



cougars
& silverbacks



MANGROVE JACKS

Mangrove Jacks have one of the most complex life histories of any fish, live for over 40 years and grow to an impressive length of 120cm. By the time they are 11 years old they have all moved far offshore and begun to settle down in a new house in the leafy green suburbs — in this case, the coral gardens of the Rowley Shoals. Spawning becomes a household word as male and female Jacks think about having kids. They also adopt some pets like the little cleaner shrimp that nips away parasites and cleans their teeth. As they progress through adulthood they get better and better at spawning and the big old ladies, the Cougars, can produce up to 4 million eggs at one time. This is when the trouble begins in the serene households of the leafy suburbs...

The male Jacks mature a little earlier than the females and the young bucks are keen to spread their seed. During the heat of the wet season the big old Cougars are so busy pumping out millions of eggs they are quite happy for a younger guy to come along and join the party. The big old males, the Silverbacks, have to fend off the young bucks, who are quicker and lighter but lack the impressive size and sophistication of a well-groomed Silverback. Conversely, when the pretty young females begin spawning the old Silverbacks can move in with their bold suaveness and impressive colouration and charm the younger ladies. The young bucks don't stand a chance against a Silverback, but while he is distracted a Cougar may enjoy some younger attention.

The end result is millions of little fingerling Jacks being kicked out of home and forced to traverse a wild ocean to find sanctuary in the mangrove creeks of the coast. This is where the real party begins. The adolescent Jacks thrive in the highly productive ecosystem of the mangroves, feasting on baitfish and prawns and packing on the weight. They also become highly territorial, defending their snag or rock from other teenagers. Once they become young adults they yearn for the glamour and glitz of

the coral gardens and begin the long swim offshore to join the Cougars and Silverbacks.

How do we conserve such a complex and beautiful animal as a Mangrove Jack? The minimum legal catch size of 300mm is well below their size at maturity, of around 500mm. Jacks are the second most prized fish in northern Australia, after Barramundi, and heavily targeted. Fisheries managers assume that enough adolescents will escape the gauntlet of lures and baits to return to the offshore spawning grounds and keep the fishery sustainable. As research is severely lacking in Western Australia, this is best-guess management. A safer way of securing sustainability for Jacks is to have a sanctuary area in the mangroves for the adolescents and a sanctuary area in the coral gardens for the adults. This way at least we know a healthy number will complete the life cycle and help to secure sustainability. Currently we have good sanctuaries at the Rowley shoals for the adults; all we need now is a sanctuary in the bay that protects some of those adolescents partying in the mangroves...

Jason Fowler

Astonishing Irruption of Native Hens

I was intrigued to read in Jan Lewis's article (EK News Bulletin 71) that the Black-tailed Native Hen had been recorded at Taylor's Lagoon, a significant wetland situated a stone's throw from Buru Energy's Yulleroo fracking site.

Before reading Jan's article, I had never heard of the Native Hen but, as usual, once a thing is bought to your attention, it starts popping up all over the place.

I picked up a good read the other day, *Journey Among Men*, an outback travelogue written by Jock Marshall and Russell Drysdale. The book is an illustrated account of their 1961 expedition to the Kimberley. Drysdale and his son Tim travelled from Sydney and headed across the top end, while zoologist Jock Marshall, ornithologist Dominic Serventy and WA Museum taxidermist Ken Bullen, hit the inland road from Perth to Broome in Serventy's Landrover.

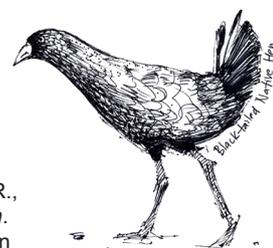
Marshall describes meeting a local naturalist, Ivan Carnaby, in Yalgoo, who obliged the bird-watching enthusiasts by taking them to a swampy stream to witness, for the first time in their lives, a flock of Native Hens.

These birds, 'about as big as a bantam, feathered dark bronze-brown, a colour relieved by a horny forehead shield of pea-green and legs of brick red', were first observed in Perth in 1883 by naturalist and collector John Gilbert, and early colonial Governor John Hutt. Marshall recounts how the 'astonishing irruption' of thousands of these pretty little birds in the new settlement resulted in them becoming known as 'white men's birds': 'Gilbert said that the birds "treaded" down whole fields of corn in a single night, and local aborigines, not having seen the little hens before, attributed their visit to the newly arrived whites, hence, "white man's birds" ... it is recorded that thousands of them were shot and killed by meat-hungry settlers.' (Marshall & Drysdale p.43)

Let's hope that the Native Hens and their companions at Taylor's Lagoon are left in peace.

Robyn Wells

Marshall, A.J. & Drysdale, R., (1962) *Journey among men*. Suffolk: Hodder & Stoughton





REPORT FROM **THE CHAIR**

I'm pleased to say that we are ending 2015 on a high note.

The number of staff has multiplied this year, which has led to a myriad of changes such as the move to the Blackman Street office and the need for regular end-of-month get-togethers so we don't lose track of who is who.

And in all of this, as we have come to expect, the team has moved through the transitions with a sense of shared purpose, good humour, a high standard of professionalism and the minimum of fuss.

As well as specialised animal and plant knowledge, EK's new staff members have brought skills and experience that have broadened and extended the organisation's capacity and have added to the wider store of ecological, cultural and NRM knowledge and ability in the Kimberley.

