



Broome-style birthday to celebrate 20 years of EK



It was a great night under the frangipani trees, with a slide-show illustrating 20 years of EK action projected onto the sails of the luggers, copious delicious food and over 300 people serenaded by the sweet sounds of the Steve Pigram Quartet and other gifted local musicians.

EK founders Pat Lowe and Finn Pedersen, EK Chair Kate Golson and the EK Director Martin Pritchard gave rousing speeches. Longstanding Board member Peter Mitchell was MC; he read out a message from former Director Maria Mann, who couldn't be here, and there were special messages of support sent via video from George Negus and Kirsty Cockburn, John Butler and Mama Kin and Bob Brown.

We would like to extend a huge thank-you to everyone who made this great event possible and to all those who have supported us so generously over the past 20 years.

Thanks especially to the Pearl Luggers, to EK's dedicated staff (especially Tess Mossop), the Board and volunteers. Thanks to the Stephen Pigram Quartet and Broome musicians Tanya Ransom, Albert Wiggan, Tonchi and George Bishop; to Jason Fowler and crew for the delicious food; to Chris Hill for lighting and to Habitat Resort, Greg Quicke's Astro Tours, Eclipse Computers, Kristey Cruickshank and Stephen Pigram for contributions to raffle prizes.

It's been an incredible 20 years of campaigns and camaraderie for the Kimberley. EK survives and thrives with support from its members and the community; we can't do without it.

**Thanks for all your help and encouragement!
Here's to another 20 years protecting the Kimberley.**



Steve Pigram Quartet. Photo: Julia Rau



Founding members Pat Lowe and Finn Pedersen. Photo: Julia Rau



EK 20th Birthday Party. Photo: Julia Rau



Report From The Chair

Kate Golson

Hello all,

A couple of months ago, I attended a talk on the efforts of villagers in southern Papua New Guinea (PNG) to sustainably harvest Pig-nosed Turtles, whose meat and eggs are the people's main supply of protein and a key income source.

This turtle is the only species of a family once widespread across the world, and lives only in the rivers of southern PNG and the Northern Territory. With these populations in decline, the Pig-nose is a threatened species.

I was particularly interested in hearing about the community-led aspect of the Piku Project as well as about local conservation in a third world setting. Yolarnie Amepou (the project coordinator) and Dr Carla Eisemberg (whose research instigated the project) spoke in detail on both and much more.

Yolarnie made the point repeatedly that in PNG villagers own and control the vast majority of her country's land and resources. Governments, miners, researchers and other outsiders must seek approval and negotiate agreements with local people to do anything on these lands. In contrast to Indigenous people in Australia, the traditional landowners in PNG did not experience wholesale dispossession.

As the researchers said, 'Decisions on whether to take action, and what kind of action to take, is largely a matter for Kikori communities. They need to decide how important the Pig-nosed Turtle is to them, whether they are concerned to ensure that the populations are there for future generations, whether they wish to respond to concerns from the global community,

and what opportunities might be created by virtue of the spectacular and interesting species in their backyard.'

The Piku Project is working to find a balance between the needs of local people and traditional ways, and reducing the numbers of turtles and eggs harvested.

Long-term, community-led collaborations are how these researchers must work in this context. The landowners have determined the use and relevance of the research to them. Through the Project, villagers, young and old, are monitoring their harvests (for example, recording the numbers of eggs sold at the markets) and defining no-take zones for turtles and eggs. Piku has produced local educational resources for schools as well as community information on wildlife management and conservation.

We were fortunate that Yolarnie, who lives in Kikori, was visiting Carla in Broome. Given that the talk was arranged at short notice, with little promotion, Carla has agreed to give another talk later in the year (once she returns from work in China, the Amazon and PNG!). For more information on Piku, including its research methods and findings, go to www.facebook.com/groups/savingpiku/

Lastly, a brief mention of the June celebrations in Broome as part of EK's 20th Anniversary. The shindig at the Luggers could not have been a better evening, with lots of people mingling, dancing and/or sitting and watching the line-up of musicians, and director Martin in full flight.

