

SAVANNAH GUIDES

Communicator



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November 2016

Welcome to our November Newsletter!

As you read this I am at Ulovane Environmental Training in South Africa, sampling some tour guide training and gazing at the awesome wildlife. Wish you were here!

This is another way that Savannah Guides is helping us grow as guides and build our own careers through understanding how some of the best do it in other places.

2017 will see more opportunities for our members and friends to explore guiding, build networks and have a lot of fun in the process. We hope to see you soon!

Mick Clark

President - Savannah Guides



Cooktown breaks Records!

"Natural and Cultural Heritage Interpretation" was the theme of our Cooktown Savannah Guides School and we learnt a great deal about the many stories surrounding this iconic town.

We explored the history of James Cook, Guugu Yimithirr people and their history pre and post contact, explored some of our own thoughts in a master class with Willie Gordon, learnt about the reptiles of Cape York, the Ulovane African experience, botanical art and biological names. We explored the Cooktown foreshore, Grassy Hill, cemetery and Finch Bay and vastly improved our barefoot bowls skills!

It was our biggest School for over a decade and we shared more great times with our Indigenous Ranger friends from Cape York and Burketown.

More stories and photographs inside ...

INSIDE ...

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-  Welcome New Members
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-  2017 African Experience
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ABOUT SAVANNAH GUIDES

Savannah Guides is a network of tour guides and operators across Northern Australia delivering a range of professional development programs. 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.



OUR NEXT SAVANNAH GUIDES SCHOOLS

will be held in

Longreach / Winton 1 - 4 April 2017

Join our Outback Queensland members for pre-season training around valuable guiding skills and the incredible heritage of Longreach and Winton's Dinosaurs.



Cobbold Gorge 6 - 9 April 2017

Multi-award winning Savannah Guides Enterprise, Cobbold Gorge will host a School for guides, rangers and friends in the Gulf Savannah.



We are also investigating a School in the **Kimberley in late April** for our Western Australian friends, and locations for our **October School**.

You are welcome to join as many Schools as you can handle!

Information and Registration Form available soon at:

<http://savannah-guides.com.au/about/savannah-guide-schools/>

Mac Jackson Receives the Val Speedie Outstanding Tour Guide Award

For his exemplary skills, knowledge and professionalism

Mac says: "To say I was 'blindsided' in receiving this award is a huge understatement. Being in such a group of amazing, dedicated guides I certainly did not see this coming. I am so flattered and absolutely blown away to be considered worthy of the Val Speedie Award. I really have to thank Jim Fitzgerald who originally planted the seed for me to consider Savannah Guides membership. I also am so grateful to Joe and Jo Lockyer at Bedrock Village for providing my first guiding opportunity; and to Smithy at Outback Aussie Tours and Lori Litwack at El Questro for allowing me to grow my skills and knowledge at their respective, incredibly wonderful stamping grounds ... what an absolutely amazing time I have enjoyed in semi-retirement! I feel as though I have embarked on a new career and the Val Speedie Award certainly has encouraged me to challenge myself further in guiding. Thank you, Savannah Guides soooooo much!"



Mac Jackson in Cooktown

CONGRATULATIONS MAC and WELL DESERVED!



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another fulfilling season is coming to an end for Savannah Guides with visitor numbers up on previous years in many regions. Welcome to some of our new Savannah Guides Supporters who are travellers with an interest in the world "behind the scenes" of guiding. Our Supporters Program has proven to be popular with over 400 guests signing up to hear more about Savannah Guides.

Savannah Guides is working to link several nature-based tour guide systems across Australia. Our partnership with Ecotourism Australia is growing, and we will be offering their EcoGuides many Savannah Guides benefits in 2017. The Wet Tropics Tour Guide Field Schools continue to find new perspectives on the World Heritage rainforest and we have a large group of guides close to finalising their Wet Tropics Tour Guide accreditation to join this happy band. We also work closely with the Charles Darwin University team who run the Kakadu and Uluru Tour Guide certification programs.

SAVANNAH GUIDES



Protectors and Interpreters of the Outback

We are increasing our training delivery. Senior Savannah Guide Mick Jerram has just conducted a one day workshop in Darwin and we plan to deliver sessions in various regions around Australia in the near future. We continue to work towards offering Certificate III in Guiding in the field and by Recognition of Prior Learning processes and hope to be offering this in 2017 as well as dedicated guide training on country for Indigenous Ranger groups.

We are also looking at professional development overseas. Some of our members have had the amazing opportunity to travel overseas to South Africa to take part in a specially designed four week training course offered by Ulovane Environmental Training. This is now open to all members and friends. With very reasonable prices the course is proving to be popular, four Savannah Guides attending the August program and a further five are there presently. This association with Ulovane would never have eventuated without the involvement of Shane Ross - thanks so much Shane for taking the time to introduce us to our new South African friends.

Kane Basset has retired from the Board as he is unable to continue due to work commitments. Kane's valuable time and experience in the role of Treasurer were a welcome addition and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him and wish him well for the future. Lee Hayter will be filling the Board vacancy and we look forward to her positive energy and enthusiasm. Thanks Lee for taking up this position. Current Board member Vicki Jones has taken on the role of Treasurer. Thanks Vicki!

It has been very pleasing to see strong numbers of attendees at our Schools, Broome in the West Kimberley was well attended considering its remoteness and Cooktown in QLD was overwhelming with more than 70 participants joining in. Next year we will be conducting three pre-season schools and one large end of season school. This will give guides and enterprises the opportunity to get some valuable training across all regions. We greatly appreciate the support our members provide to run these schools and the learning and sharing of knowledge and networks is valuable to all who attend.