At the November AGM, during Martin's and Malcolm's talks about the work and its results, I was reminded of how unusual EK is as an environmental NGO. For a start, it is one of a handful of the 96 member organisations of the State's peak body, the WA Conservation Council, that have paid staff. Moreover, EK is a rare bird in having become an amalgam of advocacy and on-ground cultural and NRM service delivery. In fact, several of the newer recruits said that this was an aspect of the organisation that had drawn them to applying for jobs we advertised.

Also at the AGM, we elected a new Board of Management. The stability of recent years has continued, with seven members choosing to stay on, one standing down (thank you again Ziggy for all your efforts) and one addition. On behalf of you all, I welcome Jeremy

Cussen, whose joining us means we have passed the important milestone of generational change.

In the final quarter of the year, we submitted two grant proposals to a philanthropic group that had requested them following a visit here in August by one of their representatives with the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network.

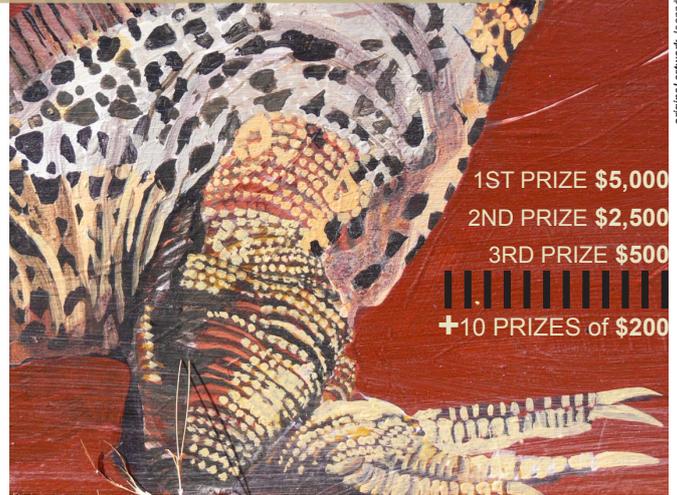
In the lead-up to Christmas, our Income Working Group will be assessing several exciting proposals to generate more of our own money on the road to greater financial self-reliance. If these pass muster, we will add them to the New Year's calendar of events, along with such activities as a series on sustainable housing in the arid tropics.

Whether you are interested in helping to plan and organise or simply to participate, call the office if you'd like more information. And don't forget to buy a raffle ticket!

Until 2005, a happy festive season to you all.

Kate

GAMBLE ON A GOOD CAUSE
ENTER OUR CHRISTMAS RAFFLE



1ST PRIZE \$5,000
2ND PRIZE \$2,500
3RD PRIZE \$500
+10 PRIZES of \$200

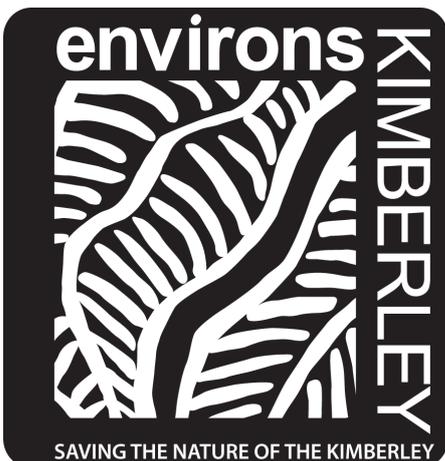
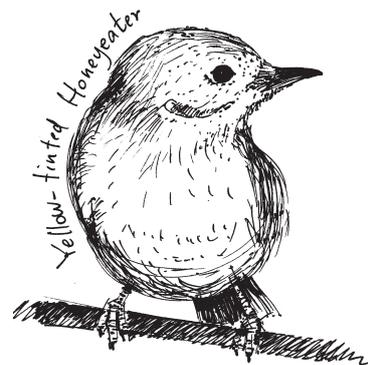
BE IN THE DRAW TO WIN \$10,000 IN CASH PRIZES
ONLY 200 TICKETS ON SALE FOR \$100 EACH



To buy tickets or for more details
Tess 0467 039 319 | Kate 0409 088 512
office (08) 9192 1922
admin@environskimberley.org.au
EK market stall | EK office Blackman St

ekraffle
■■■■■■■■■■

Draw date: 13 January 2015



CONTACT

PO Box 2281 Broome WA 6725
ph: 08 9192 1922 fx: 08 9192 5538
web: <http://environskimberley.org.au>
email: envrkimb@wt.com.au

STAFF

Director: Martin Pritchard
West Kimberley Nature Project: Louise Beames, Neil Hamaguchi, Malcolm Lindsay, Ayesha Moss, Ilse Pickerd, Steve Reynolds & Kylie Weatherall
Admin: Christine Elsasser & Tessa Mossop
Seagrass Project Coordinator: Julia Rau
Marine Project Officer: Jason Fowler
Freshwater Project Coordinator: Caitlin Pilkington



thanks for helping us to
protect the Kimberley
environment

BOARD

Chairperson: Kate Golson,
Deputy Chair: Craig Phillips
Secretary: Kat Taylor
Treasurer: Laurel Sutcliffe
Members: Jeremy Cussen, Jason Fowler, Bruce Gorrington, Carmel Leahy, Jan Lewis, Peter Mitchell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Newsletter design: Robyn Wells
Original logo: Rose Cox
Artwork: Gabriel Englert, Ryland Mitchell, Luisa Mitchell, Robyn Wells

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.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I've just spent a month in Europe on annual leave and it's given me some time to reflect on what's happening in the world and how it relates to the Kimberley.

