



Save the Nature of the Kimberley
environs
KIMBERLEY
 INC

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MARIA GETS HER JUST DESERTS



In January, Wild magazine named Environs Kimberley's long serving Director, Maria Mann, winner of its Environmentalist of the Year award for 2007. The presentation by the Victorian-based wilderness adventure publishing house was made to Maria 'in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the preservation of Australian wilderness'.

Maria has been an active member of Environs Kimberley for more than a decade, initially as a volunteer and more recently as our salaried Director.

In the citation for the award, Maria was praised for coordinating efforts to save the nature of the Kimberley, in the process putting EK on the map as the area's peak non-government organization.

Amongst many other contributions to the Kimberley environment, Maria led EK's first and longest-lasting campaign—to keep the Fitzroy River flowing free—against proposals to dam the river for a broadscale cotton-growing venture, and to transfer its water to Perth. Maria's

level-headedness and strategic sense were major assets contributing to EK's success.

After listing EK's major achievements, the Wild citation continues: 'Without Maria Mann's direction and tireless efforts, none of these things would have been achieved and the Kimberley would be a very different place today.'

We at EK think the award is well-deserved, and Maria herself was thrilled. Now she has gone off to Paris and Finland to spend the \$1000 award money. In her absence, our Freshwater Campaigner Gary Scott will ably fill her shoes.

WANTED—ALIVE!!! VOLUNTEERS FOR OUR MARKET STALL AND UPCOMING EVENTS

If you've been wanting to help save the nature of the Kimberley, then this is your golden opportunity! Our market stall operates every Saturday from 7.30–12.30 with two shifts of two volunteers each looking after the stall—that's a commitment of only 2½ hours! Of course, you choose how often you would like to work on our stall.

We also urgently need trailer volunteers, who can tow the trailer to the markets in the morning and take it back after the market finishes. Again, the more the merrier, and the fewer times you will be called on.

Major events this year will include our annual Fundraising Art Auction (7 June) and Science Week (16–24 August). Both are big events, so lots of helpers are needed!

For our Art Auction we need helpers for our food team (to bring food and/or serve it to our customers) and clean-up team.

Please think about it and tell all your friends. For more information and to register your interest in becoming part of our dynamic volunteer team, call Christine on 9192 1922 or e-mail: envrkimb2@westnet.com.au



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT (EX CATHEDRA)

Another quarter of a year has whirled by and the good ship EK forges on, through tempest and tribulation. In the face of the enormous threat that is posed to the Kimberley environment by uncontrolled development of the Browse Basin offshore gas deposits, the EK Board has charted a course between the extremes of pragmatism and idealism. We have issued a Joint Statement with the Kimberley Land Council and the Australian Conservation Foundation, WWF, the Wilderness Society and Conservation Council of Western Australia, which seeks protection for the Kimberley coastline while acknowledging that, if any part of our coast is industrialised, the damage to country should be paid for by significant economic benefit to the traditional owners and their descendants. At the same time, we have campaigned with other conservation and natural heritage groups to keep the proposed Inpex development away from the sensitive Maret Islands, and to pressure the state and federal governments to undertake full heritage studies of the Kimberley, as well as to take a coordinated strategic approach to these and all major projects. As always, the thoughts of every or any EK member are welcome on this and any other matter affecting the Kimberley.

Our director Maria Mann has taken a well-earned two months leave and Freshwater Campaign officer Gary Scott

is doing a wonderful job acting in her position, as well as continuing his normal duties. Community WEEDS project officer Louise Williams and Admin Assistant Christine Elsasser are continuing their excellent work — in breaking news, EK has been granted funding for a Science Week project later this year, thanks to Louise's initiative. In 2008 we will also be reviewing our Strategic Plan, dealing with major staff changes and trying to deliver the best possible environmental outcomes in relation to the proposed gas industry. Once again we are facing a problem with funding for staff wages and campaigns, so we have come up with the Dozen Donors Program to replenish the coffers and allow EK to continue to Save the Nature of the Kimberley. If you or your friends are able to help out by making a tax-deductible donation, please let us know.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all the unpaid contributors to our organization, including the members of the EK board, the regular volunteers at the markets, and those who have been happy to help out at one-off events, such as the musicians at our very successful Christmas party. Thank you all.



