

# SAVANNAH GUIDES

## Communicator

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May 2014

Welcome to our May Newsletter

We are still excited after our school in Winton which was a terrific showcase of Australia's Dinosaur Capital. Our next school will be at spectacular El Questro 9-12 October - some details are inside along with news on a range of activities. Check out the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program and our Indigenous Business Partners.

Please enjoy and send us your news for our November newsletter.

Ben Humphries Savannah Guides President



## Winton School - one for All Time!

The Winton Savannah Guides School was enjoyed by all participants and showcased one of Australia's great towns while we investigated existence, evolution and extinction.

Lark Quarry's Dinosaur Stampede and Tattersall's Hotel, owned by Savannah Guide Paul Neilsen started proceedings.



Rick Edwards at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs



John Colless and friend Banjo - we knew he was a cattle whisperer, but...

All were enthralled by our old mate and leading bird expert John Young. Last year John captured the first evidence of a live Night Parrot in over 100 years after thousands of hours searching and monitoring sites across arid Australia.

Another of our favourite presenters, Dr Alex Cook, returned to tell us about the regional geological setting. At the North Gregory Hotel, where Waltzing Matilda was first performed in 1895, we belted out our own version to the pianola and toasted Banjo once or twice. Some fascinating concepts were presented including David Morgans' experience development and de-extinction - science's work to bring extinct species back to life through cloning.

We explored the ancient landscape of Bladensburg National Park, with Queensland National Parks & Wildlife staff. For many the highlight was the Australian Age of Dinosaurs (AAOD) Museum, where we were on the tools to release real dinosaur bones from ancient rock, found out about their student program and the creative means of turning fossil evidence into 3D animations, models and future toys.

Special congratulations to new Savannah Guides Amanda Hinton, Roving Interpreter Andres Lukacs and Site Interpreter Steve Turnbull. Winton was a wonderful school, with many old friends catching up and a great deal of fun learning.

## SAVANNAH GUIDES

Savannah Guides is a network of professional tour guides with a collective in-depth knowledge of the natural and cultural assets of Northern Australia. It is a not-for-profit company with enterprise and individual members. Savannah Guides works with many of Australia's leading tourism, environmental and community organisations to pursue its mission:

Being an economically sound, community based, professional body maintaining high standards of: interpretation and public education; training and guiding leadership; and through the promotion of ecologically sustainable tourism principles, enhancing regional lifestyles and encouraging the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the Tropical Savannahs of Northern Australia.

The next

## SAVANNAH GUIDES SCHOOL

is at

**El Questro, near Kununurra WA**

**9-12 October 2014**

This school will be a wonderful insight into the Kimberley so please contact us about details! We'll be in the field exploring Gorges, breathtaking lookouts, frontier Wyndham and lots more. We're coordinating share accommodation and possibly some transport so please contact us with your plans.

The Information and Registration Form is at:

[sgltd.com.au/guide-schools/](http://sgltd.com.au/guide-schools/)



### Just some of our El Questro highlights:

- Explore the diversity of El Questro's landscape, flora and fauna with El Questro Rangers, Traditional Owners and National Parks experts.
- Responsible Tourism session developing new ideas about guide and operator positive contributions to the environment and local communities.
- Cruise on Chamberlain Gorge - towering escarpments and a 3km fresh waterhole.
- See for miles and learn about El Questro's geology at Pigeon Hole Lookout before sunset nibbles and BYO drinks.
- Contribute to a cooperative interpretation walk at Emma Gorge and swim at Droplet Waterfall.
- Learn about research into cane toad impact undertaken at Emma Gorge.
- Visit renowned birdwatching site Marlgu Billabong for wetlands insights and a join our fun bird spotting Twitchathon competition to build your birding skills!
- Visit Wyndham's spectacular Five Rivers Lookout and Prison Boab Tree and have a Barra Burger at the Wyndham Pub. Hear from a local representative on Wyndham's tourism future.
- Optional Early Morning Birdwatching walks.
- Tour Guiding skills exercises on wilderness walks will examine Risk Management, Cultural Protocols and Interpretation.
- Join a night drive (spotting night birds) to Saddleback Ridge Lookout to learn some useful astronomical stories. At camp we'll bring out the guitars, didges, ukes, spoons and voices for a jam.
- Visit the thermal waters of Zebedee Springs and soak in the experience.
- Travel along the Gibb River Road for expansive views of the Cockburn Range.
- Visit Home Valley to meet the team at this multi-faceted attraction, complete with tourism and training academy for local Indigenous staff.
- ... and yes, some free time for fishing, swimming, relaxing and making new friendships.

