



NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW
protecting nature through community action

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NEWSLETTER NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC No 111
Spring edition
SOUTHERN SYDNEY BRANCH

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In This Issue:

We are breaking new ground. If you have an email you will receive this solely as an e-newsletter, unless you have actually told us you prefer to read in in paper.

If you received it via the post you have either not provided Head Office with your email or do not yet have one. That's OK. We want you to receive it.

Better still, we want you to read it! And do tell us what you think. Notice the live hyperlinks!

BUSINESS MEETINGS All are welcome to attend, have your say and hear what's happening in the NPA. Contact Peter on 95287341 or Gary on 95701813 for details. Held on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

BRANCH MEETINGS: Come and meet other members from your local area, new members and friends are most welcome. These meetings are organised for you, are informal, informative and relaxing. An interesting evening is guaranteed and supper is provided. These meetings are now held on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except when this coincides with school holidays. This means that you can all attend Australian Plants AND NPA talks. That is a bargain.

The venue for Branch meetings is the Multi-Purpose Centre, 123 Flora St Sutherland (near Belmont St) 3 minutes' walk from the railway station and with plenty of parking. All meetings commence at 8.00pm.

Branch Matters

As mentioned on the front page, this is arriving in email addresses solely for those members who have an email address (or who have given an accurate one to Head Office) and did not indicate that they need a paper one. Members without email addresses will be reading it on paper a little later in the process.

Approximately 80% of Branch members do have a registered email address with Head Office and you will recall that I wrote a lengthy email to you all canvassing the possibility of going to a digital version of the newsletter. I wrote:

At present we produce a quarterly newsletter of eight pages, mailed to all members. That is not a frequent mailing and I wonder if it is effective. Urgent news cannot be sent via that medium and, in addition, any pictorial content is of a poor quality, given the production. Accordingly, given that many of you are on email, would you find it better if we sent the newsletter as a PDF, colour version, instead? We could make the glossy version quarterly and between editions we could send out a shorter email updating members of activities or urgent matters? Would you read it if it came via your email more or less than if it came by post? Feedback please!!!! The next newsletter, traditionally, is due for early December and that means we would soon need to put it together for printing, labelling and distribution.

Now you can also tell from the timelines that there are benefits in the proposal from the point of view of the Executive.

- More relevant and timely communication with members

- Better quality product, with larger formatted photos and better layout
- Cheaper production and distribution costs
- Less labour time in production for the small team of Executive members who do the work.

That said, it is of no value to us if you won't read it online. Mind you, there is no value to us if you don't read the printed version either!

I received replies from more than 40% of those who received the email and of those replies more than 90% were more than happy to receive it in email or digital form. I was thrilled with the number of respondents and the thoughtful responses that were included. It shows that the Branch members do read the newsletter, do value it and do appreciate that it takes a lot of time, effort and resources to produce such a newsletter. We were not sure but that response said GO FOR IT!

I can't remember those who did say I do get emails but would still like to read it in print form. We will be producing some print newsletters for those without emails (and if you get a printed one and do have an email address and would like the extra features a digital version provides, just email me at brian.everingham@gmail.com and I'll add you to the mailing list. Copy that email to Fae Barton, operations@npansw.org.au, so that Head Office also has accurate records. That way you will also get the short bulletins and short walks notices too. That was one of the additional requests many of you asked and I am only too happy to oblige.

Brian Everingham, editor

News from and about our parks

Several Branch members asked about the Coast Track and I am now happy to tell you that the planning process is over and physical work has commenced on the section of track between Bundeena and Marley Beach. Several

million dollars will be spent there before the end of the financial year, including quality stone work on the steeper sections and that will be done by the team that completed the excellent work around Wentworth Falls.



One local issue is the overcrowding that has occurred at Wattamolla. A planning/briefing meeting was held on 21 October to consider both people management on busy days and the upgrade of the sewage system. Overcrowding at Garie Beach and Bonnie Vale are also being considered. Joy Scott attended on

behalf of the Branch Executive and followed up by asking pertinent questions to the consultants. While we appreciate the need to manage the crush of visitors that can occur on busy days the Branch will focus on the natural environment and ensure that the area is protected as much as possible.

New Deal for Nature

If you have followed news from NPA and NCC you will be aware that Premier Baird has delayed introducing his decision to tear up our nature laws in NSW. We have produced a comprehensive document arguing for better protection and the Branch has written to all local MPs seeking their support. We received no replies but perhaps the letter helped in getting a rethink from the Government. Pressure on local MP's from Branch members would be so useful. Attached to this newsletter will be a list of MPs within Branch boundaries so you can also write.

You can get the entire document from <http://www.nature.org.au/get-involved/take-action/new-deal-for-nature/>

Our Wildlife

The Commonwealth Government has released the Threatened Species Strategy and you can find it online at

[https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/strategy-home#Action Plan 2015-16](https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/strategy-home#Action_Plan_2015-16)

The Action Plan 2015-16 is the first instalment of a five-year Australian Government response to the risk of species extinction. The Action Plan 2015-16 identifies 10 threatened mammals and 10 threatened birds for action that will grow their populations by 2020. A further two mammals and two birds have been identified for emergency intervention. They were recognised as a priority by the Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner in response to expert input and consultation with the scientific community, and through consideration against the principles for prioritisation in the Threatened Species Strategy. The remaining eight mammals and eight birds will be identified in one year through community consultation.

