

# ECA



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## President's Message

Spring and summer are the times that ecological consultants traditionally get into the field and document nature at its most bountiful. However, the period to undertake productive surveys of flora and fauna now seems to extend into autumn and, who knows with the climate

# Newsletter of the Ecological Consultants Association of NSW Inc.

changing, may become a year-round exercise.

Consequently, we all seem to have been busy during the early part of this year and the lack of production of the February newsletter has been a consequence. Hence this issue covers both the February and May editions. We always need material for the newsletter, and interesting news items, comments or articles should be sent to our esteemed editor, Gerry Swan. A strong aspect of the ECA is the networking between members, both via email and the newsletter. Questions raised and answered, information passed on and opinions expressed are all part of a healthy association and need to be fostered. The newsletter is an important part of that networking - so get writing!

Many developments have occurred since the last newsletter, particularly concerning regulatory requirements for those undertaking ecological assessment. In the future it may be necessary for persons undertaking Species Impact Statements, Assessments of Significance (8-part tests) and the recently proposed Biodiversity Certifications to

be accredited. The legislation does not make such a process compulsory (this would make it a restrictive practice), but over time it is expected that all persons undertaking such assessments will 'come on board' to ensure the legitimacy of their expertise.

Two representatives of the ECA were invited to participate in a working group to assist in the development of an accreditation process to undertake ecological assessments. We jumped at the chance, as it is important that practicing ecological consultants have some control over the proposed process. The invitation can be taken as further evidence of the increased standing of the ECA within the natural resources agencies.

Both myself (as President) and Liz Ashby (as Secretary) have attended two day-long meetings with representatives from DEC (ex-NPWS), NSW Fisheries (Department of Primary Industries), NSW Planning (part of Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources), EIANZ, Local Government and Shires Association (representing council officers) and an independent aquatic

consultant (Marcus Lincoln-Smith, The Ecology Lab).

Many aspects of the accreditation process were discussed, much of which was based upon submissions to the original discussion paper. It seems that there may be two streams of accreditation – survey accreditation and impact assessment accreditation. At present, the final development is in the hands of DEC (they have appointed an executive officer to undertake this) and it is anticipated that something will be available by the end of May, with June for comment and the final process released by October. However, never trust a timetable from a government department. We will keep you up to date as time goes on.

The membership is steadily increasing, again a sign of recognition of the ECA as a legitimate voice of professional ecological consultants. Welcome to all new members and I hope that your relationship with the association will be a profitable one. I notice that we have gained several new members from the north coast – this is good news, as there has been a lot of controversy associated with impact assessment in that part of the state. It is planned to have a conference up north in the near future, so any ideas from members about topics would be welcome (send them to the Secretary).

With winter approaching, it is time to check your surveying

gear, and repair and upgrade where necessary. You will notice a review of a new type of trap for reptiles in this newsletter. In recent years there have been many developments in survey methodology and equipment (for fauna experts think of the new Anabat recorders using a flash storage card, hair funnels etc). The survey guidelines being developed by DEC (I hope you have all read them and submitted comments, contact Catherine.Price@environment.nsw.gov.au for an electronic copy) will be the basis for future surveys – for better or worse. The amendments to the Threatened Species Conservation Act state that surveys and assessments are to be undertaken and prepared in accordance with standards approved by the Director-General of the DEC. A set of guidelines for undertaking aquatic surveys is being prepared by NSW Fisheries. Ecological consulting is a dynamic profession, and it is important that we keep up with all advancements (hence the call for submissions to the newsletter). With the focus on targeting threatened species, techniques and equipment are becoming more and more sophisticated, no longer can one survey an area with a shot gun and rat traps.

All the best for rest of 2005, I hope you have a peaceful (but profitable) winter.

*Martin Denny*

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## ECA Office Bearers 2005

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## ECA Constitutional and AGM changes

### 1.0 Preamble

All members will soon be asked to vote on a number of Constitutional changes.

The Executive and the Council have already endorsed almost all of these changes. But we require a Special Resolution (75% majority of the membership) to pass these as they are changes to the Association's Constitution. This will have to be done by a postal vote via e-mail (as it is unlikely that we will be able to get the membership together in one place for this purpose).

The changes are as follows:

### 2.0 Limited Tenure of Executive and Council

Council has supported these additions. They are there to encourage forward planning for electing the Executive and Council. They are designed to share the burden of

governance of the Association among all the members of the Association. They involve 2 additions to Rule 13.

### 13. Constitution and Membership

(1).....

to

(5).....

(6) A member may be appointed to a particular office-bearer position for no more than 3 (three) consecutive years.

(7) A member may be appointed as a Councillor for no more than 6 (six) consecutive years.

Almost all modern vibrant societies have such rules to ensure that they are no longer burdened by "the right to rule" attitudes or "ownership" of the society by one or a selective few members of the society. These rules will ensure that new energy and ideas will continue to flow into the governance of the ECA and that it is not run by only a few "old men and women".

