

# SAVANNAH GUIDES

## Communicator

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### Savannah Guides School

Townsville, 27-30 October

#### Climbing the Peak of Tour Guiding – best practice and ongoing development

Be sure to make it to this landmark Savannah Guides School. We'll be focusing on many different aspects of guiding and tour operation with practical workshops in the natural areas around Townsville. Meet with some knowledgeable locals and other experts and gain valuable insights into interpretation, tour technique, accreditation, training resources and more. This is a school for new and experienced guides, managers and tour designers, as well as those looking to connect with the Savannah Guides organization.

Members and any interested participants are welcome, and camaraderie and networking at the school will be a strong feature. As always there will be accommodation for a range of budgets and assistance with transport arrangements:

This is the first school to timetable alongside the Ecotourism Australia Conference [www.ecotourism.org.au/conference](http://www.ecotourism.org.au/conference) which is based at the Townsville Convention Centre with the theme "Building on Natural Advantages".

#### 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 - Natural and cultural resource management and through the promotion of ecologically sustainable tourism principles, enhances regional lifestyles and encourages protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the Tropical Savannas of Northern Australia.



June 2006

#### Inside this issue:

From the President	2
New NT Board	3
Savannah Way	4
ATDW	5
Meet the Board	
Indigenous Tourism	6
AQIS & SGL	7
Letters	8
Nature Notes	10
Guide Profiles	12
Cape York Adventures	15
Use of Gears	16
Trees in Cyclones	17
Weed Spotters	18
Ghost Nets	19
Book Review	22
Tourism NT	23
IAA	24
And much more	> 32



## Greetings from the President

G'day everyone

Well it seems that the last month has seen most Enterprises wrapped up in what they do best - guiding tours.

Its this season which we can display the benefits of our organisation off, through conducting the standard of presentation, interpretation, customer service and safety standards which we spend a large amount of our reduced activity time training for, mentoring others in and implementing into our business systems.

In the near future, we will be attempting to gather information from the membership, in order for us to maintain and develop benefits for members. This will start with a survey which highlights current membership requirements and quality control, (an important component of staying ahead of the game), so look out for that.

Planning for the next School in Townsville is well underway. It has been set to correspond with the next Ecotourism Australia conference and will be an opportunity for SGL to demonstrate its ethos of working to attain high standards of operation, resource management, training and leadership in the Guiding Industry. Rick Murray and the Board will be endeavouring to maintain contact in the ensuing months, so - have a great season

Mick Jerram, President, Savannah Guides Ltd

### **Savannah Guides**

#### **It's YOUR organisation**

Would you like to be more involved in Savannah Guides? Give something back to the organisation by being more active in the organisation?

Taking on a Board position is a very rewarding & educational experience. Elections will be held as usual at the AGM in Townsville so start thinking about whether you or someone you know would like to be more involved in the direction of Savannah Guides. Nomination forms will be sent out with the school registration forms, along with a proxy voting form if you can't make it to Townsville.

Remember, we all have something unique to contribute and our organisation is made strong by you - our members.

**'Your true commitment to Savannah Guides and its beliefs**

**is not judged at Schools**

**but by your actions in the field long after the euphoria**

**of a School has past...'**

Bram Collins, Savannah Guide

## **New NT tourism board appointed**

### **Ministerial media release - May 24, 2006**

The new Northern Territory Tourism Board has been appointed to provide advice on strategic issues facing our industry. Chief Minister and Minister for Tourism Clare Martin said she has appointed the new eight-member board following changes to the NT Tourist Commission Act. "We needed to get the right balance between local knowledge and outside experience – and that's been achieved," Ms Martin said. "The board has the perfect combination of skills to provide me with the best advice on maintaining a buoyant tourism industry. "It will ensure the Territory is well equipped to face local, national and global challenges. "The Board includes co-founder of Lonely Planet Maureen Wheeler who will provide valuable advice on how to lure backpackers to the Territory," Ms Martin said. The Board is made up of six external appointments and two NT Government representatives:

Grant Hunt (Chair), Ex CEO of Voyages (now consulting on national and international development projects)

Ron Morony, General Manager of Indigenous Business Australia

Col Hughes, Chair, National Tourism Alliance

Rick Murray, Consultant

Alastair Feehan, CEO, Imparja Television

Maureen Wheeler, Founder and Director, Lonely Planet

Maree Tetlow, CE, Tourism NT

Mike Burgess, CE, DBERD

### **Badges**

Just a quick reminder that if you need any badges, patches etc for the forthcoming school it would be a good idea to order them when you register for the school.

The price list for patches & badges etc is on the website and all you need to do is let us know by email what you want and then deposit the payment into the Savannah Guides bank account. The Savannah Guide Bank details are: Westpac Cairns BSB: 034 167 Account number: 814 167 Account name: Savannah Guides Ltd.

When you make payment by direct deposit could you please identify your deposit by entering your name into the notes field on the bank transfer so we can easily track it. As soon as we confirm payment has been deposited we will arrange and send out your order along with a Tax Invoice for your records. Rick

### **Guides Of Australia - Accreditation Launch**

The previously mentioned launch of the national tour guide accreditation, run by GOA, was postponed. Another date has been established in its place. If you're anywhere near Healesville Sanctuary, Vic (just outside of Melbourne) on Monday 26th June then you'll be able to attend the launch with the federal Minister for Small Business and Tourism, Fran Bailey. The accreditation (Guides of Australia) is aimed at all tour guides in all sectors of the tourism industry with requirements on experience, first aid, references, a field evaluation and ongoing professional development. With the implementation of Certificate III qualifications into SGL we have covered all bases for the national accreditation and so are more easily able to apply for the national accreditation. If you have any further questions on this subject contact Vicki on

vicki.jones1@bigpond.com or go to the GOA website [www.goa.org.au](http://www.goa.org.au).

## Savannah Way

The Savannah way s one of Australia's ultimate adventure drives, linking Cairns in Tropical North Queensland with the historic pearling town of Broome in Western Australia, via the natural wonders of Katherine in the Northern Territory. Whether you explore just a section, or the entire route, you'll pass through an amazingly diverse and spectacular landscape of wide horizons, ancient gorges, rock pools, salt pans, hot springs and abundant wildlife.

The tropical savannas lie in a climatic zone characterised by two distinct seasons: the wet and the dry. The wet summer months, December to March, are hot and humid, in contrast to the dry winter months of May to October which are cooler and have less. Much of the tropical savannas annual rainfall arrives in heavy bursts from thunderstorms, widespread monsoon depressions or from the passage of associated tropical cyclones.

**INTERESTING FACTS** Compared to other tropical regions in the world, Australia's tropical savannas have a sparse population with fewer than 350,000 residents -less than Tasmania. The largest crocodile ever captured was shot by Mrs Krys Pawlowski - a North Queensland taxidermist - in the Norman River, near Normanton Queensland in 1958. Named after its captor, Krys the Croc measured 8.63-metres and a replica now sits in the main street of Normanton in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Normanton is internationally recognised as an important location for an estimated third of Australia's migratory wading birds (eg brolga, Sarus crane).

Magnetic termite mounds found in Northern Territory are precisely oriented with their narrow edges facing north - south. The mounds are built by tiny blind insects and are oriented so that they get the least sun at the hottest time of the day. Wedge-tailed eagles are impressive birds. The largest eagles in Australia, and among the largest in the world, they have wingspans of up to 2.5 m. The wedge-tailed eagle once carried a bounty on its head. Between 1927 and 1968, 150,000 bounties were paid in Western Australia and ten thousand were paid in Queensland in a single year.

The first camel was imported into Australia from the Canary Islands in 1840, then in 1860 for the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition. There are now an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 feral camels in the Northern Territory alone (conservative 2001 census projections) - almost half of all feral camels in Australia Feral camels double their number about every 6 to 10 years.

The bulbous boab tree found in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia stores water and only sheds its leaves when there is no water. The boabs nearest relatives are

## From: WAITOC

Hi, WAITOC, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and the Traditional land owner groups of Central Australia look forward to seeing you at the Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference 2006 in Alice Springs from 19 till 22 September 2006. For more information please

email [waitoc@westernaustralia.com](mailto:waitoc@westernaustralia.com) Kind regards :) Maria Morgan Chairperson

## Profile your business to the world through the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse

Work with Tourism Queensland and list with the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) and you can enjoy greater sales, enquiries, and exposure to domestic and international consumers.