Peter

ACTING DIRECTOR'S DIGRESSIONS



Minister Garrett announces Kimberley Strategic Assessment

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2008. It promises to be a big year for the Kimberley and for EK, with the Kimberley coast set to receive a lot of attention.

In early February, EK Committee member Tanvier Fowler and I attended a two-day coastal and marine values workshop in Broome organised by WWF-Australia. This event brought leading scientists and local people together in a collective attempt to identify and map important habitats and ecological processes along the Kimberley coast.

The workshop began on a high

note, as the new Federal Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, announced by video that the Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments had agreed to undertake a strategic environmental assessment of liquefied natural gas (LNG)-based industrialisation of the Kimberley coast. This is something that EK, along with other environment group members of the Kimberley Alliance, had been pressing both levels of government to agree to.

The WA Government's Northern Development Taskforce, set up last year, will continue with its task of identifying a suitable location for what is being called a 'Common-User LNG Hub Precinct' along the Kimberley coast. Importantly,

it will also consider sites outside the Kimberley. The Taskforce expects this process to take around six months. In EK's view it should take longer, given the need to consult with communities

along the coast and to collect and properly assess all relevant scientific and cultural information.

Assuming that a site is identified by the Taskforce, the WA Minister for State Development, currently Eric Ripper, would become the proponent for an

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industrial hub. Approval for the development of the hub would then have to be gained from the WA Environmental Protection Authority and the Federal Environment Minister under the respective state and Commonwealth environmental legislation. Once environmental approval has been obtained, there is likely to be a fast-tracked approvals process for any proposed industrial development wishing to locate there.

Whilst all of this is going on, the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts will be undertaking an assessment of the national heritage values of the west Kimberley coast from Cape Londonderry in the north to just south of Broome. This could result in national heritage listing for all or parts of the coast and be an important step on the path towards World Heritage listing.

Environs Kimberley welcomed the announcement by Minister Garrett and the WA Government. However, we are extremely concerned that Inpex is being allowed to continue to seek environmental approval for its Maret Islands LNG proposal and have called upon the Federal Minister to use his powers to require the company to engage in the new hub process. Environment groups rallied in Perth recently

outside the Inpex office and delivered a letter asking the company to immediately cease its operations on the Maret Islands.

Our constant pressure on Inpex is having some impact. In January, the company cited the need to address the concerns of 'activist groups', as well as new government arrangements, and financial and engineering issues, as reasons for a probable delay in the anticipated start-up time for the project. It is also considering alternative locations should government eventually refuse approval for the Maret Islands.

EK will continue to rely on the support of our members and the local community throughout 2008. With your help, we intend to maintain the pressure on government to protect the Kimberley coast from destructive development and, as always, to speak out with a critical voice where we deem it necessary.

The Draft Terms of Reference for the Kimberley LNG hub strategic assessment have been released for public comment and can be found on the website of the WA Department of Industry and Resources: www.doir.gov.au/ndt. Submissions close on 21 March.



A FISHWAY FOR THE FITZROY RIVER—A PROGRESS REPORT

Many EK members may have seen the excellent segment on ABC TV's Catalyst show in September last year.

The show highlighted the Freshwater Sawfish tagging research program being conducted on the Fitzroy River by Dave Morgan and Dean Thorburn from Murdoch University, with the help of the Nyikina-Mangala Rangers from Jarlmandangah. If you missed it you can still watch it online at <http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/s2043601.htm>

The research has found a noticeable difference in fish species composition above and below the barrage at Camballin. This piece of infrastructure, the only major artificial barrier on the Fitzroy River, was constructed fifty years ago for what turned out to be a failed irrigation project. The barrage effectively blocks the upstream migration path of fish for large parts of the year. As a consequence, Freshwater Sawfish — listed as a threatened species under Commonwealth legislation — are getting trapped below the barrage and so



Barrage dam at Camballin



Sawfish, Fitzroy River

being exposed to greater fishing and predation pressure. The Murdoch University scientists have been calling for a fishway to be constructed at the barrage for a number of years now.

