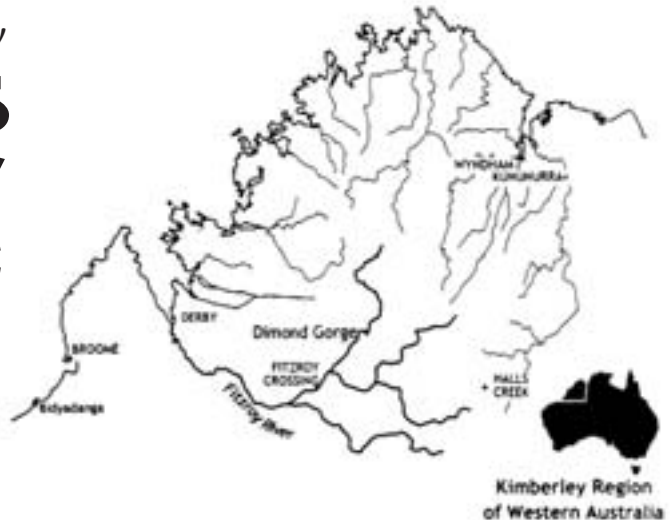




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Bulletin No. 30 • July 2004

MUCH TO CELEBRATE

We at Environs Kimberley have much to celebrate in this issue. **Most notably:** Koolan Iron Ore Pty Ltd withdrew its application for a mining exploration licence over Irvine Island and other parts of the Buccaneer Archipelago, and the State Government has not re-signed its Memorandum of Understanding with WAI for further cotton trials, at least for the time being (see articles). We have worked hard to get our message over about protecting our natural resources into the future, and the omens are looking a little more favourable than they were a year ago.

We have also taken part in optimistic events such as the Cool Communities workshop and Celebrate the Bay. And we are proud of our new-look market stall and merchandise. We who oppose a Kimberley cotton industry were recently called 'Zealots and Ideologues' in the Legislative Council. **Zealot:** one showing earnestness or fervour in advancing a cause or rendering service. **Ideologue:** a visionary. Yes, we'll wear that. Onwards and upwards.

Ed.

COTTON DECISION HANGS BY A THREAD

The State Government has deferred a decision on re-signing a memorandum of understanding with NSW cotton proponent Western Agricultural Industries covering a large area of the west Kimberley, which expired on June 30.

State Development Minister Clive Brown said the government was concerned at opposition to the project by the area's Traditional Owners.

He told ABC radio there had been a lack of appropriate consultation with the traditional owners and the proponent could not simply trample on other people's rights.

Mr Brown also expressed reservations about the project's water use and its use of GM crops.

He told The Australian newspaper that the government was faced with a difficult choice between cancelling WAI's right to continue researching the project, or making an application under the Native Title Act to take away the land from the Traditional Owners.

EK and the Australian Conservation Foundation applauded the decision not to automatically re-sign the MOU, saying it showed that the government was listening to the people of the Kimberley who had fought the project for more than six years.

EK spokesperson Pat Lowe said the project would nearly double the State's annual water consumption, would see the clearing of 200,000 hectares of valuable Pindan woodland — home to the endangered bilby — and would introduce a genetically modified crop into a near-pristine environment.

"Although the project is still on the agenda, we are heartened that the State Government is expressing reservations about the whole thing," Ms Lowe said.

"This one project would change the environment and culture of the west Kimberley and the Fitzroy River, forever.

"The proponent's own figures demonstrate that the project would need in excess of 1600 gigalitres of water every year. The entire state of Western Australia currently uses 1795 gigalitres a year, and that includes everything from drinking water to crop irrigation, mining and industrial uses," she said.

"At a time when the rest of the nation is talking about national water strategies and our own state is looking at an expensive desalination plant, giving such a large amount of water to one man just doesn't make sense.

"Proponent John Logan promised earlier in the project that he would walk away from the proposal if the Traditional Owners did not want it. We think it is time for him to honour that promise.

"The area's Traditional Owners have said No to this proposal so many times they are sick of saying it."

Cont page 5...

From the Coordinator's Desk...