### What is the ATDW?

The ATDW is a national tourism database that sends your information to regional, national and global web sites that market Queensland destination and tourism products. By listing in the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), your information can be displayed on Tourism Queensland's flagship consumer site [www.queenslandholidays.com.au](http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au) and Tourism Australia's international website [www.australia.com](http://www.australia.com)

Listing your product in the ATDW provides you with web pages on these high traffic sites and includes:

- ✦ Comprehensive promotional descriptions
- ✦ Opportunity to display your key digital images, brochure and video

Display of your contact details, links to your website and email details

### What does it cost?

The annual ATDW fee is \$300 - for Tour products this includes four tour listings - additional tours can be listed for a fee of \$55 each). A discount of \$100 may apply to some Regional Tourist Organisation members. The listing period runs from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

Registration is easy - see the attached PDF for more details or log onto [www.tq.com.au/atdw](http://www.tq.com.au/atdw)

### MEET THE BOARD

With the resignation of Greg Johnson in February, the Board exercised its right as per the Constitution to fill the Casual Vacancy and select a replacement.

Pauline Rayner accepted the position in March until the next AGM, to allow time for succession planning and to enable preparation of new candidates.

The position was offered to Pauline due to her previous Board experience as a representative of the NTTC ( now TNT), and current Special Membership of SGL. Pauline worked within the Industry Development Unit of the NTTC for some sixteen years and acted as the liaison person working closely with SGL, particularly in the early development stages of our Organization.

Pauline now lives in the Malanda area of the Atherton Tablelands Queensland, and continues to be actively involved and a strong supported of SGL. You can contact Pauline on;

410 Merragallan Road, Malanda 4885 Ph: 07 40965561 Em: [Rayners.roost@bigpond.com](mailto:Rayners.roost@bigpond.com)



Be a S m a r t E a r l y B i r d – Register Before End June & Save \$100!

## **I n d i g e n o u s T o u r i s m P e r s p e c t i v e s** **f r o m A r o u n d t h e W o r l d**

A highlight of AITC 2006 includes the inclusion of two international Indigenous keynote speakers: Wally Stone from New Zealand & Dawn Madahbee from Canada. Register for AITC 2006 to draw upon their wealth of tourism experience.

**Wally Stone** is currently Chairman of Tourism New Zealand, also Executive Chairman of Whale Watch Kaikoura, and several other profit and non profit making organisations. Wally is a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Management and an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

**Dawn Madahbee** has many years of experience in business development, has an academic background in political science, law and economic development and has a solid footing in traditional ways. Dawn Madahbee is the General Manager of the Great Spirit Circle Trail Incorporated which is a tourism company owned by eight (8) First Nation communities on Manitoulin Island, in northern Ontario, Canada. This company is unique and the first of its kind in that it is a partnership of 8 communities and 55 Aboriginal businesses that has been successfully operating since 1998. Dawn is an Ojibwe and a traditional dancer on the powwow circuit who enjoys participating in both traditional and competition powwows throughout North America. She believes strongly that economic and business development is the solution to the many issues that face Aboriginal



*The 'Black-Necked Stork' has been busy!* **CONGRATULATIONS**

Greg (Bart) & Penny Johnson of Cooktown celebrated the safe arrival of their third child, a sister for Isabel & Beau. Talina Rose was born in Cairns at 3.46pm Sat 27<sup>th</sup> May weighing in at 5lb 12 (2.6kg).

Earlier this year Rod & Michelle Low Mow of Adels Grove welcomed their second child - a baby girl. Charlee Rae, sister for Haydn ('Gumnut'), was born in Townsville on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January (4lb 4oz / 1.94kg).

Congratulations to the Johnson & Low Mow families!



## Savannah Guides help ‘keep a top watch’ on Australia

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) has developed a mutually beneficial relationship with Savannah Guides across northern Australia, through the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS). NAQS is an AQIS program designed to survey northern Australia and neighbouring countries to provide early warning for targeted emerging pests, weeds and diseases.

As Australia’s northern coast is a particularly vulnerable area of coastline for the possible introduction of exotic pests, weeds and diseases, AQIS staff survey coastal areas between Cairns and Broome and islands in the Torres Strait, and work with neighbouring countries such as East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

As Savannah Guides operate in some of the most remote regions across northern Australia and have an environmentally sustainable approach to their operations, the organisation was met with an enthusiastic response when it approached AQIS to offer support.

AQIS Regional Manager, Gary Maroske said, “Savannah Guides has shown great initiative in proposing we develop this relationship. There are obvious synergies for AQIS with the organisation due to their philosophy of promoting ecologically sustainable tourism principles and encouraging the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of northern Australia.”

The relationship has been developing for three years, with AQIS officers providing training and information materials to operators, including the *NAQS Quarantine Pocket Guide* which details the target pests, weeds and diseases of particular concern to northern Australia and how to identify and report them.

AQIS has detected and enabled the early eradication of many pests including Siam weed and papaya fruit fly in Cape York, and the fringed spider flower and Asian honey bee in the Northern Territory.

Potentially, more than 120 Savannah Guides could act as ‘eyes and ears’ for AQIS in remote areas, reporting any unusual plant or animal pests or diseases to AQIS.

If you would like a copy of the *NAQS Quarantine Pocket Guide* you can contact AQIS Offices in:  
Cairns 07 4030 7800 Darwin 08 8920 7000 Broome 08 9194 1200

Or visit the NAQS website [www.aqis.gov.au/topwatch](http://www.aqis.gov.au/topwatch)



# Letters & Feedback

To Gwyneth at Nareeba Wetlands

**Odonatas** Following a question from her about dragonflies

You may know of me, I do the wildlife talkback on ABC radio. The only modern publication that deals with the dragonflies of N.Q in their entirety is Dragonflies of Australia by Watson Theischinger and Abbey 1992 published by CSIRO. It is out of print and very difficult to get. CSIRO have no plans to reprint the work. Also it is highly technical and requires that any specimen to be identified needs first to be dead. CSIRO has had plans to produce a 'pictorial guide' to Australian Dragonflies but this has been their plan for 6 years and we haven't seen anything yet. The problem with CSIRO publications on dragonflies (there is a Victorian one) is that they use photos taken in the wild and you can't really see the features you need to get a positive identification. In frustration I set about publishing a field guide to the dragonflies of SEQ which is now available - whew! I'm not a trained entomologist but have been a bit obsessive about the odonates for about 16 years. Many of the north Queensland species are also found in SEQ and the image you sent is one of these. It's the Scarlet Percher *Diplacodes haematodes* and yours is a male. I have attached three images one is of my guide and the other two are sample pages, one damselfly and one dragonfly. I would love to do a guide to the dragons of your part of the world and am working on ways I might be able to do this. The first thing we need to do is to nail down a checklist of the NQ species. I'm also working on that. Cheers Ric Natrass

Pictures following

(Maybe a good SGL project)

**GREEN EMPEROR**  
*Anax gibbosulus*

47



♂ WS 120mm

On the basis of wingspan alone the Green Emperor is the second largest dragonfly in SEQ. Only one record from SEQ.

**Distinguishing features:** Great size, brilliant blue spots at wing roots and blue bands on second abdominal segment. Broad green areas on sides of thorax. Frons has black "T" mark which separates it from closely related Lesser Green Emperor (see p48).

**Habit:** "Flies over lagoons and swamps" (Fraser 1960).

**Habitat:** "Lagoons and swamps" (Fraser 1960)

**Locations:** In SEQ Elanda Point, Cooloola Shire (B Kenway) one record 19 Feb 2006.

**Flight Times:** Nov - Feb (Fraser 1960).

**Illustrations** are based on male discovered by Barry Kenway during the Queensland EPA's BugCatch weekend at Cooloola National Park, 19 Feb 2006.

**REDTAIL**  
*Ceriatagrion aeruginosum*

35



♂ TL 35mm

♀ TL 43mm

This is the only damselfly in SEQ with an all reddish coloured abdomen in mature males.

**Distinguishing features:** All 'red' abdomen. Thorax is very dark in early adult life maturing to greenish yellow. Eyes are green and there is no 'tail-light'. The larger female is dull greenish grey with dark eyes.

**Habit:** Flies through thick vegetation near water, resting often, easily caught.

**Habitat:** In SEQ - slow moving creeks and large ponds and swamps.

**Status:** Common

**Locations:** Can be found in any lowland location.

**Flight Times:** Sep - May.

**Illustrations** are based on a male and female found in tandem, Tarradarrapin Wetland, Birkdale, 25 Mar 2005



♂ Twice natural size



## **What are Dragonflies and damselflies?**

Apart from the largest species of lacewings ( Neuroptera), it is difficult to confuse dragonflies with any other insects. The most useful feature to keep in mind is the almost minute nature of dragonfly antennae. All other vaguely similar insects have long, curled antennae often ending in a bulbous tip as do butterfly antennae. Dragonfly antennae are barely noticeable.

