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## Environs Kimberley's Fifth Fabulous Fundraising Art Auction — better than ever!



**Environs Kimberley's Art Auction on 7th June was a huge success—yet again!**

An impressive array of artworks was presented for auction in a wonderful collaborative event for artists, the business sector and conservationists.

More than 250 people attended the event, held again at the Broome Factory. Most turned up early to preview the Art up for auction and fill their empty bellies with delicious curries and drinks, while discussing which piece to bid for. Lots of comments such as: 'Did you see ...?' and 'Isn't that an outstanding piece...?' 'That would look great on our wall...!' were heard!



Bidding was fierce during the live auction, thanks to Emily Rohr, Tony Hutchinson and Paul Boon, who took turns to accept bids for paintings, drawings, sculptures and indigenous artefacts. 105 pieces were up for grabs, and more than 75% of them sold. Early indications point towards this being the most successful EK Art Auction ever.

The smooth running and success of the event were due to tremendous community support, and EK would like to acknowledge the following: the artists and galleries who so generously took part; Lachy Fraser and the team at Broome Factory for providing the space and transforming it into a gallery; our auctioneers Emily Rohr, Tony Hutchinson and Paul Boon; Troppo Sound for sound and lighting; Harry Jakamarra, Cats Ransom and friends for the music; Aarli Bar, Café Carlotta, Fusion Herbs, Brumby's, Kimberley Wild Expeditions, Limpopo, The Pandanus Pantry, Tenderspot Butchers, PM&D Architects for food donations; Broome Advertiser and



Top Drawer, as well as the many volunteers who helped with promoting the event (special thanks to Joe Fox, Zach Barclay and Anita Lubimowski) and hanging the art (Marilyn Tabatznik, Claire Beausein), and those who assisted with the auction, helped out on the door and payment desk, did a marvellous job at cooking and serving the food and drink (special thanks to Nancy Gibson, Richard Bartlett and Andy Chapman), and cleaned up afterwards—**and** of course, thanks to our members and supporters who came to bid for the works and share the fun.

See you next year!

*Christine.*



*Addendum: Christine deserves an ovation for her huge effort and great organization. Thank you, Christine!*

*Ed.*

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



It's the beginning of the season known locally as Barrgana, with dry easterly winds and cold starry nights; time for sitting around fires and cooking a freshly-caught walga walga/blue-nose salmon or two — though even this iconic staple of the saltwater lifestyle may be under threat. We'll keep you posted about the new Save Our Salmon campaign.

Welcome back to Maria. She has returned from her long leave and got back in the ring — thanks to Gary Scott for filling in so ably. Louise Williams has made great progress in the Community WEED project, including convincing the WA Water Corporation to make significant improvements to their 'WaterWiseWays' booklets. Gary continues to work on protecting the Fitzroy River from unsustainable development, and we hope the

State Government will make a real commitment to this in the forthcoming election year. Admin assistant Christine Elsasser keeps the office and the markets running smoothly and has taken on a significant book-keeping role. Louise, Christine and Board members are also preparing for another successful Science Week project in Broome in August.

The Browse Basin LNG process is gathering pace, and we expect that potential sites for a gas processing 'hub' will be announced in the coming quarter. Thanks to those of you who responded to our survey of the membership views on EK's campaign options. EK continues to engage via the Northern Development Taskforce's Environmental Working Group and to consult with other stakeholders, including our regional and national campaign partners. The EK Board intends to regularly assess and

review our campaign as more information comes to light and more is understood about the options.

We continue to seek long-term funding to help us maintain our ability to campaign effectively on the Browse, and all our other campaigns and projects, to keep our skilled and hardworking staff, and to attract new staff as required. Any suggestions and contributions from you, the membership, about attracting funding and donations are most welcome.

Your Board continues to provide effective management and governance services to the organization — in the high-pressure environment of Broome in the 21<sup>st</sup> C (believe it!) this is a significant contribution and, on behalf of the membership, I thank them all.

*Peter*



## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

First of all, a big thank you to all the fantastic EK staff and dedicated Board members who stepped in to take care of business while I was away on leave, visiting family and friends in Europe. It was a wonderful journey in many ways.

As Gary reported in the March newsletter, the Browse LNG project continues to occupy centre stage, with this September suggested as the deadline

for the State Government's decision on site selection for the hub.

