

WILDLIFE DIARY

June 2017



Great Finds

Juvenile **Blue faced honeyeater**, *Entomyzon cyanotis*, have been sighted distinctive from their parents because of the yellow/green facial skin rather than blue like adults.

Brown goshawk, *Accipiter fasciatus*, **Collared Sparrowhawk**, *Accipiter cirrocephalus* noted in Redlands.

POPULATION MATTERS

The growth rate of 1.2 percent between 2000 and 2005, when applied to the world's 6.5 billion population in 2005, yields an annual increase of about 78 million people. Because of the large and increasing population size, the number of people added to the global population will remain high for several decades, even as growth rates continue to decline.

World population clock

<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

Torpor

Torpor is the most effective means for energy conservation available to mammals and is characterized by substantial reductions in body temperature (Tb) and metabolic rate (MR). Most Australian terrestrial mammals are small with high mass-specific energy requirements and, although it is widely believed that torpor is not needed in a 'warm' country like Australia, a large number of species are heterothermic (i.e. capable of changing Tb, in contrast to homeothermic mammals with a constant high Tb). These heterothermic species (estimated >43% of terrestrial Australian native mammals) employ periods of daily torpor or prolonged multi-day torpor (hibernation) to conserve energy. Daily torpor is used by dasyurids (e.g. dunnarts, antechinus, quolls), myrmecobiids (numbat), tarsipedids (honey-possum), petaurid possums (e.g. sugar glider), rodents (but only known in the introduced house mouse), and small megabats (blossom-bats). Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yc88zpg8>

Kimberley gas fracking—keeping the pressure on

Community members converged outside Buru Energy's AGM in Perth this week. They were there to support Traditional Custodians to have their voices heard, and send a strong message to the company that is driving gas fracking exploration in the Kimberley's Canning Basin: that it doesn't have a social licence to operate. their concerns about the impacts to their Country from gas fracking activities.

Source: <https://www.wilderness.org.au/articles/kimberley-gas-frackingkeeping-pressure#sthash.fEpm15Se.dpuf>

Did You Know?

Did you know many fish are not silent? Angelfish have been heard to thump loudly and certain damselfish make chirping noises to communicate. Sweetlips are also sometimes known as grunts because of the grinding noise made by the teeth in their throat and amplified by their swim bladders. Jewfish are known as croakers in America because of the sound created by the drumming of their swim bladders and toadfish are presumably named for the resemblance of their mating calls to those of toads and frogs. Dwellers in houseboats on the coast of the United States are kept awake at night by the extremely loud noises made by one of these species, the oyster toadfish. More locally, our noisy fish include saltwater grunTERS, trumpeters and freshwater blackbream. Source: <http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/register/p00820be.pdf>

Bush fly, *Musca vetustissima*, move into southern Australia each spring from NW and SW Queensland. It seems certain that mass displacement of flies take place on all strong winds under the generally warm conditions of summer. Research undertaken in December showed marked flies were recovered up to 3.5 miles from the liberation point within 48 hr of release. The distance and speed of travel makes for an amazing feat of endurance for such a small insect; it is one of the largest migrations known in the world.



Great Walks

Want to see koalas, curlews and a great view of the bay then visit G. J. Walter Park. Public greenspace adjacent to Moreton Bay makes for a nice walk on any day.

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Moreton Bay seagrass maps now online
<https://public.tableau.com/profile/wpccs#!/>

Toondah harbour & political donations
<https://tinyurl.com/jnbqqgk>

Inshore Moreton Bay Reef Habitat Maps
<https://www.reefcheckaustralia.org/inshore-moreton-bay-map.html>

Coal mine and Bimblebox
<https://bimblebox.org/nature-refuges/>

Plastic Bags

Approximately 6.9 billion plastic bags are consumed annually in Australia, with 6 billion of these being high density polyethylene (HDPE) such as supermarket singlet bags, and 0.9 billion being low density polyethylene (LDPE) such as boutique bags. 67% of HDPE and 25% LDPE bags are imported, with the remainder locally produced.

Single-use plastic shopping bags generate around 35,850 tonnes of waste per year. This is equivalent to 0.2% of total solid waste going to landfill each year in Australia (an estimated 16 million tonnes). Average bag use per person in Australia is around 360 bags (1.9 kg), which is equivalent to 0.7% of average household waste going to landfill each year (an estimated 260kg). This impact is reduced, however, when you consider the high percentage of bags reused in the home.

Much of the concern regarding plastic bag litter revolves around the impacts on marine life. Much anecdotal evidence has been gathered around the world on the incidence of at least 143 species being affected, injured and killed by plastic bags – either by ingestion or entanglement. It is believed that turtles, and other species such as whales, mistake plastic bags in the water for jelly fish or other food. The bags can choke the animal or restrict food absorption in the body leading to injury or death. Mammals and other species also become entangled in bags leading to injury, loss of limbs, infection and possible death.

A figure of 100 000 marine animals killed annually has been widely quoted by environmental groups; this figure was from a study in Newfoundland which estimated the number of animals entrapped by plastic debris in that area over a four-year period from 1981-1984. Actual numbers of animals injured or killed annually by plastic bag litter is obviously nearly impossible to determine.

Environmental Daily reported on 22nd August 2002 that Irish consumers' demand for disposable plastic shopping bags had plummeted by over 90% since the introduction of the PlasTax. Irish Minister for the Environment, Martin Cullen, said:

"The reduction has been immediate and the positive visual impact on the environment is plain to see [...]. We are realising that by implementing practical measures such as this, the environment wins."

In recent consultation with major Irish retailers, the sustained reduction of plastic shopping bags has been confirmed. The overall reduction is estimated at over 90%, with major supermarkets Tesco and SuperQuinn experiencing 92% and 94% reductions respectively. These retailers predict, that rather than an increase in plastic shopping bag consumption over time, that the reduction rate will stabilise at 95-96% of pre-levy consumption.

The Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017 will be tabled in Parliament this evening, 14th June. The bill legislates a ban on lightweight plastic bags (including degradable and biodegradable plastic bags) up to 35 microns thick. These are the supermarket style bags.

Let us hope the Bill become an Act.

Source: <http://www.environment.gov.au/archive/settlements/publications/waste/plastic-bags/pubs/analysis.pdf>

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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