To all of EK's members and friends, thank you for your generous support.

Here's to the next 20 years.

Kate



In honour of our 20th anniversary, EK is for the first time publishing our hard copy Newsletter in glorious colour.

To compensate for the extra costs, we will produce just three editions this year, in April, August and December, instead of four. Funds permitting, we may continue to publish in colour in future years, so we would love to know what you think of our new look.

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Letters To The Editor

Environs Kimberley welcomes letters to the Editor. We accept comment and criticism, and print all letters that are not obscene, offensive or libellous. If you have a bone to pick, pick it with us.

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Director's Report

Martin Pritchard

I attended the Developing Northern Australia Conference 2016 in Darwin in June. There were 400 delegates in attendance at the \$1,000/head two-day conference. Around a dozen Aboriginal people and three representatives from environment groups were present; the rest were cattlemen and women, irrigators, farmers, oil and gas executives, academics, bureaucrats, consultants and lobbyists. The conference was backed by the Northern Territory Government and the thrust is the Northern Development White Paper, which was released by the Abbott government in 2015.

Unfortunately, the conference's main emphasis was on industrial-scale agriculture, massive infrastructure projects and how to mitigate the damage from them. There was very little discussion on what kind of development would be best for the people and environment of the North.

This is a process that appears to be happening without the knowledge of most in the North, but also of the majority of people in the South. This is exacerbated by the relatively small population and resulting minuscule political representation in Canberra (Northern Australia accounts for 5 per cent of Federal House of Representative Seats) and Perth (North-west Australia has 2 seats in the 59-seat WA Legislative Assembly).

The NT Chief Minister gave the welcome to the conference. His speech was about development at any cost and he mentioned a railway from Tennant Creek to Mt Isa to open up the land through that area, a railway from Katherine to Kununurra (which the NT government is conducting a feasibility study on) and eventually through to Broome, and piping gas from fracking fields in the Territory to the East Coast markets. His concluding statement was, 'Make a decision, get it done, get it built.' He is unlikely to be the Chief Minister after the NT election in August.

By far the most important keynote speech was given by Peter Yu, CEO of Nyamba Buru Yawuru, Broome. His speech was a critique of the current colonial development model being applied to Northern Australia, where governments and industry impose '...western development at the expense of Indigenous traditional culture and values.' Peter also described the Northern Development White Paper as '...a development approach from the nineteenth century because of its reliance on exploiting the north's natural resources and extracting the region's wealth for the benefit of southern Australia and not the permanent population of the north.'



The concerning thing is that nothing is likely to change unless a large enough number of people in the North (and South) are willing to challenge the current development paradigm. The focus of the majority of delegates from Broome for development is the old economy of large-scale agribusiness, mining, and oil and gas. It is difficult to see how a new paradigm for the North can be forged unless we adopt a progressive economic ethos that is based on sustainable development and new thinking. Progressive people, please stand up now.

The key elements of an emerging northern economy would be: eco-cultural tourism, conservation management, carbon sequestration and abatement, art in all its forms, renewable energy, native plant horticulture, education, social and community reconstruction, health and wellbeing and environmental research.

EK attended the conference thanks to funding from the Kimberley to Cape Group.

Letter to the Editor

Greetings and thanks to all contributors to the newsletter, poets, ruinators, staff, members and supporters of EK.

A dry wet and a wet dry finds me sipping from my Eco-cup (available on the fabulous E.K. stall). I enjoy my hard-copy newsletters, whatever the format, but the colour is good. Keep them coming, your news and views give me the incentive to keep fumbling along the soft and winding path of living more and consuming less, to the best of my ability.

Happy Birthday, E.K.

— I'll be at your 21st! I LOVE your work. - Diana

Thank you, Diana. The only other letter we received was from someone who didn't like our glossy new look and thought it 'too corporate.' Ed.



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Living Green

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More tips to improve the sustainability of our daily lives without too much effort.