THE MYER
FOUNDATION

The campaign action has continued these past three months. Our strong efforts to persuade the State Government not to re-sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with cotton industry proponents Western Agricultural Industries (WAI) were redoubled as the date of expiry of the existing MoU – June 30, 2004 – approached.

As most of you will already know, WAI want to develop a genetically modified cotton industry in the west Kimberley, clearing more than 200,000ha of pindan woodland in an arc roughly following the Great Northern Highway from Nita Downs to the south of Broome to the Fitzroy River south-east of Derby. They want to use all of the available groundwater from the La Grange aquifer and all of the allocable water (around 1,600Gl) from the Fitzroy River.

EK's work focused on a joint media campaign with the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF). To this end, we employed media consultant Jane Hammond from Fremantle Freelance to develop a media strategy, prepare media releases, advise us how the media works, provide contacts and provide training in how to use the media. (Check out the media releases on the EK website.)

Close to the MoU expiry date, there were mixed messages from the government. Kimberley MP Carol Martin came out very strongly against the proposal and the Premier Dr Geoff Gallop said the project wouldn't go ahead without the support of the Traditional Owners (TOs). The matter was debated in the Legislative Council, with Minister for Agriculture Kim Chance supporting a motion by former One Nation Party MP John Fischer: 'That this House request the State Government to support feasibility studies relating to the establishment of a cotton industry in WA'. John Fischer argued his case fervently, saying that the KLC is 'not representative of Aboriginal people in the area', is comprised of 'zealots and ideologues', and that your very own Coordinator is a 'self styled expert on all the Kimberley'! A couple of days later, the Minister for State Development Clive Brown would say only that the government would soon be making the difficult choice between cancelling WAI's right to continue researching the project or making an application under the Native Title Act to take the land from the TOs. There is no indication at this stage of when this decision will be made.

TOs have consistently and strongly said no to the cotton project. They want to explore ideas for good businesses that suit the local culture, land and wildlife and which are of real and lasting benefit to Indigenous communities. EK, ACF and the KLC have signed an Agreement, committing

themselves to work together on this and other matters, including putting pressure on the Government to withdraw its support for the cotton proposal and instead support the development of a community-based regional plan for the Kimberley.

While the cotton campaign has occupied most of our time, we have managed to tend to a few other matters as well:

Our objection to Koolan Iron Ore Pty Ltd's application to explore for iron ore on Irvine Island and other wonderfully pristine islands in the Buccaneer Archipelago was unexpectedly won when the company withdrew its submission a few days before the matter was due to go to court – more about this elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our application to host the Communications Officer position, set up to support the workings of the Kimberley Natural Resource Management Interim Group, was successful. Kate Golson will join us in mid-July to take up this position. She will also help out with writing funding applications for EK.

To accommodate Kate and take care of our growing need for space, EK has moved. We're still at Lotteries House, quite close to our old office. You will see us as you come in. There's more space for volunteers and a better display of information and merchandise, so come and visit us! We love to see our members, and recently enjoyed a visit from several of our eastern states associates who dropped in to say hi and lend a hand. Keep it up!

I managed to slip away for a couple of days in June for a bit of professional development at the WACOSS 'Bring on the Change' conference in Perth. This was attended mainly by human and social service organisations. It was interesting to see how similar the challenges are facing the human & social services sector and the environment sector, e.g. political advocacy, public profile-raising, getting media attention, especially when trying to promote an idea or positive news, and how many possibilities there are for collaboration.

Many thanks to our wonderful admin assistant Kerry Marvell, who keeps things in the office ticking over, no matter how hectic it gets on the campaign front. As well as the day-to-day running of the office, Kerry does a fantastic job with the markets, has made a couple of presentations to schools about our position on the Broome marina, and ran a highly successful Cool Communities day in Broome recently – more about that elsewhere in the newsletter. ✨

Maria Mann




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One good Tern deserves another!

Research into waders and terns has been turned into an 'extreme sport' by unusually rainy conditions.

An intrepid team of researchers turned up two weekends in a row at the beginning of May to band Whiskered Tern chicks on Roebuck Plains. It is believed to be the first time that chicks have been banded in this area. The objective was to band and flag as many chicks as possible in the hopes that as they grow and disperse they may be seen and reported.