Such a quick decision is hugely problematic in many ways. The recently-commenced Commonwealth Government's Broad Regional Strategic Assessment is not scheduled for completion for another two years, in June 2010. This work will describe the natural and cultural values of a large portion

of the Kimberley – around 17 million hectares in all, from Roebuck Bay to the Bonaparte Archipelago and most of the Fitzroy River Catchment – and is expected to recommend that most, if not all, of the area be included on Australia's National Heritage List.

EK welcomes the assessment. However, we are dismayed that the State Government intends making its decision about the location of a common user LNG hub precinct within a much shorter timeframe and based on a reduced body of information, which is being sought under the terms of reference of the much narrower Kimberley Hub Regional Assessment.

This is largely as a result of pressure by LNG proponents, Woodside, Inpex and others, who are aiming to deliver 'first gas' in 2012 or 2013. The looming State Election in late 2008/early 2009 might also have something to do with the short timeframe.

An LNG hub and associated industries would occupy several thousand hectares on land and sea. It would include an LNG processing plant big enough to process around 50 million tonnes of LNG each year; a large industrial port; so-called 'downstream' gas processing industries (such as

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fertiliser, methanol and explosives factories); an airport, and service and accommodation facilities. It is worth noting that the Burrup industrial zone in the Pilbara occupies more than 50 square kilometres.

LNG has for some time enjoyed the reputation of being a 'clean' fuel. However, nothing could be further from the truth and CO2 emissions associated with the extraction and processing of LNG in WA are set to increase Australia's emissions dramatically, to well above the national target. LNG is a fossil fuel, after all.

One would think that big companies such as Woodside would want to be doing more about developing Australia's renewables technology; however, they are shying away even from their small pilots, such as the hot rocks project. Instead, they hang their hat on techniques such as geo-sequestration, which has been suggested as one way of dealing with the CO2. Even if this experimental methodology works, it

leaves more than half of all greenhouse gases produced unaccounted for.

There have been two major explosions in LNG processing plants in WA in recent months – one owned by Apache and the other by Woodside.

EK continues to attend meetings convened by the State government, LNG proponents, the Kimberley Land Council, environmental non-government organisations and others. We want to influence the site-selection processes of all parties and will examine all suggestions. Unfortunately, we have been hampered by the slow release of reports by the Northern Development Taskforce.

We are not convinced that there is an appropriate location for an LNG hub precinct in the Kimberley, and will continue to lobby for studies to include areas to the south and north of the region, especially where industrial sites already exist.

*Maria Mann*

## Update from Community WEED

### Weed Education and Eradication Delivery (WEED) Project

**It has been a whirlwind of activity on the weed front as the Kimberley Community WEED has been assisting weed control projects up and down the Kimberley Coastline.**

Someone popped into my office recently and asked where I had been. I answered that between chain-sawing Coffee Bush at One Arm Point with the Bardi Jawi Rangers, removing Castor Oil Plant with the Karajarri Rangers at Bidiyadanga, working with Minyirr Park Rangers at MP and pulling out passion vine at Prices Point, I hadn't had a lot of time in the office. 'Wow!' was the reply. 'You don't just talk about weeds, you actually *do* stuff!' I am not sure how else you would run a weed project, but my theory is that it is better to kick into action than to spend a lot of time talking about it.

In between all that I managed to fit in a week's trek with SKIPs (Society for Kimberley Indigenous Plants), collecting plant samples for the AQIS herbarium and seeds for experimental growing and future revegetation projects. The value of working with this local plant group was seen when the Community Weed Project (Me from EK) and Vine Thicket sub-project (Alison McGilvray from DEC) spent a morning with the Bardi Jawi Rangers and One Arm Point Community school, planting SKIPs-donated Vine Thicket plants to revegetate a weed-control area. Many of these species are hard to source and it is important to retain local provenance where possible. The planting day itself was a fantastic opportunity for Rangers and community members to tell children the language names and uses of plants and educate them about

*Louise and Karajarri Rangers, Kevin, Preston and Byron, remove Castor Oil Plant from satellite infestation in Bidiyadanga.*



the damage weeds are doing to the Peninsula's threatened Vine Thickets.