For this reason, whether or not this becomes part of our Constitution, I will not be standing again as your 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President the next time around. Notwithstanding that this rule will not be retrospective, it is my 3<sup>rd</sup>

consecutive year in this particular executive position.

I urge all members to support this resolution.

### 3.0 Special Admission

This Council has NOT endorsed this addition. It has been deferred repeatedly each time this has been presented for discussion.

There is a real need to have a discretionary power to admit non-graduates where such individuals clearly and rightly deserve to be in our ranks. Simply bending the Association's graduate requirement rule to allow non-graduates to be admitted (as is the current practice) as full-practising members just diminishes our Association's standing – unless, it can be clearly shown that such individuals deserve (and have earned) such a level of recognition.

#### 11a Special Admission

The ECA may admit, with the recommendation and advice of the membership committee, as a full practising member a non-graduate by ordinary resolution at a general meeting, notwithstanding rule 2 (1) (c).

I am mindful that some graduate members will not support this change as they are mistakenly thinking that it will open the floodgate for

non-graduates to be admitted. This is far from the case!

I urge members to support this change so that we can legally admit deserving individuals to our ranks and not rely on the "grandfather clause" to continue having non-graduates in our ranks.

#### 4.0 Financial and Membership Year

The current rule as to our membership year stands as follows:

#### Interpretation

##### 1. Definitions

- (1) In these rules, except in so far as the context or subject matter otherwise indicates or requires:

.....

**membership year means the 12 month period from and including 1st day of January in any year to and including 31st day of December in the same year.**

And, in Rule 23:

#### 23. Annual General Meetings - Calling of and Business at

.....

- (c) to receive from the treasurer an Income and Expenditure Statement for the preceding financial year and a Balance Sheet as at the 31st day of December of

#### the preceding financial year.

Council has endorsed the addition in the definitions to include:

*Financial year* means the 12 month period prior to and including 30 June in the current year.

And, correspondingly the change in Rule 23 to reflect this will be:

#### 23. Annual General Meetings - Calling of and Business at

.....

- (c) to receive from the treasurer an Income and Expenditure Statement for the preceding financial year and a Balance Sheet as at the 30 June of the preceding financial year.

These are purely procedural changes to ensure that our accounts and reporting are properly kept.

There is no inconstancy in having the financial year different from the membership year. It will in fact give some members an opportunity to become current before the membership fee acceptance date for the financial year closes before an AGM.

I urge everyone to support it.

This would bring the closing of the year's accounts in line with the normal financial year

and facilitate the reporting of the Association's financial affairs. This brings us to the timing of our AGM. Also See below.

#### 5.0 Winter AGM

With regards to the holding of AGM the current rules read:

#### 22. Annual General Meetings - Holding of

- (1) With the exception of the first annual general meeting of the Association, the Association shall, at least once each calendar year and within the period of 6 months after the expiration of the financial year of the Association, convene an Annual General Meeting of its members.

I do not know why the timing of our current AGM is in November when all of us who are successfully employed will know that this is the busiest time of the year for field surveys and monitoring.

This notwithstanding, as I have pointed out at various Council meetings and previous AGM, the holding of an AGM in November is illegal under our current rules. It has to be within 6 months of closing of the (last) financial year (currently 31 December). NOT prior to closing (of the current financial year)! This continued disregard for our Constitutional rules puts at

risk the proper governance this Association. Proper governance is a prerequisite and indeed a pre-condition for the ECA to be taken seriously as a professional body – eg when representing our interests such as commenting on proposed guidelines and having a professional opinion on matters dealing with accreditation, etc. And can be the reason for the cancellation of the corporation.

One of the more important matters of “Calling of and Business at” an AGM is to receive from the treasurer an Income and Expenditure Statement for the preceding financial year and a Balance Sheet. A winter AGM is consistent with the ending of the financial year as at the 30th day of June of the preceding financial year.

I urge all members to support an August AGM. Maybe we can hold our AGM further north where it is warmer at this time of the year rather than always in Sydney – which is both expensive and inconvenient for country members.

I am finding it exceedingly difficult to make time for an illegal November AGM. I am sure most members have the same time constraint problem even if they don't share my concern on the issue of propriety that is reflecting badly on all previous Councils.

I urge all of you to support the holding of our AGM in August.

## **6.0 Surplus money and property**

Our current Constitution is silent on specifics with regards to where the monies and assets of the ECA should go in case of the Association winding up, and it requires a Special Meeting for resolution. It currently reads:

### **41 Surplus property**

In the event of the winding up or the cancellation of the incorporation of the Association, the Association shall vest its surplus property and funds in an association or corporation with similar objects to the Association, in accordance with a special general meeting of the Association.

As will be the case when such events happens the treasurer, or what remains of the executive, is often left incompetent to make this final decision if a quorum cannot be achieved when a Special Meeting is called.

I urge all members to support Rule 41 to read:

41 Surplus Properties and Funds

In the event of the winding up or the cancellation of the

incorporation of the Association, the Association shall vest its surplus property and funds in an association or corporation with similar objects to the Association, in accordance with a special general meeting of the Association or with the Royal Zoological Society of NSW.