Christmas is fast approaching so I would like to wish everyone well for the festive season and look forward to your continued involvement in Savannah Guides. I hope to see you in 2017.

Regards

Mick Clark

President - Savannah Guides



Welcome to the Team!

A very warm welcome to our newly accredited Savannah Guides:

Phil Clucas – Adels Grove

Harold Neil – Undara Experience

Dee Stephens – Oz Tours Safaris

Geoff Stephens – Oz Tours Safaris

Adam Utschink – Flat Creek Station

Michelle Whitehouse – Australian Nature Guides

Cam Winn – Gecko Canoeing and Trekking



Congratulations to these talented and valued new Members!

Tim Francis, a long-time supporter from Friend of Savannah Guides Enterprise, Charles Darwin University, was acknowledged as a **Special Member**.

BUT WAIT ... THERE'S MORE ...

A huge shout out to Board member Steve Grainger for his tireless efforts and commitment to Savannah Guides ... we were thrilled to promote Steve to **Senior Savannah Guide** at our Cooktown School. Thanks Steve!

New Savannah Guides Board for 2016-17

Savannah Guides has a big year ahead and a new Board to lead the way. Kane Basset resigned due to work commitments and we sincerely thank him for his valuable work as Treasurer.

Our new Board member is Lee Hayter, who is based in Sydney and runs the volunteer program at Taronga Zoo as well as walking tours in Parramatta. If you've been to a Savannah Guides School or Wet Tropics Field School in recent years you'll know Lee, who was accredited as a Savannah Guide at our Broome School earlier this year.

Vicki Jones steps up to the Treasurer's role and Mick, Rick, Ken and Steve are backing up with more commitment.

Sincere thanks to these volunteers whose time and effort drive Savannah Guides.



Savannah Guides' Manager Russ Boswell with 2016-17 Board Members Rick Edwards (Vice-President), Ken Fairbairn, Lee Hayter, Mick Clark (President) and Steve Grainger. Vicki Jones (Treasurer) not shown.



Cooktown School Memories: 27-30 October 2016



Rick Edwards' stories of Cooktown Cemetery



Birding at Keatings Lagoon



Johnny Ross rocks Nature's Powerhouse



QPWS' Pete Spencer at Hillcrest



QPWS Ranger and Savannah Guide, Doug Davidson



Michelle leads the way at Finch Bay



Melisha McIvor presents to the group



Special Member Tim Francis, CDU with SGL President Mick Clark



Mac Jackson's interpretation exercise at the James Cook Historical Museum



Cooktown School Memories: 27-30 October 2016



Willie Gordon captivates the audience ...



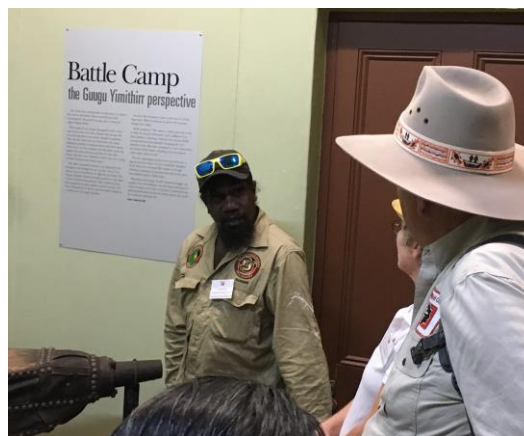
... and has some fun with Ken and Will



Andrew James explains what is inside the rope circle



Kathy and Ken on the Bowling Club dance floor



Larry Banning relays some history



Together at Finch Bay!



James and the Grey Goshawk by Savannah Guide James Boettcher

One of the many rewards of volunteering for FNQ Wildlife Rescue is the opportunity to help locate and save injured or orphaned native animals. Recently I attended an “all too common” call about a raptor that was trapped in a commercial shed in Cairns. Cane harvesting season attracts many Kites to the region, that was my initial hunch from the phone call. Once I arrived at the property, I identified the bird as a male Grey Goshawk.

Personally, I hadn't seen one up close before, unlike locals with domestic birds and chickens who surely see them stalking captive birds on a regular basis. I was highly motivated to see this Goshawk go free ... but he wasn't going easily! The Hawk was going between several sheds as they were connected via the insulation and roofing. Goal One was to synchronize all the business owners to be present at the same time for our team to access the whole area in which he was moving. Using seven extended pool scoops we blocked the areas he was likely to fly to and actually managed to catch him twice but his power proved too great for our nets!

After several hours most of our team had to move on to others tasks like real work (ha ha!) but myself and one business owner had one last plan. Work smarter not harder we thought. The Hawk seemed to like one part of the roof that was obviously the most difficult area for us to access. We committed to trapping him there and embraced our inner ape ancestors to get up there ourselves! We used several techniques to ensure the Hawk would associate this area with safety. We also knew we had JUST ONE CHANCE to get him, as the other volunteers had left, it was now or never. The shot Cairns locals saw in a newsclip was the final moment when all our efforts came down to one last attempt. Our happiness was unrivaled to see that beautiful creature go free after our agonizing efforts to help!



Savannah Guides / EcoGuide NEW Partnership Benefits

Details are being finalised for the exciting new partnership between Savannah Guides and Ecotourism Australia to link the national EcoGuide program to Savannah Guides. This will deliver great new benefits for EcoGuides and grow the links between nature-based Tour Guides around Australia.