THE OUTER REACHES

It is difficult to adopt a truly sustainable lifestyle in the world we inhabit. However good our intentions, we all fail hopelessly – some more hopelessly than others. It's easier for lone operators, but if an environmentally committed couple decide to adopt a minimalist existence, what do they do about their children? Do their parents refuse them all the material things their peers, and even most schools, consider essential — electronic gadgetry, such as a laptop, a tablet, a smart phone? Then there's the designer clothing everyone else is wearing. No op-shop treasures for them. Oh yes, capitalism has us all by the throat.

Around the world there are interesting people and groups who do manage to live without leaving much impression on the earth. Hearing about them can inspire us to lift our game.

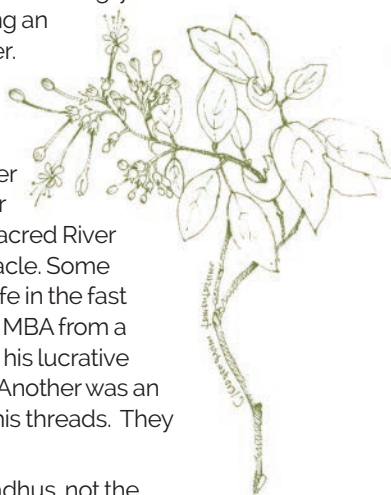
There is the London librarian turned Buddhist nun who spent 12 years in a small cave in the Himalayas — most of that time sitting and sleeping in a one-metre-cube meditation box. She visited her monastery from time to time during the first nine years, but spent the last three completely on her own — until the Law turned up at her cave and told her to leave because her visa had expired. The nun then went around the world teaching and wrote a book about her experiences, but told an interviewer she wants to get back to retreat. Let's hope she gets her visa sorted this time.

The people that fascinate me most are the naked Sadhus in India. They give up everything, including clothes, but do sometimes carry a blanket. They spend their lives walking from place to place and depend on the generosity and faith of the public to feed them. They don't handle money nor ask for food in so many words; when hungry they indicate this by throwing an arm back over their shoulder.

Other people give them food — there is a long and noble tradition of alms-giving in India. Sadhus gather in their thousands each year at Varanasi to bathe in the sacred River Ganges — it's quite a spectacle. Some sadhus have experienced life in the fast lane — I read of one with an MBA from a US University, who gave up his lucrative job for the unclad lifestyle. Another was an engineer before shedding his threads. They all appear to be male.

The most extreme of the Sadhus, not the naked ones, live around cemeteries and use a human cranium as their food bowl. I won't go into their alarming eating habits, but suffice it to say that in their belief system nothing is offensive or disgusting. Their lifestyle does have its compensations — they tend to smoke a lot of dope.

So, if you really want to get out of the materialistic world you find yourself in, there are many other paths to choose from. Take your pick.



Ruminating with MAD COW



FAIRY GOLD - a parable

When I was a child, my mother told me the story of a poor man who met a fairy. The fairy, pitying the man, offered him one wish. The man wished for his hat to be filled with gold. I pictured him wearing a flat cloth cap of a type favoured by working men in England in the 1950s, patched and worn.

The fairy waved her wand and in her hand appeared a small bag. The fairy asked the man to hold out his cap, and then poured into it gold coins in a seemingly endless stream. When the cap was full the fairy stopped pouring the gold, but the man urged her to put in just one more coin. The fairy dropped one more gold coin into the cap, but the threadbare cloth was not strong enough to bear so much weight. The cap split in two, and all the gold fell onto the ground.

Well, we know what happens to fairy gold — if it touches the ground, it vanishes. The man stood there with nothing; even his cap was now unwearable. He turned to the fairy to plead with her — but she too had vanished.