In Wales, people are rising up against fracking in the north-east and south, while the UK Government plans to allow fracking companies to put 'any substance' under people's homes and property and leave it there, under the Infrastructure Bill, which is being debated in the House of Lords. Lord Wigley, the former leader of Plaid Cymru, was proposing an amendment to give the Welsh government the power of veto, but failed.

Also in the UK, disillusionment with the main political parties has seen a surge in support for the UK Independence Party (UKIP), a right-wing anti-immigration, anti-European Union group that's capitalising on economic woes and running scare campaigns. At the same time a comedian turned revolutionary, Russell Brand, is advocating abstaining from voting in elections.

In Spain, Podemos ('We Can'), a left-leaning political party led by university professor Pablo Iglesias, won five European Parliament seats in the elections held in May, just two months after it was registered.

The party was born out of the 'Indignados' movement, which saw thousands of people occupy Madrid's main square in 2011. Like Syriza's in Greece, Podemos's popularity has come from opposing government spending cuts and calling for a 35-hour work week, a program of public spending to create jobs, and a lower retirement age.

In France, protests erupted across the country in Lille, Nantes, Toulouse and Avignon after a young biologist, Remi Fraisse, protesting against the Sivens dam project, was killed by a stun grenade thrown by the police. In Paris, 25 schools were barricaded by school students in protest at police violence. The dam has been put on hold.

Back to the Kimberley, what is the state of democracy here? There will be local government elections next October. Who's going to stand for the interests of local people and the environment? How can we expect a more progressive and just future for people and the environment if there's no one in power to represent these interests? I look forward to the conversation in 2015.

Meanwhile, here's wishing you all a happy and environmentally sound Christmas.

Martin Pritchard



**living
green**
—PAINLESSLY

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

DIVEST OR BE DAMNED

All right, so you never buy bottled water, you always take a shopping bag to the supermarket (or stagger out with an armful of unwrapped purchases if you forget it); you live in a sea container or a recycled cardboard box, ride a bike, and buy all your clothes from the op shop and never iron them. Oh, and you take your own refillable mug to Molly Bean, or whoever your local coffee vendor is. What more can you do?

Those of us who are deadly serious about saving the planet can join the Divestment Movement.

For anyone who has been sleeping while this has been going on, let me explain: to divest is to sell an asset. Divestment is the opposite of investment.

ANU recently caused a furore by divesting from several resource companies whom they believed were not behaving responsibly, including Santos. The action was widely reported as a divestment from the fossil fuel industry, but that is not so. The ANU still holds a portfolio of fossil fuel investments. Even so, the action put the wind up both industry and government, and the ANU was savagely attacked in the media, reflecting the alarm the move has caused.

Meanwhile, ordinary citizens who do not hold shares in resource companies but have some dollars saved can do their bit by divesting from the Four Big Banks, all of which invest heavily in fossil fuels. The Big Four are: the National Australia Bank, the Commonwealth Bank, Westpac and ANZ.

Now, I've been with the Commonwealth for many a long year. I joined it because at the time it was a government-owned bank and I had socialist leanings. Between 1991 and '96 it was privatised, but I stayed on through habit, convenience and for want of a better offer. Now, however, I'm rethinking.

The question then is: Having divested from one bank, where should you reinvest? It's probably not a good idea for me to give financial advice, so have a look at this website, which will answer your questions: <http://www.australianethical.com.au/news/ethical-banking> (just quietly, I put my savings in the Bendigo Bank).

You can also divest from your Superannuation Fund. It's safe to say that most funds are not what we would think of as 'ethical investors' any more than the banks are. I have a very modest sum in superannuation, but I took it out of my fund and re-invested it in Future Super, founded by Simon Sheikh, formerly of Getup! Future Super makes it easy and painless to do the swap; you just sign up and leave it to them.

The point of all this divestment is to persuade banks and Super funds that their investments are under scrutiny, that their customers care where they invest, and that they will lose customers if they persist in investing in fossil fuels. If students got ANU to disinvest from big companies, we, the great unwashed, can do the same with banks. Happy divesting.

RUMINATING WITH MAD COW



CHARITY BEGINS WHERE?

Christmas is one time of year is when the numerous charities that have been after our money sporadically all year make a special combined effort to extract it from us, along with our supposed seasonal good will. The other time we can count on them coming out in force is at the end of the financial year, when they try to persuade us that donating to them will reduce our tax bill. And so it does, while reducing our cash stocks even further.

I think Christmas is probably the worst time to look for good will, with everyone in an end-of-year panic to meet deadlines, plan the holiday, attend endless parties, lay in mountains of food, send wasteful cards and buy unwanted gifts, while angsty about forgetting someone who might not forget you.

All that aside, I wonder if other people share my more-or-less permanent state of anxiety, guilt and uncertainty about how to deal with all those requests for money.

My stepfather, who ran a pub, eventually dealt with the demands of charities, all of whom wanted him to host their donation tins on his bar, by choosing just one of them and supporting it wholeheartedly, with donations and raffles, and rejecting all the others. He chose Guide Dogs for the Blind.

I can see the wisdom in choosing one charity and putting all offerings into that basket — \$1,000 (say) would do a lot more for that one than dozens of individual \$50 and \$20 donations would do scattered amongst all who ask. The trouble is, I can't begin to decide which charity amongst the many whose letters strew my desk is the most deserving. How could I ignore those bile bears, with their heartbreaking stories of decades of abuse and eventual rescue and rehabilitation? But if I chose them, how could I shun the refugees supported by UNHCR but turned back with their boats from Australia? Then there are the fistula hospitals in Ethiopia, transforming lives at only \$200 a pop, and Amnesty International liberating political prisoners, and disabled children wanting to play sports, and polar bears under stress and Bush Heritage saving habitat by buying it up — and on it goes. Not to mention struggling NGOs like the Environmental Defender's Office and Get-up! and Tim Flannery's Clayton's Climate Council, crowd-funded after the original one was disbanded.