Whiskered Terns are a little known species in the Roebuck Bay area. They are infrequently caught in beach netting because they do not congregate on the beach in large numbers as other species of terns often do. Also, we are unaware of their movements around the Kimberley and further afield.

Whiskered Terns make a nest on a grass clump in the marshy conditions seen on Roebuck Plains adjacent to the Highway, running south. To catch the chicks, first you have to wade through swampy water sometimes reaching halfway up your legs. Luckily, on neither occasion were mosquitoes, snakes or other creepy crawlies a problem. The chicks are extremely well-camouflaged and within a few hours of hatching are hiding under tussocks of grass, evading the eagle eyes of predators and researchers. They are very cute as you can see from the photo (thanks to Adrian Boyle).



A total of 158 chicks were banded and the majority flagged with a yellow flag. So if anyone sees young Whiskered Terns with yellow flags, please report them to Broome Bird Observatory (BBO) or Chris Hassell.

Our next foray was to catch juvenile migratory waders in Roebuck Bay. Due to the still wet conditions on Roebuck Plains behind the BBO, the birds were showing a marked reluctance to stay on the beach and were

taking off to the plains (inaccessible to researchers, even very intrepid ones). The team assembled, with clouds looming. Net setting had been done in fine conditions earlier in the morning. Early reports were that Red Knot and Great Knot were assembled near the catching area and hopes were raised. Then it started to rain, so we sheltered in the vehicles and the birds all took off for the plains. When the rain stopped, people dispersed to see if there were any birds, anywhere. There were, but as soon as anyone moved they took off to the plains as well.

It rained again. By this time we were all slightly damp, so decided to stay out in it. No birds, and the tide had almost reached its peak. Two stalwart volunteers manned shovels to try and hold the incoming tide from the net, carefully camouflaged on the beach. By this time everyone was wet and disheartened. I am sure there are better things to do on a weekend.

Just as we had all but given up hope, a small flock of Lesser-Crested Terns and a few Silver Gulls landed just within the catching area. The cannons were fired and 22 Lesser Crested Terns and 5 Silver Gulls were captured. Four of the terns had been caught before: two on the same beach in 1998, when they were aged 3+; they are now 8+ years old. One was caught in 1991, then 2+, now 4+. The last was caught in 1996, then 2+ and now 10+ years old. In the middle of all this excitement I found a new way to descend the cliff. My trousers and nether regions will never be the same again!

Interesting information has been released as a result of data matching from the International Expedition conducted at Roebuck Bay and 80 Mile Beach earlier this year. Of a total of 406 retrapped birds, 61 were older than 10 years. The oldest, as far as we can tell, is a Red Knot over 21 years old that was first caught and released in 1985. When we catch adult birds we are only able to say that they are older than 2, so this bird's actual age is not known. The age of birds that were first caught as juveniles is known: the oldest are a 17 year old Greater Sand Plover, a Terek Sandpiper and a Bar-tailed Godwit. From the retrap data we can see that birds caught in the same

catch more than 10 years ago are still in the same flock today.

Australian researchers have been assisting with catch and release programs in China and USA as birds were making their way to the Arctic breeding grounds. In China researchers were thrilled to recover birds banded in Australia, and with sightings of birds with flags from Australia or New Zealand, and from other programs in China.

In the USA, research is continuing in Delaware Bay, a stop-over for Red Knots making their way from South America to the Arctic. 15 years ago there were more than 100,000 of these birds; this year the maximum count was 13,500. However, a complete moratorium on the harvesting of horseshoe crabs during their breeding period in June has meant that the Red Knots who feast on surplus eggs deposited at the high tide mark were able to reach their required body weight in just a few days. Even if this year is a good breeding season it will take many years for the numbers to climb back.

These catch and release programs are proving their value in recording the movement of birds from their non-breeding grounds to their breeding grounds and in monitoring numbers of birds and providing data to assist in conservation programs.

Thank you to Australasian Wader Studies Group and North West Wader Studies Group (NWSG) for permission to reproduce data.

