



Missy Higgins and Shane Howard at the EK shindig in Melbourne

## Missy rocks Melbourne for Environs Kimberley

Late last year, we were thrilled to hear that Missy Higgins was keen to support the work of Environs Kimberley via a benefit gig in Melbourne. Our excitement in Broome was soon eclipsed by that of her fans — this was to be her first gig in Melbourne in nearly two years. In no time at all, our first Victorian fundraiser was sold out, weeks in advance.

Missy went all out to create an amazing event, calling in friends from the Australian music scene to bring a surprise all-star line up including Dan Sultan, Shane Howard, Jen Cloher, David Bridie, Ben Fountain, Angie Hart and her brother Dave Higgins. Broome's own Wil Thomas provided support and gave some local knowledge prior to Missy taking the stage in front of over 600 people. In the lead up to the gig, Missy had this to say about her personal commitment to the Kimberley:

*Any Australian who's lucky enough to have visited this incredible part of our country knows how special it is. It would be*

*a crime on so many levels to allow this mammoth industrialisation plan to go ahead. Not only would it be the biggest LNG processing plant in the Southern Hemisphere, it's just one foot in the door as far as further industrialisation goes. Recently WA Premier Colin Barnett has begun compulsorily acquiring the land, stripping the Kimberley Traditional Owners of their Native Title rights.*

*I find it hard to believe that this is even legal any more and it completely undermines any progress we've made with reconciliation in recent years. The point is that there are alternatives to bringing the gas onshore at James Price Point, and I*

*think it's our responsibility to make sure that our leaders choose these alternatives... It's just too special to ruin forever.*

We also kicked off a raffle for a hand-painted guitar, signed by Missy (see picture). We have since sold over 1000 tickets as an additional fundraiser to the door sales for this fantastic event.

A huge thanks to Missy, all the guest performers who joined her on the night and her management at Eleven Music; many thanks also to Rebecka Valle for organising the guitar raffle, and Belle Cumming for her beautiful artwork on the guitar.  
Emma Belfield

## ek art auction 2011

— **get involved!**

Are you an artist or a discerning art collector? If either cap fits, you and your like-minded friends are invited — no, urged — to take part in this year's fundraising art auction.

EK's art auction is the liveliest event at which to sell your own or someone else's work, to pick up an art treasure or find a bargain AND support a good cause at the sametime.

After last year's success we are excited to announce that the event will take place at the Broome Convention Centre again to make use of the fantastic display space!

Troppo Sound has put in a new sound system and improved the acoustics. We are reverting to centralised auctioning so that patrons can stay in their seats and don't have to follow the auctioneer around. The white-gloves get their job back!

**When?** Saturday 11 June

**Where?** Broome Convention Centre Chinatown — 19 Frederick Street (next to Aarli Bar, old Minigolf building)

Entry forms can be obtained from the Environs Kimberley office. They must be submitted by Thursday 13 May.

Environs Kimberley will be showcasing and auctioning some of the best art works the Kimberley has to offer, and there will be keen buyers.

Come along, enjoy delicious nibbles, a well-stocked bar and great company.

If you would like to help with the organization of the event, we would like to hear from you!

For more information contact Christine at 9192 1922 or e-mail [envrkimb2@westnet.com.au](mailto:envrkimb2@westnet.com.au)



REPORT FROM

# THE CHAIR

Hello EK members,

Happy Year of the Hare (never the rabbit)!

When I returned from holidays in February, my first task was to join Martin and others — all fishing enthusiasts — on the EK stall at the Broome Fishing Club's 2011 Open Day. This is a community event at its best, inviting a broad range of local groups and organisations to get together with information and activities, alongside the tackle and boat sellers — all drawing an estimated 800 attendees.

It is a pleasure to welcome to EK the new Seagrass Monitoring Project Coordinator, Christine Howe-Piening, and to once more thank Fiona Bishop for all her brilliant efforts. The project well illustrates EK's role as a local deliverer of natural resource management services and the importance of its enduring partnerships — in this case with the WA Department of Environment and Conservation. An important aspect of the project is its emphasis on providing people — local and visitors alike — with opportunities to learn more about the marine environment through practical experience and, for those interested, a program of certified training. Find out more about participating by contacting Chris on [seagrassmonitoring@hotmail.com](mailto:seagrassmonitoring@hotmail.com).