Once upon a time in Broome, a fairy offered the people a golden gas hub. The imaginary gas hub was going to solve all their problems, even ones they didn't know they had. It would employ thousands of people (from elsewhere), attract tourists and produce fairy gold for everyone. Magically, it was not going to harm the natural environment nor affect the whales, which would put in earplugs and swim around it, nor the Bilbies, which in any case couldn't be found. It would only require the destruction of irreplaceable remnant rainforest, a few miles of ancient dinosaur footprints and the sea floor. It would turn off its lights at night to allow turtles to lay their eggs and baby turtles to find their way to the sea, even though there would no longer be anywhere for turtles to make their nests, nor food for them or their babies to eat. Any problems would be overcome by three magical incantations beginning with m: minimization, mitigation and management.

Some Broome people doffed their caps and held them out for the fairy to fill, but they were spared the ignominy experienced by the aforementioned poor man because of the villainy of the rest of the townspeople, who didn't trust fairy gold and refused to accept it. Eventually, the fairy tired of so much skepticism and left in a huff, saying she would build her golden gas hub out at sea.

A few years later, news came back that the fairy was almost bankrupt owing to a crash in the value of fairy gold and would not be building her golden gas hub out at sea or anywhere else. Nevertheless, the townspeople who had held out their caps continued to blame the fairy-gold skeptics for not having had them filled, which only goes to show that people who believe in fairy gold are off with the fairies.

Mornington Sanctuary 20 Years On



The SKIPA weeding group after a hard morning weeding.



Mertens' water monitor at Mornington. Photo by Dianne Bennett.



Male dingo takes a morning dip in a waterhole. Photo by Dianne Bennett.



Male Purple-crowned Fairy-wren taking food to his chicks, in the nest hidden in the Pandanus.

In mid-April, I travelled with a band of EK and SKIPA members along the Gibb River Road to the Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary. Mornington is part of the 12,080-square kilometre sanctuaries that are run by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. It is made up of: Mornington, Marion Downs, Artesian Range/Charnley River and Tablelands Sanctuary — subleased by AWC from the Yulmbu community.

The Sanctuary is nested in the Leopold Ranges, at the headwaters of Mardoowarra, the mighty Fitzroy River.

The SKIPA team was on hand at Mornington to make a small dent in the overwhelming volume of weeds that threatens the Kimberley; since the AWC purchased the lease in 2001, cattle have been cleared from large areas, but weeds continue to multiply along the river's winding banks.

In addition to the strange satisfaction of pushing our way through snake-infested grasses and pulling out weeds during the stifling heat of the day, there was much to take delight in during our stay. We had the thrill of seeing a dingo bathing in the river in the early morning light, Crimson Finches skylarking in the savannah and fairy-wrens building nests in the pandanus.

The afternoons gave us plenty of time to explore. The beauty of Dimond Gorge was a revelation. Some of us kayaked along the river, which winds between rippling sandstone walls — at 1.8 billion years old, the gorges of the Leopold Range are some of Australia's oldest sedimentary rock; some of us clambered over the baking hot black dolorite boulders strewn over the narrow pass and some just lay in the tumble of shallow water under the shade of contorted acacias. We thanked the lord for the passion and commitment of those early EK campaigners who fought against the WA State Government proposal to dam the Mardoowarra at Dimond Gorge and divert its waters for a largescale cotton industry in the Kimberley.

The import of our visit on the 20th anniversary of EK was not lost on the Mornington staff, visiting scientists and other volunteers. The trip was a great opportunity to strengthen professional friendship and to find out about Mornington's activities, which include frontline research on cane toads, (now only 18 kms from the Sanctuary base and a serious threat to the native quoll population); the establishment of the Sir David Attenborough Field Research Station in the Artesian Range; the management of feral cats; EcoFire collaborative fire management with neighbouring pastoral stations; and the development of land management practices alongside traditional owners — all of which gives hope for a new model of environmental protection in the Kimberley.



SKIPA is auspiced and supported by the Kimberley Nature Project which is managed by Environs Kimberley and funded by Rangelands NRM and the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.





An Unexpected and Immediate Threat for Shorebirds

Jan Lewis

Climate change is often presented as a relatively slow, incremental process as temperatures and/or rainfall amounts change. However, a recent study on migratory shorebirds has revealed that, for some species, changes may be more immediate and disastrous.

