

KATOOMBA & DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 20. * APRIL 1975.....Price 10¢.



Patron Mr Allen A Strom
Advisor in Conservation
Department of Education N.S.W.

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R.O. Slatyer, Prof. Biology,
A.N.U.
Australian Natural History-
December 1970.

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At the May meeting, we will have the privilege of hearing Mr Allen Strom, our Patron. His subject: "The Local Society in the Conservation Programme of the State".

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Members of this Committee are still busy. The latest move has been to apply to the Australian Government for a grant to carry out a study on the Blue Mountains. We would hope by this to establish that this is an area of a special nature, namely a natural fresh-air and recreation area and should be considered as such in the determination of future population.

Also, submissions have been prepared and sent to.....
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2) Blue Mountains City Council re the Kings Tableland and "Deer Park"; 3) The Minister for Lands and Forests (Hon. M.A. Morris) regarding Kings Tableland with its heathland and ancient Aboriginal site; and 4) The Interim Committee on the National Estate, on lands we consider should be acquired.

On the latter, Nancy Douglass travelled to Sydney to attend a meeting called by that Committee. Three trips have been made to Sydney by other Committee members to consult with Urban Systems, Peter Princes of the National Parks Association, and Dr Harry Recher, Chief Ecologist of the Australian Museum.

Two of our Committee attend the Public Gallery at B.M.C.C. on Tuesday evenings when Council meets. Would any other member be interested in helping by attending the Gallery for some of these meetings and reporting to our Committee on matters of environmental concern. B.M.C.C. meets 6th...

This took place in March, and most of the previous office-bearers were re-elected. May we again point out the valuable work volunteered by those manning the Conservation Hut on weekends and holidays. More volunteers will always be welcomed. Contact Mrs. Griffith (Ph.57-1597) if you would like to put in a day. You can also contact the Secretary (Kevin Smith, Ph.82-2594), preferably Friday afternoon or evening, or President Bob Douglass, (Phone 82-2081) for information about what is going on.

ECOLOGY FOR EVERYONE

Out of our concern for the quality of the environment, many related issues arise. One of these is the packaging industry. Take paper for example. Australians pay millions of dollars every year simply to dispose of paper used for no other purpose than for wrapping the food and other articles they use. In practical terms, we also lose some of our natural heritage every year, bit by bit, as wood is needed to make paper. Ideally more than one tree should be planted for every one taken, but this is not being done, and slowly, but surely, we are losing our native forest areas. What can we do? One avenue which individuals can follow is to stop buying packaged goods where possible, and buy bulk where possible. (Every little bit helps). To this end I am interested in starting a co-operative effort. I visit that unpleasant metropolis every week, and it has occurred to me that this could be put to good advantage. I regularly buy those foods in bulk quantities which do not quickly perish -- such items as dried fruits, nuts (with or without shell), sugar, flour and so on. More perishable foods could possibly be added for bulk buying if some of you are interested. You may also find your grocery bill a bit lower. If you are interested, then do not hesitate to call me.

----- Kevin Smith.

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Perhaps in time we shall see Ben on ABC Television.

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Or do humans often behave like birds? Maybe both have a common heritage of basic behaviour patterns, which they learn to modify according to life-style, intelligence and ideals?

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The new Minister for Lands and Forests, Mr. Morris, accepted the State Pollution Control Commission's recommendations against Forestry Commission proposals to clear 16,000 acres of virgin forest for a pine plantation.

Referring to the sustained campaign to save the Plateau, Mr. Mile Dunphy said 'it had taken five years of work by about a hundred conservation groups and over one thousand individuals.

Our Society played its part, and also many of our members as individuals. Outstanding among these were Martin and Betty Kaub, who persistently pressed the issues during the five years of the campaign.

Fine Stand by B.M.C.C

The attitude of the Blue Mountains City Council was most encouraging. In a letter to the State Pollution Control Commission, Council specifically supported the submission sent by our Society and added its own submission calling for "complete abandonment of the development proposals"

"The Boyd Plateau being contiguous with the Southern extension of Narrow Neck Peninsula and with the Wild Dog Mountains area, the whole is an integral part of the Blue Mountains Region", the BMCC submission said, and "the Council is of the view that any disturbance of existing 'wilderness' areas is to be strenuously avoided".

Mr Morris has indicated that he is in favour of the disputed area of the Plateau being added to the Kananra-Boyd National Park. (At present it is part of the Kananra State Forest.) Conservationists will continue to press for this--so that the Plateau in its entirety will be within the land system to which it naturally belongs and safe for posterity.



NOTES ON WATER POLLUTION

The Planning Committee has received from Miss Mary Collins, a biologist who recently joined our Society, a most useful study on water pollution. These notes consist of one month's personal research on the problem of water control.....dealing mainly with the problem of water pollution and its relation to the Australian people," Miss Collins writes.

The notes describe the problem, give types of water pollution, their source and effect, give a useful summary of the Australian apathy to it, make concrete proposals towards a comprehensive model of water control and end with a useful list of reference works.

The Planning Committee will undoubtedly find them most useful in preparing submissions and a second copy is being made to be available to members through our library. Thank you Mary Collins

RAVENS AND THEIR RELATIVES

A reader sends some interesting notes about ravens in Britain! An ancient tradition states that Britain will withstand all the assaults of her foes as long as a raven remains in the ancient Tower of London. Towards the end of the war the numbers had been reduced to three birds, and great concern was felt for the future of the realm. There are now eight ravens at the Tower, and the numbers are no longer permitted to decline, says our reader.

Ravens are generally regarded in literature as birds of ill-omen, and even our informant describes them as "very black and nasty looking". However, have a look at one of our Australian ravens in the sunshine, with its gleaming iridescent plumage and dignified bearing. Undoubtedly beautiful.

Ravens belong to the family Corvidae, which are usually regarded by ornithologists as the most advanced in evolution, the most intelligent and the most adaptable of all birds.

By their large size ravens are easily distinguished from other British corvids, the rook, carrion crow, hooded crow and jackdaw. Not so, however, the five Australian species, which are considered the most difficult of all passerine birds to identify in the field--so much so, in fact, that it is only within the last ten years that two hitherto unsuspected species have been described--the Little Crow and the Little Raven.

All Australian corvids are black, all adults have white eyes, and the size differences are not sufficient to be noticeable in the field. Probably the Australian Raven, which is the common one in the Blue Mountains, is the only species recognisable in the field, because of its long-throat hackles. The Forest Raven is the only corvid in Tasmania and is larger than the Little Raven, whose range is South East Australia. The ravens have grey bases to the feathers, the crows white. The Australian Crow and the Little Crow inhabit the more arid areas. There are differences in the calls of the five species.

A Pair of ravens have a territory in the Katoomba Falls area. They raised three young this season from a nest in a coachwood tree. Their solicitude for their young is remarkable. One bird is always on guard near the nest while the other gets food. If you enter the nest territory, you are followed by a parent bird until you leave.

EDITOR GRAHAM ALCORN BOX 39 BLACKHEATH N.S.W. 2785.

Please send your contributions for our next issue now, double spaced please. It is easier to read and for the Editor to make remarks on.

B E E A L Y

This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in January 2021 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

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