I have also managed to upload the first edition of 'Kimberley Weed Cards' to the EK website. These cards have been produced on the run as I have been busy compiling photos of flowers, fruit and form, as well as information from various sites and trials. Check them out at <http://www.environskimberley.org.au/weeds.htm> and email me if you would like a glove-box-sized laminated copy for use in your weed project. I hope to continue to add to the first 16 over the coming months; there are plenty more Kimberley weeds out there!

The Community WEED's campaign for Water Corporation to drop their promotion of potentially weedy plants in their East and West Kimberley & Pilbara 'Waterwise Ways' booklets, has met with some success. The Water Corporation has now employed a new consultant and agreed to amend the brochures and website, beginning with the Kimberley. While some plants have been removed, I have been compiling the response of the Kimberley 'plant' community to the new draft list. There has been considerable support for many exotic plants to be replaced by locally native species,

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so hopefully we can look forward to a list that is much more suitable to Kimberley climes, and is both waterwise *and* environmentally responsible. The Invasive Plants Program Coordinator (DEC) has been assisting this process and will see that the Kimberley amendment leads the way for the remainder of the state.

The Community WEED has compiled and submitted a detailed report for the Broome Shire and outlined measures for workable Local Weed Laws. Council will review it soon.



## BROOME TO SIBERIA: THE FASTEST RACE ON EARTH

### More news on those amazing satellite-tagged Bar-tailed Godwits.

Eleven birds left Broome during April on their epic journey to their breeding grounds in Siberia, stopping first in the Yellow Sea at various places along the Chinese coast; one ventured into North Korea. Three birds decided to stay in Roebuck Bay and are providing the researchers with lots of new information about their movements during the dry season. Unfortunately, contact has been lost with one bird, but there's hope that it's just a satellite transmitter malfunction and that she will be back in Roebuck Bay in September.

We know that one bird migrated sometime late in the afternoon on the 12 April 2008 – she was seen at a roost in Roebuck Bay by Adrian Boyle and Maurice O'Connor between 3.00 and 4.00pm. Then at midnight her satellite transmitter reported her being 666km north of Roebuck Bay. Six days later, she was reporting from North Korea – 6,300km away! Now that's pretty impressive.

The first bird to leave Roebuck Bay was also the first

bird to arrive in the Yellow Sea. She was then the first to leave the Yellow Sea and the first to arrive in Siberia on 19 May 2008. Here she is, photographed in China by Mr. Bai Qingquan.

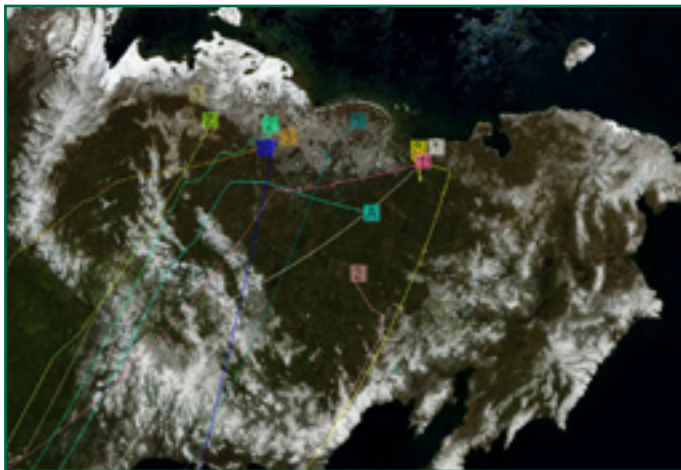


Apparently, the researchers were caught napping, as they were expecting this first bird to spend another week in the Yellow Sea. All eleven birds are now on the Siberian breeding grounds, with only 900km separating the most westerly and most easterly birds (see the Google Earth image below).

Just to illustrate how quickly these birds travel, one bird appears to have done the journey from the Yellow Sea to Siberia at about 91km per hour!

Now the researchers hope that the batteries in the transmitters will last as well as the ones on the New Zealand birds did last year, so they can gain new information about what these birds do on the Siberian breeding territories, as well as track their southward migration. So don't turn off yet, folks!