Red Knots are one of several species of shorebirds that spend the non-breeding season on the tidal flats of the Kimberley coast, particularly in Roebuck Bay and Eighty Mile Beach, and migrate to the Arctic to breed. There, their chicks feed on the insect life that proliferates with the melting of winter snow.

In recent years the high-Arctic region has experienced globally unrivalled warming rates, leading to earlier snow melts and a change in the timing of peak insect numbers. A recently published study in the journal *Science* revealed an unanticipated finding. In years when snow melt was early, not only was chicks' average body size smaller, but the smaller birds also had shorter bills. Does this matter? Yes, it really does — because in the non-breeding season in the southern hemisphere the primary food of shorebirds is bivalves buried in the mud of tidal flats. Birds with shorter bills are unable

to reach deeper bivalves and face more competition for food from other shorter-billed species that feed at shallower depths. The study found that this resulted in higher mortality in the juvenile population of Red Knots — the chance of survival for shorter-billed birds was reduced by 50%!

Although the study focused on the subspecies of Red Knot that migrates from the Arctic to West Africa, the findings may well be another factor in the dramatic decline in Red Knot, indeed all migratory shorebird numbers, in Australia. This decline has recently resulted in 49 species being added to the list of Endangered species and two being designated Critically Endangered. Previous attention and advocacy has focussed on loss of feeding habitat in the staging sites between Australia and the Arctic as the cause of reducing numbers.

While this remains a hugely important issue, the new study highlights the additional need to ensure that there is no further reduction in the habitat for shorebirds in Australia, as the consequences of increased competition for declining food sources amongst birds with shorter bills could be dire.

For more information see <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/352/6287/819> and <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/species/pubs/855-conservation-advice-05052016.pdf>

Broome's Dinosaur Footprints need your support

The extent and diversity of dinosaur footprints on the Dampier Peninsula coast were one of several reasons why the West Kimberley was granted National Heritage status in 2011. Later this year, when the results of several years' field work by University of Queensland scientists are published, the significance of the prints and trackways will become even more obvious, and more than justify the designation of the area as the DINOSAUR COAST.

A community group, the Dinosaur Coast Management Group (DCMG), has been formed to 'protect and promote the dinosaur tracks of the Dampier Peninsula and educate the public about their cultural and scientific significance.'

Check out the stories on their Facebook page: Dinosaur Coast Management Group or their soon-to-be-uploaded website: www.dinosaurcoast.org.au

Like all new community groups, the group is struggling for funds to get activities going.



There's a number of projects they would like to see happen this year, including:

- ensuring maximum impact is achieved from publication of the new findings
- coordinating information sessions, site visits and/or training for tourist operators, businesses, Aboriginal rangers and community members
- developing and distributing information and display material

There are two ways that you can help:

- Take out a membership of DCMG – it's only \$20 per year or \$50 for three. Email dinosaurcmg@gmail.com for a membership form.
- Make a donation and become a Friend of DCMG. The bank account is: Dinosaur Coast Management Group Inc. Commonwealth Bank Broome, BSB: 066-505 Account Number: 10512115

Whichever you choose, you will receive invites to field trips and early notice of events, and be part of the development of what will become another iconic feature of the Broome coast.

Plant of the Month

Pindan Wattle *Acacia eriopoda* is widespread in the pindan in the southern parts of the Dampier Peninsula, yet is rarely noticed except when in flower. This year the yellow blossoms have been seen throughout the area in early July, demonstrating just how common it is. Looking a bit like an old-fashioned broom standing on its end, Pindan Wattle has thin pale green phyllodes (leaf equivalents) and thin cylindrical 'twisties' flowers. Like most wattles it flowers in the cooler part of the year, producing seeds from the warm season of wirlburu (around September) onwards. Pindan Wattle is also known in some parts as 'seven-year wattle', referring to its habit of growing tall (to about 6 metres) and then senescing. The height of stands of wattle gives a good indication of time since fire, as many individuals re-sprout from suckers or germinate from seed following fire.



