

Kevin's Wilderness Journeys

KEVIN'S WALK ON THE WILDSIDE



ISSUE 11: APRIL 2005

Welcome to the 11th issue of 'Kevin's Walk on the Wildside,' an ezine with a focus on wilderness in Australia, but also areas throughout the world. Having had a quick look at the web site it has become obvious to me that issue 10 didn't make it to the site - so I guess there are two issues being put up on the web on this occasion. I'm not really sure how I managed that (or didn't manage it as the case may be).

In this issue I have a bit of a look at keeping 'Yabbies' as pets. I'm not so much into the 'normal' pets such as cats (environmental pests), dogs and goldfish. Give me something of an alternative pet type, like the Yabby for example. I'm also keen on keeping frogs and reptiles as pets as well, though you need a license for these and can only acquire your specimens from registered breeders. How much more interesting to set up a small 'ecosystem' and watch the antics of some actual wildlife - especially those that are native!

Anyone have any interesting native pets out there? I'd love to hear from you and share your experiences through the ezine.

My view? Well, isn't it one way that we can ensure the long term survival of Australia's wildlife, especially given that escaped pets are causing such havoc to it? Well, it's worth a thought if nothing else.

If you have any feedback on the site please let me know about it. All you have to do is send an email to me at the address below:

nrbcpastorkev@yahoo.com.au

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1. KEVIN'S WILDERNESS BLOG:

I have a blog now on the site - a place for leaving any thoughts or comments concerning preparations for future trips, wilderness news, etc. Just go to the site's front page and click on the link to the blog. It really is as simple as that.

This will be where I begin to leave thoughts about upcoming trips, unless they happen suddenly like the last few that I have taken. What I will add to the Blog in days to come will be the actual journey journal entries

that I wrote on my last trip - not they are particularly exciting or revealing. This only covers July 2-8, 2004 - or the period of my last trip. The two trips prior to that I had forgotten to write in my journal (only a new thing for me you see). Hopefully it will become more interesting with future trips.

Any of my readers have an online Blog or Journal that records their trips and experiences? If you have, send me an email and let me know. I'll add a link to it on the site, as well as have a look at it myself.

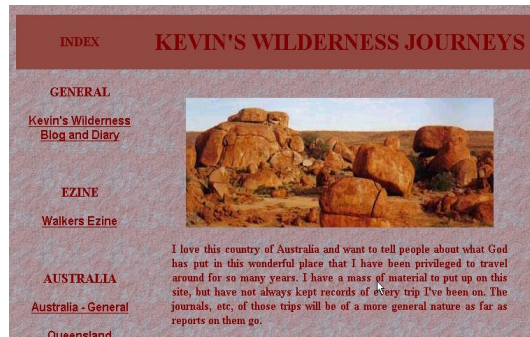
2. KEVIN'S WILDERNESS JOURNEYS: Web Site

Not a lot has happened on the web site in recent times. I have been busy updating my family history site, getting all the photos easily accessed from the site without having to register at a photo hosting site to do so.

Still, I have some plans for the coming weeks including the beginning of content relating to other wild places throughout the world.

Visit the web site at:

<http://wilderness.esmartweb.com/index.html>



3. YABBIES AS PETS

Interested in some stranger than usual pets? Why not try the 'Yabby?' 'What is a Yabby?,' I hear our American friends ask. You would have thought with Roy and H. G. Nelson instructing the Yanks on all things Australian they would know the answer to that by now (Yes, I can hear them now asking who Roy and H. G. are)!

Yabby is the Australian common name for Australian freshwater crayfish. We actually have about 100 species of freshwater crayfish Down Under, with the name Yabby referring specifically to the *Cherax destructor* species of Australian freshwater crayfish which are naturally found in the eastern states of Australia. Yabbies typically grow to about 130mm (about 5 inches), though some will grow to about 200-250mm. Depending on the colour of the water they are found in, Yabbies can be brown, dark green, bluish and even white.

Why keep Yabbies as pets? Well apart from being near indestructible, tolerating the poorest of water conditions in the wild and needing little care in captivity apart from the occasional feed, they can be quite interesting creatures to observe. I always like to watch freshwater crayfish in the wild when I come across them in mountain streams or slow running freshwater creeks. Mind you we also found a large number of them in a sedimentation pit we were cleaning out at work as well, both adults and immature specimens. Being territorial and burrowers, as well as extremely easy to breed, they make great specimens for a freshwater aquatic tank.

Yabbies will destroy all your efforts to grow plants and if you keep fish with them they will eat the fish. They will also find any possible way to climb out of their tank, so a lid is pretty much a necessity.

Yabbies prefer vegetative meals, so you can simply feed them the occasional vegetable peeling (organically grown), thin slice of vegetable (potato, pumpkin or carrot) and keep some old leaf litter in the tank as well. They also should have a shelter in the form of a small hollow log, which actually doubles as something for

them to climb. Adding to the interest level is that they will moult from time to time, usually once a year in adults.

For more information visit:

<http://www.blueyabby.com/TheYabby.htm>

<http://www.abc.net.au/creaturefeatures/facts/yabby.htm>

4. Wilderness News

Australia: New South Wales - Bush Clearing Halted?

Australia is facing a massive crisis in the form of land clearing. Well over 500 000 hectares of Australian bushland is cleared every year. This places us well into the top ten land clearing countries of the world. Most of this land is cleared for agricultural and rural purposes. To put this problem a little more into perspective, what do these 500 000 hectares really represent?

These large tracts of land represent not only areas of previously non-utilised bushland, but also all of the native animal and bird species that rely on these areas for survival. In other words, millions of native animals and birds die each year as a result of land clearing as important habitat and feeding grounds are lost to them forever - driving more species to extinction or the brink of extinction in Australia. It is thought that some 100 million reptiles are lost every year as a result of land clearing! How can Australia continue to sustain these losses?