New arrangements will see Savannah Guides operating the EcoGuide program from 1 January 2017 including assessing and administration. Along with the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program operated by Savannah Guides, and growing partnership with other nature / culture sector guide groups, this creates a cohort of hundreds of guides, the base for a national culture of excellence in ecotourism guiding with an ethos of continual improvement and network of partnerships with Protected Area Managers, Tourism Organisations, Operators, Tour Guides and Trainers, Conservation and Research Bodies. This will support Tour Guide career progression with more transportable credentials and recognition.

The new benefits will include:

- Regional one day workshops on Nature, Culture and Commentary Excellence
- Workbooks allowing Tour Guides to develop their own specific content
- Accredited training options including through program workbooks and on-the-job assessment
- Building a team of regional EcoGuide Assessors to develop local professional development programs
- National communication links through e-newsletters and social media
- Discounted rates to 2-4 day field schools and Savannah Guides Schools
- An online National Tour Guide Resources Library
- Access to cost effective Tour Guide insurance
- Professional Development tours to South Africa and other international ecotourism destinations

We will keep you in touch with developments or please email info@savannah-guides.com.au



Australian Regional Tourism Network delegates visit Carnarvon Gorge

By Michelle Whitehouse

Carnarvon National Park recently became the backdrop for a jam-packed day of proceedings for delegates attending the Australian Regional Tourism Network (ARTN) Conference in Roma. The event hosted over 70 representatives from Regional Tourism Organisations across Australia, some of whom chose to include the pre-conference excursion to Carnarvon Gorge in their packages.

Savannah Guides Enterprise, Australian Nature Guides, was one of many local businesses invited to participate, and I was asked to lead a selected group of delegates up the steep, yet spectacular, Boolimba Bluff in record timing. This was a brilliant opportunity to spend some quality time showcasing our brand, and demonstrating the standard of operation we strive for on each and every one of our tours. We shared a quick lunch, while soaking up the view, before commencing our decent and regrouping with fellow delegates who'd taken the opportunity to attend guided walks to the Moss Garden, Baloon Cave and Rock Pool.



Representatives from Queensland National Parks, Takarakka Bush Resort, Heli-Central, and Carnarvon Gorge Wilderness Lodge were also in attendance, and took the opportunity to provide our delegates with some insight into the benefits and challenges associated with land management, small business operation and promoting tourism in a remote location such as Carnarvon Gorge.

It may have been a whirlwind visit, however, delegates had a positive experience and departed Carnarvon Gorge with a greater understanding of how best to promote our region to future visitors.

Congratulations!

Award-Winning Savannah Guides Enterprises!

2016 QUEENSLAND TOURISM AWARDS

GOLD - Major Tourist Attraction – Australian Age of Dinosaurs
GOLD - Tourist Attraction Award – Cobbold Gorge Tours
SILVER - Tourist Attraction Award – Capricorn Caves
BRONZE - Tour & Transport Operators – Outback Aussie Tours
GOLD - Hosted Accommodation – Cobbold Village
BRONZE - Hosted Accommodation – Adels Grove



2016 OUTBACK QUEENSLAND TOURISM AWARDS

Major Tourist Attraction – Australian Age of Dinosaurs
Tourism Attraction Award – Cobbold Gorge Tours
Tour & Transport Operators – Outback Aussie Tours
Hosted Accommodation – Cobbold Village
Best Outback Pub – Goldfields Hotel – Forsyth (Cobbold)
Hosted Accommodation – Adels Grove



And more Award-Winning partners:

2016 BROLGA AWARDS for NT TOURISM

Major Tourist Attraction – Kakadu National Park
Luxury Accommodation – Cicada Lodge
SKAL Tourism Industry Employee Award – Christian Diddams, Kakadu Ranger



SAVANNAH GUIDES ENTERPRISE and MEMBER PROFILE

“THE GULFLANDER” and Ken Fairbairn

Take a journey through frontier country from Normanton to Croydon as you step aboard the iconic Gulflander. Also known as the ‘Tin Hare’, this legendary rail motor is one of the last great characters of the rail world.



Affectionately said to go from ‘nowhere to nowhere’, the Heritage Listed Normanton to Croydon line was never connected to the state rail network and remains the only line in Queensland still measured in miles. From wetlands and grasslands to arid Savannah territory, the Gulflander travels through countryside that most people will never see. This nostalgic rail journey is the perfect way to discover an area steeped in pioneering

history and heritage. As a working tribute to the Gulf of Carpentaria’s early pioneers, the Gulflander is a once in a lifetime experience.

From the North West Star, by Linda Muller:

Senior Savannah Guide and Board Member, Ken Fairbairn, is the Officer in Charge of this outback gem ... Originally from the Blue Mountains, this trained toolmaker and mechanical engineer took leave from his job, bought an old red Toyota and did a trip around Australia. “When I pulled into town (Normanton), I met an old timer at the railway station and he told me they were after someone with mechanical experience to work as station assistant,” he said. That was eight years ago and Ken, age 36, moved from



Second-in-Charge to Officer-in-Charge, keeping the top position for the past six years. He met his partner Tara, a school teacher in Normanton, and quickly became entrenched in the community. “I love the job, but what I love most is being engrossed in the community. This is beef cattle country and it’s nothing for someone to phone and ask for help in the yards. I knew nothing about cattle, but you learn quickly. It seems strange to say it, but I am busier here than I ever was in Sydney. You have no choice but to get involved. Once people learn you have a skill, you are put to work,” he said. “I have a good circle of people – including some of those old timers – and run a beautiful train. It’s a lifestyle thing and I get paid to do it.” Ken has become involved in the heritage committee and local Arts Council in a bid to foster the history and heritage to the area. His work as Officer-in-Charge involves being Stationmaster, Fitter, Booking Clerk and Train Driver. He works with five track workers (one ganger and fitters), a station assistant, gardener and second-in-charge. His home forms part of the station grounds.