In the latest instalment in the saga of Australia's worst oil spill, the Montara rig accident, and the company responsible for it, PTTEP Australasia, last month we learnt that the Gillard Government had approved PTTEP continuing to work in local waters.

The Thai-owned company at present operates seven exploration licences, five production and seven other leases here. Within days of the announcement, PTTEP sought permission to drill two new wells off the north-west coast, about halfway between Darwin and Broome. If approved, drilling may begin by April.

The Government's decision follows its review of PTTEP's licence to operate nationally, which resulted in it imposing special conditions on the granting of licences to the company. With nine endangered species known to frequent the proposed drilling area, including Humpback and Blue Whales, the application will be the first test of the new conditions.

Ought we to be surprised at how blatantly PTTEP has been spruiking its environmental record in seeking to expand its operations here? While the 2010 independent inquiry into the causes of the Montara accident found — in a nutshell — that PTTEP's systems and processes were so deficient and its key personnel so incompetent that it was an accident waiting to happen, in PTTEP's recent application to the Department of Environment, it said it should be granted permission to drill the new wells because it had a 'satisfactory record of responsible environmental management'.

EK staff is providing a submission in response to the independent commission of inquiry report, detailing our strong support for a number of its key recommendations.

Kate Golson

## ON SLEEPING IN THE OPEN

From *Travels with a Donkey* by Robert Louis Stevenson.

Night is a dead, monotonous period under a roof; but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature.

What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps afield. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely; even as she takes her rest, she turns and smiles...and houseless men who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

And there is a special pleasure for some minds in the reflection that...we have escaped the Bastille of civilisation and are become, for the time being, a mere kindly animal and a sheep of Nature's flock.



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for helping  
us to protect  
the Kimberley  
environment

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Newsletter design: Robyn Wells  
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Luisa Mitchell, Robyn Wells

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Environs Kimberley welcomes letters to the Editor. We accept comment and criticism, and print all letters that are not obscene, offensive or libellous. If you have a bone to pick, pick it with us.

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

THE SAR IS UPON US, RELEASED A YEAR LATE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE DEVELOPMENT.

WE NOW HAVE THE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT REPORT, CONSISTING OF REPORTS OF THE STUDIES CARRIED OUT BY WOODSIDE AND THE STATE GOVERNMENT INTO THE PROPOSAL FOR GAS REFINERIES AT JAMES PRICE POINT 40KM NORTH OF BROOME.

The reports come to more than 7,500 pages, which would take one person approximately 8 weeks full time to just read. (Submissions close on March 28, 2011). The reports are not designed for easy reading, they are just the opposite. The process is complicated, the language bureaucratic and technical. One thing is clear, though; the Strategic Assessment Agreement has not been honoured.

The agreement signed by the Commonwealth and State governments on 6 February, 2008, states:

*The process for selection of the Precinct will consider feasible alternatives to locations of the Precinct outside of the Kimberley Region.* (Section 4.6, Strategic Assessment Agreement)

The SAR makes clear that there has not been a thorough consideration of sites outside the Kimberley. This is a fundamental flaw in the process. It makes a mockery of the whole strategic assessment, which was supposedly designed to find a site with the fewest negative environmental and social impacts. At the same time, the Federal and State Governments set conditions on the petroleum leases of the Joint Venture partners (JVs), Woodside, Shell, Chevron, BP and BHP, that require them to develop a gas hub at James Price Point unless they can show they can develop one elsewhere in the same time period. The JV's were also obliged to spend up to \$1.25 billion dollars on investigations by June 2012. So, one arm of the Federal government is supposedly assessing the project on the basis of its environmental and social impacts and comparing different sites, including ones outside the Kimberley, while another is forcing the companies to

go to one location — James Price Point.

Some of the companies (BHP, Chevron and Shell in particular) are known to be less keen on the Kimberley option. Oil and gas industry analysts have consistently reported that, for the JV's, it would make sense for the gas to be piped to the Pilbara, to back-up the North-west Shelf supplies, due to run out in a few years. Both JP Morgan and Citigroup have said as much. So why is there such an insistence on James Price Point by the State Government and Woodside? The Premier Colin Barnett has said publicly that he would like the Kimberley to be the next Pilbara. He wants to leave an industrial legacy here and the best way to do that is to establish a massive heavy industrial complex on the doorstep of the biggest town in the Kimberley, Broome.

