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# KALORI

March 1971.



*Ricinocarpus pinifolius*

Lower Blue Mountains

Wildlife

Conservation Society



"Man is confronted with the difficult and complex ecological problem of finding out how he can fit into his environment so that it will not deteriorate but continue to provide what he needs."

R.G.Downes.

Kalori is published monthly by and for the members of the Lower Blue Mountains Wildlife Conservation Society.

The aims of the Society are, briefly, to:-

1. Educate the public and civic leadership towards a better understanding of environmental conservation.
2. Work for the dedication of areas of natural environment and for the maintenance of their values in perpetuity.
3. Carry out research into the distribution and population of wildlife in the Blue Mountains.

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Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month in the Civic Centre, Springwood, at 8.00 PM.

NEXT MEETING -- 12th.MARCH



## THE CONSERVATION SCENE

AT a recent meeting of supporters, the Colong Committee was re-elected as stood, with the addition of three of our local conservationists - Mick Dark, of this Society, and Mr. and Mrs. Martin Kaub, of Katoomba and Districts W.C.S. Congratulations to all three.

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The Colong Committee came out strongly anti-Liberal during the recent elections. Strong propaganda was issued, with emphasis on electorates with a shaky Liberal member. Zealous local supporters made a wee boo-boo re a certain "- unsigned, unauthorised document -".

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In a case currently before a Mining Warden's Court, Southern Portland Cement Co. is being accused of illegally dumping overburden from their Marulan leases into Barbers Creek near Bungonia Gorge. Local objectors have listed 12 points against the continued dumping, one of which is, the certainty of siltation of the Shoalhaven River, of which Barbers Creek is a tributary.

Dumping has been going on for two years, in an area which is a public reserve. In a statement to the Court, a Company official blithely admitted breaking the law, and intimated that another 100,000,000 tons is scheduled to be dumped.

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The Colong Committee is currently having a drive for shareholders in A.P.C.M.(Aust)Ltd. For \$3.00 you will receive one share, and the Colong Bulletin. The share will earn six (6) cents a year in dividends and the Bulletin will keep you in touch with the latest events in the campaign. If there is no application form with this issue of Kalori, write and send \$3.00 to Mrs. M.Eden, c/o Colong Committee, 18 Argyle Street, Sydney. 2000.

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The Wildlife Preservation Council is holding in the Sydney Lower Town Hall from Monday August 16 to Sunday August 22 a 'Wildlife Show'. A similar show held two years ago was attended by 55,000 people. We are looking at the possibility of taking some space at the Show.

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The official address of the Society is now P.O. Box 58, Springwood, 2777.

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Issue No.1 (1971) of the Australian Mining Industry Council's Environmental Quality Bulletin has arrived. Some of the news is:-

- The Environmental Protection Agency of the U.S.A. has proposed national air quality standards for six common classes of air pollution, which will apply to all areas of the U.S.A.
- The Prime Minister of New Zealand has announced the establishment of an Environmental Council.
- The President of the West Australian Chamber of Mines has publicly suggested that the Government should use some of its royalties from mining for environmental restoration and a research fund. The President, who is Executive Director of Western Mining Corp., said that the 1970/71 royalties would be \$24,600,000. This benefits the community because the money is being spent on services within the State. However, it would be appropriate if the Government accepted more responsibility for restoration of the environment around abandoned mine. (In other words, the mining companies paid the people of W.A. \$24,600,000 for their irreplaceable resources, and want the people to clean up the miner's mess.)
- BHP has spent \$30,000,000 in the last ten years at its major plants in N.S.W. on projects which did not increase productivity, but which did reduce nuisance emissions.
- The Australian Mining Industry Council will hold a seminar on "Progress - Mining and Environment" in April. If you wish to attend, rush your \$15.00 registration fee before March 12th.

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On 27th. March we are holding a barbecue with a dual purpose. Mainly we want to raise \$50 (see the 'purple peril' handbill) and secondly we want to get to know the members of this Society and the members of other Societies.

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At the last Committee meeting we decided to look at the possibility of opening an education/visitors/meeting centre abutting on the National Park. The best location is one where people already enter the Park, where land is available, not too near other Centres. Two sites suggest themselves - both at the entrance of Sassafras Gully. Some of us went to inspect a site in Yondel Avenue on Sunday 28th.

