



INTERACTIONS OF MAMMAL AND REPTILE PREDATORS

An audience of 40 watched Brendan Alting present results from his PhD project into interactions between dingoes, an apex predator, and 3 mesopredators – quolls, foxes and goannas. Apex predators, such as dingoes, can exert strong influences on smaller predators, suppressing their numbers, benefitting smaller species in different ways.

Brendan is a final year PhD Student at the University of New South Wales and an OFF research grant recipient. Brendan's work is part of the Myall Lakes Dingo Project, ongoing on the mid-north coast of NSW since 2019.

As part of the project Brendan set up camera traps so he could identify the number of different species in the research area. This resulted in more than a million images, not necessarily all of animals, which had to be checked and identified. Artificial Intelligence was used to assist in this process reducing the amount of work needed.

One of the project aims is to improve dingo management through collaboration with local residents, national parks, indigenous groups, and council. This includes educating the public to understand dingo behaviour and especially to not feed them. This research indicated that the pure-bred dingoes in the area seem to cooperate within a number of defined ranges.

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

KAYAK/WALK ALONG/ON WINGECARRIBEE RIVER

Joint field day at Burradoo with Southern Highlands Landcare Network. 31 OFF members and friends enjoyed a lovely day out at Burradoo near Bowral, hosted by Ian and Heather from Southern Highlands Landcare. 20 people paddled on the Wingecarribee River from Burradoo to Berrima Weir (11km round trip), guided by Ian Royds. A highlight was a platypus sighting near the launch site.

The non paddlers enjoyed a walk along the river and saw the planting along the riverbank which was done in November. Some of the eucalypts are now more than a metre high! The river-bank restoration was started by Ian approx. 35 years ago and it is fabulous to see the resultant beautiful big trees.

The walkers also continued on to the Bong Bong Weir just past the picnic area. Both groups met at Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve for a picnic lunch.

It was beautiful weather for this combined field day, particularly as it rained heavily the next day! Photos of the day can be seen in OFF [Google Photos](#)

GLENLEE UPDATE

Glenlee has been sold to persons as yet unknown. Until a DA is submitted the property remains as is and is not yet regarded to be in imminent danger. This was the "trigger" mentioned by the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Penny Sharpe, needed to invoke another NSW State Interim Heritage Order. Locals and others concerned about the fate of Glenlee should be forever vigilant for any undue developments – such as an excavator or other plant or equipment being moved onto the property. Please contact Georges River Council and/or ring this 0408 605 923 if this occurs. An earlier update can be viewed [here](#)

GEORGES RIVER BIODIVERSITY AND FORESHORE STUDIES (LEP2021) - FSPA REVISITED) - OUTCOMES

GRC's draft planning proposal for changes to the Georges River Local Environment Plan 2021, after passing through Council's Environment and Planning Committee, was put to the full March Council meeting. In essence it maintained all the minimum lot sizes for subdivision as they were in the former Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA) back in 2020 as well as reasonable floor space ratios (FSR) and landscaped areas (percentages) across the Foreshore Scenic Protection and Unique Character Areas (UCA) as well those lots that were previously in the FSPA but were then excluded under the previously proposed plans. In total, there were over 320 submissions to the consultation: 293 individual submissions from the

community, and 30 community submissions based on a proforma. In addition, of 178 responses to the lot size poll, 83.4% were in favour of keeping the existing minimum lot size for subdivision. A win for the environment through participatory democracy? Many, many people had or took an interest in the proposals and made submissions. Ultimately, we believe these are what influenced Council's decisions: ie, the community's strong views, supported effectively by the current Councillors. OFF would like to thank Councillors Borg, Jamieson, Landsberry, Mahoney and Mort, who promised to advocate to save the FSPA in their Responses to OFF's candidate survey.

Further, to mitigate the potential for these resolutions to be impacted by Premier Minns' Sydney densification push that could result in relaxation of allowable developments in Council's LEPs, the following recommendation was also adopted by Council:

Exclusion from Complying Development

Request the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to exclude the application of the Low-Rise Housing Diversity Code from the proposed FSPA and proposed UCA to ensure dual occupancies, manor houses, multi dwelling housing and terraces are only permitted through the Development Application process.

MEMORIAL TO SHARYN CULLIS

OFF is proposing to establish a memorial for Sharyn Cullis, a well-known and illustrious member of OFF and avid campaigner on environmental issues, who tragically passed away in 2022. Prominent among these were the establishment of Dharawal National Park, protection of our vulnerable Koala populations, particularly in western Sydney, caring for the Georges River and assisting OFF in its endeavours.

Sharyn was the long-time Principal of the Georges River Environmental Education Centre, founder and Secretary of the Georges River Environmental Alliance and long-time community representative on the Georges Riverkeeper Committee. In recent years she received her PhD, focusing on the effects of coal-mining on the water catchments south of Sydney supplying up to 25% of Sydney's water supply. This was another of her passions. She was also at the forefront of Oatley residents' concerns about the effects of GRC's planning proposals in the preceding article.

The [Council's Historical Markers](#) program is one way to achieve this. Nominations close on 19th May. Members are urged to nominate Sharyn, a lifelong dedicated voice for the natural environment. Information available:

[Leader article](#) in Sharyn's memory.