Woodside has different interests. If it piped to the Pilbara it would lose out, because at James Price Point it would own 46% of the Browse Joint Venture, and get a much bigger return on the processing of natural gas to LNG than it would on the North-west Shelf, where Woodside is a minnow with just a 16.7% stake. The company made \$1.56 billion last year; it wants more.

There's a lot at stake here: a Premier's legacy and an oil and gas company's bottom line versus the future of the natural, social and cultural environment of the Kimberley. The odds are against us and we need your help. Please make sure you write a submission on the SAR and mail a personal letter to the Federal Minister for the Environment and the Joint Venture companies. Martin Pritchard



**living  
green**  
— painlessly

Tips to improve the sustainability of our daily lives without too much effort.

## Mainly Cleaning

Some people's bathrooms and laundries are filled with cleaning products, each one supposedly serving a different purpose. Most are synthetic detergents. Most are toxic, waiting to be swallowed by some hapless child. The chemical smell can be suffocating. We don't need them. Vinegar (acidic) and bicarbonate of soda (alkaline) are two cheap, useful and non-toxic substances that make a satisfying fizz when mixed together.

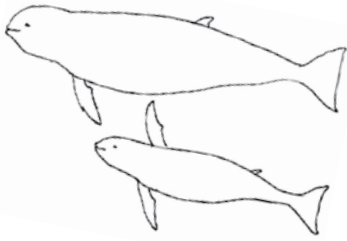
A cup of vinegar in a bucket of warm water can be used to clean just about any kind of floor: vinyl, tile, linoleum, wood. I've used cheap white vinegar neat on a damp cloth to get the blue chlorine stains off sinks. Vinegar in water is good for delicate materials such as glass.

Bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) is an abrasive powder, which can be used for all sorts of cleaning purposes. Use it on a damp cloth to clean sinks, basins, toilets, crockery and more besides. Half a spoonful stirred into a cup of water is also good for relieving indigestion.

Lemon juice (dearer than vinegar) is another natural cleaner. Two parts of olive oil to one part of lemon juice is an effective furniture polish to replace the toxic brand polishes found in shops. Lemon juice in water on a soft cloth is good for cleaning windows. Lemon in hot water with honey and rum can do wonders for a cold (well, it makes you feel better).

To get marker pen marks off surfaces — works even when you've accidentally used a permanent marker pen on a whiteboard — apply eucalyptus oil neat on a cloth. Eucalyptus oil in water is also good for floors. You can inhale the vapours of a few drops of eucalyptus oil in hot water to help clear a congested chest. That's something you can't do with Handy Andy.

For the die-hards, do your washing-up in the garden using a bowl of water and a handful of sandy soil. Works a treat. No self-respecting green camper would use anything else.



## PLANTING SEEDS OF THOUGHT — WITH SEAGRASS

2011 began well, with seagrass monitoring sessions in the first week of January revealing good percentage coverage of seagrass at the Demco and Town Beach sites. This was a great introduction for me, as I took over the reins from the ever-effervescent Fiona Bishop.

To provide a brief introduction: I have been living in Broome for nearly five years. In a previous life I studied and worked in the Arts in Sydney for close to ten years. Overcome by feverish dreams of rugged, far-flung lands, I fled the din of big city lights, and arrived in Broome Town. Deciding to seize upon a long-held curiosity for the natural world, I embarked on a career change, undertaking a Diploma of Conservation and Land Management at Broome TAFE. Under the auspices of Beau Bibby, this largely field-based course gave me a thorough introduction to natural resource management in the Kimberley.

One of the projects I assisted with was a twelve-month monitoring project of Lyngbya blooms along Simpson's Beach in Roebuck Bay in 2008. This provided me with a basic understanding of conducting biological surveys, and a familiarity with the life-forms that inhabit the rich mudflats. I recall from general observations in that year that seagrass coverage was relatively sparse, and I was reassured to see the seagrass in better health this year. As the water warms, and increased run-off from rainfall filters into the bay, it will be important to observe, in the next round of monitoring at the beginning of April, how much Lyngbya has bloomed.