The best way to follow the progress of these birds is to visit the Global Flyway Network (GFN) website [www.globalflywaynetwork.com.au](http://www.globalflywaynetwork.com.au) or the link through the Broome Bird Observatory website [www.broomebirdobservatory.com](http://www.broomebirdobservatory.com)



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*Cheers, Louise*

# EDO—THE SOURCE OF LAW REFORM

**The bulk of the work done by the network of Environmental Defender's Offices in Australia is legal advice (and in appropriate cases, legal representation), but much of that work uncovers problems with laws that are supposed to deliver environmental protection outcomes.**

That means we are very well placed to 'tell governments where to go' in terms of law reform.

Two key resources are available to the community as a result of this work.

One is part of the website of the EDOWA, <http://www.edowa.org.au/submissions/index.html>, where you will find the key law reform submissions and related background papers produced by the EDOWA in the last few years. Key submissions from 07/08 have been:

- Response to EPA's draft Guidance Statement 19: Environmental Offsets (August 2007)
- Joint EDO / Conservation Council submission on the proposed Human Rights Bill (August 2007)

- Joint EDO / Conservation Council submission on the review of the State Administrative Tribunal Act (September 2007)
- Submission about the proposed National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting System regulations (November 2007), and
- Submission about Dr Janet Woollard's proposed Bill to introduce third-party planning appeal rights in WA (March 2008).

The other useful community 'database' is on the website of the Australian EDO network at <http://www.edo.org.au/policy/policy.html>. Big ticket items from 07/08 at that level have included the following:

- Submission on the Garnaut Climate Change review—Emissions Trading Scheme Discussion Paper (April 2008)
- EPBC Act: Recommendations for Reform (March 2008)
- Submission to the ACCC on the Issues Paper: *The Trade Practices Act and carbon offset claims* (February 2008), and
- Submission on the Water Bill 2007 (August 2007).

*Cameron Poustie,  
Principal Solicitor, EDOWA*



## EK RAFFLE 2008

**Yes, our annual raffle is on again, with marvellous prizes on offer.**

- First prize this year is a painting valued at \$500, donated by well-known local artist Denise Walker.
- Second prize is 3 days and 2 nights of holiday accommodation on the Dampier Peninsula, donated by Goombaragin Eco Adventures.
- For third prize we have freshwater pearl jewellery, value \$180, donated by Willie Creek Pearls.
- Fourth prize is a bicycle helmet and pump, valued at \$99, courtesy of Broome Cycles.

EK is most grateful to all our generous donors. The raffle will be drawn on 6th September at 11.00am at our stall at the Courthouse Markets.

The raffle tickets are in the office, waiting to be sold, so, Broome members, please drop in and pick some up from Christine. Sell them at work or at play, to your family, friends and strangers in the street. You will be doing a great service for your very own environment group, as well as giving others the chance to win an exciting prize.

## COUNTING THE EMISSIONS

**With varying projections bemusing the concerned it's timely to consider the current acceptance of global warming probabilities as 90%.**

From year 1000 or so CO<sub>2</sub> levels rose from about 180 parts per million (ppm) to about 200 ppm by 1750. Most of the rise was due to natural decay, substantially balanced by dissolution in sea-water and absorption by plants. By the mid-1800s however, the Industrial Revolution drove CO<sub>2</sub> levels to 250-280 ppm. The current increase is about 3% per year and CO<sub>2</sub> has now accumulated to 380 ppm. Most scientists believe levels cannot exceed 440 ppm by 2050 without seriously endangering our climate.

Our current anthropogenic emissions (those due to human presence or activity) are about 36 billion tonnes each year, of which 80% is from burning fossil fuel and general industrial activity, and the remainder from removing trees.

Every 15 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions increases CO<sub>2</sub> levels by about one ppm. To not exceed 440 ppm, we must limit emissions between now

and 2050 to about 900 billion tonnes: an averaged 21 billion tonnes/year. This is readily feasible: cease chopping down trees; cut fossil fuel usage by a third. It's done.

Unfortunately, that scenario ignores that the world economy is likely to grow four to six times by 2050. This will increase energy usage three to four times. So, meeting that 21 billion tonnes/year implies more than simply cutting emissions by 40% or so. We need to cut *very* much more than that to allow for the extra emissions resulting from increasing global economic growth. But this too is still feasible. It can be done by ensuring global electricity production becomes substantially emission-free. This is known to be possible

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by progressively shifting to various forms of renewable power. It is possible that nuclear fusion will by then be a reality and, if so, that solves the energy problem for millennia to come. Nuclear fission remains a backstop, but its use is becoming increasingly unlikely as it will never be more than an interim and problem-generating solution.