Dragonflies and damselflies make up the insect order known as the Odonata. The Odonata is divided into three suborders. Only two of the three suborders are found in Australia, the damselflies (Zygoptera) and the Dragonflies (Anisoptera). When referring to the whole order it is usual just to use the term “dragonflies”. There is a definite difference between the two suborders and this difference is most marked in the larval form. Damselfly larvae have three feather-like gills protruding from the tail tip, whereas dragonfly larvae have their gills stored inside the rectal cavity.

As adults the difference is not quite as great but is nevertheless easy to determine. In the South East Queensland species, the forewings and hindwings of damselflies are the same shape, appearing as paddles on stalks, whereas the forewings and hindwings of dragonflies are noticeably different shape. The hindwings of dragonflies are much broader at the base than the forewings.

In both the larval and adult stages all dragonflies are predatory insects chasing, catching and eating anything small enough to be overpowered and consumed. In the larval stage, they often sit in ambush, but as adults actively pursue their prey on the wing. Prey is usually flying insects and will include smaller members of their own order. This is not “cannibalism”. All the falcons eat other birds. This does not make them cannibals. In the pursuit of fast flying prey, the large, often massive compound eyes of Odonata are essential equipment.

Their reproductive biology is unique in the insect world in that males have primary reproductive organs in the ninth and tenth abdominal segments where the sperm is produced and secondary reproductive organs in the underside of the second and third abdominal segments from which the sperm is delivered. Mature males set themselves up in a territory they can patrol, chasing off intruders often both their own species and any others that venture close. The male’s abdomen is then curled round to transfer sperm from the primary set to the secondary set. Males pursue females, catching them just behind the eyes with tail tip appendages that are specifically shaped to fit only that species. The two either fly in the tandem position or come to rest on vegetation while the female curls her abdomen around to reach the males secondary genitalia when the second sperm transfer occurs, this time from male to female.

Following fertilisation the eggs are then flicked off the tail tip into water or are deposited into slits in aquatic vegetation cut by the female depending on species and order. In damselflies, egg laying is usually done while the male remains attached to the female. In dragonflies the habits vary. Depending on species, males will remain attached, fly above to keep guard, or leave the female to her own devices.

At this point, the next generation of dragonflies is under way. Mortality of eggs and larvae is very high, but since the females can produce a series of eggs, sometimes hundreds in each batch, survival rates do not need to be high to maintain populations.

## About the dragonflies

### **The Damsels**

To date, 28 species of damselflies have been recorded for Southeast Queensland. More will be discovered, not so much as new species to science, although that is possible, rather more species that will be “new” to the area.

The 28 so far known range from the tiny Splendid Longlegs at less than 20mm long to the giant Sapphire Rockmaster and Bronze Needle with total lengths of 50 – 60 mm. Many of the Southeast Queensland species are truly spectacular either in size or colour or both.

Habitats range from the white water mountain streams and dense rainforest to still waters of Wallum swamps and perched dune lakes of the Moreton Bay islands and broad, sluggish rivers open country. The damselfly fauna of each habit type is different, although there are always some species that are common to most types. For example the Rockmasters are confined to the fast flowing mountain streams and the Needles to closed forest, while the ubiquitous Common Bluetail is found almost everywhere.

### **The Dragons**

To date 58 species of dragonflies have been recorded from Southeast Queensland. These 58 range in size from the tiny Australian Pygmyfly at about 30mm wingspan to the massive Southern Giant Darner at 140 mm wingspan, one of the largest and fastest flying dragonflies in the world. Some habitats such as the Wallum and the dune lakes contain species found nowhere else.

While all damselflies are strictly diurnal (sunny daytime fliers) some species of dragonflies are crepuscular (dawn and dusk) or nocturnal – flying at night. Some species will come to lights, a method often used to survey the duskhawkers and evening darners.

### **General**

For those willing to do the “ Dragons and damsels” on a more serious level, than traditional collection would be needed and should this be done, I strongly recommend consultation with both the Australian Dragonfly Society and staff at the Queensland Museum.

There is no doubt that some collecting would greatly benefit the official collection at the Queensland Museum as there are a number of species in the area known only from a single specimen or a single location.

But care would be needed to prevent over collecting of well known species. Information on the poorly known species can be obtained from either the QM or the society.

Increasingly people are becoming more reluctant to kill living beings even in the cause of good science. A viable alternative in this day of affordable digital cameras is to record the specimen on flashcard making sure that several images are recorded and measurements taken to reduce the chance of misidentification. From a scientific point of view, images are not much use unless accompanying data is also recorded. Precise location and date are the minimum requires.

Notes take from Ric Natrass’ recent book “Dragonflys of SE Qld

## The Speedies

Val: Born Melbourne - migrated to various places in Northern NSW, SE Qld, attended Clayfield College for a while, stayed in Bonny Hills near Port Macquarie NSW for 5 years, meandered around Sydney then off to Perth for 10 years - married a mad Scotsman there and had 2 offspring then attended Murdoch University as a mature age student where they granted me a BSc to get rid of me.

We came to Innot Hot Springs in 1981 and we earned degrees in manual labour harvesting lawyer vine from the rainforest, managing an orchard, share farming strawberries (Oh my aching back). In 1988 I had a ball in Mission Beach as assistant manager of a 30 acre environmental Park "Dundee Park - We cage the people not the animals" was the motto. We had the whole range of Australian fauna including 200 saltwater crocs. This was our downfall as a major flood in Dec. 1990 allowed the salties to float over the 3m fence and go walk-a-bout; much to the consternation of the local residents. Funny that!!

The Park closed and in mid 1991, I moved camp to Undara Lava Tubes which was just opening up to the public in a big way. I was head guide/biologist there for 11 years becoming a Savannah Guide in the process. (Great organisation by the way- you may have heard of it) Tony became a guide at Undara a bit later and is still working there part time. Both of us really enjoy the friendship and fellowship of the Savannah Guide organisation and still think it is the best!

Tony came to guiding by way of schooling in Scotland and Perth ; retail buyer in Perth; engine driver at a power station at Kwinana; tin miner on the huge tin dredge at Innot Hot Springs; bridge builder on the Wild River and other parts north before starting work at Undara. How's that for variety? He works part-time now and his passion is model railways and I have to fight to keep some of my house free of tracks and engines. He is kept busy maintaining the 30 acre property cyclone Larry trashed. I have also semi-retired and beside co-writing and editing the Gulf Croaker take on any other project offered that looks interesting – i.e. Editing my mothers writings hopefully with a view to publication; exploring the outback as a conservation assessor for funding requests to the NGRMG; helping set up a web-site for remote area schools; doing the occasional guiding stint to keep my hand in. I am having a great time!

Retirement is not stopping work - it is freedom to do the work that you enjoy most. Val



## Congratulations! Ken Millard

Savannah Guide Ken Millard was honoured with a Public Service Medal on the 12th of June this year. The award was given for outstanding public service to Queensland Rail, the Gulflander tourist train, the Carpentaria and Croydon Shire communities, and Gulf-Savannah tourism'. This is not the first time Ken has been the recipient of such an award: in 2001 he was awarded a Centenary Medal for his 'service to the community and to the outback as Officer-in-Charge of the Normanton railway'. •This is a fitting tribute to Ken's tireless work on the Gulflander and in the Gulf country for many years. Our hearty congratulations.

Best wishes Ken - hope to catch up in Townsville mate!

## DAVID SADLER'S STORY

On the sale of our property in Victoria in 2002, the scene was set for Helen and I to begin our Australian adventure. After ten years with a local coach company touring Australia, we decided to travel this big land and take the time to “smell the roses”.

We contacted Rod & Michelle Lo Mow at Adel's Grove and were offered a seasons work. The guiding then became a natural progression. Rod & Michelle were very free with their advice and information which led into the training at Riversleigh Fossil Fields & Lawn Hill Gorge. Further knowledge was gained from the local guide Harry Burgen, (Yididi Tours).

On finishing the season, I attended the Savannah Guides School in Darwin and then returned to Victoria over Christmas. The pull of the Gulf Region was too much, so we returned to do a second season at Adel's Grove. I attained my Site Interpreter qualification at Longreach SGS. One of the highlights of my time at Adel's Grove was to spend time with Michael Archer head palaeontologist on his annual fossil dig at Riversleigh. At the end of this season we travelled via the Savannah Way to Kununurra to attend my 3<sup>rd</sup> Savannah Guides School.