Call for fracking ban to be extended to the Kimberley

The Canning Basin in the Kimberley is the fifth-largest onshore geological basin in the world. It is believed to contain more gas than the whole of the east coast of Australia. A 2013 report for the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) estimated that 41,722 gas fracking wells could be required in the Canning Basin, with a lifespan of 25 years. The main push for fracking is coming from Buru Energy, a small West Australian company supported in large part by Japanese industrial giant Mitsubishi. This is undoubtedly a global play for energy — but will it happen?

The price of Australian gas is linked to the price of oil, which has meant the recent steep fall in the oil price has also hit gas export prices. Oil prices hit a low of \$US26.21 a barrel in February this year, down from \$US100+ /barrel in 2014. The current oil price of \$US50 /barrel is around half of what it has been for the last decade. This led to Buru Energy halting oil production of 3,000 barrels a day at its Ungani oil field 150km from Broome in January this year. This was Buru Energy's main source of income.

The crash in oil and gas prices has dampened enthusiasm for fracking in the Canning Basin as well, and any appetite for investing in the industry. Buru's plan for 2016 has yet to be publicly announced but was being worked on, according to their last operational update in May. Buru also outlined how the fracking it carried out in 2015 at Valhalla and Asgard (on Noonkanbah Station) has confirmed 'the presence of a major gas resource that has the potential for commercial development'.

The situation at present appears to be that Buru Energy believes it has commercial quantities of shale gas at Yulleroo, Valhalla and Asgard but, given the low oil price, it is not economically viable to drill, frack, or build roads, pipelines and pumping stations in the Kimberley as yet.

There is a very real danger that the community will become complacent about the lack of activity by the fracking industry in the Kimberley. Sooner or later the oil price is likely to recover to a point where companies like Buru Energy will say that fracking is viable.

The people in the South-west of WA understand this well and have recently been very actively opposing fracking in the region. Such is the strength of feeling that two Labor MP's have broken ranks with their party and are calling for a total fracking ban in the South-west rather than a moratorium, which is their current policy.

The danger is that if the Labor party comes into government next March they would put a ban in place in the south-west and forget about the mid-west and Kimberley.

We need to make sure that all political parties understand the depth of opposition to fracking in the Kimberley. The best way to do that is to email your local member of parliament and let them know that you oppose fracking.

The email for the Member for the Kimberley, Hon. Josie Farrer, is Josie.Farrer@mp.wa.gov.au

Please forward any responses to director@environskimberley.org.au

a photographic essay by DAMIAN KELLY
with writings from the campaign

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The Toads are Coming!

Steve Reynolds



The dreaded Cane Toad is on the march (hop?) west, and there have been sightings near Halls Creek and further west along the Gibb. Kimberley Nature Project staff are working with Gooniyandi Rangers establishing fauna monitoring sites prior to the arrival of the toads. Gooniyandi country is east of Fitzroy Crossing, so the toads can be expected to arrive in the next few wet seasons. We have been recording native frogs, goannas and other reptiles, and noting birds and plants at springs. The project is funded by Rangelands NRM.

In November we visited several areas in the Mimbi, Galeru and Ngumpan areas. Most of the country was bone dry, but there are some springs and permanent pools known to the locals. These are the types of sites that the toads will invade, so we selected four sites for monitoring.

Before we began our wet season surveys there was a report of toads near Mimbi community, with possible breeding in the area. This was well ahead of the toad front. The Rangers, plus a group of volunteers, searched caves and streams and found tadpoles but these were of native species. Phew! In this case it turned out to be a false alarm, but it certainly got everyone thinking.

Those of you who were here will know that the wet season was not very, well, wet. February was dry, but nonetheless in early March we went out at night to survey for amphibians. Hugh (co-ordinator) and Gooniyandi Rangers Virgil, Bevan, Gavin and Luke, were accompanied by three youngsters. Although the frogs were not calling, some were found congregating at remnant pools. Despite the poor conditions we found 11 species.