Emissions from land and sea transport are likely to decrease substantially. Following a recent breakthrough in electricity storage (mega-capacitors),

cars are now likely to be electrical or hybrid/electrical, with diesel and LNG as interim fuels. But air transport may need drastic rethinking.

Such initiative must be driven politically. In particular, until the USA's seemingly inexorable energy thirst is curtailed, third world countries will not take global warming seriously.

If tackled now, none of this is particularly costly. Burying emissions (if it works) may raise electricity costs by 10-15%; a move to solar may increase

them by 20%. Freed of the need for oil, transport costs could actually decrease. There may come a time, however, when man-made CO2 emissions must virtually cease.

Most climate scientists agree on a scenario like this. The 10% dissenting minority could be right — but the price of being wrong is so high, I believe no one over 30 or so should stand in the majority's way.



*Collyn Rivers*

## Kimberley water forum

**Around 100 people gathered in Broome in March this year for a two-day forum to talk about Kimberley rivers and groundwater systems and how best to manage them into the future.**

EK was part of the Steering Committee for this event, along with a number of other agencies and organisations, including the Department of Water, Department of Agriculture and the Kimberley Land Council.

In his presentation from the Department of Water, Ed Hauck pointed out that there are numerous 'wild rivers' in the Kimberley, particularly in the North Kimberley, and that new water legislation is being drafted in WA that would set out the rules for water allocation and environmental protection, and for incorporating Indigenous interests into the planning process. Special sites may be designated to protect highly significant rivers, wetlands, aquifers and watersheds.

The forum was well attended by Aboriginal Traditional Owners from throughout the Kimberley. A number of presenters emphasised the need to recognise the great cultural importance of water and water sites for local Aboriginal groups. According to Joe Morrison from the North Australia Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAISMA), too often in the past Indigenous values have been overlooked or simply seen as part and parcel of the allocation of water to the environment.

I gave a short presentation about securing legal protection for the Fitzroy River by 2010. I began by pointing out that the Forum coincided with the International Day of Action for Rivers. Community groups around the world participated in events that highlighted the considerable damage that has already been done to major river systems, and protested against current development proposals that are set to cause further damage.

I emphasised that legal measures to

protect the Fitzroy River should achieve the following goals:

- provide statutory protection for the river.
- recognise native title rights and associated Traditional Owner interests.
- establish a governance framework based on community partnerships, co-management and sufficient funding.
- prohibit damaging activities in Fitzroy River Catchment (e.g. new dams and weirs, broad-scale land clearing, large-scale water extraction).
- maintain bottom-line ecological thresholds and ensure protection of cultural values (through regional and catchment-based water management plans, and environment and heritage laws).

EK has since written to the Minister for the Environment, David Templeman, recommending that his department investigate whether an Environmental Protection Policy is required for the Fitzroy River catchment in order

to prevent dams being built, as well as deal with other pressing matters such as fire and weeds.

EK would like to pay tribute to the late Professor Peter Cullen, who, sadly, passed away in Canberra while the Water Forum was in progress. Professor Cullen had been invited to give the keynote address to the Forum. He was a founding member of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists and helped raise public alarm about the state of rivers in southern Australia. His timely warnings about the misuse of our river systems will resonate long into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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“The Australian landscape has always been a dry and an arid one, so we’re always getting ‘droughts and flooding rains’ and when we get those flooding rains, a lot of soil and material goes in the water systems. So the rivers are generally turbid and coloured with a lot of contaminants. We’ve made that worse with our misuse of fertiliser, with our sewage and urban stormwater, and perhaps more so by...allowing grazing of cattle and sheep right down to

the river banks. So we’ve lost the sort of natural buffer areas that those riparian areas provided, which used to trap pollutants. And of course now we’re busily trying to get those back, but it would have been far better not to have lost them.” (Prof. Peter Cullen, interviewed on ABC Radio, 23 October 1999).



# RUMINATING with Mad Cow

## MAD SCIENTISTS

Well, the scientists have been let loose again, and asked to come up with technological fixes for climate change. Some EK readers may have heard Tim Flannery and others talk about ‘injecting sulphur into the stratosphere’ to reduce the earth’s heating.