It was then back to Victoria to catch up with our family again, and in February 2005 we received a call from Odyssey Tours and Safaris to take on a position as camp hosts at Minjungari at Litchfield National Park. I then became a Roving Interpreter. On the refurbishing of the camp we went on to offer silver service in the bush. This was a totally new and learning experience for the both of us and one we took a lot of enjoyment from.

We finished up in mid September and headed for the NSW coast planning to nest, but the best laid plans of mice and men sometime come unstuck and on reaching Hervey Bay we were offered positions at Cathedral Beach, Fraser Island. This was another new and challenging experience, learning the running of a caravan park as assistant managers, catering for 1,2, & 3 day tours and backpacker accommodation.

After finishing in mid May we wandered down the east coast again looking for that place to nest and continued on to Victoria where we caught up with friends who were heading for the west, so we decided to have a holiday and join them.

So here we are, after an interesting tour of the Benedictine Monastery Town of New Norcia, north of Perth, after a few wines we find ourselves sitting around the camp fire compiling this story, and once again looking at the map to explore the west coast before heading across the Kimberley's to perhaps find a nesting place on the NSW coast or a retirement home whichever comes first! Keep up the good work SGL.

Helen & David Sadler PS – our new email address is - [djhpsadler@bigpond.com](mailto:djhpsadler@bigpond.com)



## ALAN " fruit bat " KLEIN

Since leaving the wide brown plains of Longreach and the burning red hills of Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackways, I have ventured south for a short stint to paddle a few rivers around the Barrington tops before arriving in Brisbane to work a short stint at Australian Day Tours. Tours from here involved driving a large coach up to O'Reillys Guest House in the Gold Coast Hinterland...certainly a different challenge to driving "Polly" on the dirt tracks of Winton... (Those who have been up the road to O'Reillys will understand what i mean) Other tours included going to visit Steve Irwin at the Australia zoo and a Brisbane sights tour. Occasional visits to the theme parks of Dreamworld, Seaworld and Movieworld were included. That lasted about 2 months before deciding to move to Cairns. Within days I started at Down Under Tours in Cairns. Working here involves tour guiding in Cape Tribulation, Atherton Tablelands and 4WD Clohesy River Tours. Between tours it is charter work with groups of mainly foreign visitors , reef boat pick ups and on rare occasions with Skyrail transporting passengers about. The jobs are different from day to day and can be very rewarding. I have now spent one year in Cairns and as much as I love it here I miss the dinosaurs more. Alan Klein



## Gamba grass management guide

The introduced pasture gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*), is now the subject of a new management guide from the Northern Territory. The NT Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA) has developed the guide as a tool for all land managers to help identify and manage the grass. It provides a four-step approach to managing gamba to either eradicate it, prevent its spread, or use it as a pasture.

The guide explains how to assess the situation, develop and implement plans and monitor and review. The guide also has photos to help identify gamba throughout its life cycle. NRETA is leading a joint initiative in collaboration with the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines and Charles Darwin University to develop a Weed Risk Assessment System for the entire Territory.

Currently gamba grass is not a declared weed in the NT or Queensland, but in the NT it is being tested under the draft model WRA to be considered for declaration under the Weeds Act. The Weed Management Branch of NRETA is also undertaking community education and awareness of the environmental impacts of gamba and ways to identify and manage the grass species.

In Queensland, where the grass was recently identified in Queensland's Burdekin region, a preliminary assessment has been done and is currently under consideration by Queensland's Dept. Natural Resources, Mines and Water.

The Gamba Management Guide is available from: [www.nt.gov.au/nreta/naturalresources/weeds/gamba/pdf/gamba\\_man\\_guide.pdf](http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/naturalresources/weeds/gamba/pdf/gamba_man_guide.pdf) Web: [www.nt.gov.au/gamba](http://www.nt.gov.au/gamba) Tel: (08) 8999 2020 (Darwin office) or Tel: (08) 8973 8107 (Katherine office).

## Jim Fitzgerald's Cape York Adventures - Moreton Telegraph Station Campground

Susanne and I have been managing Moreton Telegraph Station Campground on the Wenlock River in Cape York for just over two months, and it's been interesting to say the least.

We decided to make a trip to our nearest town, Weipa, on Easter Monday to pick up supplies and meet our suppliers. With the interim caretaker due to leave in a few days, we reasoned that this could be our only chance for a while. We travelled with some Weipa locals who had spent the Easter weekend camped here and thought that five vehicles travelling the same route would give us all some extra security. That turned out to be an adventure in itself, with the Rocky Creek crossing being about bonnet-height on a Land cruiser.

We stayed overnight in Weipa and got all our business done by around 11am and headed for home. By this time, we'd heard that Cyclone Monica was heading our way and so we were keen to get back. Rocky Creek was running faster and higher, however, and chancing the crossing was not an option, so we returned to Weipa where we sat out the storm. We finally got back to Moreton with our perishable supplies on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> April via a charter flight, having left the ute behind.

The Wenlock River rose as expected, and we spent Friday the 21<sup>st</sup> working hard to get everything up above the likely flood level. Most of the vehicles and equipment are stored on high ground near the airstrip, and our veranda was also crowded with two washing machines, two 90Kg gas bottles, a 4.5kVa generator, fuel and various other things. At about 2am on Saturday the sound of air bubbling up from under the concrete slab under the house signalled the beginning of the inundation. Water finally stopped flowing under the house on the following Monday but there was still lots of water about the place. Check out the following web site for some pics of the flooding (and what happens when Akubra meets tractor-slasher!): [http://photobucket.com/albums/h175/Susanne\\_Andres/](http://photobucket.com/albums/h175/Susanne_Andres/)

Since Monica we have been cleaning up the mess and getting prepared for the season. I was finally able to get to Weipa and pick up the ute on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May!

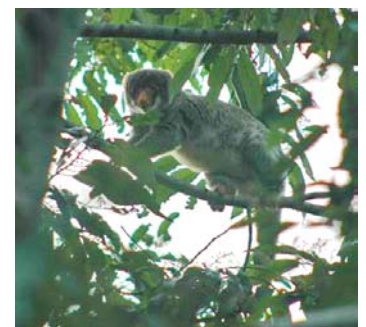
Travellers have been few and far between and as of today, the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, you could count the private travellers to have camped here on the fingers of both hands. One bonus is that the road from Cairns to Weipa is in great shape and the Bamaga road is being repaired as I write. There is still an awful lot of water about though, and many vehicles have and are still getting into strife. We are looking forward to the season and hope to



see you up here some time soon.

PS We've had several sightings of the spotted cuscus. Susanne found one of them and alerted Dean Nulty and his group, who were all rather excited at seeing their first cuscus.

Left - Akubra meets slasher



## **Never too late to learn new techniques**

*After attending a 'vehicle familiarisation course' in the NT, I thought that the following excerpt from the manual should be interesting to all 'professional driver-guides'.*

Thanks to: G.R. Pendlebury S.M.A.R.T – NT, Defensive Driver Training Manual

### **GEARS**

The advances made in manual gear boxes have changed driving styles but the principle of 'matching the gearbox to the engine speed whilst changing gears' should still apply. This principle involves shifting the right foot to the accelerator whilst depressing the clutch pedal and giving the accelerator a small 'rev' (applicable during a down shift). This principle ensures a smooth gear change (and less wear and tear on the gearbox components) and greatly minimises the possibility of a 'rear wheel lockup' (can be caused by the engine slowing the rear wheels at a rapid rate, thus losing positive traction with the surface).

A practice utilised in the past with gear selections was to 'go down through the gears' as you approached a hazard. This practice was utilised in the era when the brake systems on a vehicle were inferior (mechanical brake systems and hydraulic drum brake systems) and using the gears assisted in slowing the vehicle down. Today's vehicles employ very efficient braking systems and the need to 'go down through the gears' is no longer required. The correct procedure is to select the gear that you require for the hazard just prior to entering the hazard. As an example, if you are travelling in 4th gear at 70km/h and need to slow to 20km/h to negotiate a hazard, after completing the braking manoeuvre, the driver changes directly to 2nd gear. The benefits of direct gear changing include; saving fuel, continued stability of the vehicles weight and extended gearbox life (its far cheaper to replace brake pads than gearbox components) Having prepared the vehicle to travel along the right course, at the right speed and in the right gear, the defensive driver is now ready to negotiate the



I thought you might like this - Evan Tandy, Operations Manager , Wilderness Challenge Pty Ltd

**MUD MAP of AUSTRALIA**

## Tree resilience in cyclones

Ecologists Greg Calvert and Betsy Jackes are keen to hear from people regarding tree loss and resilience during Cyclones Monica and Larry. The pair are planning a book on cyclones and trees, how to minimise damage to house and property through good plant selection and gardening practices. The book will list good tree and plant choices for urban gardens in northern Australia—and those which are not so good. The choices will be based on information collected from several cyclones including Tracy, Althea, Charlie, Justin and Tessi as well as the latest two.