In December, Kerrie Jocusen, from the Department of Water, and I, organised a meeting in Broome to discuss how to respond to this problem. Representatives from a number of government agencies and Indigenous and community organisations were present, as was Dave Morgan — by speaker-phone from Perth. The Liveringa Pastoral Company's Environmental Manager, Doug McGhie, also attended the meeting. Liveringa, under an agreement signed with the WA Government in the mid-1990s, owns the barrage infrastructure and still benefits from the diversion of water that it provides down Snake Creek.

It was recognised at the meeting that an initial scoping study needs to be carried out to examine the technical, ecological, cultural and financial matters associated with a fishway. No fishway has yet been constructed to take into

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account the needs of the Freshwater Sawfish. Additional data on the migratory patterns of a number of fish species that inhabit the river, as well as stream flow rates, should also be gathered over the coming year or two. A particular concern is whether a fishway can be designed to withstand the large flood events that occur most years on the river.

In February, I reported on this meeting to the Kimberley NRM Group and sought backing for a scoping study. Feedback was generally positive and steps are now being taken to approach government sources for the necessary funds (success is by no means a foregone conclusion). Meanwhile, the Commonwealth Government is drafting a Recovery Plan

for the Freshwater Sawfish and the Northern River Shark. This is due to be released for public comment later this year.

Over coming months, it will be important to build on this momentum and generate additional community, institutional and funding support for a fishway on the Fitzroy River. Perhaps, along with 'No Dam Way', we might begin to add 'Yes Fishway' to our array of campaign slogans!

Gary Scott, Freshwater Campaigner



The Kimberley Freshwater Campaign is supported by the Australian Conservation Foundation

Heavenly Credits — A MORALITY TALE



For any number of reasons — fear, credulity, expediency and greed — carbon offset trading brings to mind Pope Leo X's notion, that the effects of bad stuff could be offset, for cash, against good stuff that's ongoing anyway.

In 1517, Leo direly needed cash to pay for various projects, especially building the basilica of St Peter. He appointed Johann Tetzel, an ecclesiastic entrepreneur, to list 'sins' and the price of offsetting them (by buying so-called 'papal indulgences').

By purchasing the appropriate indulgence, those perceived (or self-perceived) to be in purgatorial peril offset their sinning against the excess prayers accrued by centuries of monks. As the monks planned (Deo volente) to keep on praying anyway, most of what was paid over was profit. Most, but not all.

The Pope's sister had somehow acquired 200,000 piastres' worth of indulgences to distribute as she wished. In an extraordinary example of nominative determinism, young Sis had been named Lucrezia de Medeci. Reinforcing the lucre in Lucrezia, she sold the indulgences to the Franciscan Friars who, in turn, set up the world's second pyramid selling scheme.

Meanwhile, Tetzel thought up the memorable adline:

*As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,
A soul from purgatory springs*

(It reads better in Latin — but he truly did write it!)

All this so upset Martin Luther that he went off and invented a new church.

But I digress.

The David Suzuki Foundation defines carbon offsets as: 'an emission credit reduction from another organisation's project that results in less carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere than would otherwise occur . . . {they} are bought and sold through a number of international brokers, online retailers, and trading platforms.'

It's a sort of:

*'As soon as a coin in the coffer rings,
An oxygen molecule to the atmosphere springs.'*

But, like the aforementioned indulgences, their present-day counterparts are only partially a good idea. The rich nations continue to pollute, while farmers and other offset recipients get paid for going on doing what they were planning to anyway. The latter-day Lucrezias take their cut.

Sometimes it's worse.