Sharyn's Sutherland Shire Environment Centre [Bill Ryan Activism Award](#) Georges River Ratepayers and Residents Party (GRRRP) [condolences](#) OFF's nomination of Sharyn for the [2018 St George Community Award](#)

SYDNEY BASIN KOALA PROTECTION

The Sydney Basin Koala Network (SBKN) attended the recent NSW Koala Summit held as part of the process of reviewing the NSW Koala Strategy, with the aim of gathering thoughts and ideas of members prior to making a submission to the review. Following this seminar SBKN released a progress report, *State of Koalas in the Sydney Basin: First Annual Assessment*, containing new scientific insights from Biolink and a legislative review by EDO. SBKN believes that the current strategy to avoid Koalas becoming extinct by 2050 is not working and made recommendations. SBKN has provided a submission guide to its members: NSW Koala Strategy Review Submission Guide for the Sydney Basin, which can be viewed [here](#). The assessment report can be viewed [here](#).

OFF members are encouraged to review these documents and make a submission to the [NSW Government Review of the NSW Koala Strategy](#) due by 26 April. The current strategy can be viewed [here](#).

Coming OFF Events in April/May 2024

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_daK5memiUVeVb7bERqr5WgKybj2w. Note: Some OFF presentations & movies can now be found on [YouTube](#)

15 April –Fungal Biodiversity - Ecology, Diversity and Distribution

Vanessa McPherson and Michael Gillings are members of the Environmental Microbiology and Molecular Analysis (EMMA) Laboratory in the School of Natural Sciences, at Macquarie University. This laboratory concentrates on the origins and dynamics of genetic diversity, and how such analyses can inform conservation, health, environmental management, and evolutionary biology. Most of the core work in the laboratory examines microbial diversity in various environmental compartments. They have used molecular techniques to investigate a range of organisms, from marsupials and insects, to native and agricultural plants; down to fungi and bacteria in soil or water.

28 April 2024 (Sunday) – Grays Point to Audley Loop via Hacking River.

Meet at 9:30am at carpark near Grays Point public school, Grays Pt road. Walk is approx. 6kms, starting with a steep descent on a bush track over rocks, tree stumps, so bring poles if needed. Then walk along the Hacking River to Audley. Great bush with lots of Banksias, Eucalypts and Angophoras, as well as native flowers along the track. Picnic at Audley, so bring along lunch, snacks and water. Then we ascend the Honeymoon track back up, with lovely views back down to the river. This track up isn't steep as steps are well placed apart. Leader: Lesley Wylie. Contact. 0400 562 085

13 April (Saturday) - First re-greening event for 2024 with Greater Sydney Landcare Network. Beale Reserve Peakhurst, 2,000 plants. This planting includes 1000 tube stock from the Menai wildflower volunteer nursery. Register on Eventbrite [here](#). Share to your network as well. 9am to 2pm.

2 May - Local Bushcare (Note. This is 1 week later than expected due to ANZAC Day.)

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 to 11 am. This month we will be at lower Gannons Park supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer. We welcome new bushcarers:

<https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Volunteering>

11 May - 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). Meet at the entrance on Oatley Park Avenue. New participants welcome. Please check with GRC Bushcare Officer on 0435 963 643 before coming.

Advance Notice: 20 May – General Meeting: Flies – An example of the Unending Diversity of Our Planet's Biota. Dr Dan Bickel (Aust Museum).

Advance notice: 26 May (Sunday) -- Field Day: Red Hands Cave. Matt Allison.

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 takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) 1 week after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Dairy Creek (near Scout Hall in Glen Road) on 23 April. Check before coming on 0430968260.

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY meetings are 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>

QUARTERLY MEETINGS WITH MAYOR

The quarterly meetings with the GRC Mayor are to be re-instated following OFF's request, to discuss issues of common interests. If you have issues that you would like brought up with the Mayor, please contact our President, Kim Wagstaff.

MEETING WITH FEDERAL MEMBER DAVID COLEMAN.

OFF President, Kim Wagstaff, and Vice-President, Adrian Polhill, recently met with MP David Coleman. After canvassing some federal issues including desperately needed action on the climate emergency faced by all Australians, we put local issues to David for any assistance he could provide. We, and David, considered the most likely chance of securing Federal assistance in our local area would be for other OFF priority issues such as programs/projects that focussed on improving the health of the Georges River. In this case, these might be: **1.** Renovation of Lime Kiln Bay wetlands to improve not only aesthetics but also water quality flowing to Georges River; and **2.** Construction of additional Gross Pollutant Trap/s (GPTs) to

capture and remove rubbish from stormwater drains before flowing under the golf course and into the River's mangroves. The need for this work was clearly evidenced at our recent Clean-up Australia Day event at this location.

LITTLE PENGUINS OF EDEN

OFF member Chris Lloyd has for some time been involved with a project to conserve the Little Penguins of Twofold Bay with an aim to bring back a thriving colony for years to come.

Eden was once home to a thriving little penguin colony that held a special place in the locals hearts. The penguins faced challenges with predators, as well as habitat erosion. These factors caused a significant decline in the penguin population, ultimately leading to the colony's extinction by the early 1990s. The Eden community was devastated by the loss and rallied together to raise funds in the hope of resurrecting the penguin colony. These funds remained in the Eden Fairy Penguin Fund until 2016 when Wendy Noble, Ranger from National Parks & Wildlife Service, Nicholas Carlile, Senior Research Scientist and Chris Lloyd from Southern Ocean Seabird Study Association resurrected the project. You can read about this project, [here](#).



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