Greg, who is currently based at Jabiru, has conducted a recent survey of around 400 fallen trees around the township. Jabiru suffered the last dying gasp of Monica, so it was around a Category 3 by the time it hit. It still had the energy to lay waste to most of the town's shallow-rooted African mahogany, as well as numerous black wattles and river red gums. "It's quite likely that Jabiru township is going to get rid of all of the African mahogany—not just the ones that fell over," Greg said. "They caused an incredible amount of mischief and damage here as they're such big trees."

As far as the good species goes, research is showing plants that have evolved in high-energy environments, such as those that grow along the edges of fast-flowing rivers and streams tend to be very resilient towards cyclones. "These plants are subjected to battering by floods and tend to have very strong root systems and seem flexible enough to move and bend," explained Greg. "Also there are species that will sacrifice small branches which reduces their wind resistance; some trees will lose their entire crown, which is not a bad sacrifice if you get to keep your roots in the ground."

Species choice is just one element though; trees can also be made vulnerable due to poor garden management such as shallow watering or factors such as termite damage. "For every one of these trees that you see doing well, you also see examples of where they've gone horribly wrong!" said Greg. "It's a risk assessment that everybody needs to make on their own houses. What are the consequences of this thing coming down on a house if it does fail? With some trees the consequences are high."

## Goats

I had the funniest thing happen to me the other day there... I was explaining the great market for South African Boer Goats and picked up an orphan goat and put him down. He hung around a little bit, then he decided he would go for a run, so here's me and the goat running down the paddock and my guests having a ball just watching!! Never heard a group of people laugh so much!! I then did a tour for a big coach group and I took a goat on board the coach and he jumped out of my hands and took off in the coach... gotta love them hey!! The people sure do. Trish



## **Are you a weed spotter?**

The Weeds CRC's new program, the Weed Spotter Network, now has 162 people registered in its network with 137 of those trained in weed collection techniques and weed recognition skills. The program is a collaboration with the Queensland Herbarium, and aims to identify and harness botanical expertise within the community to detect new weed incursions.

While initially based in Queensland, the program may extend nationally at a later date. The program recognises that there are many people with relatively high levels of botanical knowledge whose skills and interests are rarely employed in the fight to prevent new weed incursions. They may be retired professionals or accomplished amateurs, or people currently employed in agriculture, the nursery or horticultural sectors or other fields of vegetation management. The audience for the program's training sessions so far have been local community groups such as Landcare and Society for Growing Australian Plants, Local Government Pest Management Officers and individual landholders. Weed Spotters are provided with the skills, knowledge and resources necessary to submit a quality specimen to their local Weeds CRC Regional Coordinator.

The coordinators filter specimens using Queensland Herbarium criteria before they are forwarded onto the herbarium. New records and distributions are incorporated into the herbarium collections and associated databases and new weed naturalisations are notified to Natural Resources, Mines and Water.

Weed Spotters in the new network have so far submitted more than 159 specimens to the Queensland Herbarium. Four of these have been identified as Class 1 pest plants under the Queensland Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 (three *Thunbergia fragrans* and one *Acacia curassavica*).

Three class 2 pest plants (*Eichhornia crassipes*, *Sporobolus jacquemontii* and *Cabomba caroliniana*) and one on the National Environmental Alert List (*Barleria prionitis*).

If you are interested in being involved, take a look at the Weed Spotter Newsletter on the Weeds CRC website. More information: Jane Morton: [jane.morton@epa.qld.gov.au](mailto:jane.morton@epa.qld.gov.au)

## **Australian Weeds Strategy**

The Australian Weeds Committee is inviting comment on the consultation draft of the Australian Weeds Strategy. The Committee is reviewing the goals, objectives and strategies with a view to publishing a nationally agreed revision early in the New Year. The document and web based consultation form is available online or via hard copy from the Secretariat. Closing date for public comment is 17 July 2006.

For further info go to: <http://www.weeds.org.au/aws/>

## Carpentaria Ghost Nets Program

The Gulf of Carpentaria is a large almost completely landlocked body of water in northern Australia that acts as a catchment for all Ghost Nets from the Indo/Pacific region. The GoC is a very remote part of Australia consisting of mainly Indigenous communities and mining towns.

Who are we? The map on the website shows the location of most of the communities or Indigenous Sea Ranger Organisations in the Gulf. These communities, or ranger organisations, are active participants of the project both on the ground and as members of the Steering Committee.

Other non-government participating organisations are Northern Gulf Resource Management Group (managing the whole project), WWF, Northern Land Council, North Australian Indigenous Land & Sea Management Alliance, Clean Up Australia & Oceanwatch Aust Ltd.

The Project also has an advisory committee of representatives from 2 Commonwealth & 2 State Government Departments:

- National Oceans Office Branch, Dept. of Environment & Heritage (DEH)
- Natural Heritage Trust Branch, (DEH)
- Dept. Business, Industry & Resource Development, Northern Territory

Dept. Natural Resources & Mines, Queensland.

See [participants](#) for profiles of each organisation.

### What is the Problem?

Nearly all (90%) of the marine debris entering the GoC is of a fishing nature and originates from all parts of south east Asia. Once the Ghost Nets are in the Gulf, due to the circular current - gyre (see grey arrows on the map below), they are stuck in an endless cycle of fishing, getting washed ashore and washed back into the water during a storm or king tide event. On the eastern side of the Gulf (western Cape York) the nets arrive during the monsoonal season from November to March while on the western shores the nets get swept in during the south east trade winds mainly between May – September.

The problem with Ghost Nets, or any marine debris is the impact they create on the environment physically (aesthetically) as well as ecologically. Since 1996, 205 stranded turtles have been recorded on Cape Arnhem alone including four of the marine turtle species listed as either endangered or vulnerable under Australian legislation. The floating nets also create havoc with navigation and the safe operation of vessels at sea. They get caught up in propellers, rudders and even engine intakes.

Over 200 different types of nets have been identified to date.

The red dots on the map give an indication of the distribution and abundance of nets as seen from a helicopter 300ft (100M) above sea level in November 2004 during a seagrass survey conducted by the Queensland & Northern Territory Fisheries Depts\*. NB that they did not survey the islands.

The site highlighted on the map with the blue circle has been cleaned up of all debris annually for the past 6 years by a combined effort from WWF, Dhimurru Rangers & Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA). The photo shows the CVA volunteers sitting on the total amount of rubbish collected from that small site (8kms beach) during the **annual** cleanup 2005. Most of the Gulf has never been cleaned up.

As only about 10% of the Ghost Nets found so far are of Australian origin this makes finding a solution to the problem a complex issue needing more than just a quick fix cleanup & an education campaign to local fishermen. It needs:

- Quality information in the form of research and data so that government & non-government organisations have useful tools to assist them to broker International solutions to stopping the source of this menace,
- Capacity building of Indigenous rangers to continue managing their sea country beyond the life of this project,
- Finding solutions to the disposal of this incredible amount of non biodegradable rubbish, apart from the current method of land-fill.

Added to that we are working in an environment that is extremely remote and unpopulated with areas difficult to access by land. The people are mostly Indigenous scattered in isolated pockets, some in townships created by the establishment of mines and the rest in homelands. This means they have culturally diverse backgrounds and a wide range in their capacity to do things. We are also working with a diverse cross-section of partners from Government to NGOs and in multiple jurisdictions of relevant policies and law including Northern Territory, Queensland & Australian Governments.

For more information refer to the attached pdf documents:

[History of Marine Debris in Northern Australia](#)

Details how the project has evolved over the past decade or more.

[Outcomes and Recommendations from Ghost Net Forum: 2004](#)

Recommendations from the Ghost Net Forum held in Karumba 2004 for Institutional Arrangements, Management Tools, Research, Communication, and Resources. At this forum there were at least two representatives from 15 out of the 19 Gulf Indigenous communities plus some science, government, nature conservation & commercial fishing, a total of 75 people present.