Article 12 of the Kyoto protocol defines the Clean Development Mechanism, which administers the GHG (Green House Gas) credits — worth about US\$30 billion in 2006. Of those, about 60% are issued by China.

A Shanghai company makes the polluting refrigerant HFC-22. This releases HFC-23 (a *hugely* polluting greenhouse gas). There's no market for this stuff: the company releases it to the atmosphere.

Now, two Chinese companies are setting up to buy and destroy the HFC-23 — for a reported \$8 a tonne (burning coal to do so) in a process costed at about \$1 a tonne. A nice little carbon-offset earner. 'Cui bono' — as they said back in Leo's time.

Check it all out on the actual Clean Development Mechanism proposal (CDM-PDD Version 002): www.carbonfinance.org/docs/China_HFC23,Changsu_3F_Final_PDD.pdf

As with the earlier indulgences, who except the greedy few break even, let alone win? Maybe it's time for a (secular) Reformation. Here's the first nail.

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SAVE THE NATURE OF THE KIMBERLEY



Conservation Week & Conservation Awards March 29–April 6 2008

Conservation Week is the largest community environmental event in Western Australia, which celebrates WA's unique environment and promotes awareness and action towards building a sustainable future.

The aim of Conservation Week is to highlight threats the environment faces in WA and a chance to celebrate the work of conservation organisations, community groups and individuals across all of Western Australia.

Community groups are invited to take part in Conservation Week and showcase their fantastic work in protecting the environment and communicating the importance of environmental protection.

In 2008 Conservation Week will have the theme of 'WA's Water Future', to explore the future of our water in the face of a drying climate. Over the week the Council will run a series of events and activities that communicate the importance of securing our water future for both the environment and human use.

WA'S WATER FUTURE PUBLIC FORUM

Western Australia is one of the hottest and driest places on earth. Where we source our water from is critical to our future.

Western Australia stands at the crossroads of important changes in how we plan and make laws about water. This is a unique and crucial opportunity for the Western Australian community to engage with critical ideas and seek solutions to influence the direction of sustainable outcomes for water for both the environment and for human use into the future.

The forum will consider possible solutions for WA's Water Future, including the complexity, strengths and weaknesses associated with recycling wastewater.

If you would like to find out how you can be involved contact Jessie Cochrane by phone: (08) 9420 7266 or email: clo@conservationwa.asn.au or visit the website www.conservationwa.asn.au

During Conservation Week the winners of the 2008 Conservation Awards will be announced. If you would like to nominate someone for the John Oldham Conservation Employee Award, the Len Howard Community Group Award or the Conservation Council of WA Honours List please visit the website www.conservationwa.asn.au for a nomination form or contact the Council on (08) 9420 7266.



When: Tuesday 18th March 2008
Time: 9am–5pm
Where: The University Club of Western Australia, Hackett Drive, Nedlands
Further information: (08) 9420 7266 or conswa@conservationwa.asn.au



EK CHRISTMAS PARTY PLUMBS NEW DEPTHS

Local member Joe Fox made a brave (ref. Sir Humphrey) proposal in September 2007. He put to his 'kitchen cabinet' that he and friends would entertain the EK faithful at our Christmas party by singing the entire songlist from the Coen Bros movie, 'O Brother Where Art Thou'.

Completely undaunted by the absence of his most experienced musicians for the entire rehearsal period, Joe persevered with me, and encouraged those with actual talent and dedication to sing out loud lyrics which were so saturated in Olde Timey Deep South spirituality that even the practising Christian in the cast blushed. I was certainly worried about the effect on my kids.

Joe also created a visual feast of images based on the artwork from the movie and CD, but improved them mightily by, for example, substituting my face for that of the unfortunate George Clooney. When the big night finally arrived many guests made an effort by dressing up as yokels (yes it was easier for some, and no sniggering from you metropolitan types) or providing delectable food. Pat Lowe wowed the crowd in a stunning vertically-striped

number that reeked incarceration but with saucy allusions to the boudoir.