**We hope to see you at El Questro!**





*The Capricorn Caves team were an enthusiastic force again at the Winton Savannah Guides School. Here's what they thought of their experience:*

**Niki Outridge:**

The Savannah Guide school at Winton was a one of a kind experience that I will never forget. It was my first School and I was very excited to get to know other guides and to learn what I could from them. I found it was more than I was expecting from the first day with some very interesting talks given from a wide range of perspectives.

The active part of the school started off with a tour of Winton and a look into the unique historical aspects of the town, then over to Bladensburg National Park for amazing views and insight into how a beautiful natural spectacle is maintained. The highlight would have to have been Australian Age of Dinosaurs as it was such an educational and exciting day.

Over the three days I found myself learning useful skills and information that can contribute to my guiding here at the Capricorn Caves whether it be improving my birding skills or even learning about fossils. All in all I can confidently say that this was an experience I would highly recommend.

**Rohanna Bell**

**Banjo, Bladensburg and Beyond.**

As this is my third Savannah Guide School I thought I had a fair idea of what to expect from the school. But I learnt that two schools are never the same and the experiences at each one are as varied as the amazing locations.

This school was very special; it was for me a walk back through time in geology and history. The highlight was the Age of Dinosaur Museum. From the moment we arrived the staff were so friendly and passionate about what they were doing. Their enthusiasm was infectious and it wasn't long before we were able to get to prep real dinosaur bones, it was like a treasure hunt but instead of gold we were looking for pieces of carnivorous dinosaur named Banjo (*Australovenator wintonensis*) It was a real privilege to be able to participate and they made us feel like we were part of something very special.

# The Capricorn Caves Team ... digging Winton



Nikki, Kerryann, Ann, Rohanna and Amanda in their flyproof gear at Bladensburg National Park



Rohanna at Lark Quarry



Dr Alex Cook



Ann, Amanda and Smithy at the Winton Hotel



A surprise for me was Bladensburg National park and although we had to brave thousands of flies and heat, it was well worth the beautiful scenery and interesting history of the area.

## **Kerryann Flohr**

I have just returned from another successful school, full of inspiration and information. I just love talking to other guides and listening to how they interpret their environment. I am learning to become more aware of the outside of my cave system. Since coming to the schools, my knowledge of the plants and particularly the bird life has increased exponentially. I found Winton an especially great school because I got to see the dinosaurs. A part of my job is to educate guests about the fossils and bones that are in the caves, ours are a little smaller and a different time period but I was still like a kid in a candy store. The Winton area itself is a really beautiful part of Queensland and I hope to visit again minus the flies!

## **Ann Augusteyn**

Savannah Guide Schools just keep getting better! The first day was enthralling; from the first class presentations to interaction with the local community and their infectious passion about tourism in Winton. Thanks to Alistair for such an in depth look at behind the scenes of the amazing landscapes of Bladensburg National Park. The day at the Age of Dinosaur Museum was beyond expectations. Everything was so well organised and the experiences on offer from hands on dinosaur prepping to learning about the background to 3D imagery of dinosaurs and then of course there was Wade. We all came away with lots of take home messages and ideas from the Educational program. But for me the highlight was the walk on the future museum site with Dave Elliot – the visionary plans and can do attitude that has already achieved so much with a team of passionate people are truly inspirational. Thanks to Smithy for organising all the transfers, including the extra trip to the fascinating Lark Quarry on the Thursday and Alex Cook for his presentation on site. Thanks to all the team who put together a never to be forgotten Savannah Guide School in Winton.



...and with no fly veils, just for a minute!



Amanda Hinton receives her certificate as a Savannah Guide from Vice President Mick Clark at the North Gregory Hotel.

Congratulations Amanda!

Below:  
The Claw!





## How do birds sleep? Ask Dr Karl Kruszelnicki!

Nests are for babies - getting a bit of shut eye without falling off the perch or being eaten takes some very special skills.

Birds, those flying dinosaurs, are all around us. We hear and see them while they're awake, but how do birds sleep?

Most of us have the image that after a hard day of chasing worms and warbling beautiful songs, our bird will retire to their nest. They will pull up a cosy little blanket — maybe a flexible leaf — fluff up their feathers to generate some air insulation for the night and then (very cutely) burrow their head into the feathers around their neck and sleep peacefully until the next morning.