Fiona Bishop left the position well set-up, and it has been beneficial for me to inherit a solid body of information, volunteers and contacts that she has



Seagrass monitoring in January

conscientiously built up over the last couple of years. I hope to involve communities up the Peninsula, and I will be accompanying Gary Lienert from TAFE throughout the year as he does ranger training from Bidadanga to Kalumburu. I also do work with a number of young local boys who are undertaking a National Greens Jobs Corps project called Broome Youth Restoring Native Landscapes. Part of their project is to carry out works in Minyirr Park and I will be looking to see how I can enlist their help, drawing attention to the importance of seagrass and of maintaining the health of near-shore vegetation.

I will be endeavouring to think laterally and attempt to engage different audiences. Following a RBWG meeting last Friday at DEC, I was made aware of the disparate stakeholder interests in the bay. I welcome the challenge of navigating these variables, building on my knowledge of seagrass, gaining a momentum to then implant the seed of thought in others.

Christine Howe-Piening  
Seagrass Monitoring Project Coordinator

Enquiries: [seagrassmonitoring@hotmail.com](mailto:seagrassmonitoring@hotmail.com)  
**0419 839 328**

*The Broome Community Seagrass Monitoring Project, and supported by Environs Kimberley, the Department of Environment and Conservation, Coastwest and the Port of Broome.*

## APRIL 2011 SEAGRASS MONITORING SESSIONS

6 April 5.30 am  
Port slipway

7 April 5.45 am  
Demco carpark

8 April 6.15 am  
Town Beach

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# LORD HOWE ISLAND



## ADD IT TO YOUR 'PLACES TO GO' LIST

Although Lord Howe Island (LHI) is only eleven km long and less than three km wide, the diversity of its flora, fauna and landforms makes it an excellent place for any nature lover to visit. Owing to a combination of factors including rugged terrain, small population, distance from mainland Australia (570 km) and strict government control, the island has been preserved in a remarkably intact state ecologically. Only about 10% of the land has been cleared for farming or housing; the rest remains much as it was before European discovery in 1788. The island received World Heritage Listing in 1982.

For a bird lover LHI is a unique destination. 14 species of seabirds breed there at various times of the year; two species have only started breeding on the island since human settlement. In February I watched Flesh-footed Shearwaters (Mutton birds) visiting their burrows at sunset to feed rapidly-growing chicks, and White Terns feeding their fluff-ball chicks — hatched from eggs laid on tree branches on the main streets. All the beaches are inhabited by fully grown Sooty Tern chicks making their first attempts at flight or noisily demanding food from their parents, and cliff faces by birds wheeling around their nests.

Historically, land birds have not fared so well as seabirds, as three species were hunted to extinction in the 19th century to provide food for hungry people, and five more species were wiped out after rats escaped onto the island following a shipwreck. However, six of the original species have survived and another 12 have taken the place of extinct birds, through deliberate introduction or natural migration to the island. Buff-banded Rail, not commonly seen in Kimberley settlements, peck for insects and seeds in all LHI gardens; numerous LHI White-eye flit from tree to tree gleaning insects, aphids and bugs from leaves and flowers; Emerald Ground-doves, who get their name from the brilliant green of their wings, fossick for seeds on roadsides, quite unafraid of humans.

The Woodhen, a brown flightless rail endemic to LHI, provides a good conservation story. Reduced to a small remnant population, possibly as low as 37, by the depredations of early sailors and introduced cats, pigs and dogs, numbers have now increased to levels where all breeding territories are occupied and there is healthy competition to hold those territories. This was achieved by a captive breeding programme for the reintroduction of Woodhens to their former range, a programme

to exterminate cats and pigs, and measures to control the numbers and behaviour of dogs on the island. Nowadays the loud calls of Woodhens can be heard throughout the island. A number of challenges remain for maintaining the ecological integrity of LHI. An extensive rat baiting programme is being carried out, baits being placed in plumbing pipes to ensure ground-feeding birds do not take them. Extensive weeding programmes to remove exotic weeds (often garden escapees) are undertaken, often by fee-paying volunteers from the mainland, and the LHI Board takes measures to ensure that introduced grasses do not overrun foreshore areas where Shearwaters burrow.

LHI has been fortunate to win the love of Ian Hutton, a former employee of the Bureau of Meteorology there, who chose a lifestyle of wildlife research and advocacy over the security of permanent work. He has published on all aspects of island ecology and can now be found at the Island's Museum.