NWSG has a regular program of activities around the Broome area. If you want to take part please contact Chris Hassell on 9192 8585 or turnstone@wn.com.au. The next international expedition will be held from 12 February to 6 March 2005. Contact Chris Hassell about that too. Numbers are limited, so make your intentions known early. 🐦

Liz



COOL communities

Workshop

Do you want to save the world AND save money?



Rapt audience at Cool Communities Workshop

At the Cool Communities Workshop in Broome on Saturday 19th June, all 50 people who attended learnt how to reduce household greenhouse gas emissions and save money on energy bills. Environs Kimberley was proud to host the first workshop of this kind in Broome.

Cool Communities is funded by the Australian Greenhouse Office and run by non-government environmental organizations throughout each State. Two members of the Conservation Council of WA, Irina Cattalini and Geoff Down, presented the workshop in Broome.

Everyone who attended received a free 'Retrofit Kit' containing energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs, water efficient shower head, power point timer, thermometer and pamphlets about climate change, energy efficient appliances, solar passive house design and much more.

The emphasis of the Cool Communities project is to encourage householders to take responsibility for the amount of greenhouse gas emissions they produce and to cut down whenever possible.

Did you know that:

- Climate change and global warming are now considered the number 1 environmental threat facing the planet,
- Australians are the world's largest per capita emitters of greenhouse gases,

- The average Australian household produces 15 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year,
- Householders can save up to 3 tonnes of gas emissions by changing their behaviour and becoming more energy efficient,
- The sustainable level of emissions is about 3.5 tonnes for each person on the planet?



Kerry Marvell, event coordinator, with Geoff Down and Irina Cattalini from the Conservation Council of WA

Transport accounts for 34% of household emissions, so let's all think about walking, cycling and using public transport wherever possible. Avoiding many short car trips can save a lot of money and emissions, so plan ahead and load up the car with passengers!

Water heating appliances are next on the list at 16% of household emissions. The most energy efficient system to use is a solar hot water system with a gas back-up. Always

washing your clothes with cold water is yet another way to cut costs — every little bit makes a difference!

Waterwise rebates are available in WA when you purchase products that significantly reduce our domestic water use. To find out more, contact the Water Corporation on 1300 133 646 or go to www.ourwater-future.com.au

It would seem that we are a nation of overconsumers who have become dependant on an excessive lifestyle. If we all become more aware of the energy we use and the effect it has on the planet, we could dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Cool Communities provide householders with home energy audit kits, which help you to look at each room in the house and see where energy savings can be made. If you would like to know more about this important project, you can call the Australian Greenhouse Office information line on 1300 130 606 or go to www.greenhouse.gov.au/coolcommunities

Environs Kimberley would like to thank the AGO and Irina and Geoff from the Conservation Council of WA for a very informative and enjoyable day. ➔

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BROOME

Ms Lowe said the Department of Agriculture had continued with GM cotton trials near Broome despite opposition from Traditional Owners, and Agricultural Minister Kim Chance is on the public record as saying he still has hopes that the project will proceed despite Mr Brown's reservations.

Scientists are already warning about the impact of GM cotton on soil microbes and soil ecology. The Kimberley does not need a genetically modified plant producing new toxins that could damage the soil and the nearby Ramsar listed wetlands.

ACF Executive Director Don Henry said Mr Brown's comments signalled that the State Government was hearing the concerns of the Traditional Owners and the wider Kimberley community.

"With this proposal now on the backburner, the State Government has a golden opportunity to develop a sustainable, environmentally and culturally sensitive alternative vision for the Kimberley based on full and open public consultation," Mr Henry said.



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Fitzroy River — Most Diverse in the State

Scientists from Murdoch University have found that the Fitzroy River is the state's most diverse freshwater fish habitat.

The scientists working with local community members 'fish-mapped' the river earlier this year, recording 40 species of native fish, including 24 freshwater species.

Fish names from five different language groups were also collated and the cultural significance of the river was recorded.

The results of the ongoing study have been published in the most recent edition of the journal — Records of the Western Australian Museum.