We made it through to the final set without any disasters (I contend), but just as we were about to launch into the climactic finale with all performers on stage, the threatening storm broke and then it was all hands to the pumps

to protect the instruments and sound gear. In a stirring riposte to Huey we gathered in the meeting room and finished off the evening, and the audience, with the best version of 'Man of Constant Sorrow' ever

heard in Broome.

Joyful thanks must be offered to Joe and all the musos: Cat and Tania of Cat's Ransom; Craig Phillips, Carol-Anne Olivero (superKazoo) and Joe from Midnight Gas; Gwen Knox, Robyn Wells, and Eirlys Richards of the Solway Sisters; the Mitchell and

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Cardenas children, special guests Harry Gray and Anugraha, not forgetting the rousing Soggy Bottom Allstar Chorus, and to all others who contributed to the night's success. Troppo Sound once again generously provided us with sound equipment, Eclipse Computers with a projector, Lotteries House with a venue, and Broome EK members and friends brought along their inimitable spirit and grace.

Peter

BROOME COMMUNITY SEAGRASS MONITORING PROJECT — PROGRESS

Hooray! We have successfully completed the first round of the Broome Community Seagrass Monitoring Project.

The Project, which began in February 2007, has come a long way as we have increased our knowledge of our local



Kirsten making a presentation at the Broome public library

seagrass ecology and educated many of our local community members in the values of seagrass.

In February 2008 we held an informal talk about seagrass at the Broome Public Library, which was well attended by a wonderful variety of community members. We thank you all for your interest and attendance. At this talk we presented 3 new poster-size seagrass educational posters, which are colourful, engaging and informative. Spare copies of these three posters are available on loan for educational purposes/talks/forums etc... Please contact the EK office with any enquiries.

The posters, along with plenty of information about the Project, can be viewed on the EK website: <http://environskimberley.org.au/seagrass.htm>.

Armed with a generous Envirofund grant, ongoing support from DEC, EK and Seagrass-Watch, heaps of educational materials and much more knowledge, we will now enter the next stage of the project. During 2008/9 we will continue our seagrass and seed monitoring program and build on our knowledge by implementing subtidal monitoring. Working in with Deb Thiele's (Deakin University) dolphin monitoring project will be exciting. So is the promise of many more community presentations.

We all welcome Jessica Airey, the new project coordinator, and wish her the best of luck in her role.

Kirsten Pearce

Environs Kimberley Film Night

River of Dreams (1999, 55min)

Directed by John Hughes

WINNER! United Nations Award for 'Best TV Environmental Reporting'.

When developers associated with the cotton industry announced their plans to dam the Fitzroy River in the Kimberley in the late 1990s, the conservation movement and the Indigenous people of the region braced themselves for the battle of the decade.

Learn about or relive this momentous campaign! Hear about our current efforts to protect the Fitzroy River and promote more sustainable and organic agriculture in the Kimberley.

**Friday 28th March, 7pm
Circle House, Cnr Frederick and Weld Sts**

Also screening will be Sawfish Survival, a 10min segment from ABC's Catalyst show about the threatened Freshwater sawfish that lives in the Fitzroy River.

Coffee and cake available on the night. Entry by donation. For more information please call 9192 1922.

Note: We intend to make these EK film nights a more regular event. If you would like to recommend a film for future screening, please let us know.

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RUMINATING with Mad Cow

THE CASE AGAINST BROWSE

Someone has to say it, loud and clear: the proposed exploitation of the Browse Basin oil and gas reserves should not go ahead. There should be no new processing plants — not in the Kimberley, not anywhere.

Our new Federal Government has just made a commitment to reducing Australia's carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2050. If it is even half-serious about this, they had better get on with it, and there is no better place or time to start than here and now. Those who have been following the discussion so far will have heard both the current Browse proponents, Inpex and Woodside, state publicly that they each expect to produce at least 10,000,000 (yes, ten million) tonnes of greenhouse gases each year, merely extracting the gas. Since these figures come from the companies and are suspiciously round, they are likely to be significant underestimations.

