

Plant Cuttings – November 2023

Big conservation in small spaces – Ockham’s Razor (ABC Radio), 28 Oct 2023

As cities grow, nature becomes more and more fragmented.

So how can we protect native species without big areas to conserve?

Brendan Wintle says we need look into smaller places, like your own backyard or the bushland down the street.

https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/ockhamsrazor/big-conservation-small-spaces/103019030?utm_campaign=abc_listen&utm_content=twitter&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_listen

Indigenous medicine used to soothe a crocodile bite could gel in time to help Brisbane Olympics athletes – ABC Rural, 2 Nov 2023

"It's a little bit shorter now": That's how Nyikina Mangala elder John Watson describes his finger, which was severed by a crocodile as he hunted in Western Australia's remote Kimberley region.

But researchers from Griffith University are more interested in what happened straight after the bite. Mr Watson took some bark from a mudjala mangrove tree, chewed it up and applied it to the wound for pain relief.

The pain relieving properties of the mudjala's bark have long been known by the Nyikina Mangala people. "The mudjala tree is a numbing medicine," Mr Watson said.

When word of this hunting expedition got back to the local lands council, they asked for Mr Watson's permission to pass on his story to researchers. And now, thanks to Mr Watson, the properties of the mudjala bark might help ease the aches and pains of Olympic athletes.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-02/traditional-medicine-after-crocodile-bite-use-olympic-athletes/103057744>

Drones, dingoes and thermal cameras: The new war on feral goats – SMH, 3 Nov 2023

Drones, dingoes and thermal imaging are just some of the new tools the federal government could roll out to cull feral goats, whose numbers are ballooning into the millions.

Feral goats are found in every state and territory and threaten the survival of 128 threatened plant and animal species, including the brush-tailed rock wallaby and eleven species of wattle.

Under a new draft plan, released by the federal government on Friday, a range of actions will be explored to manage goat numbers, including thermal cameras that improve detection for aerial culling, while drones will be used for aerial surveys, as well as baiting and trapping methods.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/feral-goats-australia-culling-20231102-p5egxj.html>

Unearthing Canberra's extinction vault – Canberra Daily, 3 Nov 2023

Few Canberrans would know we have an extinction vault – a secure collection of about 8 million precious seeds that are an insurance against native plant extinction.

Plants are not as charismatic as animals (koalas get more attention) but Australia's rate of plant extinctions stands at 36 since records began (probably more have been lost before scientists even knew they existed).

Canberra's extinction vault is a last stand (its official government title is 'National Seed Bank'). Astonishingly, it is kept in a modified 1960s caretaker cottage at the base of Black Mountain, amongst the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG).

<https://canberradaily.com.au/unearthing-canberras-extinction-vault/>

Scientists rush to cryogenically freeze plants at risk from myrtle rust – Cosmos Magazine, 5 Nov 2023

Researchers are hurrying to cryogenically preserve critically endangered plants at risk due to myrtle rust. Some of the species from the Myrtaceae family are at risk of going extinct in the wild within generations.

"Myrtle rust affects the ability of the worst impacted species to reproduce and some of these species are no longer producing seed in the wild," said University of Queensland plant molecular physiologist Dr Alice Hayward.

"On top of this, seeds from affected rainforest species often cannot be stored in a seed bank as they don't survive the standard drying or freezing processes."

Scientists outlined their approach in paper *Plants*.

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/nature/cryogenics-freeze-myrtle-rust/>

Invasive species top killer list as biologists honour Australian wonders lost to modern extinction since 1960s – ABC Rural, 8 Nov 2023

The world no longer has the gastric-brooding frog, the pig-footed bandicoot or the blue-tailed skink in the wild. But these Australian species didn't disappear 100 years ago – the losses are much more recent.

To raise awareness of what has so recently been lost, biologist Tim Low has co-authored a report that lists, like a eulogy, the 23 native animals lost since the 1960s. Australia is missing more mammals than any other continent, but the list goes on, including frogs, lizards, fish, insects and plants.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2023-11-08/native-species-lost-to-modern-extinction/103055638>

Tired of waiting for a Queensland EPA, conservation group launches own 'enforcement arm' - The Guardian, 6 Nov 2023

Queensland's peak conservation group says it will launch a new "enforcement arm", amid frustration at stalled government promises to establish an independent environmental regulator.

Every Australian state or territory – except Queensland – has an independent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The state Labor government promised at the 2020 election it would "investigate and consult on" establishing an EPA. That process started almost two years ago, and environment groups have grown frustrated at the apparent lack of political will to proceed.

The Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) says it is now "stepping up to fill the gap".

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/nov/06/queensland-independent-epa-plan-queensland-conservation-council>

Amateur photographer snaps picture of 'elusive' flying duck orchid after nine-year search – ABC News, 8 Nov 2023

Amateur photographer Ockert Le Roux has been on a nine-year duck hunt — of a different kind.

Since moving to South Australia's South East from Melbourne in 2014, Mr Le Roux had been searching locally for the flying duck orchid (*Caleana major*) covering "extensive distances" across the region and even taking trips across the border into Western Victoria to find it.

But it was a tip from a friend last Sunday that led him to a location only about 30 minutes' drive out of town.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-08/photographer-snaps-picture-of-rare-flying-duck-orchid-9yr-search/103077470>

'Horrific' find infesting Aussie outback prompts call for national emergency – Yahoo News, Nov 2023

Australia's rugged outback is being rapidly choked by an invasive grass, which is known to aid the spread of fire.

Capable of destroying entire ecosystems, buffel grass is a declared weed in South Australia where authorities have dubbed it one of the state's "greatest pest threats" and worked to reduce its spread. But over the border in the Northern Territory, its proliferation is causing alarm.

Images taken five years apart in Central Australia show how this tussock grass species can blanket landscapes, wiping out native spinifex and other native plants that are essential habitat for wildlife that survives in harsh desert conditions.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/horrific-find-infesting-aussie-outback-prompts-call-for-national-emergency-050308263.html>

Domino's deletes trace of controversial word from pizza website – Yahoo News, 15 Nov 2023

Domino's Australia has removed a controversial word from a quote on its website after questions were raised about a key ingredient used in its new range of pizzas.

On November 6, the brand's chief marketing officer said its meats were slow-roasted over "Aussie Mountain ash woodchips". But by last Friday the word "ash" had vanished.

Domino's had unwittingly mentioned a species of tree (*Eucalyptus regnans*) that has been subject to a fierce debate between conservationists and timber harvesters for decades.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/dominos-deletes-trace-of-controversial-word-from-pizza-website-053054647.html>

Return of invasive plume poppy weed on Mid North Coast prompts biosecurity action and alarm – ABC News, 18 Nov 2023

Biosecurity officer Will McCaffrey says he often finds it difficult to switch off from his job and that it's not unusual for him to take mental notes of weed species he spots on the side of the road.

He was driving through his local area on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales a couple of months ago when he spotted something that surprised and alarmed him.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-18/invasive-plume-poppy-weed-efforts-spread-biosecurity-officers/103103342>

Biodiversity can rebound after bushfires, but recovery lags in severely burnt areas – UNSW, 17 Nov 2023

Extreme fires drove biodiversity declines despite overall resilience after the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfire season in NSW, a new study suggests.

The Black Summer Bushfires burnt an unprecedented area of over 5 million hectares of eastern Australia, with severe economic, environmental, and human impacts. Now, a study conducted by UNSW Sydney researchers shows plant and animal life has struggled to rebound in locations subjected to the most severe fires.

<https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/science-tech/biodiversity-can-rebound-after-bushfires-recovery-lags-severely-burnt-areas>

Griffith-led discovery identifies new algae species on the Great Barrier Reef – Griffith University, 7 Nov 2023

A groundbreaking discovery has been made in the heart of the world-renowned Great Barrier Reef and unique reefs systems of the Coral Sea and Lord Howe Island, leading to a greater understanding of how the world heritage-listed landmark is protected.

An international team of marine scientists, led by Griffith University, has identified and officially named four species of algae new to science, challenging previous taxonomical assumptions within the Porolithon genus. The discovery has far-reaching implications for our understanding of the ecological role of these algae in the coral reef ecosystem.

<https://news.griffith.edu.au/2023/11/07/griffith-led-discovery-identifies-new-algae-species-on-the-great-barrier-reef>

NEW PUBLICATION: 25 Years Of Indigenous Protected Areas – Country Needs People, 15 Nov 2023

Australia's Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) network is a world-leading example of Indigenous conservation leadership and collaboration. It demonstrates what is possible when government and other stakeholders commit to genuine cooperation with Traditional Owners. It is vital that we understand and support this going forward.

On Wednesday 15th November at Parliament House, a new publication will be launched to mark 25 years of Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia.