Ken at our recent Cooktown School



Malanda Moments



WET TROPICS TOUR GUIDE PROGRAM



Savannah Guides continues to work with its partner, the Wet Tropics Management Authority, to deliver the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program. Our latest Field School was held in picturesque **Malanda** in the Atherton Tablelands with old buddies and many new friends.

Wednesday and Thursday **optional workshops** on the Wet Tropics as a Cultural Landscape, Flora, Fauna and Landscape and Commentary Excellence. Many guides working towards their Wet Tropics Tour Guide accreditation participated.

On the two-day Field School, no-one could have asked for a better line up of local experts. We went birding with Peter Valentine at Hasties Swamp, found nocturnal wildlife with Alan Gillanders and Terry Carmichael, saw

new perspectives of cranes with Tim Nevard at Bromfield Swamp and learnt about Wet Tropics reptiles and amphibians with Michael Anthony. We were privileged to visit the Tree Roo Rescue and Conservation Centre and

the Tolga Bat Hospital. Lake Barrine was gorgeous for rainforest birds with Del Richards, Granite Gorge's Rock Wallabies were hopping and we all loved the Malanda Hotel and bakery!

If you'd like to know more about the program, please visit: www.wettropics.gov.au/tour-guide-training or contact Russell to receive the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program E-newsletter.

From: Travel Bulletin June 2016

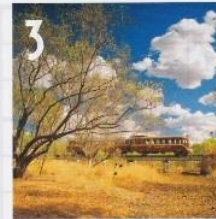
RAIL JOURNEYS

THREE UNIQUE RAIL JOURNEYS



Mexico – El Chepe train

This scenic rail journey travels from Los Mochis to Chihuahua. Also known as the Copper Canyon train, it takes 14 hours to travel in one hit, but the best way to truly appreciate this trip is to break up your journey over a few days. The route stretches over 408 miles of railroad tracks, going through 86 tunnels and crossing 37 bridges. Take in everything from flat desert to scenic mountains and valleys. Make sure you stop at Divisadero and take in the view of the Copper Canyon, four times larger than the Grand Canyon.

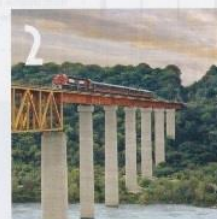


Australia – Gulflander

Admire a part of Australia that many people never get the chance to see on the Gulflander train. Traversing wetlands and grasslands to the north Queensland of north Queensland, the heritage-listed train line stretches from Normanton to Croydon. Normanton was the port for the gold rush town of Croydon, and was never connected to the state rail network. The train itself only carries a small number of passengers, and you can enjoy morning tea en route as Savannah Guides onboard keep you entertained with trivia and amusing stories of colourful characters.

New Zealand – Northern Explorer

New Zealand offers an extraordinary range of scenery and what better way to see it than by train, on the Northern Explorer. The line travels from Wellington at the bottom of the North Island, all the way to Auckland towards the top. The journey can be done in one day, or alternatively you can break it at a number of points. A highlight is the portion of the trip that travels through long, narrow National Parks, showcasing snow blanketed fields, ancient lava flows and volcanic mountains all side by side.



Savannah Guides Enterprise "The Gulflander" in good company in leading travel agent magazine



News from...

Australian Age of Dinosaurs



- We had just over 25,000 visitors for year at AAOD, and around 13,000 visitors at the Dinosaur Stampede.
- Like Red Dirt Tours, we've been hit hard with the unseasonal rain. The problem section of the road is now 50% sealed, which will make 2017 a ripper of a year.
- We've had record coach and school visitation for 2016 (even with the closures).
- We've just announced *Savannasaurus elliotorum* (aka 'Wade'). It's only taken over 10,000 hours of preparation, over 100 volunteers and about 11 years to get to this point. At the last Savannah Guide School here in Winton, we set up the vertebrae of Wade during one of our workshops, now they are fully showcased in our Collection Room. He's a new genus and species!

All the best to everyone and a very Merry Christmas!

Trish "Tricky" Sloan, Savannah Guide

From AAOD Executive Chairman,

David Elliot:

Dear All

This is just to let everyone know that the first flock of bronze dinosaurs have arrived on the Jump-Up and were unloaded at Dinosaur Canyon. These were designed by Travis Tischler and will form part of the Hunt Scene exhibition funded by the Wavish Family. Still to come will be a flock of pterosaurs funded by Denise OBoyle and three Minmi (armoured dinosaurs) funded by the John Villiers Trust.

Dinosaur Canyon is where our new building, Dinosaur Canyon Outpost will be situated (along with a mob of very realistic looking dinosaurs!) We hope to have this finished in time to open up by about April next year.

Thank you all for your support.

With best wishes - David



Group Dinosaur Dig



Matilda Fossil



Prep a Dino

The Huntsman Spider theconversation.com

There are currently 1,207 species of huntsman spider in the family Sparassidae, out of the 45,881 described spider species worldwide. It is estimated that 155 huntsman spider species are found throughout Australia, 95 of these endemic and all probably descended from a single common ancestor that immigrated from Papua New Guinea or Southeast Asia.