The project was undertaken by Murdoch University in partnership with the Kimberley Land Council and the Kimberley Language Resource Centre. It was funded by the Natural Heritage Trust.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

In recent times we have been heavily focused on the due date for the re-signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the WA government and Western Agricultural Industries, for cotton feasibility trials in the West Kimberley.

I would like to congratulate everyone involved with our efforts to have our case heard and bring an end to this process. I believe we have done everything in our power to raise the profile of the issues and put them in the public arena. This was borne out by the announcement by Clive Brown, Minister of State Development, that the State Government requires more time to consider its position. Although the main emphasis in the statement concerned the opinions and rights of traditional owners, I feel the 'penny has dropped' about the magnitude of this cotton proposal and the potential implications. Any decision will have considerable economic, social, environmental, cultural and political fallout.

We have played a vital part in informing all sides of the debate and no doubt in balancing what could have been a very one-sided affair, as the recent debate in the Legislative Council demonstrates all too clearly (for a copy of the transcript, contact our office).

During the next few months it will be important to keep the debate alive and use the media to our advantage. There are several very tricky issues for the State Government, which are also on the national agenda, most notably the responsible use of water, the debate over the introduction of GM crops, and landclearing. When those are coupled with the Native Title issue one seriously wonders how a government, and a Labor one at that, can even think about saying 'Yes' to this project! If the Federal Labor Party bears any relation to their Western Australian cousins, it is very difficult to see how Peter Garrett can fit in.

'Good on ya' Carol Martin for sticking steadfastly to her views on this and flying the Kimberley flag for us all.

Andy




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RUMINATING with Mad Cow

Logical conclusions

When I was a child, I knew that money was the root of all evil. There was even a song with that title. I also knew, on excellent authority, that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye

of a needle than for a rich man to go to heaven. Having been brought up with such a healthy suspicion of money, I was surprised and dismayed to discover later that the rest of the world doesn't share it. On the contrary, the rest of the world appears to think the opposite: that money is the one and only source of Good. I have never quite got over my disappointment at finding out that the main preoccupation of governments is not the benefit of their citizens, not justice or fairness or virtue, but something called 'the economy'. When 'the economy' is in good shape (is it ever in good shape?), then all is said to be well with the world, or rather, with the country, no matter what sort of shape the majority of its citizens may be in. However, the good of other countries' economies is of no concern at all unless and until they affect ours.

But money didn't enter this continent until a little over two hundred years ago. Some Kimberley people didn't learn about money till forty years ago. If money is the only measure of worth, how, one wonders, did people manage for all those thousands of years before it existed? They could hardly have been described as poor. On the contrary, everyone had equal access to the produce of the land to which they belonged: access to the water, the food, the raw materials needed to make tools and to build shelter. Conversely, since no one held exclusive rights to or ownership of any of it, individuals could not get rich either. No Australian indigenous language has a word for wealth or for poverty.

However, this is 2004 and money, like sand, has got into everything. In a complex society like ours, we can't do without it. But will someone please explain to me why enough is never enough?

The steady-state economy of the past has been replaced with an economy that depends on growth. Without growth, we are told, the whole structure would collapse. Growth means increase in population, increase in industry and development, increase in agriculture, increase in towns and cities, smarter technology, increase in wealth. And, dear reader, growth is our economy's fatal flaw.

Carried to its logical conclusion, and following the trends it has created, the growth credo will fill the continent with people, most of us rich and over 80, with plastic hips and other people's hearts, living alone in serried mansions crammed with technological gadgets. We will go out — if we venture out at all — in sealed and air-conditioned, sun-proofed vehicles fast consuming the last of Iraq's oil supplies. The poor...well, who cares about the poor? There will be no more birds, because all the trees will have been cut down, but we won't notice because we'll be spending most of our lives indoors playing with our gadgets; no freshwater fish because the rivers will no longer flow. The air will be unbreathable, the water undrinkable, the climate unbearable, but — oh, but! — we will be enjoying — if such can be the word — the High Standard of Living we are all supposed to crave.



Queensland members Trish Pontynen (left) and Mary Copping (right) discuss EK issues with Maria Mann as they stuff envelopes in the EK office.