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Have you noticed that the Lapstone Necklace is being painted green? A typical reaction to protest - don't hire an ecologist to advise you, hire an advertising agency to baffle the people, don't treat the symptoms, treat the image.

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## INSTANT BIRDLIFE

Prospective purchasers of land at Leonay and Emu Heights Estates are assured of an abundance of birdlife "already on the site". However, variety will be limited, and monopoly will be held by the urbanised feral pigeon, the adaptable bird that is loved and fed by old ladies and children in city parks, conspired against by architects and pest exterminators, deplored by ecologists and city sightseers, and hated by window cleaners and sculptors.

These pigeons are, or are descendants of, domestic and racing pigeons that have escaped their pigeon houses and, like Fanny Hill, taken to a life on the streets.

In the Western Suburbs the birds along the western railway line have found easy pickings in the grain that falls from Sydney-bound wheat trucks. They are now to be found in considerable numbers as far as Lapstone. I counted one flock of fifty and three more flocks of between twenty and thirty birds between Lapstone and Emu Heights, with a larger flock of about a hundred at Emu Plains. In this article, I am concerned only with pigeons outside townships proper, in other words, "those that have taken to the bush".

The wild ancestor of all domestic pigeons is the Rock Pigeon or Rock Dove, which in its natural state nests on ledges in caves and under rock overhangs in mountainous areas and on sea cliffs throughout its range. Our street pigeons have apparently adapted to such an extent that they rely solely on man-made structures as nest sites. A reversion to primitive habits by pigeons in the Blue Mountains where ancestral nesting areas are abundant could have drastic consequences.

Perhaps even a re-writing of tourist brochures, to include such phrases as: "the whitewashed Three Sisters" or "the streaked and spotted beauty of Kanangra Walls", and "Don't look up at Perrys Lookdown".

Another disturbing aspect of the pigeon menace is the drastic measures taken by exterminators to rid buildings of these persistent pests. A substance is in use which, according to the sales jargon, when spread on pigeons roosting sites, will cause nervous distress to the birds, which then proceed to fly around in circles, refusing to roost, and will eventually leave the area. The first part of this appears to be literally true; the birds, obviously distressed, being observed flying in circles. The second stage, from personal experience, is



somewhat different from the harmless picture painted by the salesmen. Far from leaving the area, pigeons with their feet and underparts smeared with the greasy substance are inevitably found dead not far from their roosting sites within two or three days of its application.

Now pigeons are notoriously hard to poison, and it is a fact that wild fruit pigeons can consume with impunity fruits and berries that would have disastrous effects on the human interior. Yet here we are blithely be-smirching our rooftops and gables with a substance which can be absorbed through the feet of birds, causing them nervous distress and a twitching death in a couple of days.

When I naively asked the operator what the substance was, I was patronisingly told, "Oh, it's just ordinary chassis grease with a chemical in it." I noticed that the operator, unlike the pigeons, prudently kept his boots on.

The question remains - how do we rid our country of these unwanted assisted immigrants, without (a) poisoning ourselves (b) destroying other useful species?

K.King

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#### MANKIND'S INALIENABLE RIGHTS

1. The right to limit our families.
2. The right to eat.
3. The right to eat meat.
4. The right to drink pure water.
5. The right to live uncrowded.
6. The right to avoid regimentation.
7. The right to hunt and fish.
8. The right to view natural beauty.
9. The right to breathe clean air.
10. The right to silence.
11. The right to avoid pesticide poisoning.
12. The right to be free of thermonuclear wae.
13. The right to educate our children.
14. The right to have grandchildren.
15. The right to have great-grandchildren.

from 'The Environmental  
Handbook'

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## THE NILE STRIKES BACK

Of all the dams built by rich nations for poor nations hoping to grow richer that way, the one built by Soviet Russia for Egypt is in a class of its own.

The high dam of Aswan is the biggest and most expensive in the world. President Nasser spent over \$1000 million on it and changed the course of history to get it. It made his political fortunes, but spread such ecological havoc that his country may never get over it.

