

# WILDLIFE DIARY

## August 2016

### Great Finds

**Southern Boobook**, *Ninox novaeseelandiae* it maybe one of Australia's smallest owls but it certainly has a strong and distinctive call. Heard around the Redlands, recently in bushland and wooded creek lines in Birkdale.

**Carpet Snake**, *Morelia spilota* and **Eastern Water Dragons**, *Itellagama lesueurii* have recently been sited. May be an early summer on the way.

### Population

*If population levels continue to rise at the current rate, our grandchildren will see the Earth plunged into an unprecedented environmental crisis.*

Computational scientist Stephen Emmott

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jun/30/stephen-emcott-ten-billion>

### Northern Brown Bandicoot

**Northern Brown Bandicoot**, *Isodon macrourus* once common in the Redlands now appears to be absent in many areas. We like to know if you have seen them of late.

Body length 400 mm; tail length 170 mm; weight 2 kg. A large male may reach the size of a miniature Fox Terrier dog. Snout long and pointed; movements jerky; posture hunched; ears rounded; harsh brown fur. Short tail (often absent). Forefeet have 3 long-nailed toes.

Inner suburbs with protective daytime cover (e.g. long grass, thick shrubs, rubbish piles); outer suburbs — dry and wet eucalypt forests, open paddocks. Also occurs on Macleay, Moreton and Stradbroke Is. Common. From the Kimberley region, WA, across northern NT to central and coastal Qld and coastal NSW.

Nocturnal. Does not climb. Infamous for the small holes it digs in lawns and gardens. Has an explosive 'balloon screech' call if disturbed. Similar to Long-nosed Bandicoot, but lacks a gap between 4th and 5th upper incisors.

Small conical holes (7 cm diameter) in lawns, usually in winter and spring; large excavations in gardens for roots and insect larvae. Droppings are like peanut pods (25 mm long by 10 mm wide). Source:

[http://www.qm.qld.gov.au/Find+out+about/Animals+of+Queensland/Mammals/Common+mammals+of+south-east+Queensland/Marsupials/Northern+Brown+Bandicoot#.V6\\_Gxq3wF-4](http://www.qm.qld.gov.au/Find+out+about/Animals+of+Queensland/Mammals/Common+mammals+of+south-east+Queensland/Marsupials/Northern+Brown+Bandicoot#.V6_Gxq3wF-4)

### Did you Know?

Did you know birdsongs are always part of larger set of sound signals? Every bird uses a repertoire of calls for communication. Calls are shorter and simpler than songs, with a much larger range of functions. Whereas songs are specialized for application in reproduction and territoriality, calls also serve such functions as signalling about food, maintaining social cohesion, contact calls, synchronizing and coordinating flight, and the resolution of aggressive and sexual conflicts. Alarm calls of various kinds are a major component, including distress, mobbing, and hawk alarm calls. Call repertoires vary greatly in size, up to 20 or so distinct call types. Rough estimates for songbirds range between 5 and 10, but some birds, especially galliforms, may have twice as many. Call usage is often sexually dimorphic and commonly varies seasonally and with physiological state. Most calls appear to be innate, but more and more examples of developmental plasticity in bird calls are emerging. Some display well-defined local dialects.

### Great Walks



With the weather warming up the numbers and variety of flowers and wildlife will begin change. Reserves that are enjoyable at this time of the year are the Glider Reserve at Alexandra Hills. Others include Scribbly Gum Reserve and Days Road at Redland Bay.