Personally it saddens me to see that we have allowed so many of our species to become extinct or threatened and that we have to resort to such a program is an indictment on all levels of government, on business, on the “develop at all costs” school of economics and on society where we know the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

Surely it was more cost effective to have protected habitat, to have ensured effectively managed ecosystems, inside and out of national parks and to have learnt to live in harmony with nature. Now we face a crisis and now we facing such action plans. However pleasing it might be that government is now responding, I can't help but think that this program is a sad commentary on what has happened and what continues to happen.

Saving Our Species

The equivalent program with NSW is Saving Our Species. Check it out on <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspecies/about.htm>

Local conservation groups, landholders, schools and local businesses can search the website to find project sites in their local area.

Conservation project managers can share ways in which their actions are helping to save a species and do our survey.

Research organisations can view key knowledge gaps that need to be addressed for species little is known about, and undertake this research. Do our survey.

Private landholders can enter into an agreement for managing threatened species on their land with the Office of Environment and Heritage or the Nature Conservation Trust, or join other partnerships to conserve species.

Corporate investors and philanthropic organisations can invest in securing a species or managing a project.

But, again, should we have let it get to this?

Special Places, Special Creatures

Tawny Frogmouth in Engadine *Podargus strigoides*



Many thanks to Colin White who alerted us to these Tawny Frogmouths at their nest in suburban Engadine.¹ You can learn more about them at the Australian Museum website by going to the hyperlink in the footnotes. They are not owls.

Tawny frogmouths share the following features with owls: they are nocturnal; they eat insects; they have large eyes; they have soft feathers for silent flight; and they have bristles or "whiskers" around their bills.

Differences include: owls will eat animals and birds up to their own size and sometimes larger, while frogmouths are almost exclusively insectivorous; owl eyes face fully forward whilst frogmouths' eyes face mostly to the side; owls have large, powerful feet, while frogmouths have

small, weak feet; owls have either a full or partial facial disk, while frogmouths do not; owls have large asymmetrical ears, while frogmouths do not; and owls have twelve tail feathers whilst frogmouths have ten.²

They are more closely related to nightjars and for those of us who have seen and enjoyed them I guess it is their cryptic colouration and ability to sit still in full view and still be virtually invisible that attracts. They can appear to be no more than an extension of the tree! Both sexes incubate the eggs. The male sits during the day, but both sexes share sitting at night. The nest is a loose platform of sticks, which is usually placed on a horizontal forked tree branch.

¹ <http://australianmuseum.net.au/tawny-frogmouth>

² <http://www.raptor.org.au/pstrigoides.html>

In the media

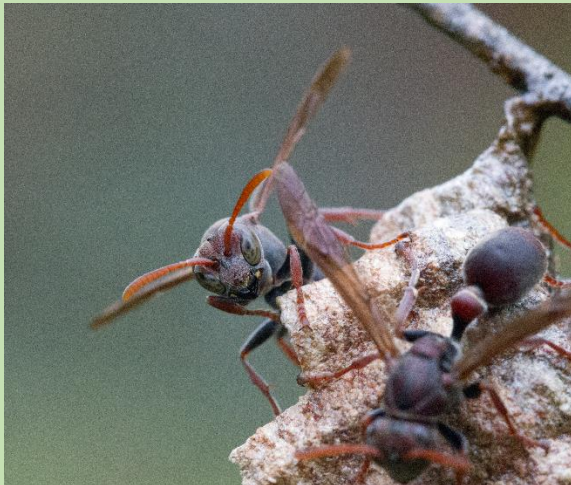
I wonder does anyone listen to Off Track on ABC Radio National. One special program recently was a love song for a changing ocean; a collaboration between two oceanographers and a composer to explore the importance of our oceans and the threats they face. It is well worth the time to listen and ponder. Ref: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/offtrack/ocean-music/6891012>

The same program explored the place of White Ibis in our urban ecology. Are they truly an urban pest or are they are an extraordinary, adaptable bird, driven from their original habitat but able to make do with what we provide? Ref: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/offtrack/australian-white-ibis/6833810>

Activities

Past

Branch members might note that there are several regular photography walks during the week. It does give Branch members a chance to walk more slowly and to explore the nature that is about us. Email alerts can be sent if you are interested. Some of the photographs are placed on our increasingly popular Branch Facebook page. "Like" us and help spread the word: <https://www.facebook.com/ssbnpansw/>



Branch members will have enjoyed slide shows from Gary Schoer (the Arctic) and Maureen and David Carter (Iceland) during September and October and there were quite a few walks to enjoy. We are always looking for new leaders so don't be shy. Mentoring is available.

Other trips have been to Curra Moors, where we got to see the waterfall going back up over its head and into the inland. It's a common occurrence but the video on our Branch Facebook page is a treat. Well taken, John Prats! It may have been a windy day but the opportunities for photography were many.

And Coming Up

The Branch trip to Kosciuszko National Park in December is now solidly booked out but there will be a report at some stage. There will also be a variety of early morning walks over the summer months.

Keep February 2nd free for an activity to celebrate World Wetlands Day! It will be held north of the Hacking River and be a morning photographic activity.

And on February 24th the slide show for members will be a tour of various national parks in western NSW; all places worth visiting! See images of Toorale, Gundabooka, Kwiambal and other delights. Then plan your trip and enjoy.



Note that Brian Everingham can be contacted on brian.everingham@gmail.com so do send in copy for this magazine and for the short bulletins that will arrive between publications.

Until next time