The frogs included ground-dwelling, rock-dwelling and arboreal species. The Giant Burrowing Frog *Cyclorana australis* is widespread; however, it is also a species that commonly gets confused with toads, because it is large and brown (usually; there are some green ones), and is often seen on roads at night. Species we encountered in rocky sites were the Rock Frog *Litoria coplandi* and Watjulum Frog *Litoria watjulumensis*.

We also observed the Green Tree Frog *Litoria caerulea*, which shelters in tree hollows, and the closely related Splendid Tree Frog *Litoria splendida*, which hides out in rock crevices.

Most people in northern Australia have conceded that we can't stop the toads because there are too many of them and the country is vast and inaccessible. So one focus of this project is to control toads at a local scale, in order to impede the progress of the toad front and allow native animals to survive. Local control may involve fencing and/or hand collecting, depending on the site. The recently released Cane Toad Management Handbook will also be helpful. This type of work should be done in the wet season to prevent breeding, but is also effective in the late dry season when toads aggregate at relictual wetlands.

While this remains a hugely important issue, the new study highlights the additional need to ensure that there is no further reduction in the habitat for shorebirds in Australia, as the consequences of increased competition for declining food sources amongst birds with shorter bills could be dire.



Splendid Tree Frog, *Litoria splendida*



Gooniyandi Rangers establishing fauna monitoring sites prior to the arrival of Cane Toads.

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Modern-day Hunting

Neil Hamaguchi



We in the West Kimberley have some rare and endangered species, like the Greater Bilby and the Gouldian Finch, both living on the Dampier Peninsula. EK and the Nyul Nyul Rangers have been keeping a lookout for Gouldians and Bilbies while doing other work on Monsoon Vine

Thickets, and have conducted surveys with Rangers on their country.

Gouldians have proven to be elusive, apart from sightings at Twin Lakes and Loongabid with photographic evidence, and unconfirmed sightings all the way south to Carnot Bay. These little birds move around with the season and availability of seed and water. They favour Pindan woodlands with a good percentage of eucalyptus — mainly white gums like *Corymbia bella* — and sorghum grass. Gouldians nest in small hollows in dead branches of gum trees, and we try to find the areas where they are breeding. We have a couple of ways to find Gouldians; the first is to sit at a watering place (usually a leaky tap, tank or bore) before sunrise and wait for them to come to drink. They don't stay long, moving on once the flock has had a drink. The other method is to use a Gouldian Finch call, played on our modern-day devices. This method works best when the birds are breeding. The males become territorial and respond immediately to a stranger's call, showing no fear and coming close. When the birds are not responding we walk around slowly, stopping to listen. Gouldians usually form flocks and constantly talk to each other. Once you learn the Gouldian's call it is easy to distinguish it from that of other birds. A pair of binoculars is essential: Gouldians are usually heard before they are seen.

Motorists spot Bilbies along the Dampier Peninsula road, sometimes as road-kill. EK and the Nyul Nyul Rangers are trying to learn more about their numbers and distribution. We drive slowly along the road, looking for tracks on the soft edges. When we find tracks we carry out a grid search (200m x 200m) into the bush to locate burrows. One Bilby will have several active burrows. Bilbies dig deep burrows, leaving a pile of red dirt at the entrance; the hole is round or oval, unlike a goanna hole, which is kidney-shaped, with less excavated dirt. We set up camera traps on any active burrows.



Gouldian. Photo: Neil Hamaguchi



Nyul Nyul Ranger Preston Cox setting up a camera trap on an active Bilby burrow.

Bilbies also leave other signs, such as shallow foraging holes (we still don't know what they are looking for), and scats.

In early April we went Bilby hunting after Alex from WWF picked up a road-kill Bilby near



Bilby feeding hole.

the Country Downs turn-off. We located many burrows but none was active. We did locate two new active Bilby spots in the Carnot Bay area, now being monitored by Nyul Nyul rangers.