Nope. That's a myth. Birds hardly ever sleep in nests unless they're babies or if it's a cold night and the adult parents cuddle up to the babies to keep them warm. Nests are for chicks to hatch and grow up in. By the end of the season the nests, full of bird poo, spilled food, and sometimes tragically, a dead chick, are simply abandoned.

For birds, sleep is all about safety and warmth.

If they are a smallish songbird they won't sleep on the ground because a cat will get them, and they won't sleep on an exposed branch because an owl will get them. So they hide, beautifully camouflaged inside dense brush or behind foliage.

Waterfowl such as ducks and geese can't sleep in trees because of their webbed feet. They're too slow and clumsy at taking off to safely sleep on the ground, so they might sleep on a small island, or just on the water. They don't have to worry about hawks and eagles because these predators also sleep at night. The waterfowl can also sense vibrations in the water, emitted by predators swimming towards them.

But many birds have another trick — they can switch off half their brain. We humans have two separate brains or hemispheres in our skull joined only by a tiny bundle of nerves called the corpus callosum. Each of our eyes sends information to each brain. But birds do it differently. The information from one eye goes only to the brain on the opposite side. So the left eye sends information only to the right brain and vice versa.

So to get a safe night's sleep, birds can close one eye and switch off one brain, and leave the other eye with the corresponding brain fully awake and alert. In fact, they can turn this on and off depending upon the circumstances. So in a large flock of geese roosting on a lake, the geese in the centre of the flock might have both brains asleep while the more vulnerable birds on the perimeter might have one eye open with its corresponding brain alert to look for predators.

Bigger waterfowl might roost in the shallows, again relying on vibrations in the water to warn them of an attack. Birds such as quail and grouse are unfortunately not very good at flying and are also fat and yummy, so virtually every creature in the animal kingdom wants to eat them. They go for the densest camouflage they can find. But when there's no vegetation, only snow, then birds such as the white-tailed ptarmigan rely on their whiteness to merge them invisibly into the snow.

Other birds such as crows, swallows, swifts and starlings all share amazing communal roosting behaviours. Some of them gather in enormous flocks, usually at dusk, to seek safety in numbers.

But of course, no birds bother the top predators such as owls, hawks and eagles — they're pretty safe as long as they stay off the ground.

But the majority of birds are perching birds from the order passeriformes — sparrows, jays, warblers, cardinals and so. Around dusk, they find a branch, grab it with their clawed feet and squat down. These 'passerines' have special flexor tendons in their legs that automatically tighten onto the branch. So long as their legs are bent they are physically locked onto the branch — and this action takes no muscular work at all.

And so, they can sleep peacefully throughout the night — resting their bird brains in readiness so they can again spread their wings.

Find Dr Karl and lots more on the ABC Science website: <http://www.abc.net.au/science/topics/?topic=enviro>



Wedge Tailed Eagle

Photo by Ivor Davies



## Please remember that Savannah Guides is your vehicle for continual professional development.

Consider how you can:

- Be nominated for a Savannah Guides award – these are available to accredited guides employed by member enterprises
- Upgrade your accreditation from Site or Roving Interpreter to Savannah Guide through contributing to Savannah Guides activities and its Mission
- Stand for election to the Board
- Join us in a project to assist developing businesses or integrate Responsible Tourism into member activities
- Contribute to the newsletter

Ask Russell or a Savannah Guides Board member for details.

## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Don't forget we are still after your ideas for our three lists to help members adopt more Responsible Tourism principles:

- Tips for Tour Guides
- Tips for Operators
- Opportunities for Savannah Guides

Please contact Russell or Ben for details.

### World Responsible Tourism Day

Savannah Guides will again attract international attention through participation in **World Responsible Tourism Day** (5 November, 2014) again this year. This worldwide movement uses digital media to target travellers interested in sustainable travel, and we encourage all members to consider how they and their enterprise can become involved. Please see <http://www.wtmwrtd.com/>

Last year the very responsible Ken Fairbairn, Savannah Guide on the Gulflander Train in Normanton, took a group of Normanton school students on the train to talk about tourism in their community.