By and large, I don't support Australian health charities (cancer, hearts, kidneys), not because I have anything against them, but because Australia is such a wealthy country that most health needs are well provided for and the \$200 that would transform a life in Ethiopia wouldn't go anywhere here (so what's that Kidney Health raffle ticket doing on my fridge?) I also tend to avoid the biggest corporate charities, again on drop-in-the-bucket grounds.

I hope you are not looking to me for guidance, because I didn't get far with my plan to rationalize my giving, modest as it is. Instead of choosing one charity, all I've done is convince myself that I should be supporting all of them.

If you are decide to take a leaf out of my stepfather's book and plumb for one charity, you could do worse than choose Environs Kimberley.



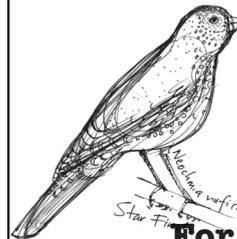
thank you TO OUR MARKET STALL VOLUNTEERS

EK would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has helped on the market stall this year! We really appreciate your support.

The market stall is EK's public face in Broome and everyone has done an amazing job.

We wish all of our volunteers a happy and safe wet season and we hope to see you all, on the market stall, again in the New Year!

The stall will be up and running from Easter next year and EK welcomes anyone who wants to help out and continue protecting the nature of the Kimberley now, and into the future.



MARKET STALL

For information contact

**Tessa on 9192 1922 or
admin@environskimberley.org.au**

The Ultimate Journey to the Stars



Astronomy experiences for anyone who has ever looked up in the sky and wondered.

Astro Tours uses resources that will be around for a very, very long time. Stars are the ultimate recyclers.

www.astrotours.net

- Phone: 08 9193 5362
- Mobile: 0417 949 958



DAMIAN KELLY PHOTOGRAPHY

0459 233 780

www.damiankellyphotography.com.au

RIVER RIGHTS

An ecosystem in the US is defending its right to exist and flourish by filing a motion to intervene in a lawsuit. Earlier this year, the rights of the Little Mahoning Watershed in Pennsylvania were secured in a Community Bill of Rights that enshrined the rights of human and natural communities to water and a healthy environment. In outrage, the Pennsylvania General Energy Company (PGE) is suing the township to overturn the Bill of Rights – claiming that it violates the constitutional right of the corporation to inject fracking wastewater into the groundwater. Constitutional right? Something seriously wrong with the constitution, I'd suggest.

The rights of nature is a growing movement – in NZ, the Whanganui River and tributaries were given legal personhood status in 2012. The agreement recognised the river system as 'an integrated living whole from the mountains to the sea, intrinsically connected to the iwi and having its own legal entity'. The Whanganui iwi (people or nation), who had been seeking legal protection of the river since 1873 (no, that's not a misprint), were appointed as guardians to protect and speak for the river.

The Fitzroy River merits this kind of special protection – and we can't wait 140 years, lest we be left with a river transformed by mining, gas and irrigation.

WHAT'S IN A NEXUS?

You may have heard about the water-energy-land nexus – which, in essence, recognises that the three are inextricably linked, with decisions about one affecting another.

This is an important concept here in the Kimberley. Vast quantities of water are used to mine, extract and transport raw materials, and generate power. Fracking for shale gas is extremely water intensive – using millions of litres per well – and can pollute water. Pumping, moving and treating water, as for groundwater irrigation, comes at an energy cost. Agricultural and energy developments clear land, degrade country and pollute waterways, and the two industries compete for land and water resources. Burning fossil fuels changes the climate, alters the water cycle and damages country. And so on...

A recent study found that 38% of the world's shale gas reserves are in arid or water-stressed areas, sounding alarm bells about the stresses on finite resources. In spite of recent government rhetoric around 'seemingly endless' Kimberley water, we live in a water-scarce environment. Our rivers and groundwater sustain a healthy, interconnected and finely balanced ecology: everything here, from the headwaters to the floodplains to the oceans, is water-dependent – the animals, fish, plants, cultural sites, people's wellbeing.

We can't continue to think about the impacts of development in isolation, ignorant of the true interconnectedness of systems. There is no action without trade-offs. So the real questions to ask when decisions are being made about energy, water or land are: what are we trading off, who benefits, and who loses?

Caitlin Pilkington

NORTHERN TERRITORY WATER NEWS

Environment Centre Takes a Stand on Water Licences

Environment Centre NT (ECNT) has made the courageous decision to take legal action against the Minister for Land Resource Management, Willem Westra van Holthe, following a series of decisions allowing very large quantities of water to be extracted from the Ooloo and Tindall (Mataranka) aquifers, which feed the Daly, Katherine and Roper Rivers, outside the established water planning process.

The tough decision was made as the NT Government granted two licences to extract another 5GL of water from the Ooloo aquifer, taking the total maximum extraction to 68GL, which is 8GL over the agreed maximum extraction limit outlined in the Draft Ooloo Water Allocation Plan.

The Environment Centre will be represented in the Supreme Court on December 16 by the Environmental Defender's Office NT, which will argue that the Minister failed to properly review several water licence decisions, including for two licences in excess of 12GL from the Ooloo aquifer issued to Tropical Forestry Services by the NT Water Controller, who is also the Director of the Department of Land Resource Management, for the purpose of growing sandalwood.