Long time EK member and former resident of the Kimberley, Mary Copping, visited Broome from her home in Townsville and wasted no time before

Queensland members help EK

EK's resources were bolstered in late May by the arrival of two volunteers from Queensland.

volunteering her services to help EK.

Mary's neighbour and friend Trish Pontynen was quickly enlisted as a member of EK and the pair were put to good use stuffing envelopes and updating the database.

Trish is a biologist and accompanied Mary on the drive from Townsville. The pair came along to EK's monthly committee meeting in May and gave an interesting account of their local environment group's work.

Mary's main reason for visiting Broome was to see her son who works as a chef in the town and

recently celebrated his 21st birthday.

Trish was on her way to Mornington Station to assist friends who are collecting and collating plant specimens.

Mary said she had enjoyed her time in Broome and was glad to be able to offer her assistance to help the cause. Trish was delighted to finally join EK, having read many of Mary's EK newsletters over the years. Many thanks to both of them.

Coordinator of EK Maria Mann said volunteers are welcome at EK and there is always plenty to do. 🐾

CELEBRATE THE BAY FORUM 2004

Celebrate the Bay 2004, a forum organised by Broome Bird Observatory, attracted a steady flow of visitors and locals to hear the latest research findings about Roebuck Bay – and was deemed a great success by all!

A distinguished gathering of scientists including the authors of 'Life along Land's Edge: wildlife on the Shores of Roebuck Bay' (available from BBO and EK market stall) emphasised the uniqueness of the Bay – describing it as one of only three large tropical intertidal areas in the world that has abundant shellfish stocks – and showed the long term and seasonal changes in abundance and size of animals that monthly mud-sampling has revealed. Rubibi representative Neil McKenzie explained the Yawuru way of describing seasons in the Bay through a variety of changes which are probably associated with the seasonal variations in mud animals. UWA lecturer Andrew Storey explained a method of monitoring the foodweb relationships in the Bay by using stable isotopes. By tracing carbon, it is possible to tell which little mud animals have eaten what plant material. His research has also revealed raised nitrogen levels off the coast near the Port sewerage works, which may be of concern in the future.

The afternoon talks were initially devoted to shorebird research. Danny Rogers described the limited roost

sites available to shorebirds at high tide and the impact that disturbance could have on the birds' roosting patterns; Chris Hassell detailed the increased knowledge of migration routes that has resulted from the last 10 years' leg-flagging activities. A well-received joint presentation by EK and WWF followed, which canvassed the range of different values held by users of the Bay, told us about some of the threats, and encouraged people to see the importance of management planning.

The final talk by Theunis Piersma summed up the key points of the day. Firstly, that scientists have a useful role to play:

- In providing input into management plans which ensure an ecologically sustainable and bio-diverse future for the Bay
- In acting as watchdogs – and keeping up interest in life in the Bay
- In changing the way people are thinking – giving scope for intellectual renewal.

And finally, that a great deal more work needs to be done. For example:

- The taxonomy of the benthic organisms in the Bay needs refining
- The role of invertebrate predators in the food web must be determined
- The feeding ecology of crab-eating waders (eg plovers) has not been studied
- The reproductive ecology of benthic invertebrates is unknown
- There is an urgent need for shorebird disturbance on the northern beaches to be analysed.

Let's hope they all come back to do it!

The Broome Bird Observatory would like to thank the following people and organisations for their support:

Broome Shire for use of the venue; Kimberley Bookshop for loan of the sound system; Rubibi for their participation; Grant Pearson for his facilitation on the day; all the speakers who volunteered their time and airfares to attend; EK and CALM for their displays; Sue Ferrari for help with catering, the Mangrove for the loan of the banner – and finally all the people who cared enough to attend. Thank you! ➡

Extreme sports round three!