News from

### SAVANNAH WAY LIMITED

The Local Tourism Organisation for the Gulf Savannah has some exciting projects underway:

- A Bird Watching in the Gulf Savannah booklet is being produced with input from our own Savannah Guide Ivor Davies and Friend Allan Gillanders.
- The 2014 Gulf Savannah Visitor Guide has been distributed across the north and at Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane Caravan Shows.
- Architects have been appointed to design the new Barramundi Discovery Centre in Karumba as a part of Savannah Way Limited's TIRF project with Carpentaria Shire Council.
- A new A4 Savannah Way brochure will be produced in the coming weeks.
- A new RACQ featuring Queensland's Savannah Way and overlanders Way is now available.



[www.savannahway.com.au](http://www.savannahway.com.au)

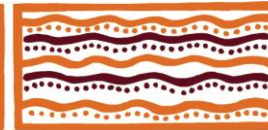
Australia's Adventure Drive



Board Members at the Winton School General Meeting, Tattersalls Hotel Bar. They are reading, not asleep !



The quietest they've ever been in that bar!





## Adels Grove for Barramundi!

Adels Grove is living up to its reputation as a diverse holiday hot spot; this week adding 'fishing' mecca to its long list of attractions. Lawn Hill Creek which flows all year round is abundant with fish, and avid angler Michael Hartley from Mount Isa could hardly believe his luck when he landed an 8.8kg, 92cm Barramundi just minutes from the campground in an Adels Grove hire canoe.

Hurriedly paddling his catch into reception for a quick happy snap and boasting rights Michael and the staff then released the beauty 'barra' back into the creek to fight another day.

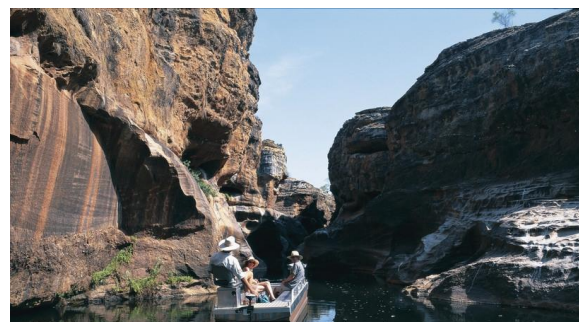
Adels Grove Manager Michelle Low-Mow was both shocked and delighted to see Michael's catch. "We were just finishing up from lunch service on the deck when Michael came in with his prized catch. Although it is not unusual for our guests to catch barramundi around this time of year it was certainly a shock to come face to face with one; but a real delight at the same time to see Michael's enthusiasm".

"Michael's catch was our first big barra of the season and we look forward to many more to follow" said Michelle.



## Meanwhile at Cobbold Gorge...

Much of the Etheridge Shire had had its second failed wet season in a row. Cobbold Gorge reports "Our average annual rainfall is approx 32 inches. This season we just snuck past 16 inches and the season before we managed only 15. There are a lot of other areas worse off than ours so we should consider ourselves lucky we got that much! Water and grass for the cattle property side of things will be an issue in the second half of the year so some cattle have already been sold to lighten the load on the land.



Cobbold Gorge itself is spring fed so there are no issues with water levels there.

Last closed season (1 November 2013 to 30 March 2014) saw a number of projects completed at Cobbold Village. The refurbishment of the Boundary Huts and Rouseabout Rooms, new drive through powered sites, the levelling of sites in our main campground and our powered ensuite campground and the new garden round-about at the front entrance! All of these can be seen in the new promo video here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xe-xTWu9tYo&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xe-xTWu9tYo&feature=youtu.be)

## SAVANNAH GUIDES PARTNERSHIPS

Savannah Guides Limited has a range of valued partners who assist our organisation work towards its mission:

### Our Corporate Partners

*Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service* – support our schools through expert presentations and participation and continually liaise with Savannah Guides on access and park monitoring issues.

*Tourism NT* – long term partners acknowledging Savannah Guides Limited's role in experience development.

*Savannah Way Limited* – promotes the Cairns to Broome drive route and features SGL Enterprise Members.

*Price Waterhouse Coopers, Townsville* – leading accountancy firm who complete our Annual Financial Review.

*OM4* – website design company providing the SGL website platform.

### Our Project Partners

*Wet Tropics Management Authority* – protectors and presenters of the ancient rainforests in north Queensland who contract Savannah Guides to run tour guide workshops for rainforest guides.

SAVANNAH GUIDES



*Protectors and Interpreters of the Outback*



## WET TROPICS TOUR GUIDE PROGRAM

Savannah Guides continues to work with its partner the Wet Tropics Management Authority to develop the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program, which includes two day Field Schools, day famils and workshops, an online course developed by Industry Accreditation and a social media network of guides.