Huntsmen are big spiders, can weigh 1-2 grams and may be as big as the palm of your hand. The world's second-largest species, the massive golden huntsman, *Beregama aurea*, from tropical Queensland, weighs over 5.5 grams. An adult's forelegs may stretch 15cm and they lay egg sacs the size of golf balls.

The top speed demons are both sizeable animals from tropical Queensland, *Holconia hirsuta* and *Beregama aurea*. These run 42 and 31 body lengths per second, respectively. The world-record-holding human, Usain Bolt, runs at a sluggish 5.2 body lengths per second. These are some of the fastest spiders recorded in the world.

Huntsmen are long-lived for spiders, with most living for about 2.5 years. Although some other primitive spiders (such as tarantulas) can live up to 20 years, most other spiders live less than a year.

All huntsman spiders are active at night, emerging from their retreats to forage for insects and other invertebrates, and occasionally small vertebrates. They are ambush predators, generally sitting and waiting for prey to come close before running and leaping on it. Huntsmen don't use webs, but use a combination of vibrations and vision to locate their prey.



Brown snake in Ugg Boot

Snake Catchers Adelaide Manager Rolly Burrell said a woman went to collect her Ugg boots from outside her house at Moana in the city's south and saw a brown tail disappear into a boot.

"It saw her and shot into her Ugg boot," he said.

Mr Burrell said the company removed a snake from a shoe about once a year - last year from inside a rubber boot that had been hung upside down on a rack. (www.abc.net.au)



What's that Skippy? You're left handed!

Kangaroos prefer to use their left forelimb to do things, say researchers, who have reported the first ever discovery of human-like handedness in animals.

The study, published in the journal [Current Biology](#), found that wallabies and bettongs also had this trait, referred to by scientists as 'true' handedness. True handedness refers to a population-wide trend in which the majority of individuals prefer one hand over the other to carry out a number of tasks

They use their left forelimb to wipe their snout, or to collect food. Kangaroos preferred their left hand to support their body. Wallabies use their right hand for supporting their body, and for grabbing on to branches, while using their left hand to rip off leaves and feed themselves. Kangaroos eat grass, wallabies eat leaves from tree branches, developing an adaptation to different ecologies. These bipedal marsupials stand on two feet like humans, and this may explain why they have all developed true handedness.

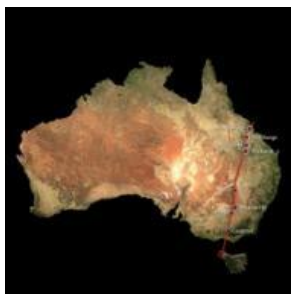
Scientists have traditionally thought that such handedness was unique to humans. In the majority of cases, animals have only individual preferences. One individual can have a right or left preference, but another individual will have a different kind of preference, and the third one will have no preference.



SUPPORTERS PROGRAM

If you know someone who would like to become a Savannah Guides Supporter and receive our newsletter, just email info@savannah-guides.com.au

We'll subscribe them and post out a Savannah Guides Bookmark or Bumper Sticker.



The Superchain of volcanoes

Hidden Superchain of Volcanoes Discovered in Australia

Scientists have found the world's longest chain of volcanoes on a continent, the [newly discovered Australian volcano](#). 2,000 kilometres long, it spanned most of eastern Australia, from Hillsborough in the north to Tasmania.

Scientists had long known that four separate tracks of past volcanic activity fringed eastern Australia. Some of these regions were separated by hundreds of miles, leading geologists to think the areas weren't connected.

New research shows that the Australian volcanism had a common source: a mantle plume that melted the crust as the Australian plate inched northward over millions of years. (Whereas many volcanoes form at the boundaries of tectonic plates, where hot magma seeps up through fissures in the Earth, others form when mantle plumes, or hot jets of magma, at the boundary between the mantle and Earth's core reach the surface.)

It turned out that, at certain spots along the Australian tectonic plate, the lithosphere was so thick that the mantle plume couldn't permeate to show at Earth's surface. However, at other points, the lithosphere was just barely thin enough to show the tiniest hints of magma at the surface.

uk.news.yahoo.com/hidden-superchain-volcanoes-discovered-australia-185543924.html#LQG23Bk



Tricky Shots!

News from Savannah Guide Trish “Tricky” Sloan, based at Winton’s Australian Age of Dinosaurs:

Guru shots is an international photography competition. Photographers from all over the world enter themed competitions set by world-renowned photographers. I chose to submit my photos into a themed competition called ‘Solo’: One subject, one wow-factor! Around 25,500 photos were submitted into this one competition (around 5000 photographers). There are five levels you can achieve, and getting to the top two levels is an amazing achievement for any photographer. The four images I submitted into this competition reached the second level, which finished with 2052 photographers fighting for a place. I was ranked 761st on the Elite level, which puts me into the top 1000 photographers in the world for that theme. It’s the highest I’ve ever achieved in any competition, not too bad for a hobby-photographer!

Go Tricky! That Purple Crowned Fairy Wren chase at the Adels Grove School really paid off!



Nevo’s Memories

Savannah Guides Manager Russ Boswell recently caught up with a Savannah Guide from the 1980’s, Peter “Nevo” Neven.

Nevo was working at Escott Station, near Burketown, when Savannah Guides was taking shape. Gerry Collins recruited him to work on Yarramulla Station and establish the Undara Experience lodge including its restored railway carriages. Bruce Butler was running tours into the lava tubes from Mount Surprise and Nevo soon became a guide for the increasing number of visitors coming to the Gulf Savannah. His fond memories include working alongside cattleman and guide Terry Claydon and Kowanyama Aboriginal Ranger Johnny Clark, a founding Board member of Savannah Guides. In 1988 Nevo was in Savannah Guides Uniform at the World Expo in Brisbane, showing off a crocodile from the Edward River Crocodile Farm.

