

No More Beating About the Bush

John Sinclair

Leader Fraser Island conservation campaign for 45 years
and Fearless Leader on safaris

The thoughts and reminiscences of a “retiring” Greenie





**Almost 500 days
exploring the Kimberley
produced a fascinating
array of adventures and
experiences**



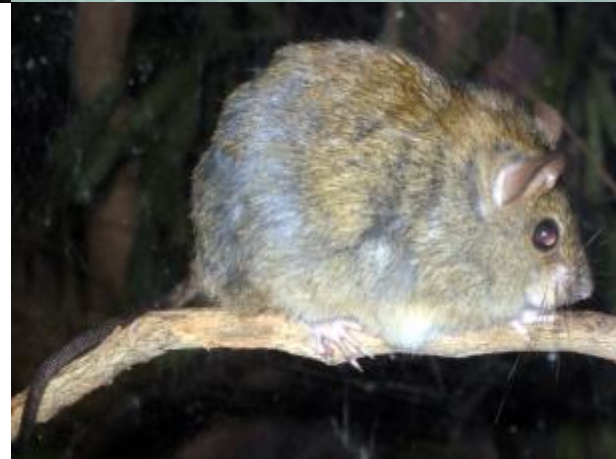


Kimberley Adventures provided the greatest challenges for our vehicles





There are always interesting wildlife discoveries to be made in Kakadu in both the wet and the dry seasons But Kakadu's wildlife is being diminished despite the protection being given.







At least some Tasmanians value their forest for their intrinsic value rather than for potential profits to be made by destroying them





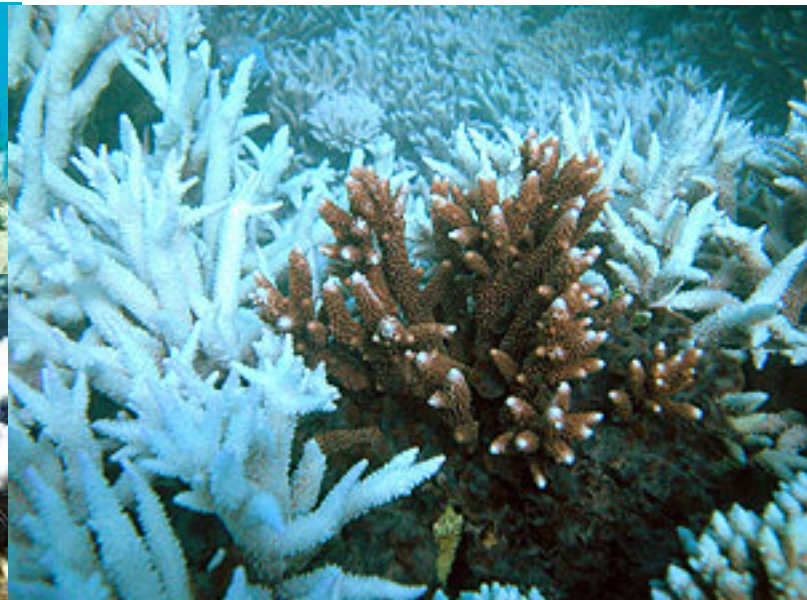
Exploring the Great Barrier Reef from its southernmost to its most northernmost extremities is an incredibly rich experience





The Great Barrier Reef, identified as one of the greatest natural wonders of the world, is suffering from:

- Industrialization, super-port developments and shipping;
- Fertilizer and sediment runoff from mainland farms;
- Coral bleaching from global warming;
- Acidification of the sea dissolving the calcium carbonate;
- Overfishing and fish disease and much more.





**Lord Howe Island another
World Heritage site — a
paradise of the South Pacific**





Lord Howe Island though is another Pacific paradise in peril:

- Cloud forests are amongst the most vulnerable ecosystems globally due to climate change.
- Many sea birds are already affected by climate change
- Rats and humans have made many species extinct;
- Weeds are a major problem;
- Impacts of past land clearing are still occurring.
- It imports all of its energy sources and exports all its rubbish





Few safaris in the world traverse as much diversity and interesting places as Outback Queensland.





In 2009 water flooded through the Channel Country. Nature's bounty was quickly harvested by stock leaving little for natural ecosystems. There was little seed produced for seed eating birds and not much even for insects. Birdsville is no longer worthy of its name.

Only days after leaving the recently flooded Channel Country in September 2009 we witnessed 16 million tonnes of Outback topsoil, worth more than any shipment of minerals pass overhead.





In 1986 a few mates went looking for some reported freshwater sharks in Queensland's Gulf Country rivers.

The rivers were depleted of sharks because they had also been depleted of freshwater crocodiles and barramundi by the local people.

This 90 kg sawfish was hauled out of a Saxby River billabong that had received no flow for more than two years prior to this catch.



Over 20 years Go Bush's
Mungo Mutawintji and
Macquarie Marshes
traversed three states





In the process I saw:

- The Murray Darling Basin withering through overgrazing, over-clearing of mulga lands and increasing soil salinity
- The Darling River was drained out. I walked across the dry riverbed at Wilcannia that had once been a busy river port.
- Without such severe erosion from overgrazing the secrets of Mungo may never have been revealed.