That’s even more extreme than an earlier proposal to fill the oceans with balls of Styrofoam. A predictable side-effect of such meddling would be, as an American scientist recently remarked, with disturbing *sang-froid*, that the Earth would no longer be enveloped in blue skies. What colour the skies might become, he didn’t say. I imagine a sort of drizzle grey, like London in November. Flannery readily admitted that such an experiment would be extremely dangerous, and might well cause a global catastrophe. He added rather lamely that, to escape the catastrophe we are already facing, we might as well risk another.

Do other people share my sense of outrage at this proposal? Who, pray, would dare to make such a decision on behalf of humankind? Who will carry it out, while the rest of us dumb clucks sit around and watch the heavens fade and the anticipated global catastrophe unfold? Would such an act not be the greatest example yet of hubris:

that overweening pride the Ancient Greeks understood to incur the wrath of the gods? One may contemplate with equanimity the divine vengeance being visited upon Flannery and his colleagues but, make no mistake, they want to take the whole world with them.

Flannery’s sort of talk illustrates what happens when impending disaster is ignored and no remedial action taken, despite the warnings. People panic and start throwing things. It shows, too, that we can’t leave it to the scientists to find a solution to our climatic predicament, any more than we can afford to wait for politicians to save us. Scientists will only conduct perilous experiments with more and more outlandish technology, when what we really need is less of it. Politicians will promise the Earth, but allow the rich to dig it up and burn it.

We know what is causing the seemingly inexorable rise in temperature on this planet, and we know the only sensible remedy. Like many remedies, it’s going to hurt, but it’s not going to bring about irreversible global catastrophe, so let’s get on with it. If the politicians and the scientists fail us, the masses (that’s you and me, kiddo) must take control and force their hands. If we want humankind to stop extracting and burning fossil fuels, we must develop, and use, alternatives. Let’s do it.



**NATIONAL TREE DAY—  
JULY 27—GET INVOLVED!**

**Planet Ark is once again organising National Tree Day Plantings. Last year, thanks to the efforts of thousands of site coordinators, over 290,000 volunteers planted 1.2 million trees at 3,100 sites Australia-wide. Be part of it on July 27<sup>th</sup> this year, and call Planet Ark’s hotline on 1300 88 5000 or visit [treeday.planetark.com](http://treeday.planetark.com) for information or assistance, or to simply talk trees!**

## Science Week 2008 Healthy Place, Healthy People

**Thanks to Louise Williams and Peter Mitchell, EK succeeded in gaining a ‘healthy’ grant to run Science Week this year.**



What a great theme! Most of us know how important clean air and water are to our health and the environment, but how do you keep your place and environs healthy? And why does this keep you healthy? How do you recognize an unhealthy place? Science week will endeavour to provide answers and solutions at a range of fantastic events, including walks, talks and hands-on workshops in Broome and around the Dampier Peninsula. We’ll be focussing on sustainable land management and food production (including bush food), natural therapies and nutrition (no doubt reducing carbon emissions will get a mention too!).

Some of the events to look forward to are:

- Sustainable garden workshops with Josh Byrne (the Permaculture presenter from ABC Gardening Australia). There will be workshops at schools, community gardens

and Serendipity Farm at no cost, so there is no excuse not to get involved!

- Information sessions on Organic Agriculture and the part it has to play in a sustainable, healthy future, with Andre Leu, Chair of Organic Federation Australia and tropical fruit farmer/expert from Northern Queensland: Can Organics feed the world? Andrew will also be conducting a workshop on becoming certified organic, so please, if you've ever considered this option and want to know more, get in touch! The EK office can tell you how to find me.
- Coastal walk and sustainable tourism tour with Kathleen Cox at Goombaragin on the Dampier Peninsula. Come and appreciate stunning Kimberley country and get fit

on this 2 ½ hour walk.

- Natural Therapies Expo at Circle House, with a wide range of local practitioners, including holders of indigenous knowledge.
- A quiz night at the Surf Life Savers Club towards the end of the week, to test your new knowledge, will be hosted by Ben Collins and Alan Gray. This is a fun family event with a fundraising BBQ and lots of prizes from local businesses. Anyone interested in helping out (or donating prizes) please contact the office.