Compare these figures with the WA Premier's plan, announced in March 2007, to cut the Government's gas emissions by 90,000 tonnes per year by investing in renewable energy. And changing your light bulb just doesn't, um, cut it. In the same announcement, the State Government committed WA to reducing its greenhouse emissions by 60% by 2050. It seems they don't feel they need to start until at least 2040, when the Browse oil and gas resources are expected to begin running out.

You will be told that gas is cleaner than coal. Maybe, but I hear of no plans to close coal mines, do away with coal-powered energy plants nor phase out coal exports to China. Make no mistake: the gas will be used as well as the coal to feed ever-expanding world consumption. It is as clear as day that our decision makers are still putting most of their efforts into finding other sources of dirty energy to replace the oil that has passed its peak.

Have you ever wondered why so little investment has been made into so-called 'alternative' power? Think about it: alternative sources of energy are all free; money is to be made only from the infrastructure needed to harness them. No mega-company can monopolise the wind or sunlight nor control the tides, as they control oil, but never doubt that they would if they could. After all, Coca Cola has made a killing out of pouring water into plastic bottles and selling it for several thousand times its value in our taps, and I predict that one day the gullible will be able to buy canisters of 'fresh air' to go with it.

The major environment groups, including Environs Kimberley, have taken a moderate stance on the Browse development, on the grounds that it is 'inevitable'. I say that no folly is inevitable unless the voices that should be raised against it are silent. Despite our experience over the past 11 years, we still live in a democracy, and environmental groups should be standing up for what we believe in, not rolling over to forces we perceive to be stronger than we are. If we don't lead the debate, who will?



WWF WORKSHOP

I recently attended a 2 ½ day workshop held by the WWF on the natural values of the Kimberley Coast.

The main group, looking at scientific information, was attended by government reps, tourist operators, environmentalists and scholars. On maps they outlined areas of importance within different zones/habitats. This was tricky because of species movement between habitats.

The second morning, each group presented its findings. There were many gaps in knowledge about species distribution and richness, and few hydrological studies.

A smaller group convened to discuss Aboriginal engagement. There was a very good presentation by Dermot Smyth about 'country-based planning' (CBP). Present management plans fail to incorporate Traditional Owners (TOs)' view that country, land and sea should be managed holistically rather than by separate departments.

CBP is an 'effective means' of conserving country that doesn't require legislation and can occur regardless of tenure. It can be used to show how government departments can meet their statutory requirements in a manner consistent with Traditional Owners' wishes.

Our group was one-sided, and we recognized that an Aboriginal perspective is vital.

The next day began with government processes. There was a presentation from the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on the process of becoming National Heritage Listed (NHL), and the protection listing would offer.

NH listing occurs irrespective of land tenure; existing land users must manage land in a way that does not alter

recognized heritage values. New development can only occur if the minister is satisfied it would not affect NH values; however, the minister has discretionary powers to accept any particular development.

National Heritage listing began in 2004 and there are now 76 listings. A coastal Kimberley area has been accepted by the minister for consideration of its NH values by the NH Council (an independent body).

KLC has also received funding for a consultation with TOs to inform communities.

In the plenary session on the last morning, we noted that the uniqueness and species richness of the Kimberley was supported in all scientific studies.

Fire was discussed: debris falling on rivers and reefs causes an increase in nutrients and fire increases topsoil runoff into mangroves. Fire-disturbed areas have more feral plants. Feral animals cause more fires, especially in rainforest pockets. Cattle also damage rock paintings.

The short period of time allocated by the government to determine a suitable site for an industrial hub was discussed. Studies to fill gaps in knowledge won't be done until the site has been selected. The rush to select a site was questioned repeatedly. The government replied that industry needs to know. They want to avoid ad hoc development, like that of INPEX on the Marets.

