

June

Free

Village Eco News

A publication of Bangalow Land and Rivercare.

Welcome to Village Eco News. For more information about how you can subscribe or contribute see page 4

Patrons of the Environment Initiative

Bangalow Land and Rivercare group is again launching our *Patrons of the Environment Initiative*. Each year since 2012 we have asked our local community and anyone who supports our work to choose a level of patronage, or choose your own! It is this donation that helps us to keep going.

The idea is that the community can enjoy the benefits of our work such as the Bangalow Wetlands and the All Souls Planting seen below, reduce our carbon footprint, provide habitat for native birds and animals, improve water quality in our creeks and restore green space for everyone to enjoy making a better future for generations to come. All this without getting your hands dirty. If everyone could spare as little as \$25 a year the support would enable us to do much bigger things. We are always grateful for the very generous support provided to us by individuals and the local business community some of whom display their Patrons Certificate in the window of their premises and we urge readers to support them in return. The levels of patronage per year is as follows:

Bronze Patron: \$25.00, Silver Patron: \$50.00, Gold Patron: \$100
Platinum Patron: \$500, Diamond Patron: \$1000

In the past year these funds have been used for continued planting on all our sites, to replace losses and increase species diversity as well as control weeds. We made a commitment to place plant labels along some of our pathways which has now started and will increase as trees mature. This year we need to employ a local person to manage the Wetland at Bangalow Parklands due to the failure of the council to take it on as promised.

Details on how you can help us to help our environment can be obtained by; calling Liz (h) 66871309 or talking to Noelene at our Bangalow Farmers Market stall on the 3rd Saturday of each month.

A direct deposit can be made to Summerland Credit Union BSB 728728 Acc 22209164

More details about our work can be found at <http://www.bangalowlandcare.org.au/about/>



Bangalow Wetlands



All Souls Planting

Like Us On
facebook 

Landcare Working Bee

Our team of friendly volunteers work every Saturday morning, weather permitting from 8.30am to 10.30am rotating through the various sites around Bangalow. All welcome.

Draft 'Strategy for Nature 2018 - 2030' widely criticized

In the midst of a tremendous environmental challenge across Australia, the Federal Government has released a draft document, *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2018–2030*, for public comment. Regrettably the strategy falls a long way short of what's required and contains significant flaws.

Australia arguably has the worst conservation record of any wealthy and politically stable nation. Since European arrival roughly 230 years ago, 50 animal and 60 plant species have become extinct, including the loss of some 30 native mammals – roughly 35% of global mammal extinctions.

More than 1,800 plant, animal and ecological communities are listed as being at future risk, ranging from individual species all the way up to entire ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef.

A visit to the *Northern Rivers Wires* website is a shocking reminder that we are home to many of these threatened birds and animals and not only do their numbers decrease every year, additional species are being added to the list that face a growing threat from rampant land clearing, invasive species and of course climate change.

The draft 'Strategy' contains no firm commitments or measurable targets or relevant scientific evidence. Conservation organisations propose a bolder more science-based vision to include the points listed below:

1. Set measurable targets by 2025
2. Commit to preventing human-caused species extinction and establish and maintain clear paths of accountability.
3. Adequately fund the strategy's implementation.
4. Focus on the intrinsic value of biodiversity, this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.
5. Make specific legislative recommendations requiring recovery plans for all threatened species and plans to efficiently manage major threats such as the impact of feral predators, herbivores, invasive plants and new diseases.

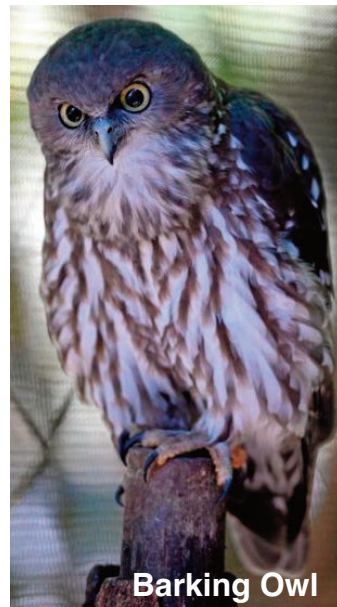
6. Specifically protect high-value ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef and those that are critical for species survival.

7. Base the strategy for Australia's conservation commitments on the current 30 International Agreements.

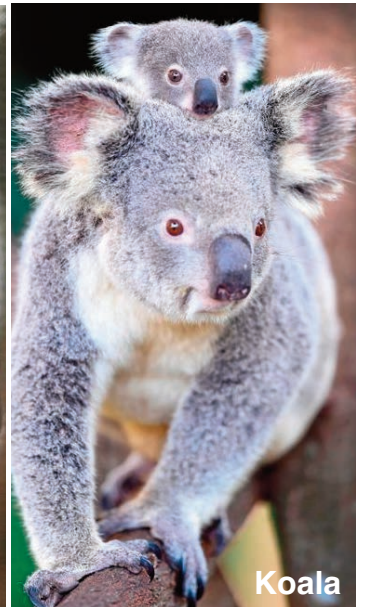
8. Recognise key issues that affect Australian biodiversity conservation and include new and emerging issues that can harm our environment, such as Australia's increasing use of natural resources, loss of environmental water flows in rivers, and overfishing.