The Environment Centre appreciates the support of the Northern Land Council and Traditional Owners of the Daly River and Mataranka regions, who are concerned about the health of their river systems and have had their bid for recognised water rights quashed since the government scrapped the Strategic Indigenous Reserve policy, which would have provided some water specifically for Indigenous economic development.

Wagiman Traditional Owner Lizzie Sullivan said that she had already noticed that extraction was affecting the health of the Daly River. 'Some parts of the river, at Ooloo Crossing, are silting up and people are concerned that there won't be enough flow to look after important cultural sites.'

In media coverage, we stated that the NT Government was risking our precious water resources and threatening the health of our rivers by ignoring water planning processes established under the National Water Initiative, and failing to make its decisions in accordance with the best available science or community aspirations.

Environment Centre NT is working together with The Wilderness Society to raise the profile of the case and encourage supporters to stand up to protect our Top End Rivers.

Anna Boustead

dirty fracking business

BOOK REVIEW



If you want to know more about the dirty tricks that the fracking industry gets up to, then one place to look is a novel newly available from Broome library or online booksellers: DIRTY FRACKING BUSINESS by Peter Ralph (publisher Melbourne Books 2012).

The story revolves around the strategies of the coal seam gas industry in a mythical NSW region, not dissimilar to the Hunter Valley. It tells how companies trick farmers into signing away their land, how the sweeteners that they are promised never materialise and how, as land values fall on properties adjacent to land where drilling is occurring, the local bank (the people's bank) forecloses on loans they have been happy to carry for years. It also details some horrible impacts on individual health when fracking chemicals leach into rivers and farm dams, the sleep deprivation that results from noise pollution from compressor stations, and the impact on humans and animals of methane from leaking wells.

Several characters in the novel are thinly-disguised variants of individuals active in the anti-fracking movement in the eastern states – The Frackman features strongly in the story as the Gas Man; Drew Hutton and Lock the Gate are there, renamed slightly, as is Alan Jones (aka Aaron James). Some of the pro-gas individuals, e.g. motel owners who accommodate workers and real estate agents who sell houses to gas company management, are reminiscent of the individuals with vested interests who advocated for Woodside in the James Price Point conflict. The strategies used by chairman of the Board of the invading gas company (called Clean Energy and Gas – ha ha!) in his struggle to retain power and the huge levels of personal profit he's salting away made very interesting reading.

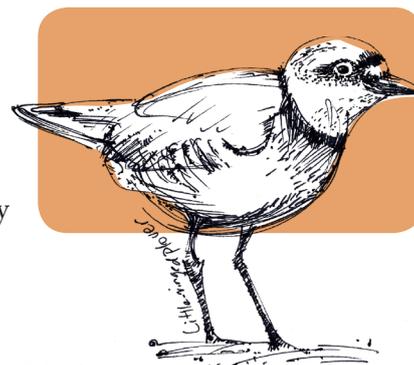
The evolving role of the local newspaper in the mythical Fisher Valley is interesting to follow. At first it ran coal seam gas companies' advertising to rescue their failing bottom line (unsurprisingly, the ads made the same points that Buru Energy makes – the employment opportunities and an undertaking not to pollute air or water). Later, some investigative journalism by the owner/editor into the validity of the industry's claims lead to a front page article titled 'Too much at risk', and then the paper becomes a key means of exposing the truth. If only we could rely on our local paper to respond in a similar way!

This story does not have a happy end. Politicians claimed they were protecting the national interest and sovereign rights when they authorised Police use of water cannons to disperse blockaders trying to prevent entry to a private property, and the Army to remove vehicles with heavy equipment. Land was taken and wells were dug. The stock market loved this, the gas company's share price rose and the Chairman stashed away some more money.

Peter Ralph is a former CEO-level businessman-turned-author so he knows how big business works. I doubt that his rather wooden characters and their stilted dialogue will ever see him short-listed for a major writing award, but the horror of the story he told seemed credible and kept me reading to the end. As something similar could happen here, we need as much information as we can gather to ensure our opposition is effective, so my recommendation is to give it a go.

Jan Lewis

Jan is giving birds a rest for Christmas and has written a book review instead.



20 Hunter St Broome

Ph: 9192 2832



Network Solution Specialists

Microsoft Certified Professional Engineers

Fully Equipped Workshop & Same Day Onsite Service

Computer systems custom designed for your needs

Hewlett Packard Authorised Sales & Service

Agent for: Acer, Compaq, DELL, Epson, Fujitsu, LG, NEC,
sales.eclipse@westnet.com.au - www.eclipsecomputers.com.au

Catch Your Share of the
Kimberley Sun

Kimberley
Enviro
Solutions



T: 9192 6145
Broome WA

Website: www.kimberleyenvirosolutions.com.au

Power Your Electricity by Solar

naming new friends in the desert

In August a couple of staff from EK travelled with the Karajarri Rangers and some other adventurers in a vehicle convoy to Dragon Tree Soak (Kurriji Pa Yajula). This freshwater soak is a long way out in the Great Sandy Desert, and is unusual as a permanent water source (in an otherwise mainly dry desert) that supports a cluster of Dragon Trees (*Sesbania formosa*) – hence the name. The area is part of a Nature Reserve and there is some concern about camels degrading the soak, and other management matters including vehicle access and fire. We observed birds and other wildlife (including camels) during our journey, listened to stories, and visited a freshwater soak (jila), but here I want to talk about some of our observations of plants.



After a week of making our way along tracks and some bush bashing over the longitudinal dunes (jilji) of the Great Sandy, we came to appreciate the plant life and even became a little familiar with some of the common species – familiar to the point that we started to give them names, like old friends.