The community and tourism industry involvement in the program has been strong and helped share the key themes of the World Heritage Area.

Our April Field School was in Kuranda, the Village in the rainforest, where we had some memorable sessions:

- Panel Discussion on Kuranda as a Wet Tropics village with local leaders – its tourism experiences, conservation action, community groups, Indigenous perspectives and life in a rainforest habitat.
- Roving interpreter Steve Grainger discussed developing Wet Tropics walking tours.
- Researcher Dr Conrad Hoskin enlightened us on Frog diversity and conservation in the Wet Tropics.
- We explored Kuranda's walking trails and contributed to their interpretation, including visiting the Batreach Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre.
- Minibeast Wildlife introduced us to some incredible invertebrates at the Kuranda Hotel!
- A cooperative workshop developed Interpretive Techniques including interactivity, themes, suspense and storytelling.
- Savannah Guide Evan Tandy took us on Skyrail to Barron Falls Station for a behind the scenes walk with Djabugay Rangers, a commentary on the history of Barron Gorge and an evaluate of Skyrail's Interpretive Centre.

The 9 May One Day workshop focused on how freelance and small businesses guides can market themselves in a busy marketplace, including a presentation from Digital Marketing Guru, Nicky Jurd.

Our next Field School will be in December, with several One Day Workshops before that. If you'd like to know more please visit: [www.wettropics.gov.au/tour-guide-training](http://www.wettropics.gov.au/tour-guide-training) or contact Russell to receive the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program e-newsletter.

### Northern Australia – the next Big Thing again!

Russ participated in the Northern Australian Futures Roundtable in Darwin 7-8 May, bringing together over 90 conservation, agriculture, mining and tourism representatives to discuss strategic priorities. Our region was described as a place of Australian identity and soul that had been lost in some other areas. We'll keep investigating opportunities for Savannah Guides and stay in touch on developments.

CAIRNSPOST.COM.AU WEDNESDAY APRIL 9 2014

## Wet Tropics takes students into field

ANIKA HUME

FAR North tourists are in line to receive a world-class visitor experience after the Wet Tropics Management Authority delivered its fourth successful tour guide program field school.

The program is part of the WTMA's attempt to ensure tourists gain a deep knowledge of the biodiversity of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

WTMA tourism and partnerships manager Paul Chantrill said the field school urged participants to see Kuranda through locals' eyes.

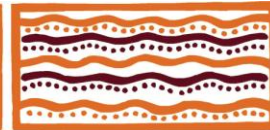
It featured talks and tours by community leaders, traditional owners, researchers and wildlife experts, and a guided tour by Djabugay rangers and a Skyrail trip.

The two-day event combines with an online course to contribute towards participants' certificate III and IV in tour guiding, which is delivered by Savannah Guides and funded by the Queensland Tourism Industry Council.

Dr Chantrill said the field schools were not about competing for business, but for sharing and strengthening student skills.



GRIPPING ATTRACTION: Alan Henderson, of Minibeast Wildlife, and friend at the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Field School.





**Mike Keighley**, our Far Out Adventuring Savannah Guide in the NT has some great yarns in his new online book. Check out <http://wildiaries.com/articles/13>

## Some Background on Willie Mar from Winton historian Helen Collins

Some of our participants were asking for more information on the Mar family who settled in Winton. Their old store is being restored as a heritage site. The following extracts provide an interesting insight into migrant life in Australia.

### Mar Way / Willie Mar (Senior)

Somewhere between 1897 and 1903 Mar Way, or Willie Mar (senior) as he became later known in western Queensland, arrived in Queensland. He was born on the 15 October 1866 in Chungshan province (now Zhongshan) in China, in the rich agricultural region known as the Southern Pearl Delta Region. Immigration and Alien registration docs all give Canton as his place of birth, but vary on age, date of birth and date of entry to Australia. At age 37, Mar Way arrived in the port of Townsville as part of a third wave of Chinese immigrants associated predominantly with the expansion of settlement in Queensland and in particular, agriculture. Between 1903 and 1917 very little information is available to shed light on the life of Willie Mar Senior. In March 1917, under the Commonwealth *War Precautions (Alien Registration) Regulations 1916*, Willie Mar applied for his certificate (number 75) at the Hughenden police station. His occupation was noted as a "cook" and he had been working at Nelia Ponds Station. Later that year he was employed at Werna Station located near Winton. Between November 1917 – March 1921 Willie Mar moved around the district at least three times working as a cook between the police districts of Winton, Richmond and Hughenden. By 1921-22 Willie Mar was employed as the cook/gardener at Crendon Station, north west of Winton.