### Web Sites

#### WPSQ Coastal Community Science

<http://wpsqccs.wordpress.com/>

#### What is the Indian Ocean Dipole?

<http://e.bom.gov.au/link/id/zzzz57aa9bb17516b088Pzzzz53ff2d7c05fb5046/page.html#zzzz579a9f5e93903212>

#### Shocking images' reveal death of 10,000 hectares of mangroves across Northern Australia

[http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-07-10/unprecedented-10000-hectares-of-mangroves-die/7552968?WT.ac=statenews\\_qld](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-07-10/unprecedented-10000-hectares-of-mangroves-die/7552968?WT.ac=statenews_qld)

# Human Population

Earth is home to millions of species. Just one dominates it. Us. Our cleverness, our inventiveness and our activities have modified almost every part of our planet. In fact, we are having a profound impact on it. Indeed, our cleverness, our inventiveness and our activities are now the drivers of every global problem we face. And every one of these problems is accelerating as we continue to grow towards a global population of 10 billion. In fact, I believe we can rightly call the situation we're in right now an emergency – an unprecedented planetary emergency.

We humans emerged as a species about 200,000 years ago. In geological time, that is really incredibly recent. Just 10,000 years ago, there were one million of us. By 1800, just over 200 years ago, there were 1 billion of us. By 1960, 50 years ago, there were 3 billion of us. There are now over 7 billion of us. By 2050, your children, or your children's children, will be living on a planet with at least 9 billion other people. Sometime towards the end of this century, there will be at least 10 billion of us. Possibly more.

We got to where we are now through a number of civilisation- and society-shaping "events", most notably the agricultural revolution, the scientific revolution, the industrial revolution and – in the West – the public-health revolution. By 1980, there were 4 billion of us on the planet. Just 10 years later, in 1990, there were 5 billion of us. By this point initial signs of the consequences of our growth were starting to show. Not the least of these was on water. Our demand for water – not just the water we drank but the water we needed for food production and to make all the stuff we were consuming.

Demand for land for food is going to double – at least – by 2050, and triple – at least – by the end of this century. This means that pressure to clear many of the world's remaining tropical rainforests for human use is going to intensify every decade, because this is predominantly the only available land that is left for expanding agriculture at scale.

Meanwhile, another 3 billion people are going to need somewhere to live. By 2050, 70% of us are going to be living in cities. This century will see the rapid expansion of cities, as well as the emergence of entirely new cities that do not yet exist. It's worth mentioning that of the 19 Brazilian cities that have doubled in population in the past decade, 10 are in the Amazon. All this is going to use yet more land.

We currently have no known means of being able to feed 10 billion of us at our current rate of consumption and with our current agricultural system. Indeed, simply to feed ourselves in the next 40 years, we will need to produce more food than the entire agricultural output of the past 10,000 years combined. Yet food productivity is set to decline, possibly very sharply, over the coming decades due to: climate change; soil degradation and desertification – both of which are increasing rapidly in many parts of the world; and water stress. By the end of this century, large parts of the planet will not have any usable water.

We are going to have to triple – at least – energy production by the end of this century to meet expected demand. To meet that demand, we will need to build, roughly speaking, something like: 1,800 of the world's largest dams, or 23,000 nuclear power stations, 14m wind turbines, 36bn solar panels, or just keep going with predominantly oil, coal and gas – and build the 36,000 new power stations that means we will need. Our existing oil, coal and gas reserves alone are worth trillions of dollars. Are governments and the world's major oil, coal and gas companies – some of the most influential corporations on Earth – really going to decide to leave the money in the ground, as demand for energy increases relentlessly? I doubt it.

Where does this leave us? Let's look at it like this. If we discovered tomorrow that there was an asteroid on a collision course with Earth and – because physics is a fairly simple science – we were able to calculate that it was going to hit Earth on 3 June 2072, and we knew that its impact was going to wipe out 70% of all life on Earth, governments worldwide would marshal the entire planet into unprecedented action. Every scientist, engineer, university and business would be enlisted: half to find a way of stopping it, the other half to find a way for our species to survive and rebuild if the first option proved unsuccessful. We are in almost precisely that situation now, except that there isn't a specific date and there isn't an asteroid. The problem is us.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jun/30/stephen-emmott-ten-billion>

Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

- *Margaret Mead*



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