'Anthony', otherwise known as Salt Wattle (*Acacia ampliceps*) was an indicator of a salty subsoil, and occurred around the margins of salt pans and flats. 'Wally' was our name for the Desert Walnut (*Owenia reticulata*), a tree with corky bark (providing protection from fire) and big leaves, which occurs in loose clumps. Wally scores fairly highly on the shade-ometer, and is a good tree to park your tent under. Similar in name but of a different character was 'Holly', with holly-shaped leaves and red flowers. This plant, the Holly Grevillea (*Grevillea wickhamii*) occurs in patches and attracts honeyeaters when in flower. The Silver-leafed Grevillea (*Grevillea refracta*) with its orangey-red flowers was also patchy (hence the occasional 'refracta patcha') and seemed to occur on lower slopes adjacent to dunes and low stony hills. Neither of the Grevilleas gives particularly good shade.

'Gollum' was our name for the most common species of paperbark encountered on the journey, the Inland Tea Tree (*Melaleuca glomerata*). This low tree (or large shrub) is scattered and patchy, occurring wherever there is a bit of water, near clay pans and other areas that are inundated after rain. We felt that the name was appropriate for this flaky-skinned swamp dweller.

As we drove along we had been seeing a small tree with corky, fissured bark that looked as if it might be a wattle, but had oddly-shaped leaves. When we managed to stop and grab a sample it was baptized 'Acacia odd-fellow', and we saw it here and there on sandplain country throughout the trip. After a bit of searching on our return we found out that someone had already named it Duck-head Wattle (*Acacia anaticeps*) in reference to the unusual shape of the leaves, however, I prefer our name. Lastly, 'Shady Nina' became our name for Turpentine Tree (*Gardenia pyriformis*), which occurs in Broome and down into the desert. It grows as single trees or sometimes a loose group of two or three, and as you might have guessed, it scores quite high on the shade-ometer.

All in all we had a good introduction to the desert country and encountered a wide range of plants in different habitats. And it wasn't just the plants that were given names; I too received a new name in the desert: SJ.

SJ



top: Dragon Tree Soak
bottom: *Grevillea wickhamii*


Rangelands NRM
Western Australia

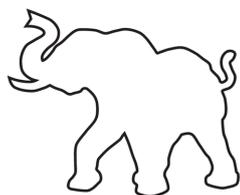


This project is managed by Environs Kimberley, through funding from the Australian Government and Rangelands NRM



Australian Government

BROOME
CONVENTION
CENTRE
CHINATOWN



12 Frederick Street, Broome
Phone: 9192 6222
Mobile: 0418 938 724
Email: broomeconvention@bigpond.com

TROPPO SOUND

- Musical Instruments
- PA & Lighting Systems
- Mobile Stage
- Recording Studio

MICK CONNOLLY

PO Box 185, Broome 6725
SHED: 29 Hunter Street, Phone: 08 9192 2394 Fax: 08 9193 5690
SHOP: 19 Frederick Street, (old mini-golf building) Ph/Fax: 08 9192 6222
Mobile: 0418 938 724 Email: troppo@comswest.net.au

reflections of an ek pioneer



The best thing about Environs Kimberley has always been the wonderful group of people who make up its team of workers, volunteers, members and supporters.

I was reminded of this at the recent Annual General Meeting at Broome's Lotteries House. As we heard presentations and watched slide shows depicting the achievements, campaigns and future directions of the organisation, I reflected on how many things have changed since the group's inception in 1996, and how much has stayed the same.

I remembered the heady days when a small band of determined folk, led by the indomitable Pat Lowe, Finn Pedersen and Natasha Palich, resolved to fight the cotton barons of New South Wales who had decided to dam the Fitzroy River, extract millions of litres of groundwater, clear a quarter of a million hectares of pindan woodland – which they called 'bush' – and establish a genetically-modified cotton industry in the West Kimberley.

We started our deliberations around verandah tables, sitting on borrowed chairs and tapping out messages on personal computers, most of which we sent by facsimile machines (only a few people had email then). An early task was to develop a fighting fund, then to get our story into the media, write to government ministers, form alliances and encourage people to join us. Bob Brown was an early supporter and his contacts taught us the finer points of campaigning and where to find money.

Eight years later, the government finally withdrew from negotiations with the proponent, Western Agricultural Industries. We rejoiced! Less than a year later Colin Barnett came to power, promising to bring water from the Fitzroy River to Perth via what became known as the Far Canal (say it aloud), so we plodded on for another two years. A valuable lesson was learned – environmental campaigning is never over, it just changes focus.

We soon recognised that, as well as reacting to development pressures, we needed to develop proactive campaigns, such as Science Week activities and Clean Up weekends for the public. The groundwork had been laid by the good folk of the Broome Botanical Society and Kimberley Conservation Group.

Once we had raised funds, we employed extra staff: a part-time Administration Assistant (high turnover until Christine came along: Adele Dixon, Anna Sanderson, Sarah Moon, Gabe Gartrell and Trish Molloy, Kerry Marvell, Rachel Tenni and finally Christine Elsasser and Tessa Mossop), a Freshwater Campaigner (Gary Scott, whose work has been expanded by Caitlin Pilkington), a Community WEED Project Officer (Louise Beames, who skilfully developed her project into what is now the Kimberley Nature Project) and a Seagrass Monitoring project officer (Danielle Baines, who was succeeded by Fiona West, Kylie Weatherall and now Julia Rau); and rented additional office space to accommodate them.