Nevo’s advice for guides is to “be yourself, be a bit humorous and know your subjects. A lot of your guests won’t try to interact with you, so you have to interact with them. You’ve got to relax and help your guests relax.”



On the Road with...



Alan Smith and Ian Pascoe

An authentic Outback Queensland Experience!



Welcome to Country on Stratford Station near Blackall



Baloon Cave in Carnarvon National Park

The Trip involved 3 nights in Longreach doing station visits, 3 nights in Blackall where we visited Idalia National Park and several station tours, followed by 3 nights at Carnarvon Gorge, and finishing with 2 nights on Lady Elliot Island.



Cooktown Twitchathon!

The creative juices of many of our twitchers at the Cooktown Savannah Guides School were flowing! As well as a great range of local species some amazing new varieties were spotted and reported in a terrific edition of our classic bird watching game.

Our Cooktown Twitchathon Teams:

THE DOUG OUTS
BIRRBIRR (Rainbow Lorikeet)
TEAM SUCH N SUCH
B.O.B. – Banks' Official Birders
THE YARD BIRDS
JIJIRR GUUGU
MOUNGIBI JOOLAGI
COOKOO BIRDS



GREAT WORK TWITCHERS!

Some unverified species:

Cook's Creeper
Crested Bowling Bird
Sand-Dusted Beach Skipper
Greater Story-Wren
Bigbill
Savannah Lorikeet
Noisy Guide Pitta
Amazing Sam-Athystine Bell-Bird
MC-Mina
Bare-Breasted Godwit
Weary-Eyed Night Parrot
Accredited Golden Oriole



World-first genome study reveals rich history of Aboriginal Australians

ABC Science By Dani Cooper, additional reporting by Tom Forbes (edited version)

The most comprehensive genomic study of Indigenous Australians to date has revealed modern humans are all descendants of a single wave of migrants who left Africa about 72,000 years ago. They arrived on supercontinent 'Sahul' around 50,000 years ago. By 31,000 years ago, most Aboriginal communities were genetically isolated from each other, giving rise to great genetic diversity.

The findings are contained in one of three papers published today in *Nature* that look at the dispersal of modern humans from our evolutionary birthplace in Africa to Europe, Asia and Oceania.

To date, academics have debated whether we all share the same ancestors from a single mass migration event, or that the dispersal took place in distinct waves at different times. Today's papers support the single wave theory.

MIGRATION FROM AFRICA TO AUSTRALIA

[The Aboriginal study](#), led by Professor Eske Willerslev of the University of Cambridge, was undertaken with the collaboration of elders and leaders of various Indigenous communities. The international team sequenced the genome of 83 Aboriginal Australians from the Pama-Nyungan-speaking language group, which covers 90 per cent of the continent, and 25 Highland Papuans. Australian co-author, Dr Michael Westaway of Griffith University said the study showed evidence only for one colonisation event in Australia, and a continuity of occupation from that genomic signature for 40,000-odd years.

It reveals Papuan and Aboriginal ancestors left Africa around 72,000 years ago and then split from the main group around 58,000 years ago. They reached the supercontinent of 'Sahul' that originally united Tasmania, Australia and New Guinea around 50,000 years ago, picking up the DNA of Neanderthals, Denisovans and another extinct hominin along the way. Papuans and Aboriginals then split around 37,000 years ago, long before the continents were finally cut off from each other around 8,000 years ago. The flooding of the Carpentaria basin and its increasing salinity may have promoted population isolation. Professor David Lambert, who was also involved with the study, said the point of entry into Australia was still unclear, but the data revealed an expansion of people from Cape York about 30,000 years ago.

The study also revealed remarkable genetic diversity between Aboriginal people of the east and west of Australia. Dr Westaway said this could be connected to the last Ice Age around 30,000 to 20,000 years ago. "The onset of the last glacial maximum creates this huge expansion of the arid core in Australia and a dramatic reduction in gene flow between the east and west of the country," he said.

Interestingly the genome sequencing also showed Aboriginal Australians adapted biologically to the environment, a trait Dr Westaway said was reinforced by their long occupation of the continent. The evidence suggested desert groups were able to withstand sub-zero night temperatures without showing the increase in metabolic rates observed in Europeans under the same conditions. "People have changed and adapted over deep time as the country has ... we just don't see that in any other *Homo sapiens* populations. That great genetic diversity in Aboriginal populations reflects the huge amount of time they have occupied the continent."

Dr Westaway said they only have 83 genomes representing the population history of an entire continent and working and partnering with Aboriginal peoples, in particular the non-Pama language groups in Arnhem Land and the Gulf of Carpentaria would help analyse dispersion.

Co-author Ms Colleen Wall, a senior Aboriginal woman of the Dauwa Kau'bvai nation from the Mary River catchment area in south east Queensland said she was pleased women were well represented as collaborators in the study, and that the study was very important to Aboriginal people. "As a society we already believe that we are the oldest race on Earth, and from my point of view this research goes some way towards proving that."

Mr Thomas Wales, an Indigenous elder from the Cape York community of Mapoon and co-author, said the study helped him "learn more about my people, myself and my land. You can lose all of your oral (history), Science, DNA and carbon dating ... you can keep hold of things. Tell us about our past."