Murray Darling irrigation areas



Macquarie Marshes





**The Red Centre
has a spectacular array
of features and colours made
famous by Albert Namatjira. It is
so much more than just Uluru**





In the heart of Australia

- Wildlife species are disappearing
- Feral animals are invading
- Fire regimes are changing
- The land is progressively degrading





The South West of Western Australia has many stunning attractions

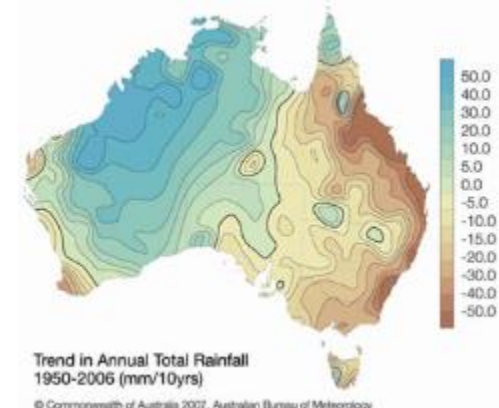






In Western Australia's South West

- Salt, foxes and many other ferals are invading and depleting the land;
- Animal species are disappearing or becoming rarer or threatened;
- Diseases like phytophthora are decimating the flora;
- Land clearing continues in very marginal country;
- The rain belt is demonstrably shifting south



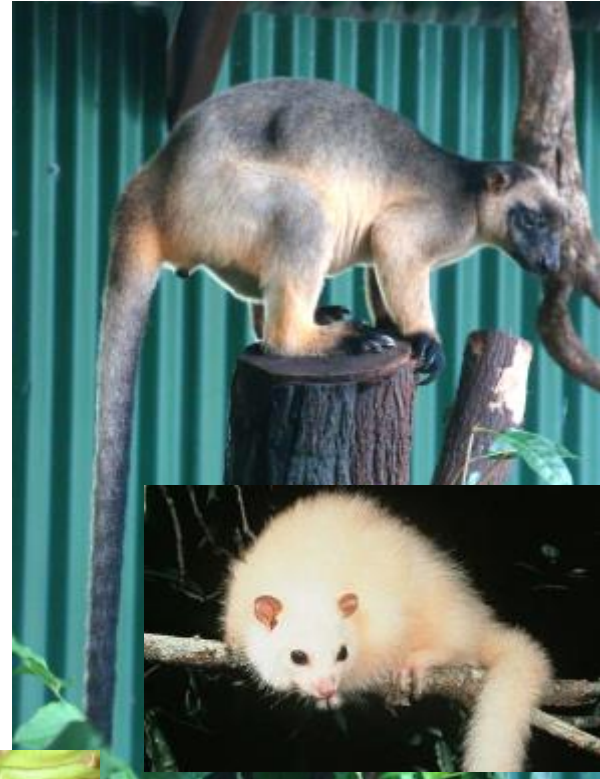


**North Queensland's
Wet Tropics World
Heritage Area is
always enthralling**



Whittling away the Wet Tropics rainforest through land clearing and logging continues to impact:

- Climate change means some wildlife species are headed for extinction
- Habitat fragmentation places other species in danger;
- More corridors through the forest is provides paths for the spread of weeds, diseases and other injurious agents.





Papua New Guinea

The Land of the Unexpected





The Sepik's Angoram market
Fish are major items traded
in Angoram and ironically
Pacu (*a species of piranha*
recently introduced there)
seemed to be more popular
than Mangrove Jack





While bashing about abroad in Thailand-Laos-Cambodia GO BUSH Safaris covered much more than just the normal tourist agendas





Just over 100 years ago Alfred Russell Wallace developed the Theory of Evolution while exploring the natural environment of the “Malay Archipelago”. So much Nature has been modified since in that region that he would never have been able to develop that theory on the basis of the observations he could make there in the 21st Century.

It numbs the senses to watch the ever-expanding urban sprawl to house an ever-growing population swallow up the agricultural land used to feed that ever more human mouths.





Fraser Island is always an exciting place to visit and there is always something new or interesting or attractive to discover there.





Prior to January 1971:

- **Fraser Island had only about 5,000 visitors annually and only a handful of people knew it or its values;**
- **Logging had been going on for just over 100 years;**
- **Sandminers had secured mining licences for about 10,000 ha in 1963 prior to the establishment of organized conservation bodies in Queensland.**

In January 1971

- **Sandminers sought to double the area of their mining leases on Fraser Island**
- **FIDO was formed and one of Australia's biggest ever environmental battles began.**





FIDO has been the principal advocate for Fraser Island for 43 years. In that time FIDO has had some successes:

- Mining has ceased 1976
- Logging has ceased 1991
- World Heritage is now recognized 1992
- A Management Plan has been in place 1994





There have been some slides backwards:

- **New diseases, e.g. Jamella and Myrtle rust**
- **Unsustainable visitation is having heavy impacts**
- **Weeds and alien species are invading**
- **The fire regime is out not right**
- **Climate change is kicking in strongly**
- **Sandblows are being rapidly colonized**
- **Sea level changes are already being felt**



Moon Point 1985



Moon Point 2011



Indian Head 1974



Indian Head 2003



Four dominant Fraser Island tree species — Blackbutt, Tallowwood, Satinay and Scribbly Guns — are at the northern limit of their range.

These comprise about half the trees in Fraser's forests



What happens to natural forests in a hotter climate?

What wildlife species will adapt to the hotter conditions on and around Fraser Island ?

No More Beating About the Bush

Environmental changes are already occurring at an alarming rate. We need to recognize that:

- The natural environment throughout the world is being either destroyed or degraded at an alarming rate;
- The climate is changing and there is little doubt that the changes are being anthropogenically accelerated;
- There is little doubt that the quality of water, of air and of our biological resources has been dramatically diminished in our lifetime and continues;
- If present consumption and exponential growth trends continue, the future of humanity on Earth looks bleak indeed;
- We are the first generation in history that will bequeath to our successors a future which is much less promising than we inherited.



**It has been a great ride so far
but sadly there can be no
more beating about the bush**
(At least on GO BUSH commercial safaris)