We aspired to expand our efforts into the East Kimberley and formed an alliance with the local group SEEKS (Saving Endangered East Kimberley Species). We campaigned against GM cotton, but it was difficult to gain traction in the Shire with all those farmers.

We wanted to campaign a lot more around Fitzroy Crossing and Derby; now, with the threat of fracking in the Canning Basin and coal mining in the Fitzroy Valley, this is happening.

I enjoy witnessing the evolution of Environs Kimberley, and often the Paul Kelly song 'From Little Things, Big Things Grow' runs through my head as I hear of the latest success. Certainly, there have been setbacks. But always there are people willing to learn from the knocks and have another go. That is the secret of a sustainable organisation, which EK, now entering its nineteenth year, surely is.

Maria Mann (EK Coordinator/Director 1996 – 2008)

Stand up to protect our Top End Rivers!

The Environment Centre NT called on all Territorians to stand up to protect their Top End rivers as part of its long-running Living Rivers campaign.

The campaign calls on governments to strengthen environmental laws, properly resource land and sea management and research, and prevent over-extraction of aquifers by allocating water through proper water planning processes in response to several serious threats to our rivers. These include:

- Proposed expansion of the NT shale gas industry prior to the results of the Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing being known
- The risk of contamination posed by regulatory failures causing environmental disasters at the McArthur River Mine, Western Desert Resources Mine, Ranger Uranium Mine and many legacy mines, including Redbank Copper Mine which was found by the EPA to be contaminating water 35km downstream from the site.
- Cutbacks to resources allocated to park management, Indigenous land and sea management, landcare and weeds management
- Cutbacks to environmental research funding
- The slashing of operational funding to critical environment groups such as the Environment Centre NT and the Environmental Defenders Office.
- New dam proposals, including a recreational dam on the Elizabeth River and up to three new drinking water supply dams proposed in the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan.

Supporters can go to the Environment Centre website to sign a petition to the Legislative Assembly asking members to protect river health by reinstating proper water planning processes supported by the best available science, community consultation and principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Supporters are also encouraged to donate to the Environment Centre to enable us to continue our critical work shining a light on poor environmental management practices, to work with members of the community to support sustainable development and to keep the pressure on our regulators to ensure mining and petroleum companies don't make short-term profits at the expense of damaging our environment and natural resources. Anna Boustead

STOP PRESS

In a win for Top End rivers, the 'recreational' dam proposed for the Elizabeth River has been thrown out of the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan by the Minister for Planning, Peter Chandler. Mr Chandler said that public opposition was a key reason behind his decision. The Environment Centre provided critical information in a submission to the plan which also demonstrated the immense value in maintaining mangroves as a buffer to a sea level rise and storm surge, rather than building a new dam.

Policy and Campaigns Director Anna Boustead said in media statements that the Environment Centre welcomed the Minister's decision and once again called on the Minister to build on his recognition of critical ecosystems by throwing out plans for a new 'dirty port' at Glyde Point and a dam on the upper Adelaide River, also contained within the Draft Plan.

<http://www.ecnt.org/campaigns/stand-protect-our-top-end-rivers>

the wonders of seagrass

photos: Julia Rau



top: Len McKenzie with Karajarri Rangers at training workshop
middle and bottom: fish survey team

"I love that I can be enjoying the sunrise over the mudflats, looking at all the amazing critters in the bay and knowing that our work is helping produce scientific facts about the life of seagrasses. And having coffee and cakes with friends is a bonus."

Jon Hall, Broome seagrass volunteer

It's been a busy seagrass monitoring season. As in previous years, Len and Rudi from Seagrass-Watch HQ (Cairns) made their way across to Broome to deliver the two-day Seagrass-Watch training workshop. Among other things, participants learned about seagrass ecology, survey methodology and global coastal management strategies, as well as the various threats this valuable marine habitat faces. Seagrass-Watch is a global scientific monitoring and education program, where scientists, coastal managers and local stakeholders from across the globe collaborate to assess the status of their seagrass meadows. With regular monitoring we can spot indications of coastal ecological decline. Started in 1998, the program has so far expanded to 355 sites across 26 countries.

The Broome Community Seagrass Monitoring Project was established in 2007 and Broome is still the only Seagrass-Watch site in Western Australia.

The Karajarri Rangers from Bidyadanga are investigating the possibility of setting up a seagrass-monitoring site in their sea country and it was great to see them attend the workshop in Broome. The rangers also joined us at one of our monitoring sites and gave us a hand collecting data. A big thank you goes out to them!

Our project attracted a wide range of media coverage this season; we took part in radio interviews on Goolarri and ABC Kimberley, and even made an appearance on the ABC TV News. Additionally, Seagrass-Watch lead scientist Len McKenzie and I gave a joint community presentation at Lotteries House as part of the 'Science on the Broome Coast' talk series, which was organised by the Roebuck Bay Working Group.

The Broome Community Seagrass Monitoring Project has been running for many years now, with community volunteers taking part in seagrass surveys. I have also conducted educational sessions at local schools about the importance of seagrass. To further the project's understanding of the Bay's seagrass, we are now investigating which faunal species use the intertidal seagrass beds of Roebuck Bay when they are inundated. Equipped with a big drag net, a permit from the Department of Fisheries and of course Yawuru's permission, we undertook a pilot survey just off Town Beach. Wading through the shallow waters at Town Beach, our intrepid team collected, identified and photographed a myriad of juvenile fish and prawns, and even a box jellyfish, before releasing them into the water. Stay tuned for more on this exciting new addition to our project.