2017 AFRICAN EXPERIENCE!



JOIN 4 WEEKS OF SOUTH AFRICAN FIELD GUIDE TRAINING

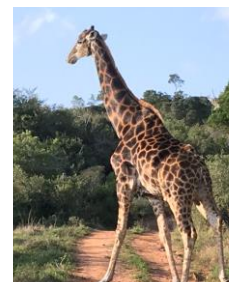
Savannah Guides has developed an unprecedented professional development opportunity for Australian Tour Guides, Operators, Rangers, Protected Area Managers, Researchers and their partners. This unique Savannah Guides program is made possible with our partners Ulovane Environmental Training. This is not a course – it is a taste of four different environmental tour guide courses. No pressure, just the immersion!

A PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL JOURNEY

A life changing experience, sampling environmental training in South Africa's Eastern Cape. Observe an array of wildlife (including over 200 birds for the dedicated). Train with local and international students in engrossing field-based activities. Work with expert trainers in a range of habitats. Learn about wildlife, guiding in Africa, land management, protected areas and reserves. Share memories with the friendly Ulovane team. Experience a special time in Africa.

WHERE does the training take place?

Ulovane Reserve, beside Amakhala Game Reserve:
<http://ulovane.co.za/about/camp-facilities-location/>
 Much of the practical side of the course takes place in Amakhala Game Reserve www.amakhala.co.za
 A range of nearby reserves and habitats are also used. The closest city and airport is Port Elizabeth.



WHAT are the Requirements?

- Fit and Healthy ~ Positive Attitude ~ A Thirst for Learning ~ Valid Driver's License
- You do not need a study visa. You may enter on a Visitor's Visa, issued on arrival in South Africa.
- Participants are invited to prepare a 30 minute presentation for Ulovane students on a topic of their choice

2017 Dates

- Arrive 19 February – Depart 19 March 2017
- Arrive 14 May – Depart 11 June 2017
- Arrive 13 August – Depart 10 September 2017
- Arrive 05 November – Depart 03 December 2017



COST includes:

- ✓ All transfers during the different weeks, including two airport transfers
- ✓ Accommodation for the duration of the four week course in a shared room (2 - 3 students per room), with ensuite bathroom. Bed linen, towel, a cupboard, a desk and a chair is provided
- ✓ All meals during the four week course plus game drives, walks and other field trips
- ✓ Reference Books: Tracks and Signs Field Guide + Southern African Mammals Field Guide + Two Oceans Field Guide + Roberts Birds of Southern Africa
- ✓ Uniform: 2 x Ulovane Tee Shirts + 2 x Collared Shirts + 1 x Cap + 1 x Polar Fleece Long Sleeve Sweater
- ✓ All practical and classroom activities and tuition
- ✓ Mobile phone reception at camp (MTN or Vodacom work best) and Wifi (weather permitting!)
- ✓ All of this for AUD \$3300! Ask your accountant – this is a tax deductible expense for many participants.

WHAT to expect at Ulovane Campus:

- There are usually two courses running at a time, with each group being 5 - 16 people, so it's a friendly scene at Ulovane camp. The campus has safe walking areas, social dining and recreation rooms.
- Pack extra goodies and be prepared. Supermarket delivery twice weekly. BYO alcohol.



WEEKLY EXPERIENCES:

Week 1 – Your South African experience will kick off by joining the Track and Sign evaluation week of the Trails Guide Course. This is an extremely interesting week where the learners will be tested on their Track and Sign Identification skills. Master Tracker, Louis Liebenberg, will conduct the evaluations which are always humbling and tremendous learning experiences. You will receive a great insight as to what is included in the qualification and life as a Trails Guide in Africa.



Week 2 – Join the FGASA Level 1 learners during their Week 7 of a 10 Week Introductory Guiding Course. These students will be well on their way in terms of their overall knowledge, understanding and guiding skills and will start refining their driving and guiding skills to prepare for their practical drive assessments with real guests the following week. See what is involved in the Level 1 Qualification and vehicle based safaris. The main focus of this week will be African Mammals.



Week 3 – In Week 3 you will join the first week of the Marine Guiding Course. The focus will be an overview of many different marine and coastal environments, climate and oceans around South Africa. You will undertake a range of field trips to gain a greater understanding of different marine and aquatic environments and interact with the Marine Guiding students to sample the life of a Marine Guide.



Week 4 – For your final Week you will join the first week of a Bird Guiding Course. This will focus on introducing students to the amazing birdlife in the coastal and thicket environments of South Africa. The week will consist of early morning field trips finding as many species as possible as well as classroom sessions researching these birds in more detail regarding feeding, breeding and general behaviour. Your final week will give you an understanding of what is involved in being a Bird Guide in Africa.



HOW do I sign up?

Further details and application packs are available from: info@savannah-guides.com.au

- All Applications and Payments should be made through Savannah Guides.
- 10% deposit required to secure your place and receive pre-departure booklet. This is non-refundable.
- Full payment is required two months prior to your commencement date and is non-refundable. Should you cancel due to unforeseen circumstances you should be covered by your travel insurance.

TRAVEL Arrangements

- Savannah Guides can recommend Port Elizabeth hotel accommodation, pre/post Addo Elephant Park touring and a travel agent for airfares and Travel Insurance if required.
- Arrival: An Ulovane representative will pick you up at Port Elizabeth on Sunday at 1:00pm.
- Departure: Will be on Sunday from the Campus at 9:00am and an Ulovane representative will ensure you get to Port Elizabeth airport on time for your departing flight.



**BE A PART OF
THE 2017
AFRICAN
EXPERIENCE!**

info@savannah-guides.com.au



Time to Get Feathermapping!