Further still a closer look at these terrible practices reveal that salinity is growing at ever increasing rates as a direct result of land clearing and the rising water table. The more land that is cleared, the more land that is lost to agriculture through environmental problems caused by the land clearing.

Australia: Queensland - Great Barrier Reef Still Under Threat

The Great Barrier Reef is surely one of the greatest natural wonders of the world - yet this has not stopped the Australian government searching for oil in it's pristine waters. Yet this is only one of many threats facing The Great Barrier Reef.

The Reef is also threatened by mud - yes mud! With ever increasing land clearing tons of sediment are being washed into the reef region. Coupled with this problem is that of declining water quality draining into the reef that is causing real problems for the corals.

All these problems are but the tip of the iceberg, with global warming, mining, the Crown of Thorns Starfish plague, etc. The reef is seriously under threat with ever increasing pressure being applied to it. How long can it hold out to all of this?

Global: Kyoto - What Happens Now?

If you

Asia: Tsunami Event and the Environment

Those

5. MY LATEST TRAVEL PLANS

Talk about becoming frustrated! I haven't been able to get away now for quite some time. I have even postponed my week's holiday due on the 17th April 2005. What is happening? I just can't get away - from work of course. So I guess the short version is that I don't have any travel plans at the moment - don't even have the time to plan any travel plans!

One area I would like to travel to in the near future, as something of a day trip or weekend trip, is the wine region of the Hunter Valley. This area is pretty much right next door to me here. I actually want to get some really good shots of some vineyards for the web site and some future pages on wineries and wines. You see, I don't mind the odd glass of wine or two. I have a great little wine cooler full of wines which I enjoy with a meal (not the whole cooler full, just the odd glass or two). So that's something I'd like to do soon.

I'm also thinking that I might look into some areas of the Hawkesbury when I actually get my week's holiday. I'd like to look more into the Old North Road and a number of national parks within the Hawkesbury region.

I do have a few larger trips beginning to ruminate in my mind, but I probably shouldn't mention those just yet - not until they become more reality than imagination anyhow.

6. OXFAM CHALLENGE NEPAL TREK: 1-14 May 2006

The latest Oxfam Challenge is to be held in Nepal, trekking through the amazing wilderness that is the Himalayas. This challenge will take place from the 1st to the 14th of May, 2006. If you want to participate in this trek you need to first pay the \$300.00 registration fee and then raise \$5000.00 to pay for the trip, as well as support the various Oxfam Community Aid Abroad projects.

For more information on Oxfam Challenge Nepal Trek visit:
<http://www.oxfam.org.au/challenge/nepal.html>

7. KEVIN' S WILDERNESS WALKERS MAIL GROUP:

Associated with Kevin' s Wilderness Journeys web site is the ' Kevin' s Wilderness Walkers Mail Group.' The mail group currently only has a few members and very little in the way of activity. One of the members (other than myself) has posted some photos in the photo album of her visits to the Colo and Wollemi wilderness area west of Sydney. Hopefully as more people join the group there will be an increase in activity.

Why join the mail group? A good question. The group gives an opportunity for those who love wilderness and the bush, especially in Australia, to share their experiences and perhaps pass on information about destinations, track conditions, etc, to other group members. By doing so there is an opportunity to assist others who are planning trips to the same area, etc. When you think about it, the opportunities for the sharing of information are limitless.

Visit the group at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Kevins_wildwalkers/

8. THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA:

The Wilderness Society of Australia is committed to the promotion, restoration and preservation of wilderness across Australia. The society is a high profile organisation which often uses techniques that

many of us perhaps don't agree with. Many of their protests could simply be described as stunts, yet you couldn't but agree that they always bring attention to the cause they are seeking to publicise.

The Wilderness Society of Australia has a great web site which provides much up to date information relating to issues facing the wild areas of Australia and then some. There is an interesting project currently underway called WildCountry, aimed at reforming Australia's approach to conservation issues across the country.

Visit The Wilderness Society online at:

<http://www.wilderness.org.au/>

Visit the WildCountry site at:

<http://www.wilderness.org.au/campaigns/wildcountry/>

9. AUSTRALIAN WORLD HERITAGE AREAS

Australia has an interesting array of world heritage areas preserving areas of great interest to travellers of varying types, especially those interested in wilderness. Over the last couple of issues we have been focusing on some of Australia's World Heritage Areas, such as Lord Howe Island (see the last issue). Kevin's Walk on the Wildside will continue to look at these areas in coming issues. It is possible however to jump ahead of the ezine and have a bit of a look at all the sites and even to have a look at others around the world (there are many of them).

There are some truly magnificent Australian World Heritage Areas including the Tasmanian Wilderness, Kakadu National Park, Shark Bay, Purnululu National Park, The Greater Blue Mountains and the Wet Tropics of Queensland.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre page on Australian sites is found at:

http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=246&id_state=9

Pick up the latest World Heritage Newsletter at:

<http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=125>

10. OTHER INTERESTING WEB SITES

Australian Wilderness Photo Gallery

<http://www.ginini.com.au/wilderness/>

David Bailey Panoramic Photography

<http://www.davidbailey.com.au/>

Geoff Murray Wilderness and Landscape Photography

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

11. SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE

If you would like to subscribe to 'Kevin's Walk on the Wild Side,' simply send an email to Kevin at **nrbepastorkev@yahoo.com.au** and let me know. If you want to unsubscribe, simply send me an email and let me know. Members of the mail group automatically get a copy of the ezine as part of the group.