Ian's recent sighting of a Red-billed Tropicbird, the first sighting of this species in Australia, made big news in birding circles. Check out [www.lordhowe-tours.com.au/news.htm](http://www.lordhowe-tours.com.au/news.htm).  
Jan Lewis



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# what turtles (AND CVA VOLLIES) have been up to this season

THE END OF FEBRUARY SAW THE END OF CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS' SEA TURTLE MONITORING PROGRAMS IN THE BROOME REGION FOR ANOTHER SEASON.



*Turtle hatchling on its way to the sea*

2010-11 was the fifth season for the Cable Beach Community-based Turtle Monitoring program, and the third season volunteers have patrolled Eco Beach. From 1 November until 28 February about 70 community members volunteered their early morning time to monitor one of three two-kilometre long sections of Cable Beach for overnight turtle activity. The target of the research is the Flatback Turtle (*Natator depressus*), a turtle that nests exclusively on Australian beaches. It is the only one of seven species of marine sea turtle not to have a status listing from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, described instead as 'data deficient'.

The season just finished was a very quiet one for turtle activity on Cable Beach, with only 13 nests and 9 false crawls recorded along the six-kilometre stretch being monitored. This is the lowest number of nests recorded in the five years the program has been running. The reasons for this can only be speculated upon, the most obvious being that sea turtles nest on a cyclical basis. Flatbacks normally nest every two to five years, although Conservation Volunteers' Eco Beach program has seen some turtles returning to nest in successive years.

Eight of the thirteen nests on Cable Beach hatched successfully, sending at least 260 baby turtles off on their long journey, we hope to return to lay their own nests in about 20 years' time. One of the nests was

predated by a cat, not a good sign for native wildlife on and around Cable Beach.

Numbers of nesting flatbacks were also down at Eco Beach, where 86 nests were recorded this season. Volunteers at Eco Beach conduct night surveys to view nesting turtles, conduct egg counts, attach flipper tags and take DNA samples. Two lucky turtles had satellite transmitters attached and their travels can be followed at [www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org). Search for 2010 CVA Eco Beach.

This season Conservation Volunteers introduced a weekend Hatchling Program at Eco Beach during January and February, which proved very popular with Broome volunteers. Each weekend a team of five people checked nests that had been due to hatch in the preceding week. If the evidence suggested that hatching had been successful, the nest was dug up and the remaining eggs and shells analysed. A detailed report will be issued in April, but a preliminary review of the data suggests it was a very successful season for rate of hatching.

Although nesting activity was down this season, volunteer and community interest remained strong. Conservation Volunteers would like to thank everyone who took part in the program this season, and all those people who contacted the office to let us know about turtle activity we had missed.  
Kevin Smith

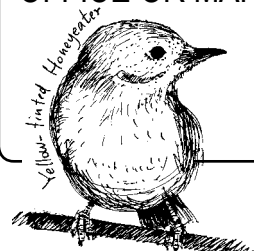


Anyone wanting more information about Conservation Volunteers turtle programs and other projects in the Kimberley is welcome to call us on 9192 6198.

## NOTICES

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# The West Kimberley Nature Project

Driving out to One Arm Point we noticed the familiar yellowing of the tree canopies, and as we drew closer to the central infestation, many of the trees had lost up to 90% of their leaves. The likely culprit was *Lymantria* sp. or Gypsy Moth. In 2009 we witnessed them eat out just about all the Manowan and bloodwood trees from Djarindjin to Beagle Bay. Many of them never recovered and now stand as silent reminders of the previous infestation.

Perhaps it is a natural occurrence, a boom and bust infestation, playing an ecological role in thinning out the woodlands every few years. However, since many people have no long-term memory of such an infestation, this species may be responding to two major changes in recent history: a change in fire frequency and intensity, and climatic change. Is it possible that *Lymantria* is responding to a key predator having been significantly reduced by previous wildfires? The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) informed us that the Gypsy Moth had not previously been recorded this far south, and in PNG was causing 40% destruction of Eucalyptus and Pinus plantations on a 7-year cycle.

There are many implications of such an infestation. Large-scale leaf loss can remove essential canopy cover and leave litter habitat, exposing reptiles and small mammals to increased predation; canopy loss can increase grass growth, further promoting fire; the failure of many Manowans to flower during the infestation cuts out an important food resource for bats and birds: key mobile frugivores that maintain the connectivity and genetic viability of monsoon vine thickets. With the Bardi Jawi Rangers, we have collected some more samples and, after analysis by Australian Quarantine Inspection

Service (AQIS) and DAFF, we hope to better understand the ecological function of this species.