We can not continue to ignore the impact of human population growth, increased per capita consumption and subsequent resource demand as drivers that threaten the health and resilience of our ecosystems.

Sources: Various conservation groups & WIRES



Barking Owl



Koala



Squirrel Glider



Fleay's Barred Frog



The Affect on Whales from offshore oil and gas surveys

Air guns currently being used for marine oil and gas exploration off the New South Wales coast are loud enough to affect Humpback Whales up to 3km away, potentially affecting their migration patterns, according to new research.

Air guns are devices towed behind seismic survey ships that rapidly release compressed air into the ocean, producing a loud bang. The sound travels through the water and into the sea bed, bouncing off various layers of rock, oil or gas. The faint echoes are picked up by sensors towed by the same vessel.

During oil and gas exploration, the air guns are fired every 10-15 seconds to develop a detailed geological picture of the ocean floor in the area. Although they are not intended to harm the Whales, there has been concern for many years about the potential impacts of these loud, frequent sounds.

Whales' communication depends on sounds, which can travel very efficiently over distances of tens of kilometres in the underwater environment. But studies show that they are also affected by ocean noises produced by humans.

As part of the BRAHSS (Behavioural Response of Humpback Whales to Seismic Surveys) project they measured the Whales' behavioural responses by using air guns on the migratory path of more than 120 groups off Queensland's Sunshine Coast. They slowed their migratory speed and deviated from their path by about 500 metres.

More research is now needed to find out how drastically the Whales' migration routes may change and to reduce the ocean mining noise.
Source: The Conversation.



Finally action on Plastic Bags

Shoppers at Woolworths supermarkets, BWS, Metro and petrol stations will no longer receive plastic bags from June 20. They will either have to bring their own or purchase thicker, reusable bags for 15 cents, or canvas bags for 99 cents.

Coles will stick with its previously announced July 1 end date coinciding with legislation coming into effect in Queensland, Victoria and WA, which will join South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and Northern Territory in banning the bag. NSW is the only state without legislation or a ban coming into effect, but the major supermarkets will withdraw bags voluntarily.

"Single-use plastic bags have become a huge problem for Australia's oceans and waterways where they cause significant harm to turtles, whales and fish," Planet Ark CEO Paul Klymenko said in a statement. "They also don't breakdown in landfill and require significant resources to manufacture in the first place."

"Experiences in countries like the UK and Ireland have shown the introduction of small charges on plastic bags can end up reducing plastic bag usage by up to 85 per cent as shoppers embrace reusable alternatives, and we have every confidence this can happen in Australia too."

Woolworths, which says it distributes more than 3.2 billion plastic bags every year, has previously been criticised for its excessive use of plastic packaging on fresh produce like bananas and sweet potatoes.

A spokesman for the supermarket said it was trialling the removal or reduction of plastic packaging for fruit and vegetables, and had already removed packaging on products including spring onion, celery, kale and spinach.

Source: frank.chung@news.com.au & Plant Ark



Come hither... how imitating mating males could cut Cane Toad numbers

by James Cook University

Cane toads are a real Aussie success story – for themselves, at least. But research has produced a new kind of trap that may help stop their insidious march.

The new traps imitate cane toads' mating calls and also use UV lights to attract insects, enticing both male and female toads to the trap. There are too many toads in Australia to eradicate by simply removing individuals, some estimates put the number as high as 1.5 billion, but we hope that eliminating reproducing females could slow population growth.

Cane toads reproduce rapidly, and are very adaptable and extremely mobile, covering up to a kilometre a night in the right conditions. They can also hitch rides on trucks, cars and even planes.

As they spread they wreak havoc on the native environment. They are highly toxic, making native predators like quolls, goannas and snakes sicken or die.

While the toads only eat about as many insects as native frogs of the same size, their sheer population numbers mean they are likely to reduce the food available for other ground-dwelling insect-eaters, and some small mammals

Male cane toads, like most frogs and toads, make a species-specific call to attract mates. To our surprise, we found that both males and females were attracted to this call, and that although males are attracted to anything that sounds even a bit like a toad, females prefer certain call types.

We also found that toads are attracted to insects that are attracted to lights, despite the paradoxical fact that toads don't like white lights very much. We solved this problem by using UV lights to attract insects without bothering the toads. We then built traps that coupled UV lights to draw in insect food for the toads with the right call type, which were more successful than traps without both.

The University has been working with our industry partner, Animal Control Technologies Australia, to develop a functional trap people can use to get rid of adult toads.

Our trap captures adult (breeding age) males and females before they reproduce, targeting future generations as well as the individuals themselves. Our research has shown that trapping is less labour intensive than hand capture, and can be conducted for long periods.

Trapping may also be a good way to collect individuals to apply any control methods invented in the future. This may be a genetically engineered disease, or ongoing efforts to genetically alter toads to make them non-toxic.

We hope that traps for adults will become part of an arsenal of methods available to combat these pests, both at and behind the invasion front. For more information:

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/>

Village Eco News

Our aim is to inform, interest, amuse and educate our readers on all things environmental. We welcome you to submit your contributions or to subscribe to this free Newsletter send your name and email address to:

bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

Please pass this publication on to your family and friends. Receiving our Newsletter online will help to save the environment we work to preserve.

Contact Details:

President: Noelene Plummer 6685 4470

Secretary: Liz Gander 6687 1309

Email: bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

www.bangalowlandcare.org.au