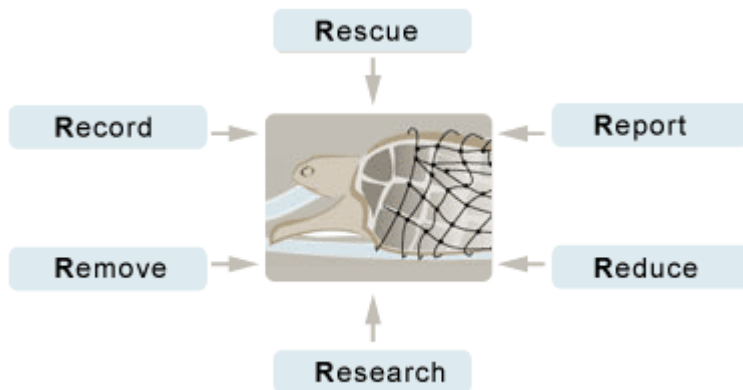
[Project Brief: 2004](#)

Project summary and Rationale as submitted to the Department of Environment & Heritage; Natural Heritage Trust II for funding.

\* Roelofs , A.J., Coles, R.G. and Smit, N. (2005). A survey of intertidal seagrass from Van Diemen Gulf to Castlereagh Bay, Northern Territory, and from Gove to Horn Island, Queensland. Report to the National Oceans Office. Cairns, Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries.

### How are we fixing the problem?

The Steering Committee summarised how we are fixing the problem in the 6R diagram seen below.



- **Remove** the Ghost Nets from the Gulf of Carpentaria coastline and waters.
- **Record** the numbers, size and location of the Ghost Nets found.
- **Rescue** animals trapped in the nets
- **Report** about the activities that the community have done to improve people's awareness about the Ghost Net issue.
- **Reduce** the number of Ghost Nets in the Gulf of Carpentaria by working together
- **Research** factors that influence the distribution, abundance, movement and impact of Ghost Nets in the Gulf.

There are a couple of other R's they also thought important such as Relax....

### Methodology

The project is coordinated from an office in Karumba (South East corner of the Gulf) and employs a Coordinator, a trainee office admin person and two Project Officers, one for each state.

The project officers work closely with the Indigenous Rangers in developing and implementing annual work plans that detail the how, why, where etc of cleanup and monitoring activities, the equipment, training and other resources they need. ([see the attached template](#))

The Karumba office source and supply these resources. Simultaneously the Karumba office coordinates communication activities such as media releases, website updates & presentations; the compiling & analysis of data collected during cleanups; prioritising and implementing research projects that will add to the knowledge base of where the nets are coming from as well as looking for recycling opportunities for these huge accumulating piles of nets.

### **How you can help**

Although the programme has been funded for three years there is much that we still need. We will not be able to fix the problem in this short of time. If you want to help we need:

Equipment ([view list](#)) Vehicles in particular 4WD tray backs & quad bikes. Cash to pay for fuel and other operating costs.

Further funding to keep the project going into the future

**Riki Gunn**  
**Project Coordinator**  
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Email: [jane@ghostnets.com.au](mailto:jane@ghostnets.com.au)

**Gary Luchi**  
**Queensland Project Facilitator**  
Carpentaria Ghostnet Programme  
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Smithfield Qld 4878  
Mobile 0429 067 338  
Email: [gary@ghostnets.com.au](mailto:gary@ghostnets.com.au)

## **Timeless Laws of Leadership**

According to Robert Kabacoff former Grad Prof clinical psychology Nova Southeastern Uni Florida

Taken from a survey of 158,000 leaders in 100 different countries. Requirements differ very little from the following;

1. Strategic Vision – the ability to use systematic thinking about how what you are doing affects all the organization – to have multiple time frames and plan what you have to do about all of them
2. Bringing Energy, Passion and Excitement to the job –
3. Developing fellowship by being very persuasive and brining people on board and aliening them with your view of where you need things to go
4. Clarity of Expectations – communication from the top down and providing people with lots of information about where they are going
5. Management focus – being comfortable in a leadership role and recognizing the requirements, being willing to exert power carefully and comfortable living 24/7 in a glass bubble where everything you do is watched and evaluated, ability to make timely decisions and to be able to live with the consequences.

A lot of leaders are introverted but can learn to be extroverted, they need to. Along with these laws there are 20 odd skills that leaders need to be successful.

They can all be learned.

## From the Book Shelf

Title: Earth Alive Author: Mary E. White Reviewed by Jeff Woodward (Gecko Tours)

Most of us would know the name Mary E. White for her previous books on the evolution of Australia's flora, *The Greening of Gondwana*, and *After the Greening*. In her latest book, *Earth Alive – from microbes to a living planet* (published in 2003), White broadens her multi-disciplined approach to trace the origins of life through to our present day biosphere. Presented here is not just another New Millennium version of *origin of the Species*, but more of an unveiling of the crucial role microbes play in the regulation of the living planet.

Those familiar with James Lovelock may already sense some *Gaian* influences underlying the books theme, and White does not hide from this – giving a brief overview of Lovelock's *Gaia Theory* in the early paragraphs of Part 1. White uses the concept of the 'Living Earth' and symbiosis as underlying themes as she takes us through the history of life, highlighting many oddities and surprises along the way.

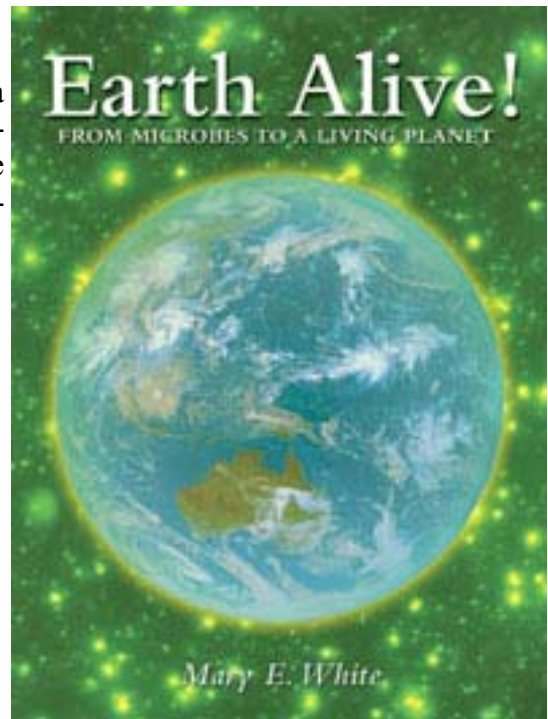
The blurb inside the back cover claims:

**Earth Alive: From Microbes to a Living Planet** gives a new perspective and reveals the significance of Life's Bacterial ancestry, and the continuing enormous importance of the invisible world of micro-organisms that still sustain the living Earth.

And after reading the book its hard not to agree that it fills its promise.

Use this book as a great reference for 'bigger picture' ecology. You may be converted to the Gaia Theory, but you will certainly be able to spark some deep debates with any Creationists on-board your tours!

Highly Recommended.



To contact Gecko Tours could you please change your records from PO Box 304 Katherine NT 0851 to:

PO Box 21, Katherine NT 0851

Mick, Jenn, Joan, Jeff, Mike & Dennis

P: 61 8 8972 2224 F: 61 8 8972 2294

E: [mick@geckotours.com.au](mailto:mick@geckotours.com.au)

W: [www.geckotours.com.au](http://www.geckotours.com.au)

## Future Savannah Guide Newsletters

To help reduce administration costs would you mind receiving your SGL Newsletter via e-mail? If so, let us know your address if we don't already have it. [info@savannah-guides.com.au](mailto:info@savannah-guides.com.au)

Newsletters on line can then be bigger, more informative, available without labour and postal costs and delays. If you do not have a computer See a friendly techo mate to get your free hotmail ad-



# **TOURISM NT**

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# **NORTHERN TERRITORY AUSTRALIA**

## **Cooperative advertising**

Cooperative advertising allows operators and trade partners to cost-effectively promote their product and extend their advertising reach nationally and internationally through financial support from Tourism NT. Cooperative funds are also used to encourage trade and industry partners to support and align with Tourism NT's campaign initiatives.

## **NT-based operators**

The Destination Marketing unit, managed by Mark Crummy, will provide cooperative support to NT suppliers, assisting them to reach their target audience and extend their marketing budgets.

Destination Marketing also can also help operators access cost-effective media rates and provide advice on making advertisements stand out on the page.

## **For more information, contact:**

Leanne Toogood, Destination Marketing  
[leanne.toogood@nt.gov.au](mailto:leanne.toogood@nt.gov.au) Telephone: 08 8951 8568

## **National partners**

The Trade and Consumer Marketing unit, based in Sydney and managed by David Cox, provides cooperative support to national product and distribution partners that sell the NT in the domestic market.

National partners are encouraged to submit proposals for cooperative funding in September each year. Proposals should articulate target audience, method of communication including media schedule, and methods for tracking and reporting campaign success. Proposals that align with and support Tourism NT's destination campaign activities will receive highest priority.

