Wendy was best known for her fundraising efforts for Bezzina House (St George Hospital Community Cancer Care Centre) and the hospital's Lamrock Committee. She was awarded an OAM for her volunteer work in 2002

WARRAGAMBA WALL RAISING SHELVED.

In May 2020, Harry Burkiit spoke to OFF about the campaign to stop the NSW Government raising the height of the Warragamba Dam wall. Wilderness Australia reported on November 1, 2023, that the Development Application has been officially withdrawn. Many conservation groups, traditional owners, scientists, technical experts, local councils and local residents had banded together for over half a decade to ensure the dam wall height was never increased. The successful "Stop the Dam" campaign is a timely reminder that when we work together and stay focussed, we can be successful in our endeavours to stand up for the environment, regardless of the odds.



Coming OFF Events in November/December 2023

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

Meetings are held in the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley, starting at 7.30pm. Meetings will also be available on-line, using the video conference application Zoom. If you are on the OFF News email list, you will receive an invitation by email prior to meetings or use this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3742141020?pwd=i_daK5memiUjVb7bERgr5WgKybj2w Note: Some OFF presentations & movies can now be found on [YouTube](#)

20 November 2023: *The Wonderful World of Wattles, Rhonda Daniels, Australian Plant Society (APS).*

Note. This is a change from the speaker advertised in the program.

Rhonda will discuss the diversity of flowers, foliage and fruit, Aboriginal and European uses, our local acacias, and acacias in the garden. There will be some myth-busting and lots of photos. Rhonda is a long-time member of the Australian Plants Society NSW, and is active in various roles in her local Sutherland Group, APS NSW and the national body. She appeared briefly in a propagation segment on Gardening Australia in April.

Supper will be served after this meeting. This will be an opportunity for members to linger and chat over light refreshments at the conclusion of the meeting - about 9 pm. Tea, coffee and fruit juice will be provided; you are invited to bring something sweet or savoury to share. +`-`

11 November & 9 December 2023 - Oatley Park Bushcare

OFF members volunteer to carry out bush regeneration at Oatley Park on the second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm, (except January). Please check with GRC Bushcare Officer on 0435 963 643 before coming.

23 November 2023 - Local Bushcare

Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites on a Thursday either 1 or 2 weeks after general meetings (exc Dec) from 8.00 am to 11 am. This month we will be at Boorea Reserve (Oatley Station) supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer and we welcome new [bushcarers](#).

25 November 2023 – Oatley Lions Christmas Community Market Day. Oatley Uniting Church, Frederick Street. OFF will have a stall at this community event. Let the secretary know if you can assist, or drop in and say hello.

4 December - Christmas Picnic in Oatley Park 5.30pm in the Castle (arrive earlier if you would like to park nearby). BYO meal and Christmas cheer and perhaps a chair and small table to supplement the seating in the Castle. You can renew your membership at the picnic. New members are particularly welcome.

2, 9 and 16 December - Street Stalls to sell 2024 Oatley calendar. Please contact Liz Cameron on 9580 6621 (you can leave a voicemail message) if you are able to assist at these stalls or drop by and buy a calendar on one of these days: Oatley 2 Dec, Mortdale 9 Dec and Oatley 16 Dec.

Advance notice: 5 February - Annual General Meeting (AGM) Next year's first Monday meeting will be the AGM. This is the time when we call for members to form a new Committee for 2023. You are invited to nominate at the AGM. Please consider joining the committee and contributing to the running of the Society.

Meetings of the Society are at the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the third Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and field days. As noted above, the meeting is accessible on-line using ZOOM.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

STREAMWATCH This activity takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) in the week after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Myles Dunphy Reserve on 28 November. Details: Graham Lalchere, 0430 968 260.

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY meetings held at 2.30 pm on the second Sunday of every month by ZOOM: <http://zoom.us/j/7868786878>

PICNIC FOR NATURE

On a beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon OFF members celebrated the Nature Conservation Council's (NCC) state-wide Picnic for [Nature](#) at Webb's Dam, Evatt Park with members of [Save Glenlee Lugarno](#) and [Lugarno Progress Association - LPA](#). Our picnic was one of almost 40 events across the state celebrating [#picnicfornature2023](#). The NCC congratulated all the community groups/people who organised and/or attended a picnic, planted trees, gave back, formed connections and built our movement for nature.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN TRIP TO SNOWY MOUNTAINS

OFF is pleased to announce that again we are facilitating another Snowy Mountains holiday at Pygmy Possum Lodge at Charlotte Pass. The dates we have selected are from 7th to the 14th January 2024 and participants can stay for as long as they want during that week. The rates are \$120 per person per day to a maximum of \$480 per person, so if you stay longer than four days the extra days are free. Currently ten OFF members have booked accommodation and with over half of the lodge now reserved it might be wise to make a booking soon. To make a booking contact Graham Fry on fryg@gmail.com to obtain the booking details.

GRC COLLECTING EXPANDED POLYSTYRENE

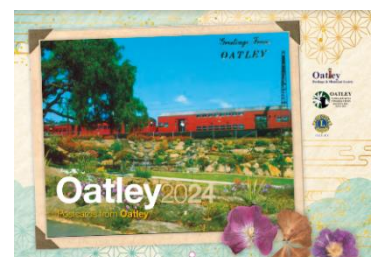
Georges River Council has announced that it is now collecting for recycling a number of previously un-recyclable materials, including expanded polystyrene (EPS). These materials can be dropped off at council's E-Waste Drop Off events. Other materials included are hard plastics including plastic chairs, milk crates and various plastic containers. Details available [here](#)

2024 OATLEY CALENDAR

Don't forget your 2024 calendar available at:

- Oatley West Newsagency
- The Hungry Spoon Cafe Oatley
- O'Connor's Pharmacy Oatley
- Oatley Lions Market Day

Still great value at \$10 and a great present.



MEMBERSHIP.

OFF Annual membership fee of \$25 will be due 1st January 2024, as membership runs from Jan 1st 2024 to December 31st 2024. New members can join now & will be financial through to December 2024. Just send a completed membership [form](#) to one of the Membership Officers at suhoward@bigpond.net.au or beuzevilles@outlook.com Members whose memberships have lapsed are welcome to re-join.

Remember to check the [OFF Facebook](#) page and [OFF website](#) and page for more information and news, and comment on OFF's activities.