Tanvier Fowler

SMALL BIRDS' EPIC FLIGHTS

In February, Chris Hassell (Global Flyway Network), based in Broome, led a team of international researchers from the US Geological Survey, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, California, and Netherlands Institute for Sea Research.



This bird, a female with an implanted transmitter, is marked 'A7'. Note the antenna that is faintly visible along her tail. (Image A. Boyle)

The ever-dedicated local volunteers completed the team, which was based at the Broome Bird Observatory. The purpose of the project was to catch a selection of Bar-tailed Godwits to implant with satellite transmitters.

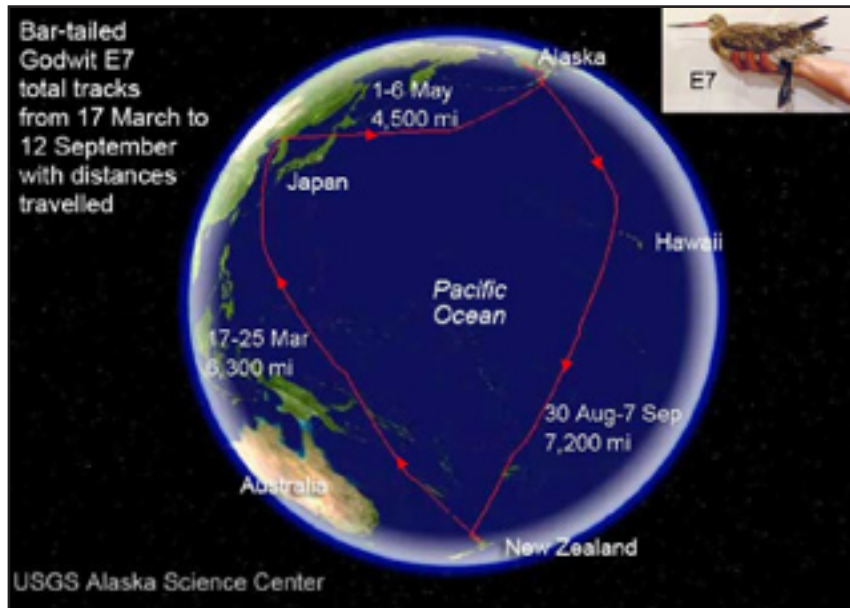
In addition to the implant birds are marked with uniquely coded leg bands to allow us to identify any individuals that might be observed. Last year the Pacific Shorebird Migration Project, funded primarily by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation,

proved that some Alaskan Bar-tailed Godwits traverse an epic 11,000 km route across the Pacific, from Alaska to New Zealand. Godwit 'E7' (represented by the red line and dot in the map below) completed an incredible non-stop migration flight between Alaska and New Zealand in early September 2007. 'E7' flew a minimum distance of 29,181 km in about 500 hours of flying.

This year, along with additional birds tagged in New Zealand, a selected number of Bar-tailed Godwits have been tagged in Roebuck Bay, so that the research team can determine the routes and timing of the migration of

the Broome birds through the Yellow Sea in East Asia, up to their breeding grounds in Siberia and back to Roebuck Bay.

Until mid-March weekly reports will come through from the birds, but then the satellite transmitters will switch over



to a schedule for their migration, transmitting for 6 hours and going off for 36 hours to conserve battery life. Birds are expected to arrive on the breeding grounds in late May/early June and return to Roebuck Bay in late August/early September.

You will be able to follow the progress of the Broome birds on the research website at <http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/shorebirds/index.html> or the link through the Broome Bird Observatory website

www.broomebirdobservatory.com once everything goes live in mid-March. The data will be updated automatically twice daily so you'll be able to check the website every day.

Community WEED update



Weed Education and Eradication Delivery (WEED) Project

The Community WEED has been busy compiling weed resources, putting together submissions and laying foundations for good weed control programs.

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The flush growth of plants during the Wet reminds us to look a little closer at the bush we know and love. It is not just native plants that are taking the opportunity to grow, flower and fruit this season, but also the many weeds that have been introduced to the region. Some were given a free ride on the back of car tyres, while others were planted lovingly in gardens. Unfortunately, there are many plants which, despite their pretty flowers and foliage, can turn out to be Garden Thugs!