This isn't just Nasser's fault. There was no excuse for all the eminent international experts who did not see what was coming, since at least one did. A few weeks before ground was broken for the dam in 1960, the distinguished Egyptian hydrologist Dr. Abraham Aziz Ahmed warned the Institution of Civil Engineers in London that the dams conception was "a complete reversal of time-honoured Nile irrigation policy." To build it, he said, would be "unwise and extremely hazardous."

He was fired as soon as he got back to Cairo.

He predicted:

1. The dam, built without sluices, would trap an annual 134 million tons of Nile sediment "containing volcanic materials which produce the most fertile soil on the face of the earth." Since practically all cultivated soil in Egypt was formed and nourished by the sediment, for which no adequate man-made substitute has yet been devised, the lack of it would strike at the heart of Egyptian agriculture.
2. The silt-free water would scour the river-bed downstream, eroding the Nile's banks and undermining every barrier-dam and bridge on its 600-mile course from Aswan to the sea.
3. Evaporation, seepage and changes in underground water movements would cause such colossal losses in the lake forming behind the high dam that Egypt would almost certainly end up with less water than it had before.

Dr. Ahmed could'nt think of everything. He failed, for instance, to anticipate the decimation of marine life in the eastern Mediterranean, erosion of the delta coastline by sea currents, a rise in soil salinity threatening to put millions of acres irreversibly out of cultivation, an unnerving increase in the exhausting water-borne disease called bilharzia, a potential invasion from the Sudan of a killer-mosquito carrying the deadliest kind of malaria.



What he did predict, though, has come true with a vengeance.

Without the Nile sediment, much of Egypt's six million cultivated acres need chemical fertilizer already, as all farmland will in the next few years. A team of Egyptian soil experts has found that trace elements will also have to be added to the delt's once-inexhaustable soil. Apart from these micro and macro-nutrients, Egyptian agriculture is absorbing 2,350,000 tons of artificial fertilizers so far, and this costs up to \$100 million a year, cutting about a fifth of the average income from the yeild per acre - quite a cut for a farmer earning perhaps \$75 per year. This is a recurrent, annual expense, for eternity.

Furthermore, without the flood to flush the earth of soil salts, salinity is reaching alarming levels not only in the delta but throughout middle and upper Egypt. There is a remedy: closed underground drains can do wonders to counteract salinity and raise yeilds, and the World Bank is helping Egypt to install them on a million acres of delta land. The cost - \$147 million. To instell tile drains and the pumps to go with them in the rest of Egypt would cost well over \$1000 million.

Meanwhile, reclamation of desert land with the dams stored waters has been sharply disappointing. Although Nasser had hoped to reclaim 1,300,000 acres, still the Governments figure, he knew from soil studies done in 1965 that there was'nt half that much land to be reclaimed in all Egypt at less than astronomical expense. It is impossible to be certain of how much land has been reclaimed. But the known reclamation projects under Egyptian and foreign auspices add up to fewer than 300,000 acres. At an average cost of \$1200 an acre.

The silt itself was so invaluable to build up badly degraded desert soil that some reclamation companies dug tons of it out of the delta and trucked it to the new lands. That alone cost \$240 an acre.

On the other side of the ledger is a clear and substantial gain: the conversion of 700,000 acres from flood to canal irrigation. With double cropping that has added half again to the yearly production of these lands. Yet here too, the Nile has found a way to strike back. The fellaheen working on these converted lands were not afflicted with bilharzia before. They are now.

(From The Australian, Feb.23,1971.)

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*"If the government  
won't buy it  
Natural Areas Ltd will"*

this is a **BARBEQUE**

to raise money to buy a share in Natural Areas Ltd (\$50),  
a company formed by conservationists to buy land for possible  
addition to Myall Lakes National Park. The Park should include  
land on the western edge of the Lakes and the Company intends  
to acquire portion 100 on Violet Hill forthwith.

*You* are invited *Invited*  
*where?* in the Blue Mountains National Park  
*when?* Saturday March 27 '71 3PM  
*meet?* outside National Park gates, Glenbrook

If crossing is closed barbeque will be at an alternative site.

organized by Lower Blue Mountains Wildlife Conservation Society

*Fire and tea supplied*

to the Hon secretary

Lower Blue Mountains Wildlife Conservation Society

Box 58 PO

Springwood 2777

I/we intend to join you for the barbeque on March 27 3PM

signed \_\_\_\_\_

from: