

Topic of Capricorn

February 2007

The *Topic of Capricorn* is the official newsletter of the Capricorn Conservation Council Inc.

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Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Capricorn Conservation Council Inc., or of the editors of the Topic of Capricorn.

Co-ordinator's Corner

Hi everyone, welcome to another edition of Topic of Capricorn, CCC's official newsletter. I extend a warm welcome to our new members. Enjoy!

News on the proposed weirs on the Fitzroy

Since the last newsletter CCC has held a public meeting inviting Michael Keane from the Department of Natural Resources and Water along to discuss the need for these weirs. Thanks to all those members that came along, it was an informative night. CCC is still waiting to hear more from Mayor Margaret Strelow in relation to the weirs. We will keep you posted.

Lack of marine park zoning on the Capricorn Coast

CCC initiated a joint submission to the Inshore Fin Fish Fishery review due on the 7th of February. We managed to get all other regional conservation councils to sign the submission so hopefully we will get the outcome we want from this.

Leekes Creek on Great Keppel Island

CCC has recently been notified that Leekes Creek on Great Keppel Island that we nominated to become a Fish Habitat Area (FHA) has been denied. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries have rejected the proposal due to the Creek not meeting their guidelines. So it is a bit of a shame, however CCC is still fighting

to have the largest part of Great Keppel turned into a conservation park (Lot 7 on Plan SP129154).

I strongly recommend that anyone else who also feels that Great Keppel should remain largely undeveloped write to either:

CEO- Peter Franks
Livingstone Shire Council
PO Box 600, Yeppoon, Qld
4703 OR

Paul Hoolihan MP
Shop 3, Evia Building
3 Normanby Street
Yeppoon 4703
Ph: (07) 4939 5732
Fax: (07) 4939 5736

PEOPLE POWER

Aquarium Fish in the Keppel's

CCC has recently been notified from members of regarding concern for the management of aquarium

fish and anemone stocks in the Keppel region. We were alarmed to discover that there had been no baseline stock assessments in spite of recommendations made by the Department of Environment and Heritage 'Assessment of the Queensland Marine Aquarium Fishery' (October 2005). The only data available for the assessment of the sustainability of the industry are the fishery logbooks in spite of DEH recommending that a sustainable harvest fishery should have both fisheries dependant and independent data.

There have been three major bleaching events in the Keppel region in the past 7 years. The first two in 1999 and 2002 resulted in moderate to severe bleaching, however the coral communities recovered with little apparent mortality. The third and most recent bleaching event in the summer of 2006 however, resulted in over 40% hard coral mortality and a smaller bleaching in November just before the annual mass spawning of the hard corals decimated the reef flats.

We need all the help we can get on this one, use the information above and send a letter to:

Dr Brigid Kerrigan Manager
Reef Line & Harvest
Fisheries
Fisheries Resource
Management

Department of Primary
Industries & Fisheries
80 Ann Street
Brisbane Q. 4001

Rockhampton Urban Waterways Initiative

CCC, greening Australia and Rockhampton city Council are working together to create a project that will enhance and beautify our urban creeks. Some of the work that will be carried out will include water monitoring, weed control, revegetation and conducting flora and fauna studies. While this project is still being arranged, CCC will serve on the strategic sub planning group as well as being the representative for the community. Other groups that will be involved are:

Great Barrier Reef Marine
Park Authority

Fitzroy Basin Association

Fitzroy Basin Elders

Fitzroy River and Coastal
Catchments

Natural Resources and
Water

Various Community Groups

Will keep you posted on how
this comes along.

Clean Up Australia Day March 4th 2007

CCC is doing our very own
clean up this year. Please
come along and help clean
up our beautiful country.

Where- Meet at CCC, 1
Livermore Street, behind
Haigh Park. We are cleaning
Canning Street.

Time- 7:30am- 9:00am

Bring- Wear sturdy shoes,
water, hat, sunscreen.

CCC will provide volunteers
with clean up bags and
gloves.

Hope to see some of you
there!

Vegetation Clearing

Midnight on 31 December
2006 saw the end of
broadscale tree clearing for
agriculture in Qld, as the two-
year phase out legislated in
2004 concluded.

CCC congratulates the Qld
government on this landmark
achievement, which will
greatly assist Australia in
attempting to meet our non-
binding Kyoto Protocol
greenhouse gas emission
target. However, CCC would
like to see the remaining
loopholes in the legislation
closed: better protection for
urban vegetation, protection
for regrowth vegetation with
important habitat or riparian
function, and declarations of
areas of high nature
conservation value.

Home Garden Waterwise Rebate Scheme

On 18 December 2006, the
Queensland Government
announced a new \$5million
Home Garden WaterWise
Rebate Scheme that
encourages more home
gardeners to buy water

efficient plants and garden products.