Two-thirds of Australian weeds were introduced for ornamental reasons and they pose significant threat to native plants and animals. The Kimberley region has an opportunity to avoid the mistakes made in other areas and prevent new weeds escaping from gardens by taking a cautious and responsible approach and acting to protect our unique ecosystems.

With the introduction of water restrictions and the push for gardeners to use hardy, drought-tolerant plants, the threat of garden thugs naturalizing in the Kimberley is increased.

February saw the Community WEED Project, housed by Environs Kimberley in the Kimberley region, and Department of Environment and Conservation in the Pilbara region, forward a submission to the Water Corporation. The submission highlights concerns about potentially weedy plants being promoted in both regions. An invitation has been extended to Water Corporation to participate in a roundtable workshop with other agencies, local horticulture groups, retailers and Shires to develop more suitable waterwise gardening promotions for each region.

Environs Kimberley hopes that species with demonstrated weedy potential can be excluded and we can look to promoting more of our beautiful locally indigenous plants.

The CWEED has also started drawing up plans for a 'Grow Me Instead' brochure, which can enable gardeners to identify 'Garden Thugs' as well as locally available indigenous plants that are both 'suitable and beautiful' replacements. CWEED is hoping to work with Shires, Departments, nurseries and plant enthusiasts to compile the lists. (Please let me know if you have any great ideas, advice or photos that would be useful!)

Garden Thugs are going to get a little more of the spotlight in the Kimberley, with ABC Kimberley and CWEED hoping to start a 'Thug of the Month', to help people identify weeds and, what's more, identify solutions.

CWEED has been developing some other great weed resources, including a weed control site manual with Site Plans, Identification & Control Cards, Safety Processes and Records for Minyirr Park rangers. This great resource can be adapted for other groups wanting to undertake weed control in a safe and environmentally friendly manner. Also, look out for some Community Weed Buster days with Minyirr Park in the coming months!

If you or your group want to undertake a weed project and are looking for some advice or support, please give me a call at 91929122 or drop me a line: ekweeds@environskimberley.org.au

Cheers, Louise

WET SEASON

Storm clouds over the Kimberley
Speak promises of rain
Lift this burden from my heart
And wash away my pain.
Feed this land and feed my soul
Bring rebirth to us all
Like this land I love so well
I crave your nurturing fall

Where have you gone my loving friends?
I miss you more each day
New blood flowing to this town
A new wind here to stay?
In search of their own pot of gold
Bring poison to these plains,
To penetrate into the ground
With the next wet season rains.

And now there're just a few of us
Holding to a long lost dream
Against the powers of greed and wealth
Who will hear our scream?
Come closer, you, who are still left
Beware of the false friend.
For those who do not feel our love
Will all leave in the end.

And still the rain a promise just
Like so many us denied.
We drink and party through the night
To numb the pain inside.
I miss the rains that will not come
Your sweet sweat on my skin.
And tears fall to the ground instead
Born of the storms within.

Heike



Louise talks to Vanessa Mills (ABC Kimberley) about garden thugs and native plants.



We meet on the last Wednesday of every month at 5pm, Lotteries House, Cable Beach Road. New members/visitors are very welcome. Ring Gary or Christine on 9192 1922 for place and time of our next meeting so that you can help to **SAVE THE NATURE OF THE KIMBERLEY**

BOOKS

- Life Along Land's Edge by Rogers, Piersma, Lavaleye, Pearson and de Goeij \$40 plus postage & handling.



T-SHIRTS

- Hemp T-shirts & singlets, *Keep your cotton pickin' hands off the Kimberley, Save Riddell Beach, Fitzroy River, let it flow and Environs Kimberley Save the Nature of the Kimberley* Available in various sizes & colours.

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Expiry date: __ / __ Total amount: \$ _____

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