Julia Rau

seagrass@environskimberley.org.au



The Broome Community Seagrass Monitoring Project is co-managed by Environs Kimberley and the Department of Parks and Wildlife; funded by Coastwest and the Kimberley Ports Authority; and supported by Seagrass Watch.

EK ANNUAL AWARDS

DIRTY SOCKS AND BROKEN THONGS

It is always a delight to present EK's annual awards for notable disservice to the environment, and this year we had a bigger field of contestants than ever. Our Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, and Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt, were hot contenders, with too many disservices to mention, but we don't like to reward the same people too often, lest we be accused of favouritism. (But memories of the G20 keep flooding back. While other leaders were talking about global matters, including Climate Change, our PM embarrassed us all by telling the world of his trivial, often lamentable, domestic achievements and failures, and by praising the production and burning of coal. Ye Gods, where does the man get his advice from?)

DIRTY SOCK AWARD

Much as we like to notice people other than politicians, this year we really couldn't go beyond our Premier, Colin Barnett, for his war against sharks. In his hunt for the Great White Shark, Mr Barnett saw to the torture and slow death at the end of a hook, or by one or more shots in the head, of 172 sharks, not one of which was a Great White. Fifty large Tiger Sharks, which have never been known to kill anyone in WA, were destroyed after surviving the night on a hook. Smaller survivors were 'released' after having the hook cut out of their heads; they probably died too. There was collateral damage to eight non-sharks, allegedly including at least one dolphin and several stingrays. This debacle was declared 'a success' by the government. With that quality of evaluation, we tremble to imagine what is in store for our region — think fracking.

BROKEN THONG AWARD

Last year we broke tradition by including entries from overseas competitors, and this year we again recognize the anti-environmental achievements of others, to wit the United Kingdom. Martin (see Director's Report) has outlined some of the unrest over there. The British Government gets the Broken Thong (to the Poms, a thong is a minimal sort of undergarment) for approving fracking in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales National Park. And remember that national parks in the UK are a fraction the size of the ones we are blessed with here.

BOUQUETS

This year, we send a bouquet with thanks to Roebuck Bay Working Group for its invaluable efforts to protect our very special Bay and all that lives in her. RBWG has surpassed itself this year in disseminating information through the community via the monthly science presentations at Broome Library. Thanks to the Library staff for hosting the talks.

Taking our awards overseas again, we fly a virtual bouquet to Scottish Pagans Against Fracking, bless their tartan socks. Scotland is tiny, but the frackers are in there too.

Somewhat grudgingly, we send a very small bunch of Vincas to the EPA for knocking back the State Government's proposal to continue its war on sharks for another three years. We are niggardly with our bouquet because the EPA failed to stop this year's cruel and unnecessary slaughter.



new ek
board member

Jeremy Cussen

Having grown up between Australia's east coast and Papua New Guinea (not an unfamiliar start for EK Board Members), Jeremy has been active in environmental NGO's from a young age, working with local action groups in Melbourne and the UK, travelling extensively and assisting in Vanuatuan health education projects.

Jeremy moved to the Kimberley in 2012 and lived between Broome and Halls Creek for the following year, which allowed him to take part in Broome's NO GAS campaign and develop strong bonds with communities throughout the Kimberley. Having worked with the majority of Broome's under 18's, his aim is to educate, empower and inspire Kimberley youth to take a leading role in the conservation and enjoyment of our abundant natural resources.



Kimberley Cottages

18 Wandjina Road (last on the right)

Self-contained cottages or single rooms with shared facilities
THE place to stay in Derby for comfort, peace and privacy

Close to town just off the Glbb River Road

Tel: 91911114 • email: kimzen@blgpond.com



* Soaps * Candles * Skin Care * Essential oils
Great gift ideas all hand made with love here in Broome

Customers are welcome to our workshop showroom
2 Harriet Rd, Blue Haze Monday - Friday 9-4
Ph 08 91937036 Fax 08 91923880
www.hiddenvalleyhandcrafts.com.au
Proud to be associated with Environs Kimberley

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

- 1 year for \$20.00 (inclusive of GST)
- 3 years for \$50.00 (inclusive of GST)
- Life membership for \$500 (incl. of GST)



environs
KIMBERLEY
SAVING THE NATURE OF THE KIMBERLEY

PO Box 2281 Broome WA 6725
 Phone: (08)9192 1922
 Fax: (08)9192 5538
 Email: envrkimb2@westnet.com.au
 Website: www.environskimberley.org.au
 Subscription is also available on our website

Name.....
 Address.....
 Town..... Postcode.....
 Email.....
 Phone..... Fax.....

I would also like to make a donation of

\$.....
 (Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible)

Thank You for helping us to *Save the Nature of the Kimberley*

Payment by Cheque Money Order Visa MasterCard Cash **Total \$.....**

My card number is ____ / ____ / ____ / ____ Expiry Date __ / __ Security Code ____

Signed..... Card Holders name (print)

Date.....

I would like to receive my quarterly EK newsletter and other correspondence by email.

The EK gift fund is a public fund and is listed on the register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55 (1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997



environs
KIMBERLEY
SAVING THE NATURE OF THE KIMBERLEY

PO Box 2281
 BROOME WA 6725

**POSTAGE
 PAID
 BROOME
 WA 6725**



SUPPORTING US HAS **NEVER BEEN EASIER**

More members and friends are choosing to give an automatic monthly donation to EK. This means you don't have to think about it and we have the security of knowing how much you want to give us through the year.

You can provide a monthly donation through our website. Please ring Christine if you have any queries on (08) 9192 1922.

9192 1922