A team of Australian scientists is using nuclear techniques to analyse waterbird feathers and create a “feather map” that tracks bird movements. The research, they hope, will help water managers ensure the birds stay healthy and their habitats are protected.

Wetlands in Australia are under pressure from drought, river regulation, climate change and changes to land use. It is estimated that only half of what existed prior to European settlement remains. The straw-necked ibis, along with other birds that breed in colonies and nest only in wetlands, has been struggling with the stress and populations are in decline.

Waterbirds congregate in large numbers at known breeding wetlands when they become flooded, but where they fly off to in the meantime has been a mystery.

Australian waterbird feathers being sent to Kate Brandis at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) are set to change that.

“Feathers are made of keratin which, once it’s formed, doesn’t change again,” Brandis explains. “So feathers create a record of what the birds have been eating and drinking, which is specific to where they are in the landscape.”

Part of a citizen science project, members of the public are being asked to collect feathers from different wetlands around Australia and mail them to Brandis, who will analyse them with colleagues at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) and UNSW.

Each feather will be scanned to reveal the ratios of up to 28 different elements, which vary in different soils. Calcium, potassium and sulfur levels in bird feathers vary the most between a subset of wetlands, and isotopes of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon are characteristic of different wetlands in Australia.

Analysing feathers is not just useful for tracking the elusive waterbirds. They “can also give us a bit more information on the health of the wetland and the diet of Australian birds,” Brandis says.

Brandis will combine this element and isotope data to create her Feather Map, where feathers collected from chicks and birds that don’t travel long distances will provide a reference “signature” for the wetland each feather was collected from. Brandis hopes her map will help inform policymakers’ and water managers’ decisions about water flow to ensure waterbird habitats are conserved.

Although Brandis has already received thousands of feathers, the researchers need many more. To learn how you can get involved, visit www.ansto.gov.au/feathermap

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/biology/feather-map-reveals-secrets-of-waterbirds>



Undara stars in Global Queensland Campaign!

From TEQ Industry News...

A new multimillion tourism campaign is set to inspire even more global travellers to visit Queensland than ever before.

Tourism Minister Kate Jones said the “I know just the place” campaign was developed following extensive consumer research which showed today’s travellers were looking for new and authentic experiences.

“This approach plays to our strengths, focusing on our natural assets and unforgettable experiences, as told by Queenslanders themselves,” Ms Jones said. “Only the locals know where to best enjoy these experiences and through this campaign they will share that knowledge with the world.”

[Check out this video](#), which puts storytelling into the centre of Queensland’s marketing. The other experience featured in the first phase of campaign videos is [Ingan Tours](#), featuring our Wet Tropics friend Sonya Jeffrey. Great work!



Senior Savannah Guide Bram Collins in Logie pose



Our Best Wishes for the Festive Season!

Some Interesting Facebook Pages:

The North West Star
The Wilderness Society
Tree Roo Rescue and Conservation
Real Journeys (Queenstown NZ)



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 May 2017 newsletter or your E-newsletter updates to Russ at: info@savannah-guides.com.au

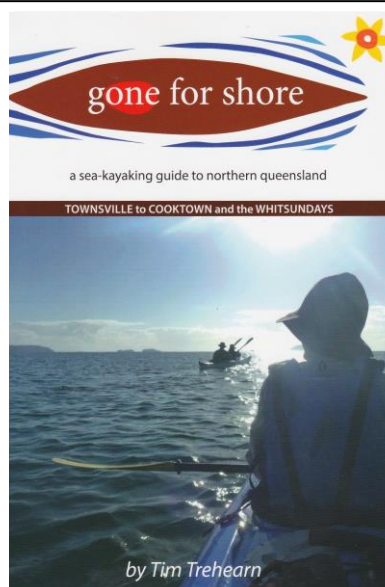
Key to **Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants V6**, available FREE online at www.ath.org.au/JCUPRD_042124.html

Fascinating Facts from the Tolga Bat Hospital in Atherton, QLD

- There are 1330 species worldwide; 85 species in Australia
- Bats have a locking mechanism in their toes so do not use energy to hang on
- More than twenty calls are used for communication, each evoking a corresponding behavioural response
- Individual odours help Mothers relocate their young after going out to feed
- The smallest Microbat in the world weighs just 2 grams
- The top strand of barbed wire fences is one of their top threats
- They live 3-10 times longer than same sized mammals



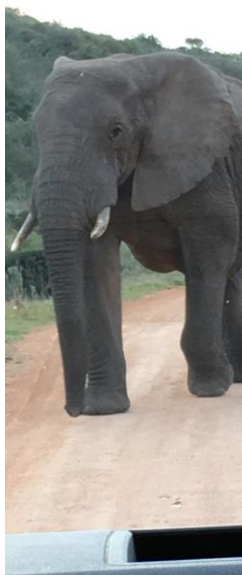
You can visit the Bat Hospital at 134 Carrington Road, Atherton daily all year 3-6pm, bookings essential Oct-Jun on (07) 4091 2683. See www.tolgabathospital.org for more details and interesting bat information.



Everything you need to know about getting into sea kayaking in northern Australia northern Queensland!



search "goneforshore" or email timtrehearn@gmail.com



Coming to Ulovane?

So...

What do you call a lazy baby kangaroo?
A pouch potato!

What kind of music do funky kangaroos listen to?
Hip Hop

What kind of music do sophisticated kangaroos listen to?
Hopera.



The End!

SEE YOU AT A 2017 SAVANNAH GUIDES SCHOOL!

Winton 1-4 April : Cobbold Gorge 6-9 April