### Mar Yen Shoo / Willie Mar (Junior)

In 1960 Willie Mar made application through the Winton police to the Commonwealth Immigration Department to bring a wife out from China. Stipulations set by the department included that a suitable dwelling must be erected, financial security and ability to support a wife established, and a history provided by the police. Willie Mar immediately engaged local builder Walter Neal and his nephew Dick, to construct a new free standing corrugated iron clad dwelling to the left of the shop and he moved out of the skillion area where he lived. With the conditions set by the immigration department met, a preliminary "approval" was granted with final approval to be confirmed. The application was put on hold and when the instruction finally came the application was "refused". The reason given at the time was the bride to be came from Canton and therefore from Communist China. Willie was 30 years old. In 1983, Willie Mar returned to China for approximately 6 months, to visit his mother. This was the first and only time he returned home. It appears Willie went to Hong Kong in December 1983 after the death of his mother, as he had inherited her flat there and intended to return to Hong Kong permanently. However he returned to Australia in October 1984 - the reason is not known.

## Some 4WD Tips from Winton School participants:

Mick: Drive slowly through water crossings (Mick loves his 200 Series Cruiser)

Amanda: Check your spare tyre before you go!

New Chum: "What do you mean, did I engage the hubs?"

Jane: I love my Nissan Navara and can take it anywhere!

Gayle: Be sure all wheels are grounded or carry two legged ballast.

Don: I thought it was just a big car to take the kids to school!

Fern: Black soil after rain will test any four wheel drive skills. Be aware of local soil types!

Ken: My 4WD has no steering wheel and never gets bogged (it's the Gulflander Train!)



## TOWNSVILLE CULTURAL CENTRE

Savannah Guides Limited has now completed its business analysis project with the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre (TATSICC) to develop their tourism and community activity. This was a very positive and exciting opportunity for both partners supported by Indigenous Business Australia. Together we looked at the centre's business structures, staff roles, markets, industry partners and key opportunities to set TATSIC on an exciting new course. The centre provides an insight into the traditional and contemporary life and cultural practices of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through its museum, cultural performances, craft workshops, art gallery, events including dinner shows and NAIDOC celebrations, and community activities such as Welcomes to Country. It is located between Reef HQ and the North Queensland Museum in Flinders Street East, Townsville. You can see more details at [www.cctownsville.com.au](http://www.cctownsville.com.au).

TATSICC Manager Melinda Tweedy and Education Officer Claudinia Lenoy have developed an exciting range of new activities for the centre including a Connecting to Culture program for Indigenous youth and school group visits where cultural practitioners deliver dance, music, craft and story sessions. These are also used for visiting cruise ships and tour groups. The art gallery has been revitalised and a range of maintenance initiatives have been undertaken.

Please drop into the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre when you are in Townsville!



Melinda and Claudinia

### First Aid Update!

A new paper by Associate Professor Jamie Seymour in the journal of Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine advises against using vinegar on box jellyfish stings.

In the 1980s researchers found evidence that vinegar makes stinging balls that haven't gone off become completely inactive. However new research shows that applying vinegar to the ones that have already fired off - perhaps 20 or 30 per cent - increases the venom coming out of those by 60 per cent, which could be fatal. The new advice is just to use regular First Aid principles - DRABC.



*Chironex fleckeri*

### 'Rally Cry' for industry to share their food, wine and beverage stories

Tourism Australia has issued a 'Rally Cry' for businesses to tell the world about their food, wine and beverage experiences as part of a campaign to put Australia at the top of the menu for international visitors. The latest evolution of the agency's global campaign - There's nothing like Australia - aims to tap in to the growing demand globally for food and wine experience as part of the travel experience, and is based on the idea of Australia being the world's greatest restaurant experience, 'Restaurant Australia'. Industry can now share stories of their offering at the campaign's online hub,

[www.australia.com/restaurantaustralia](http://www.australia.com/restaurantaustralia)



*Speargrass Experience's dining room*





## LEARN TO IDENTIFY TROPICAL RAINFOREST PLANTS

The tropical rainforests of the Wet Tropics are famous for their incredibly rich floral diversity, yet many people find this diversity daunting and perplexing. Now you can learn more.