## **For more information, contact:**

David Cox, Trade and Consumer Marketing  
[david.cox@nt.gov.au](mailto:david.cox@nt.gov.au) Telephone: 02 8281 9623

## **International advertising**

NT-based operators that wish to advertise in international trade or consumer print media may apply for cooperative advertising support, to a maximum of \$250 per annum, per market.

## **For more information contact:**

Suzanne Morgan, International Operations  
[suzanne.morgan@nt.gov.au](mailto:suzanne.morgan@nt.gov.au) Telephone: 08 8999 3823

## Familiarisations

Tourism NT's objective is to market the NT nationally and internationally. A great way to do this is to invite media to come to the Territory, experience it for themselves, then write an article or produce a television program based on their experience. Tourism NT will financially support the visiting media to a certain degree – this is called a familiarisation, or 'famil'.

A great way for NT operators to get exposure in the media is to offer their product to be included in media famil itineraries. This way, when the story is written, or program aired, the operator may rate a mention.

Download the [Familiarisations fact sheet](#) for full information on the famils program, or contact the PR/Media unit on: [media.tourismnt@nt.gov.au](mailto:media.tourismnt@nt.gov.au)

### Website Listing

How can NT operators show their product to millions of people world wide for free? By signing up to display their product information on the Tourism NT's consumer website, [travelnt.com](http://travelnt.com).

The number of people worldwide who use the Internet is now in excess of 964 million! Use of the internet for online travel bookings and as a holiday pre planning tool is also increasing dramatically. Therefore online marketing is an opportunity NT operators can't afford to miss.

By signing up with Tourism NT's Destination Marketing Content Team, NT operators can display their company's information on [travelnt.com](http://travelnt.com) which provides consumers with a direct link to the operator via email and to their own website. Product information will also appear on Tourism Australia's website, [australia.com](http://australia.com) via the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

View the [Website Listing fact sheet](#) for more details and how to get involved.

### [Interpreting Australia and Making a Difference Workshop 2006](#)

The Interpretation Australia Association (IAA) is holding a national training workshop in Cairns 11-14 September 2006.

The *Making a Difference* Workshop is an opportunity for interpreters at every stage of their careers to network and improve their skills. Through a series of interactive sessions, the Workshop will feature experienced interpreters and communicators from around Australia and overseas.

Keynote speakers are Chris Tunnoch, British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Peter O'Reilly, Tourism Queensland, Lynda Kelly, Australian Museum, and John Courtenay from the award-winning Savannah Guides.

Registration, all tours and the draft program are now available online:

<http://www.interpretationaustralia.asn.au/workshop2006>

The full program with workshop details will be available late May-early June.

Get in early to register, and book your tours and accommodation. EARLY BIRD DISCOUNTS APPLY from 19 May - 7 July 2006. Jayne Kidd, Conference Secretariat, e-Kiddna Event Management

Ph: 07 5548 6199 Fax: 07 5546 0332 Mob: 0414 441 218

PO Box 411, Annerley, Queensland 4103 Australia Email: [jayne.kidd@e-kiddna.com.au](mailto:jayne.kidd@e-kiddna.com.au).

Carolyn Dance IAA Administration Coordinator

## Using Pingers to reduce marine mammal by-catch

Marine mammal bycatch in gill-net fishing is a problem that has to be addressed. Non-target species, including dolphins and dugongs, sometimes become entangled in the nets of the fishers which is particularly stressful for the mammals. The Northern Gulf Resource Management Group has provided funding to support the Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishers Association, the Northern Fisheries Centre DPI & F, Seanet and Ecofish in a combined effort to reduce marine mammal bycatch in gill-net fishing in the Gulf.

The four groups have two main objectives to achieve this goal. The first objective is to develop, produce and test 'pingers' or underwater acoustic alarms. These are designed to alert the marine mammals and work by emitting a 'warning signal'. This signal will hopefully deter the mammals from venturing too close to the nets, which obviously prevents them from being entangled in them. Obviously, the appropriate signals had to be determined so that the signal emitted by the pinger actually warns off the mammals. One signal that was tested actually produced an aggressive response in a species of dolphin, so getting the correct signals is one of the main factors that will make these pingers successful. The Queensland DPI & FI, NFC contributed to the initial development of the pingers with expert technical knowledge as well as workshop space.

12 of these acoustic alarms or 'pingers' will be supplied to all inshore and estuary gill-net commercial fishers to reduce the numbers of accidental contacts with marine mammals during fishing operations. Seanet/Ocean Watch will be the ones to make sure the pingers are used correctly and that they are maintained daily. The aim is 100% voluntary uptake and implementation of the pingers in day to day commercial gill-net fishing operations.

The second objective is to develop a 'listening device'. This will allow fishers to detect the presence of marine mammals, therefore enabling them to make a decision to avoid contact. A hydrophone based listening device (developed by the Northern Fisheries Centre (NFC)) is to be tested. This 'listens' for any vocalisations the mammals produce. These sounds are then fed into an on-board computer where a programme processes the vocalisations. It will then warn the fisher of the position of the mammal. It is hoped that up to 10 volunteer fishers will take part in the testing of this device.

The Department of Defence donated a large amount of equipment and knowledge to this project which has allowed the devices to be far more sophisticated than they otherwise would have been.

Reducing the bycatch of marine mammals whilst still being able to conduct fishing operations rather than have fishing restrictions is clearly the most desirable option and these devices allow commercial gill-net fishers to do just that.



Eric Lollo with pingers attached to net



## NORTH QUEENSLAND GOLD PANNING

### CHAMPIONSHIPS

and Gem and Mineral Carnival

MAREEBA HERITAGE MUSEUM

Saturday August 12th from 8.30 am sponsored by

North Queensland Miners' Association and

Northern Gulf Resource Management Group



NORTH QUEENSLAND OPEN MENS AND WOMENS PERPETUAL TROPHIES

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TOLGA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE PHONE: 07 4095 4296 Email: [toltrade@bigpond.net.au](mailto:toltrade@bigpond.net.au)

### MINERS CHALLENGE ALL COMERS TO PANNING

The Championships will be held on Saturday August 12th, not Saturday and Sunday as previously advised, in the grounds adjacent to the Mareeba Heritage Museum in Mareeba. The first event will begin at 9.30 am, with registrations opening at 8.30 am. The program will be as follows:

9.30 am JUNIORS – UNDER 12 COMPETITION - 10.00 am JUNIORS – 12 TO 16 COMPETITION

10.30 am NOVICES – WOMEN - 11.00 am NOVICES – MEN

11.30 am 'THE GOLD RUSH' – STAKE YOUR CLAIM AND FIND THE TREASURE

12.00 Noon SKILLED – WOMEN - 12.30 pm SKILLED – MEN - 1.00 pm LUNCH

1.30 pm VETERANS (OVER 60) - 2.00 pm OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP (Open to all genders and ages)

3.00 pm TEAMS CHALLENGE (Teams of three) - 4.00 pm PRESENTATIONS

The 2006 Australian Gold Panning Champion, Marcus Binks, has indicated that he will be attending, and will be giving a demonstration on how to pan for gold. There will be demonstrations of metal detecting, displays of mining, prospecting, and fossicking equipment, and exhibitions of gemstones and gem cutting. The North Queensland Miners' Association has issued a challenge to all comers in the Teams Event.