In 2023 it is fitting to look back on 25 years of challenges and achievement – the legacy of hard work and positive results by Traditional Owners and their collaborators – and to commit to build on this as we look to the challenges ahead.

https://www.countryneedspeople.org.au/new_publication_25_years_of_indigenous_protected_areas

Can you bee-lieve these threatened species are crucial for pollination? - NSW DPE, 10 Nov 2023

Pollination is crucial to biodiversity, including the ecosystems humans rely on for our own survival. Over three-quarters of the world's food crops rely on pollination, to some degree, by insects and other animals.

What often comes to mind when someone says 'pollinator' is bees, and while that is correct, in the spirit of Australian Pollinator Week, Saving our Species would like to broaden the horizons by sharing some of the unsung heroes doing the heavy lifting of pollination.

These are just some of the powerhouse threatened species playing an important role in ecosystems across New South Wales, including one independent little shrub which self-pollinates!

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/news/pollinator-week-can-you-beelieve-these-threatened-species-are-crucial-for-pollination>

Central Australian bushfires prompt debate over role of buffel grass in causing blazes – ABC Rural, 17 Nov 2023

Huge bushfires in central Australia have ignited discussions about the role of buffel grass in increasing fire risks ahead of a recommendation on whether or not the plant should be declared a weed in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory's buffel grass technical working group has been assessing the impacts and management strategies of the introduced plant since March.

The group had its final meeting on Thursday before presenting a recommendation to the Environment Minister by November 30 on whether the species should be declared a weed.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2023-11-17/central-australian-bushfires-prompt-debate-over-buffel-grass/102872830>

Former ranger makes history as first Indigenous director of Kakadu, Uluru and Commonwealth parks – ABC News 23 Nov 2023

A former ranger from north Queensland has created history, becoming the first Indigenous man to lead conservation efforts and the recovery of some of Australia's most prized national parks.

Djungan man Ronald 'Ricky' Archer has been named as the new director of National Parks.

He will take the helm of Commonwealth parks across Australia, including Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta in the NT, which have been hit hard in recent years by issues like falling tourism, ageing infrastructure and feral animals.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-23/nt-former-ranger-ronald-archer-new-director-national-parks/103139238>

Events and Opportunities

Rainforest Connections 2024: Conservation, Innovation, Restoration - Ballina NSW, 4-7 June 2024

Rainforest Connections 2024 is the first conference in over two decades that is dedicated to the restoration, rehabilitation, and management of Australia's unique rainforest habitats. This event will connect more than 200 delegates from a wide range of backgrounds including scientists, program managers, on-ground practitioners, community members and specialists implementing projects in the field.

<https://rainforestconnections.com.au/>

Victorian Biodiversity Conference 2024 – Burwood VIC, 7-9 February 2024

The Victorian Biodiversity Conference (VicBioCon) is an annual scientific conference focused on highlighting biodiversity-related research and management projects based in the state of Victoria, Australia. The conference is held over three days towards the beginning of

each year and is organised by a dedicated team of post-graduate students and professionals from a number of Victorian universities and organisations.

<https://www.vicbiocon.com/>

2023/2024 State and Territory Landcare Award

Nominations for the 2023/2024 State and Territory Landcare Awards are now open!

Now in its 32nd year, the State and Territory Landcare Awards stand as a prestigious biennial national Landcare Awards program. The objective is to honour individuals, groups and organisations that are making outstanding contributions to caring for the environment in their local communities for the benefit of all Australians today, and for generations to come.

Nominations for the Landcare Awards open on Wednesday 18 October, 2023 and will close at 11.59pm AEDT on Friday 1 March, 2024

<https://landcareaustralia.org.au/landcare-awards-2023/>

23rd Australasian Weeds Conference – Brisbane QLD, 25-29 August 2024

Invasive Species Queensland (formerly the Weed Society of Queensland) is excited to collaborate with the Council of Australasian Weed Societies (CAWS) in hosting the 23rd Australasian Weeds Conference (AWC). Join us from August 25 to 29, 2024 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre for this significant national event.

<https://icebergevents.eventsair.com/awc24/>

HATCH: Taronga Accelerator Program

Applications open for 2024

The HATCH Programs are designed to help ecopreneurs take their idea from vision to reality. If you are a not-for-profit or social enterprise founder or start up with a venture that will drive positive change for wildlife, biodiversity and the environment then we are here to support you.

<https://taronga.org.au/conservation-and-science/act-for-the-wild/hatch>

3000 Days... and counting... - Strathnairn ACT, 6 December 2023, 6:00 PM -700 PM (AEDT)

Join us for a special event- an evening with botanical artist Sharon Field as she takes us on a journey through her artwork “3000 days... and counting...”, her commentary and conversation starter on climate change.

For more information on the artwork watch this [video](#) or click [here](#).

Limited tickets available, register [here](#).