In December, Jason and I attended the Ecological Society of Australia Conference, where we delivered a presentation about the West Kimberley Nature Project, including details of the ecology of the Kimberley's most threatened ecosystem: Dampier Peninsula Monsoon vine thickets. We talked about our work with different groups to manage fire, weeds and other threats and the development of scientific monitoring protocols to inform management. We were able to make connections and share experiences and ideas with many land managers and ecologists working in similar projects across the country.

This January, we have had the pleasure of working with Dave Dureau and Phil Docherty (SKIPA) to provide input for the DEC interim recovery plan for Dampier Peninsula's monsoon vine thickets; it was a prime opportunity to ensure that findings from the Broome Botanical Society report (2010), and our project experience could be incorporated into the document. We look forward to seeing it completed later this year.

In addition to working with groups to develop project plans for tackling fire, weeds and ferals in 2011, we have been



top: Jason Roe and Bardi rangers  
bottom: Jason and Nyul Nyul rangers

undertaking monitoring and begun site works. In early February we assisted Bardi Jawi Rangers and Nyul Nyul Rangers to undertake weed control at a number of vine thicket sites and, after a year of weed control and native plant propagation, we worked with Bardi and Djarindjin Oorany Rangers to plant out key weed control sites at Kooljaman. Both groups had grown vine thicket plants including Marul, Goolyi, Birrimbirri, Mangarr and Joongoon, and by planting them in the gaps created by previous grass weed infestations and fires we hope to assist the natural restoration of these areas.  
Louise Beames



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# NUTRIFICATION OF ROEBUCK BAY

Lyngbya is a cyanobacterium, commonly known as a blue-green alga, which occurs naturally but proliferates in favourable conditions. It is toxic and widespread blooms cover seagrass beds and kill seagrass by excluding the light.

In other sites in Australia several key factors have been identified as possible causes of the proliferation of Lyngbya. Blooms in northern Deception Bay, Queensland, appear to be caused by a unique combination of increased bioavailability of iron caused by the interaction between organic matter, iron and UV light, phosphorus availability and atmospheric nitrogen fixation.

In Roebuck Bay it is known that Broome pindan contains high levels of phosphates. Data on water quality reveal that there has been a major increase in total phosphorus (TP), total nitrogen (TN) and nitrates/nitrites (NOx) between 1986-89 and 2005-08 and suggest that Bay water quality is poor. The values reported for 2005-08 are well in excess of current water quality guidelines for both marine inshore and estuarine waters. Average TP concentration was particularly high, being 6 times higher than the guideline for marine inshore waters and 4.5 times higher than the guideline for estuaries. Another clue that negative change may be occurring is provided by data from a long-term (>ten years and ongoing) benthic monitoring program in Roebuck Bay, undertaken by Broome Bird Observatory and DEC, which indicates that more than half the benthic species studied have declined from 1996 to 2005.

Research by Dr Sora Estrella in Roebuck Bay into possible nutrification mechanisms is still in the early stages. Given the lack of a definitive 'target' for the campaign, a broad range of activities is being planned, attempting to address all the significant human-induced ways by which nutrients enter the Bay in groundwater or via surface run-off. The aim is behavioural change to reduce the extent of Lyngbya blooms, if not stop them.

First step in the awareness-raising campaign is the design of the campaign logo. Discussions are under way with Goolarri Media for the logo to be designed by the young people who use their Learning Centre after school. Watch out for a campaign sticker featuring Dodie the Dugong, our Roebuck Bay Anti-Lyngbya Warrior — or something similar! And, of course, please support the campaign activities in whatever way you can.



## A Roebuck Bay Working Group awareness-raising campaign

*In 2011 the Roebuck Bay Working Group will be conducting community awareness activities to highlight the possible causes of Lyngbya blooms and measures that may reduce Lyngbya in Roebuck Bay. Funding for the campaign is from NRM Rangelands.*

### Campaign activities will include:

- Poster making and rap song writing competitions for children about the connection between storm water drainage and Lyngbya.
- A bush poetry competition for adults.
- Distribution of info on the wise use of fertiliser at sales outlets.
- Surveys of organisations with large lawn areas about their use of fertiliser.
- Advocacy for more research on water quality and water circulation patterns in the Bay prior to developments which may affect water quality.
- A fridge magnet advising families of measures they can take to reduce Lyngbya and thereby support fish numbers in the Bay
- Updating the Roebuck Bay Working Group website to include information on Lyngbya.