So look and listen out for more information, and be involved!

*Tanvier Fowler*

## SAVE OUR SALMON

**Jason Fowler and I are both keen fisherman and have been 'wetting a line' for 15 or more years around Broome — perhaps not very long by 'true local' standards!**

During this time we have noticed an obvious decline in the numbers of Threadfin Salmon in Roebuck Bay. They used to be abundant and could be caught reliably from shore, even from Town Beach or in front of the hovercraft base (Simpson Beach). Those days are, sadly, long gone.

A few months back, Jason lent me a great book: *'The Unnatural History of the Sea'*, by Callum Roberts. It is a fascinating read about the commercial exploitation of some of the formerly most prolific global fisheries over the last few hundred years. The pattern that emerges in almost every case is: a profitable period of fishing, accompanied by a large underestimate of, or complete failure to consider, the numbers of wild fish needed to sustain the long-term health of a population. Eventually, the fisheries collapse, some never to recover (as with cod off New England). This book led us to chatting about Roebuck Bay.

The majority of the Kimberley Threadfin catch comes from Broome waters — around 80-90%. Annually, this is somewhere between 80 and 100 tonnes. Fisheries Department figures on the tonnage caught over the last 10 years suggest a relatively stable fishery; however, they don't tell the whole story. No stock assessment of Threadfin has been done, so one can only guess what the true baseline population once was. Modern technology and bigger boats allow the commercial licensee to catch efficiently whatever fish are around. Although there is a closed season during spawning (Dec/Jan), it is too late for the many large breeding female fish that have been caught

in the preceding months. These large fish are exactly the ones that are targeted. Therefore, it seems very likely that, although Fisheries claim there isn't a problem, there just aren't many salmon left in the area once the commercial fisherman has taken his tonnage. If we are correct, there is a risk of a serious collapse in the fishery, mirroring many global examples. Even if the fishery doesn't collapse, the cumulative effect of years of gill-netting these fish is that everyone else in the community has little chance of ever seeing one. The unintended by-catch depletes other species at the same time. Global research has shown that, when you remove a large predatory fish like Threadfin, you may upset the whole eco-system. Other, less desirable species may then predominate or unforeseen harmful changes take place.

The upshot of the above is that we are making an attempt to do something about it. Wouldn't it would be great if the salmon population in the Bay could be restored to something like its previous level? Jason recently met John Ford, the WA Fisheries Minister, and put our concerns to him. We have also lobbied the local Department, the Roebuck Bay Working Group and The Broome Advertiser.

We are planning to gather stories, photos, records – anything relevant – that can paint a picture of just how abundant Threadfin once were. This will add strength to our arguments. For example, one old local told us that they once used mozzie nets to scoop up the teeming fingerling salmon to make Belachan paste! Please get in touch if you know any such anecdotes or can suggest people to speak to: [andychapman@westnet.com.au](mailto:andychapman@westnet.com.au)

*by Andy Chapman*



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# SEAGRASS MONITORING

Hello everyone, my name is Jessica Airey and I am the new Seagrass Monitoring Coordinator for EK.

I am also a new addition to Broome, having moved here from New Zealand in December. My background is in Fine Arts, but a five-month training course through the Department of Conservation in New Zealand last November, ignited in me a desire to contribute to nature rather than take from it. I became particularly interested in marine conservation. Some of the work that I was actively engaged in was with the Goat Island Marine Reserve in the North Island of New Zealand. Working alongside professional marine educators in the program *Experiencing Marine Reserves*, I assisted in teaching and guiding people of all ages, snorkelling around the reserve and helping them connect more with the marine environment.

I am currently working for the Department of Environment and Conservation, and am settling into my position as a Marine Education Officer. The move to Broome has been very easy as the landscape is very similar to that of Tanzania, East Africa, where I grew up. It is also quite coincidental that I am the new Seagrass Monitoring Coordinator; I spent countless weekends on the other side of the Indian Ocean, at low tide, walking around the seagrass and exploring the rock pools.