The afternoon of 19 June saw a group of 14 intrepid researchers assemble at the Broome Bird Observatory (BBO) for a night of mist netting on part of Roebuck Plains adjacent to the BBO. (Thank you to the owners for permission). This event took the place of a planned cannon net on the beach on the 20th. The birds are still using the plains as a high tide roost. We were delighted to welcome Dutch Scientists Dr Theunis Piersma and Petra de Goeij to the team. Due to my advanced age I was excused from wading through the water which is still around in quite large pools. We set up the base camp with a flyscreened tent to combat the mosquitoes, while the younger (more foolhardy?) set up the nets. As dark

rapidly approached the mosquitoes came around in their hordes to welcome us to their habitat. A quick bite to eat as the almost new moon appeared and set and we were ready for the first lot of birds.

It got colder and colder as the night progressed, down to about 5 degrees Celsius, and we used a variety of techniques to keep warm. Several layers of clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, seraps were all employed. The faint-hearted left fairly early in the piece, explaining that they had to get out of bed early and go to work the next day and similar excuses. Seven stalwarts went through the night until about 0400, when it was decided that enough was enough and everything was packed up and we all went home.

Theunis took blood samples from the birds to aid in international population studies.

The majority of birds were Red-necked Stints (the smallest migratory wader). Of great interest was a Common Redshank, rare even on the beaches. We also caught a pair of Nankeen Night Herons, which are interesting for their sexual dimorphism (males look different from females). The male was one third bigger than the female. In waders and raptors the reverse is usually true: the female is larger than the male.

Hopefully we have come to the end of the extreme sports and the next planned catch on 17th July will have balmy weather and lots of birds ➡

Liz.

VICTORY IN THE ARCHIPELAGO

Environs Kimberley is celebrating a victory in its campaign to stop further mining in the environmentally and culturally significant Buccaneer Archipelago, 300km north east of Broome.

In late May, following formal legal objections from Environs Kimberley, Koolan Iron Ore Pty Ltd withdrew its application for an exploration licence covering Irvine and Bathurst Islands and other sensitive areas in the remote archipelago.

Koolan Iron Ore's withdrawal was only weeks before a special sitting of the Mining Warden's Court was to be held in Broome on June 4. This special sitting had been secured after an application from Environs Kimberley, on the grounds that we could not afford to travel to Karratha, where the Court now sits, to make submissions. Environmental experts and senior Aboriginal Traditional Owners were ready to give evidence in support of Environs Kimberley's objections.

Activities allowed under the exploration licence would have had a detrimental effect on the significant environmental values of land and marine sites covered by the licence, threatening the unique coral reefs that fringe the island and rare flora and fauna. It would also interfere

with, and could desecrate, areas of profound significance to neighbouring Aboriginal groups, including the Jawi, the Bardi and the Ngarinyin people.

Mining is already taking place on Koolan and Cockatoo Islands in the Archipelago and significant degradation of the islands and the surrounding marine ecology have taken place. Much of the reef platform around Cockatoo Island is covered in silt and other mining waste. Further, part of Irvine Island has already been pegged under a separate exploration licence held by Portman Mining.

Further degradation to other islands and reefs in the Buccaneer Archipelago is not in the public interest. The Buccaneer Archipelago should be available to be enjoyed by all sectors of the community – not just for the financial benefit of a few mining companies. Environs Kimberley supports the interest shown by individuals and government agencies to seek world heritage listing for the area. We'll keep you posted. 🐬

NOTA BENE

APOLOGIES for what should have been the June issue of our Newsletter appearing in July. Our greatly valued designer and layout buff had the temerity to go cycling in Spain and Scotland when our news was due. However, the delay has enabled us to give you the latest on the cotton campaign.

EK MEMBERSHIP STILL A BARGAIN

EK advises our members and supporters that, as of July 1st, we have raised our annual membership fees to \$20 per annum — still a bargain, we are sure you will agree. Or, you can join for three years for a mere \$50.

JOIN EK'S COMMITTEE AND STAGE A TAKEOVER!

Owing to the forthcoming departure from Broome of two of our committee members, we will be looking for new and fresh talent to join our dedicated team in saving the nature of the Kimberley. We meet once a month at Lotteries House.

Committee members decide on the organisation's strategic direction and priorities, manage staff and ensure effective organisational planning. They are also ambassadors for the organisation and sometimes talk to the media. There is scope for talents of all kinds.