“The Queensland Government will provide the one-off 50% rebate on the cost of approved plants and garden products, up to a \$50 maximum. For example, people buying \$40 of approved garden products will receive a \$20 rebate. To get the full \$50 rebate, they must spend \$100 or more. Rebates will be available on approved purchases from 18 December 2006 until December 2008, or until the funding runs out.”

For More Information call the QLD Government Hotline on 1800 243 585.

The Value of an Old Growth Tree

This document assesses the value of a hollow bearing tree for its hollow bearing characteristics only; it does not take into account such values as: food source to wildlife, nesting opportunities for nest building birds, ground stabilization, water runoff mitigation, carbon dioxide consumption, shade value, historic or aesthetic value.

A 10 year old tree can support one small nest box such as those used by lorikeets, micro bats or sugar/squirrel gliders provided that the habitat is either intact or has been rehabilitated. For each subsequent 10 years of growth another nest box may be added to the tree.

In the wild it is reasonable to assume that a two hundred year old tree could have in excess of 20 hollows of various sizes it would be feasible therefore to suppose that one hollow would be added for each 10 years of life.

However, if you had to replace this hollow tree with recruits without hollows (at least for the first 200 years of life) then you would need to hang a single box in 20 replacement trees for a period of at least 200 years. Boxes would need to be replaced every 10 years to ensure quality of the hollow habitat.

The formula:

If the approximate age of the tree is 200 years then we consider it to be equivalent to 20 nest boxes at an average price of \$100/box = \$2000.00.

Each nest box will need to be replaced every 10 years.

If we plant the same species of tree in the same area given correct growing conditions we can expect that in 200 - 300 years the nest boxes will be replaced by natural hollows** or if we leave the tree in place it will live for at least another 300 years.

Average Price of Installed nest box (\$100) x (approximate age of tree ÷ 10) x number of years until new tree replaces old one or tree will live (say 300) @2% inflation per annum.

Therefore the value of the tree in terms of nest box replacement is \$2,838,515.77 over a life of 300 years!

For more information visit:

<http://www.hollowloghomes.net/gpage4.html>

Livestock Impacts on the Environment

The challenge is to reconcile two demands: for animal food products and environmental services...

A new report from Food and Agricultural Organisation says livestock production contributes to the world's most pressing environmental problems, including global warming, land degradation, air and water pollution, and loss of biodiversity. Using a methodology that considers the entire commodity chain, it estimates that livestock are responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, a bigger share than that of transport. However, the report says, the livestock sector's potential contribution to solving environmental problems is equally large, and major improvements could be achieved at reasonable cost.

Greater efficiency in use of resources will be "the key to retracting livestock's long shadow". Although a host of effective technical options - for resource management, crop and livestock production, and post harvest

reduction of losses - are available (see box below), current prices of land, water and feed resources used for livestock production do not reflect true scarcities, creating distortions that provide no incentive for efficient resource use. "This leads to the overuse of the resources and to major inefficiencies in the production process," FAO says. "Future policies to protect the environment will therefore have to introduce adequate market pricing for the main inputs."

Action on many fronts

The FAO report recommends a range of measures to mitigate livestock's threats to the environment:

- ▶ Land degradation: Restore damaged land through soil conservation, silvopastoralism, better management of grazing systems and protection of sensitive areas.
- ▶ Greenhouse gas emissions: Sustainable intensification of livestock and feed crop production to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from deforestation and pasture degradation, improved animal nutrition and manure management to cut methane and nitrogen emissions.
- ▶ Water pollution: Better management of animal waste in industrial production units, better diets to improve nutrient absorption, improved manure management and better use of processed manure on croplands.

▶ Biodiversity loss: As well as implementing the measures above, improve protection of wild areas, maintain connectivity among protected areas, and integrate livestock production and producers into landscape management.

For More Information Visit:

<http://www.fao.org/ag/magazine/0612sp1.htm>

Website of the Month

More than 60 wildlife species have been identified in Australia as occasional or regular victims of barbed wire fences. Each year thousands of these animals face a cruel death or permanent disability from entanglement. Many of the survivors are euthanased as they are unreleasable. Bats, gliders and cranes are especially at risk. Many people, especially wildlife carers and concerned fence-owners, have sought local solutions to the problem but known the issues were too big to tackle alone. Finally there is an opportunity to make a difference. Tolga Bat Hospital received a grant in September 2006 from the Threatened Species Network of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). With this funding assured, other organizations were approached to boost the support base and breadth of the project. To date (February 07), our co-sponsors are Bat Conservation International, Australian Ethical Investments, and the RSPCA.

If you would like to help support this worthy project contact Jenny or Carol on 07 4091 2683.

For More Information Visit:

<http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/>

Judge says "relax, global warming isn't real"

Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) and the Mackay Conservation Group (MCG) are concerned with the lack of any consideration of greenhouse gas emissions inevitably arising from the proposed Wollombi coal mine inland from Mackay. So QCC and MCG took mining giant Xstrata to Queensland's Land and Resources Tribunal. The case has been heard and findings recently handed down.

The conservationists argued that the mine must bear some responsibility for the CO2 emissions resulting from their customers burning the coal. QCC and MCG sought conditions on the coal mine requiring Xstrata to balance the release of greenhouse gases by planting trees or other actions that 'sequester' carbon, to keep an equivalent amount of CO2 out of the atmosphere.

Since the release of the acclaimed Stern Report into the economics of climate change and the global run of Al Gore's film An Inconvenient Truth, political opinion appears to be

catching up with public opinion on the human causes of climate change. Scientific certainty has been greatly improved with the release in early February, of the fourth assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The fourth assessment demonstrates unanimous agreement with what most climatologists have been saying for years: that the world is warming fast and that humans are almost certainly to blame. Vocal climate sceptics (mostly economists, CEOs and industry lobbyists) critical of the scientific consensus are finally on the back foot.

Against this background it is extraordinary to discover that in the recent finding by P. Koppenol, (President of Land & Resources Tribunal) that human releases of CO₂ do not contribute to global warming, as any claim of human involvement is merely, "an assumption concerning the cause and effect of global warming. In the present case, I am not satisfied that that assumption (relevantly, a demonstrated causal link between this mine's GHG emissions and any discernable harm...) has been shown to be valid."

In support of this viewpoint Kopponol relies on a two part article written in "World Economics" and especially the standard criticism by Bob Carter of JCU. Bob Carter has been a climate sceptic for years and is becoming

more isolated with every new scientific finding. Carter relies on evidence of past climate variability to debunk the role of atmospheric CO₂ and the role of people. Notably Carter does not present any new analysis of data nor does he submit his opinions to scientific journals for peer review.

As James P.M. Syvitski (Director, INSTAAR, Boulder USA) says when pointing out that Carter is expressing opinions and not the results of painstaking scientific enquiry: "I know Bob Carter and he is no climate-change expert. All scientists have opinions, but opinions carry little weight in science. When a scientist accumulates data from experiments, observations, and surveys, he or she writes a peer-reviewed paper and submits it to a respected technical journal."

It is unbelievable in this day and age that Bob Carter's disproved attempts to show global warming isn't real persuades a judge that thousands of scientists are wrong.

For further information on what the IPCC are saying and the more alarming findings they haven't reported see Fred Pearce's article in NewScientist 9 Feb 2007

Living with Wildlife

CCC is hosting another presentation, this time on living with urban wildlife.

There will be a live snake show on the night as well as deep discussions on how and why we need to do all we can for our urban wildlife. Presenters include Wil Kemp, Susan Cunningham and Jason Countryman.

It is being held at 6pm on the 28th of February at CCC. Please bring along a friend.

Beattie resurrects plan to divert northern rivers

The Queensland Government has resurrected the 70-year-old Bradfield water plan, challenging the Commonwealth to "think outside the box" to fix the Murray-Darling river system.

Premier Peter Beattie says it is better to find more water than to cut back on current supplies.

The Bradfield Scheme is a famous old attempt to irrigate inland Qld by diverting rivers from the north. "The reason why the old Bradfield Scheme wasn't a goer in the past is because it was too expensive," Mr Beattie said.

However geographers, meteorologists and water resource experts say the scheme is flawed. Evaporation and transmission losses would see most of the water wasted. If you object to this ridiculous idea, please write to:

Premier Peter Beattie
PO Box 15185 CITY
EASTQLD,4002
Email premiers@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Yes!

I would like to join / renew my Capricorn Conservation Council Membership

I want to help The Capricorn Conservation Council attain its goals

- ◆ To make every effort to ensure the land, waters and atmosphere of the region are not misused by any person or organisation
- ◆ To promote the search for a socially and ecologically acceptable balance between population, resource use, economics, technology and lifestyle within the region and
- ◆ To promote and teach the principles and values of conservation in schools, other institutions of learning and the general community

ABN: 14 846 165 788

Incorporation No: IA4 922

Membership Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Please circle: Non-wage earner **\$5** Individual **\$10**
 Family/Group **\$15** Corporate members **\$50**

CCC Membership is due for renewal each year by the 30th of June

RECEIVED BY _____

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

I/ we would like to make a one off donation of \$ _____
Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible

I REQUIRE A RECEIPT

I DO NOT REQUIRE A RECEIPT

Please Return to:

Capricorn Conservation Council Inc.
PO Box 4011
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

Ph (07) 4927 8644
Fax (07) 4927 8279
Email ccc@cqnet.com.au

OR

Call in to "The Hut" Livermore Street "Haigh Park" Rockhampton
The Coordinator is at the Hut most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9am - 5pm