The Australian Tropical Herbarium and Wet Tropics Management Authority are conducting their annual short course in Rainforest Plant Identification, to be held Cairns in the week of June 9. Spaces are limited, and enrolments close on Monday 2nd June. If you're not able to attend, we'll be holding a residential course at Paluma in November.

More details: <https://alumni.jcu.edu.au/PIC2013>

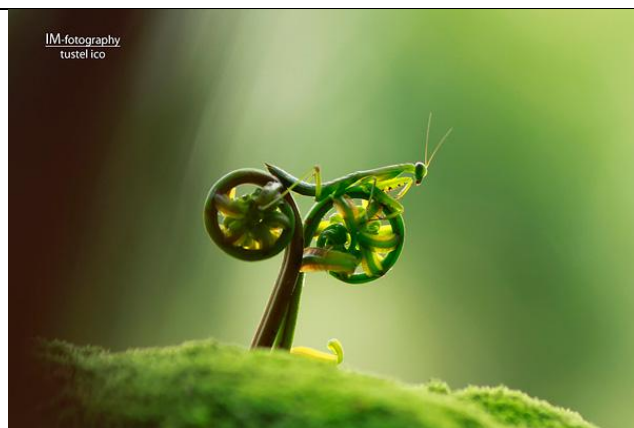
Contact Stuart Worboys, Australian Tropical Herbarium  
Ph: 07 4232 1757 / [stuart.worboys@jcu.edu.au](mailto:stuart.worboys@jcu.edu.au)



Rainforest Plant Identification Course in the field

## Savanna Plants Key on the Drawing Board

Australia's herbaria are joining to develop a project creating an Australian Savanna Plant identification System. This set of online tools would enable anyone to identify all northern Australian plants. The project requires an investment of \$11.4 million over 4 years and they are looking for a range of supporters. We'll keep you up to date with progress or if you want to know more contact Professor Darryn Crayn: [darryn.crayn@jcu.edu.au](mailto:darryn.crayn@jcu.edu.au)



## What is the main ingredient of WD-40?

'Water Displacement No.40' began from a search for rust preventative solvent and degreaser to protect missile parts. WD-40 was created in 1953 by three technicians at the San Diego Rocket Chemical Company, working on a project to find a 'water displacement' compound. They were successful with the fortieth formulation, thus WD-40. Here are some other uses:

- Protects silver from tarnishing and loosens stubborn zips
- Removes road tar and grime from cars
- Cleans and lubricates guitar strings and keeps flies off cows
- Restores and cleans blackboards
- Removes lipstick stains and untangles jewellery chains
- Removes stains from stainless steel sinks
- Removes dirt and grime from the barbecue grill
- Removes tomato stains from clothing and chewing gum from anything
- Keeps glass shower screens free of water spots
- Camouflages scratches in ceramic and marble floors
- Lubricates noisy door hinges on vehicles and doors
- Restores and cleans dashboards and vinyl bumpers
- Keeps rust from forming on saw blades, and other tools
- Keeps pigeons off the balcony (they hate the smell)
- Removes all traces of duct tape
- WD-40 attracts fish - spray a little on live bait or lures
- Spray it on your arthritic knee joints to ease them



P. S. The basic ingredient is FISH OIL



Winton School participants please note – ABC News says:

## Fly numbers in outback Queensland worst in decades

**Bush flies are breeding in massive numbers in outback Queensland, but the drought has meant dung beetles are not as active.**

The flies are breeding up in big numbers after some relief rain in some parts of the inland and some residents and outside workers have taken to wearing fly veils for some respite. But it is also the widespread and prolonged drought that is being partly blamed for the fly problem.

Traffic controller Mark King works 10 hours a day controlling traffic on the Landsborough Highway near Winton, north-west of Longreach. "When you open your water bottle up, there are that many flies, they just swarm straight in to the top," he said. "I've been drinking through the fly veil to try and stop them because I am sick of swallowing flies."

He is just one outside worker coping with a big increase in bush fly numbers. "The flies are atrocious this year - everyone is talking about them," he said. "They have never seen so many flies in their life, and they don't know when it is going to let-up either."

### Hibernating dung beetles fuels flies problem

An insect expert says she is not surprised about a massive increase in bush fly numbers in outback Queensland. Dr Christine Lambkin, from the Queensland Museum, says dung beetles usually break down cow manure where the flies breed. But she says the prolonged and widespread dry means they have gone into hibernation.

Dr Lambkin says flies have long been a nuisance. "Bush flies are a native Australian fly - Dampier and Cook both complained about the flies," she said.