EK is a vibrant organization, with lots happening. We run campaigns, hold fundraising events, meet interesting people, learn about and enjoy the Kimberley environment. If you want to protect the region you love, if you think EK needs rejuvenating or changing, this could be for you. For further information about this important and exciting role, call the EK office, or simply show up at our next meeting (5pm on the last Tuesday of the month—see below).

MEETING TIME CHANGE

We wish to advise our members and supporters that our monthly meeting time has now changed. We still meet on the last Tuesday of every month at Lotteries House Reception Room, but at 5 pm (instead of the former 7 pm). All welcome. 🐬



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Pat — we saw your interview t'other night and commend you on your forthright statements; when will the cotton lobby ever come to the conclusion that they are not wanted if for no other reason that the country they have their eyes upon and the water supply is too fragile for such enterprise — too exposed to erosion of varied types? 'twould be better if they explored other ways of developing uses of the endemic species instead of introducing a foreign type which will certainly denude the country! I guess we can't expect more while the Kimberley is a part — marginal, at that — of a city-centric State with its overwhelming interests dedicated to the metropolitan concerns.

Jim and Norma

ORD STAGE 2 *update*

In January this year the State Government issued compulsory acquisition notices for 55,000 hectares of land earmarked for Ord Stage 2 and associated developments, including Green Swamp.

Most of the land is covered by the Miriuwung-Gajerrong #2 native title claim (which covers pastoral leases). Compulsory acquisition of native title extinguishes that title forever, so that the Miriuwung and Gajerrong are faced with further significant dispossession of their traditional lands.

Under the Native Title Act, the Miriuwung and Gajerrong have the right to negotiate with the Government about this, but have no power to prevent or veto the acquisition.

The Kimberley Land Council and a steering committee of Miriuwung-Gajerrong people are working with representatives from various government departments to reach an agreement on the terms on which Ord Stage 2 will proceed and to try to respond to the impacts of Ord Stage 1. The negotiations are expected to be finalised by the end of this year.

A Framework Agreement has been negotiated covering native title and heritage issues for the land to be taken. The agreement sets out how the negotiations will proceed and has established a timeline for the process.

The Government is awaiting a report from their economic consultants, which will assess the economic viability of the Ord 2 project. This report should be released in July.

The Government has not yet announced that there is a proponent for the project. The Government has not yet stated publicly whether environmental impact assessment of the project will be undertaken. An EIS was done several years ago when Wesfarmers was the proponent and was proposing to grow sugar.

Wesfarmers walked away from Ord 2 on the grounds that it was not economically viable. ➡

Where is EK heading OVER THE NEXT 3 – 5 YEARS?

This question is being addressed through a Strategic Planning process.

The process has so far identified EK's PURPOSE: To protect and promote the natural abundance and cultural integrity of the Kimberley region of Western Australia; and its VISION: The Kimberley is a region where the natural environment is protected, cultural values are maintained, and sustainability is the pre-eminent principle guiding policies, attitudes, and activities. This is the ideal situation, or pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

For EK to pursue the pot of gold we need to follow the rainbow. We do this by establishing goals and objectives, and strategies to achieve them. We are currently finalising our GOALS (future hopes), our OBJECTIVES (specific wants), and our STRATEGIES (broad actions for achieving the objectives).

The next stage will be the development of an Operational Plan. This is the nuts and bolts of how we work — the how, what, when and who needed to achieve the objectives. It will establish targets, so we know we are on course, and measures to evaluate out progress.

A small working group at EK, together with Sharon Griffiths and Associates, is moving the process along.

Do you want to know where EK is heading?

Get a copy of the draft 2004-2008 Strategic Plan, by calling EK on 9192 1922 and have a read. Then let us

know what you think, by sending your comments to The Coordinator at envrkimb@broome.wt.com.au or PO Box 2281, Broome, 6725 by the end of August 2004.

This project is supported by Lotterywest through their Promoting Excellence program.



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**We meet on the last Tuesday of every month
 at 5pm, Lotteries House, Cable Beach Road.**

New members/visitors are very welcome.

**Ring Maria or Kerry on 9192 1922 for place and
 time of our next meeting so that you can help to
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