I was appointed to the position in March, but Seagrass has been put on hold until now as I have been settling into my job with DEC. Seagrass monitoring is now going to be done every three months. The next monitoring session will be held in July on the following dates:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
6 <sup>th</sup> July	6:30am	Town Beach
7 <sup>th</sup> July	7:00am	Demco
8 <sup>th</sup> July	7:30am	Port

I also hope to engage the Broome schools in seagrass monitoring, and actively encourage their participation by giving talks to science classes. I plan to take students on field trips to the bay and give them hands-on introduction to seagrass monitoring, with the intention of getting a geography class involved in mapping the edge of the Roebuck Bay Seagrass bed.

On the technical side of things, there are plans to install temperature loggers into the bay in August, as well as expand mapping to include the sub-tidal region of the bay.

Not only is Roebuck Bay stunning with its electric-blue water and pindan cliffs, but also its mud flats and intertidal zone are teeming with life that needs to be positively supported. Roebuck Bay needs to be looked after, and I encourage anyone interested in learning more about seagrass or helping out at any of the monitoring sessions to contact me on [jsescia@hotmail.com](mailto:jsescia@hotmail.com) or on 0488 915 005.

Jessica

## SKIPs up the Crack — Part One

**By ‘crack’, we naturally mean the narrow opening in a rock wall. And SKIPs, of course, stands for Society for Kimberley Indigenous Plants.**

These two merged when SKIPs organised a trip up the Gibb River Road to collect seed and rediscover the amazing biodiversity of the Kimberley wilderness. Cracks became a major interest of the trip as they revealed rainforest thickets and created much amusement at the mention of the word.

Phil, Martine and kids led the expedition up the Gibb River Road and found a lovely campsite. Dave, Louise and Isolde didn't hit camp until after dark, owing to the many distractions along the way. Conrad, Natalie and kids rolled into camp the next day, after a rest stop in Derby.

Our first venture into the ‘wild’ was Matthews Gorge at Mt Hart to find *Bombax ceiba*, and we made a further diversion to look at *Eucalyptus houseana*. Nearby was an amazing old Boab tree, hosting a Banyan Fig. The next day we planned a quick trip to explore the crack opposite our camp site, which revealed an interesting vine thicket. A quick trip turned into a long trip, as the heat and distance came as a surprise. Louise and Isolde decided to make use of the abundant water and went for a swim. Meanwhile, back at camp, a search party

had gathered to find the ‘lost’ pair, who were several hours overdue. All was well when they were found traipsing down the road in the wrong direction.

The next two nights were spent camping by the Lennard River, up the Milli Windi Track. Unfortunately, we discovered many weeds, including mint bush and Kimberley flea. DEC paid us a visit and Louise took the opportunity to point out the offending weeds and ask DEC what they were doing about them.

The next day, we walked up an interesting gorge full of *Livistona Mt Gladys* and *Livistona kimberleyana*. It was very easy to note the difference between the two. The crack also contained many other vine thicket species, including *Melastoma*, *Asparagas Fern* and *Grevillea* spp.

We then said goodbye to the King Leopold Ranges and headed towards the King Edward River near the Mitchell Plateau. The change in country was visible as we drove through the Phillips Range (stopping for a refreshing swim with water monitors at Galvins Gorge) before turning up the Kalumburu Road. Northern Cypress Pine was abundant as was *Brachychiton viscidulus* (just in

bloom), *Eucalyptus tetradonta* and *jensenii* along with numerous other species. Every night back at camp the specimens collected during the day were carefully pressed to be presented to AQIS for their Herbarium.

Near the King Edward River we stumbled across the ‘scientists’ camp’. Dave used all his wit and charm to try to get an invitation onto their month-long scientific trip. 30 top scientists were studying all aspects of the North Kimberley islands, to assess possible impacts of development on them. Though Dave's charm didn't work, the scientists became the Guinea pigs for crossing the metre-high King Edward River. Across the river we were all amazed by the Wandjina and Gwion Gwion (Bradshaw) art gallery and the spiritual feel of the place. There was also a plethora of wild flowers showing off their colours, including *Utricularia*, *Cartonema*, *Styloidium* and various other marsh-loving plants. This was the parting point for Louise, Dave and Isolde, and as we headed back to Broome we were filled with a sense of wellbeing and gratitude at the magnificence of where we live.



**We meet on the last Wednesday of every month at 5pm, Lotteries House, Cable Beach Road. New members/visitors are very welcome. Ring Maria 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****

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