Dr Lambkin says in recent times dung beetles have been imported into the country and have helped to keep fly numbers down. But she says they are also affected by periods of prolonged dry and the widespread drought has meant they are not active. "What happens in a dry season is that flies are still able to breed up in cattle dung, but the dung beetles don't survive," she said.

"They haven't died out, but what they've done, is that the dung beetles that would bury the cow pat and preventing the number of bush flies from increasing, they have actually gone into diapause. They are staying at that pupil stage in the ground. What is actually happening is that they are waiting for the conditions to be right, and therefore they are not handling the bush fly numbers. Once those conditions are right, those dung beetles will emerge from the soil and they will start to bury the cow pat. But it is going to take them time to reduce the numbers of bush flies, because the bush flies being in such high population are able to complete their life cycle in a very short period of time, and the dung beetle numbers have to build up slowly."



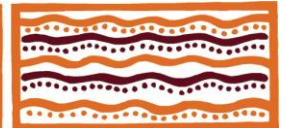
Traffic controller Mark King says he has never seen so many flies. (ABC News: Chrissy Arthur)



Boulia Mayor and local cattleman Rick Britton says it has been 30 years since he has seen such big numbers of bush flies. He agrees the dung beetles have been knocked around by the drought. "You would have to go back to the 1980, 81, 82 and 83 drought. It covered a fair bit of Queensland and I would say that is why the fly numbers are so bad," he said. Councillor Britton says it makes working outside challenging. "They do annoy you if you are up a windmill with both hands hanging on," he said.

Winton Scorecard:

Flies 786,528,961 vs Savannah Guides 59







**Nitmiluk Tours** is seeking guides to conduct river cruises on a casual basis during the peak season. Essential Qualifications include Master Class V permit, Senior First Aid Certificate and Current Driver's license. Contact Jessica Hawes Ph: (08) 8971 9703

## PLEASE SEND YOUR NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS!

It's great to hear your news, learn about something you've seen or share a nice image. Please email your contribution for the November 2014 newsletter or your E-newsletter updates to Russell at : [info@savannah-guides.com.au](mailto:info@savannah-guides.com.au)

### The secret of enjoying a good wine:

1. Open the bottle to allow it to breathe.



2. If it does not look like it's breathing, give it mouth-to-mouth.

### Website Resources

- Coursera offers free university courses online at [www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)
- Tropical Topics booklets: <http://www.wettropics.gov.au/tropical-topics>
- Landscape and people information at: <http://www.savanna.org.au/>
- The old Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savannas: <http://www.savanna.cdu.edu.au/publications/index.html>
- Northern Australian bushfires: <http://www.firenorth.org.au/nafi2/>
- FREE Rainforest Plants Key: [www.ath.org.au/JCUPRD\\_042124.html](http://www.ath.org.au/JCUPRD_042124.html)
- Biological Inventory of the World's Protected Areas: <http://www.ice.ucdavis.edu/bioinventory/bioinventory.html>
- Climate Change: <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/about-us>

**New Savannah Guides Website!** The new Savannah Guides website will be LIVE any day now thanks to the NT Department of Business and partners OM4. This is a step up to a new Wordpress platform to promote our members and describe our activities more effectively. We are still building our content and would really appreciate some more images so please send us your feedback and contributions soon!

### RECOMMENDED VIEWING

Thanks to Pauline for this amazing piece on bird intelligence:

[www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=AVaITa7eBZE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=AVaITa7eBZE)

### New book available by Ronda Green:

**Wildlife Tourism: A Handbook for Guides, Tour Operators, Job Seekers and Business Start ups**

[http://www.amazon.com/Wildlife-Tourism-Operators-Job-seekers-Start-ups-ebook/dp/B00HE1SX1Q/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1401158991&sr=8-1&keywords=wildlife+tourism](http://www.amazon.com/Wildlife-Tourism-Operators-Job-seekers-Start-ups-ebook/dp/B00HE1SX1Q/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1401158991&sr=8-1&keywords=wildlife+tourism)

### SAVANNAH GUIDES IS ON FACEBOOK



Our Facebook page is alive and well – please “Like” us and stay in touch! We are looking for members who can add posts and build our following. Can you help spread the social media word? Please visit the Facebook page or contact SGL Manager Russell!



THE END

SEE YOU AT THE EL QUESTRO SCHOOL: 9-12 OCTOBER 2014!