*For more information or to find ways you can get involved, contact Kandy Curran, Roebuck Bay Working Group Project Coordinator, on 9194 0148 or [roebuckbay@klc.org.au](mailto:roebuckbay@klc.org.au)*



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## RUMINATING

# with MAD COW



### on being taken down a peg

We western human beings do have tickets on ourselves. You must all have seen those artists' impressions of our supposed evolution from ape-like primates of the past to the ape-like primates we are today. At the back of the procession they show squat, brown, hairy, long-armed, hunched creatures, which gradually straighten up into progressively less hirsute and shorter-armed versions of one another until, confidently striding out there at the front, resplendent in pale pink skin, is one of us — a male one of us, naturally.

Even in what should be objective scientific ecological studies, we can't get away from our sense of superiority. We still hear about 'top predators' in a food chain ('end' seems a more appropriate word than 'top' for the extreme of a chain, though I thought the chain idea had been replaced by a food 'web', with no obvious top), which include tigers and cheetahs and other large carnivores, but the implication remains that human beings are THE top predator.

We are certainly the worst predator, rated by the numbers of living creatures we kill, including other 'top predators' like bears and Thylacines. But take a swim in a tropical river estuary, or the deep waters off the Kimberley coast, and see who's the top predator then. We

don't stand a chance against crocodiles or sharks — mere reptiles and fish, way down on our zoological hierarchy — which can chomp us in half and eat us up, with no respect at all for our degree in economics.

Even more lowly life-forms prey on us; they may not kill us outright, but they'll have a piece of us for dinner. Mosquitoes come to mind, with their light step and little probosces perfectly designed to syphon off our blood. Then there are sandflies, ticks, lice and bed bugs — plenty more little predators to bring us down to size.

Even lower on our hierarchy are the microscopic organisms, the bacteria, some of which, such as *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and *M. leprae* (leprosy), colonise our bodies and eventually kill us. Once we are dead, the number of microbes that feast on our remains and so help them to decompose are myriad.

The above goes to show that we are all in the same boat of life, none of us gets special treatment and, however often we blow away our leaves or trim the edges of our lawns (with special edging tools, the sine qua non of civilised living), or win at Scrabble, we are just food for microbes and no one escapes the great leveller. Have a lovely day.

## BROOME ORGANIC growers

If you like growing your own food and learning about organics then come and be inspired at our monthly meetings. We are a regional group of the Organic Growers Association of WA (OGAWA). Anyone is welcome: newcomer to town, experienced gardener, beginner, commercial grower or home gardener.

Each meeting has a topic and speaker and there is plenty of opportunity to ask questions. Feel free to bring in pieces of sick plants (someone will have advice!). Extra seed or cuttings and samples of your fresh produce are always welcome. There is also a small library with books to borrow.

If you would like to know more or be placed on a reminder list then email Tan (group convenor) on fusionherbs@westnet.com.au or ring 9192 8552.

### 2011 TOPICS

- March:** *All things Tomato with Alan* (Please bring seed for swapping)
- April:** *Different types of veggie beds*
- May:** *Make your own organic pesticides*
- June:** *Garden visit Aquaponics*
- July:** *Garden visit 12 Mile*
- August:** *Garden visit with Alan at Sunset Park*
- September:** *Extending the growing season*
- October:** *Harnessing water, slowing run-off, using rain tanks & grey water*
- November:** *Fruit Trees and Bush Foods*
- December:** *Wildlife in the garden*

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the Month

3.30pm 12 Mile Cafe

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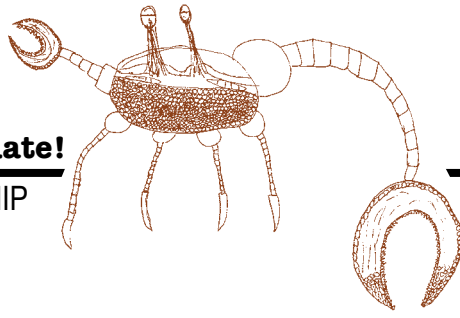


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