Contact: Rob Ryan Phone: 07 4091 7546 or [grra1@bigpond.com](mailto:grra1@bigpond.com)

Ralph DeLacey Phone: 07 4031 0241 or [rdelacey@tpg.com.au](mailto:rdelacey@tpg.com.au)



## Angel Ride

**Covered: 1,266 kms Still to go: 1,884 kms 8th May 2006**

Since my last update John and Anna have almost doubled the total distance covered having crossed into the Northern Territory and arrived at their rest stop in Top Springs. That is a massive **1,266kms** or ~40% of the total horse-ride from **Broome to Cairns!** The largest stretch of road between towns went well. They were very fortunate to be able to break it up along the way by the generosity of 3 cattle stations. Just when you would think there's no one else around for hundreds of miles, Joe drove up to meet the Angel Ride team and a helicopter arrived flying low above their heads. Joe invited them to spend the weekend with his family – the only occupants of Nicholson Station. With 25,000 head of cattle this station covers an area of 750,000 acres. The station was once owned by the British Vestey family as part of their vast empire of cattle stations. It was their canned 'Bully Beef' which was shipped to Britain & supplied to millions of soldiers during the first and second World Wars. Of course they had no shortage of very fresh meat & to help broaden the team's education, Joe took them out to get a 'killer'. That is he shot a cow, skinned it & cut it up. In return John taught Joe and Ros' daughter Jess how to train a wild horse! *Training Jess to break-in a Brumby!!* Back on the road the Angel Ride team passed through was the Aboriginal community of Kalkaringi & its close neighbour Daguragu where in the 1960s, Vincent Lingiari led his people the Gurindji, on a ten year long struggle for title to their traditional lands. After leaving Kalkaringi the wet ground made it impossible for the support vehicle to drive off the gravel road. This meant that they couldn't set up a roadside overnight camp before reaching the distant Camfield Station. The resultant 56km, 10-hour ride turned out to be their longest day in the saddle! Camfield Station, owned by the massive Australian Agricultural Company, is a property of 275,000 hectares. At any one time it runs approximately 32,000 predominantly Brahman cattle & is both a breeding station & a growing station for stock from the Montejinni and Delamere properties. Over Easter many head of cattle had left for market on nine roadtrains, each with three trailers. Head Stockman, Keysie and his jackeroos welcomed them into their small community. John & Anna stayed for two days helping with the cattle mustering, castrating, de-horning, branding and ear tagging. After another night on the road they were invited to stay overnight at Camfield Station's sister property, Montejinni Station, just 12kms from Top Springs. Staying in Top Springs for the weekend, John and Anna held a fundraiser BBQ with the boys they had met at the Stations coming into town for it. They leave today onto the Buchanan Highway (another dirt track) and up to the near half way point of Daly Waters where a Bush Ball awaits them next Saturday. *"Angel Flight is very familiar with this beautiful but remote area. They regularly provide air flights for some of our severely ill friends from the Kalkaringi and surrounding communities to their distant hospital and specialist appointments in the cities. This journey makes us realise just how difficult such a trek would be by road, even for the fit and well."*

## **Katherine's deep attraction** By Jo Hindle

While Katherine is renowned for its waterways – massive gorges, rapid rivers and a scattering of thermal springs – one of the region's most impressive treasures is located deep in terra firma.

The Cutta Cutta Caves, located 27 kilometres south of Katherine, are one of area's most popular attractions. Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park encompasses 1,500 hectares of tropical limestone (karst) landscape that also supports a rich eco-system of flora and fauna, including some endangered bird species. The Caves are thought to have evolved over 500 million years, and they continue to do so. A stockman was the first European to sight the caves when he stumbled upon the main cave entrance around 1900. Today visitors can explore this series of tropical limestone caverns via a network of winding passages. All tours are guided and a running commentary imparts some fascinating facts. Around the cave entrance are clusters of tropical rainforest and vine thicket - remains of rainforest that once covered the northern parts of Australia. The most striking feature of this habitat is the native fig, and there's a beautiful specimen right at the cave opening. Here, the fig's long roots disappear through the earth and can be followed down into the cave where they plug into a water table below.

It's a tour that doesn't require a high level of fitness - the only stairs are in the descent to the cave and onto an excellent boardwalk system that continues for the hour-long walk, lit by rows of 12-volt lighting. Descending from the bright, Northern Territory sunlight to a cavern 15 metres below the ground transports one to a whole new world. The cave's ceilings sprout stalactites of all shapes and sizes and fat stalagmites grow from the floor. Crystals that look like they're made of spun sugar adorn the walls above, and glint even in the reflection of the dim lighting. Cutta Cutta is a tropical cave and differs from temperate caves in southern Australia because animals inhabit it – in temperate cave systems they don't. Cutta Cutta hides some rare animal species in the deeper two-thirds of the cave that isn't showcased on this walk - mainly to protect them. There's a colony of endangered ghost bats and orange horseshoe bats and two strange species of completely blind shrimp with no body pigment that inhabit small pools. The only other closely related species of shrimp is found in Madagascar, off the coast of Africa.

The animals aren't the only ones who've left evidence of their presence here. The guide points out a bunch of about 30 particularly pointy stalactites, and on closer inspection you see that a good few don't have sharp ends like the rest of the cluster. Apparently the culprit is not water or erosion, but World War II soldiers who amused themselves in the caves by using the formations for target practice. When the guide turns off the lights, you can't see your fingers wiggling in front of your face because it's so dark. Apparently the Aboriginal people don't inhabit the cave for that very reason. Although the Jawoyn Aboriginal people have a long association with the area, there is no evidence of Aboriginal use of the caves, although they certainly explored here. According to one story, not being able to see the stars in the sky – just the unfamiliar winking of crystals – made the Aboriginal people rather uncomfortable. Thus the Caves were named; 'Cutta' means stars, 'Cutta Cutta' means 'many stars'.

**Fact file There's a visitor centre in the Park and it's a good idea to go here first - the centre presents more detailed information on the cave formation, karst landscapes and wildlife in the Park There's also a kiosk, picnic facilities and walking tracks**

For more information, contact Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory in Katherine, Tel: 08 8973 8888, [www.nt.gov.au/ipe/pwcent](http://www.nt.gov.au/ipe/pwcent) Contact Jo Hindle - [joanne.hindle@nt.gov.au](mailto:joanne.hindle@nt.gov.au)

## **Kakadu secrets** By Andrea Wait

It's a long weekend in the Northern Territory and, like most people in Darwin, we're frantically packing up the car with swags, eskies, the odd fishing rod and binoculars. We slam the boot shut and the car sags dangerously low to the ground as we all pile in, breathe deeply and quickly shut the doors before everything spills out on to the footpath and we have to start all over again.

Heading out on the Stuart Highway there's a steady stream of traffic. There are utes with muddy quad-bikes tied to the tray, caravans with stickers saying "Where the hell is Noonamah" (for the record, it's a township just out of Darwin), and cars like ours with people squashed in them who look exceedingly uncomfortable, but excited about the prospect of three days of bush camping, fishing and adventure.

As the Stuart Highway leaves Darwin in the distance and branches out into a myriad of destinations like Katherine, Daly River and Litchfield National Park, the cars start to disperse, and we blink our way left at the intersection just before we are about to reach Pine Creek. We're on our way to Kakadu. About 200,000 people visit Kakadu each year and there's little need to question why. It's one of the most special and beautiful places in Australia, indeed the world, and is World Heritage listed not only for its natural significance, but its cultural importance.

So most people know that Kakadu has magnificent landscapes including wetlands, rocky escarpments and waterfalls. Most people also know that there is rock art thousands of years old, with stories that have been handed down through dozens of generations. Most people have also heard about the amazing wildlife: Kakadu is full of every kind of creature imaginable, nearly 300 species of birds, plus kangaroos, dingoes, frill-necked lizards and barramundi. But what about all the stuff that people don't know? This weekend we're exploring the secrets of Kakadu and are getting off the well-beaten track in search of an Australian icon less-explored. Ask almost any local in Darwin and they'll point you in the right direction.

### **Off the beaten track:**

To do something different, explore the southern-end of Kakadu National Park. Instead of turning at Humpty Doo, a rural community which is surrounded by thousands of mango trees and has a huge replica crocodile wearing boxing gloves, continue down the Stuart Highway towards the historic gold rush town of Pine Creek. Just before Pine Creek, you turn left and enter through the southern entrance of the Park.

Gunlom Falls: This plunge pool is one of the most picturesque places at Kakadu, with spectacular views over the southern region of the park. It is about a 40km drive in from the Kakadu Highway on a gravel road, just inside the southern entry to the Park. Pitching a tent at the pretty little camping ground at the end makes the drive all worthwhile. During the wet season (December – April) access is restricted. Always check the latest access reports from the Bowali Visitors Centre in Jabiru or at [www.deh.gov.au/parks/kakadu/](http://www.deh.gov.au/parks/kakadu/).

Yurmikmik: Located on the way to Gunlom Falls, Yurmikmik is an area of separate but interconnected walking tracks. The individual walks are: Boulder Creek Walk (2km return); Yurmikmik Lookout Walk (5km return); Motor Car Falls (7.5km return) and Kurrundie Creek Walk (11km return).

Maguk Plunge Pool: This is a four-wheel-drive destination only. There's a 2km monsoon forest walk at this pretty spot with a small waterfall and clear plunge pool. Turn off the Kakadu Highway 44km north of the southern entry station and travel a further 12km.

Travelling back to Darwin, the windows are wound down and the wind is whipping all conversation into non-existence. The car is significantly lighter and we're contemplating our return to work the next day. We've been camping at Kakadu. It's a place most people think only consists of icons like Nourlangie Rock and Jim Jim Falls. How could they be so wrong.

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