Bilbies are nomadic and these ones will move onto another area in the future, we don't know when or where. These are some of the things we hope to figure out, to help keep our Bilby population healthy in the future.

The Kimberley Nature Project is managed by Environs Kimberley and funded by Rangelands NRM and the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme,



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Bob Brown
President, Bob Brown Foundation and former Senator and Leader of the Australian Greens



EK Art Auction a Winner



The EK Art Auction, now in its 13th year, has become the Kimberley's premier art event and is a significant date in Broome's social calendar. This year was no exception, with 500 people attending.

The Art Auction is EK's major fundraiser, but it also supports local artists — and vice versa. We again received terrific backing from Kimberley galleries and art centres, as well as from many local independent artists.

This year, as always, we showed only high quality works, very few of which did not reach their reserve price and had to be passed in. Works sold included a drawing of Dimond Gorge, the site of a proposed dam on the Fitzroy River, by the late Jimmy Pike, who joined EK on our first visit to Mornington; two classic small soulful sculptures by the brilliant Marilyn Tabatznik; a brace of exquisite carved-paper pieces by Jacky Cheng; great works from Derby by Donny Woolagoodja and Mark Norval, and a host of others. Our indefatigable auctioneer, Chris Maher, kept up the bidding tempo for more than three hours without a break.

Former Premier of WA and later Health Minister in the Keating Federal Labor Government, Carmel Lawrence, was an unexpected guest, who made a successful bid for one of the pieces.

We would like to send out a huge thank you to everyone who supported this event, with special thanks to Chris Maher for his great effort, Troppo Sound for the best venue in town, to all the artists and art centres who entrusted us with their precious work, to Tim Parry for the music, and to all the volunteers and EK staff who ensured that the evening unfolded so seamlessly and made this great event a success once more.



Director Martin Pritchard and former Premier Dr Carmen Lawrence.
Photo: Julia Rau



Chris Maher auctions piece by Jimmy Pike. Photo: Julia Rau



Julie Melbourne makes a winning bid.

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Weeds and Friends

Now this is story of weeds and friends, I missed the beginning but can now see the end.

I think that it started with a drive on the plain, by some friends of the country with weeds on their brains.

Suddenly there, standing bright green and tall, were hundreds of parkies, yellow flowers and all.

This infestation they couldn't ignore, but continued their drive to discover some more.

Garry, John, Jess, and a lady called Lu, they cared for the country and knew what to do.

Garry's right up there for killing all weeds, and training the rangers for him is a breeze.

John and Jess did the work on the ground, with Ranchers and Rangers and us mob from town.

Lu rang and emailed and hassled all round, and kept it right up till some funding was found.

They went back to Anna Plains to talk to that mob, to work out the best way to take on this job.

Well, Helen and David were happy indeed, to work with the Rangers and take out this weed.

They found more while mustering and flying around, and put in some tracks for us on the ground.

They tore down some big ones when they had the time, and still kept the property running just fine.

The Karajarri Rangers are regulars there and we at EK — well, we've done our share.

We cut 'em and stumped 'em and pulled 'em with chains; and over the years went again and again.

Now 2016 we've been driving around to all the old places that Parky was found.

There are no more patches of prickly and thorn; I'm thrilled to report now that most of it's gone.

We only find babies a long way from seed, and hand-pulling them is quite simple indeed.

This is a story of weeds and friends that should be repeated again and again.

Neil Hamaguchi

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Karajarri Rangers and Helen Stoate with one of the last Parkinsonia plants on Anna Plains



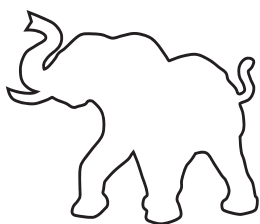
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Large or small, when you make a bequest you are helping to provide for the future of the Kimberley. You are giving Environs Kimberley the power to speak out and act for our region and ensure its protection for future generations.

Please contact us if you'd like advice on making a bequest to EK.

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The EK gift fund is a public fund and is listed in the register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 subsection 30-35 (1) of the income Tax Assessment Act 1997.



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