This change has previously been passed by Council.

Note I have carefully drafted this change to include property and funds, and most importantly, that it does not preclude a Special General Meeting, if held, from resolving this matter consistent with the intention of Rule 41.

Many of you will ask: Why single out the RZS?

Through its generosity in providing field equipment at no charge to these individuals (and through them their clients) the RZS has been an unwitting “silent partner” in the initial setting up of many of our practising members. It is thus only fitting that the RZS is expressly identified as a beneficiary should the ECA wind up or cease to exist as a corporation. Cancellation of incorporation can happen through, among other things, incompetent, improper or lack of governance and/or illegal activities.

## **7.0 Voting**

Now that all members have the background to these changes, I would encourage you to think about them.

Voting will proceed when the Council can appoint a Returning Officer to conduct this ballot from its ranks of Councillors who currently have no specific responsibility.

Voting rights will be clarified by the Returning Officer.

I look forward to the ECA evolving to becoming a leading professional association in its field.

*Leong Lim*

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## REPTILE FUNNEL TRAPS - A ROAD TEST

These traps first came to my notice when Gerry Swan described them at last years conference on survey techniques. They are basically an enlarged fish trap made from plastic netting over a wire frame with a funnel at each end. I have used the fish traps for aquatic fauna sampling and they have worked well, so I was eager to try the larger version on land.

The traps are sold by Ecosystematica Research Consultants in Western Australia (see [www.ecosystematica.com](http://www.ecosystematica.com) for how to order) and need to be transported from the west

(this adds to the price). I ordered 22 (cheaper in orders over 20) and have used them on several surveys this year. The traps are a rectangular shape, about 75cm long and 18cm wide, but they fold up to a small size (about the size of a cigar box). Each trap comes with a screen of sun-shade cloth to protect any captures.

The traps are usually laid out in association with a drift fence and can be placed with either the fence joining the funnel at each end, or the funnels alongside the drift fence. It is usual to place a funnel on each side of the fence, thus ensuring a greater catch (not necessarily a more diverse catch) rather than having a funnel placed within the drift fence. I have used both methods and found little difference in results so far. Gerry Swan has used the side by side method with success.

It is plain that the traps were developed for use in open flat country, such as that occurring in inland Australia, but they can be used in other environments as well. We have been using them in several different areas in the Central West and have found them relatively easy to set up. The ground cover in the areas we surveyed is probably denser than that where the funnels are usually used, so we had to clear a path before setting out a drift fence. We have used them in dense heath, swamp, beside creeks, in woodland and in rocky areas. The problem with rocky areas is that it is impossible to set up a drift

fence, so we placed the funnels next to cliff-lines. So far, these have not met with much success (although the trapping was done in autumn).

Many of the set-ups involved a combination of funnels and pit traps i.e. a drift fence with an alternating funnel and pit trap. The funnels may not be as good at trapping legless lizards, so pit traps are needed.

The results from the use of funnels were promising. In a variety of environments at Newnes Plateau we trapped seven reptile species and a mammal species. This was during autumn, so reptile activity was slowing. Where we set out a combination of funnels and pits, we trapped three times as many reptiles in the funnels compared to the pits. At another site near Mudgee we trapped four species in the funnels and one species in a pit trap. However, the reptile in the pit trap was *Rhamphotyphlops nigrescens*, a blind snake not usually caught in funnel traps.

### The reptiles captured in funnels in four areas were:

Scientific Name	Common Name	
<i>Acritoscincus platynotum</i>	Red-throated Skink	1
<i>Acritoscincus duperreyi</i>	Eastern Three-lined Skink	1
<i>Lampropholis guichenoti</i>	Grass Sunskink	7
<i>Lampropholis delicata</i>	Garden Sunskink	4
<i>Pseudemoia pagenstecheri</i>	Grassland Tussock-	1

	skink	
<i>Eulamprus quoyii</i>	Eastern Water-skink	2
<i>Ctenotus orientalis</i>	None	2
<i>Austrelaps ramsayi</i>	Highlands Copperhead	1
<i>Diplodactylus vittatus</i>	Eastern Stone Gecko	1
<i>Amphibolurus muricatus</i>	Jacky Lizard	1

The capture of the copperhead snake created some excitement, but the use of a set of reptile tongs enabled the animal to be extracted from the funnel (there is a wide zipper that allows access to the inside of the funnel).

The capture of a *Sminthopsis murina* was also exciting, showing that the funnels can be used for mammals. The Common Dunnart is seldom trapped in Elliott traps, but is captured in pit traps. The reptile funnel successfully provided an equivalent to a pit trap.

Apart from the capture of a greater number and diversity of reptiles than pit traps, the funnel traps have the advantage of being easily transportable and capable of being set up in places where pit traps could not go. We used them in rocky areas, as well as beside creeks and in wet swamps. Because they can be carried easily we could walk them into places inaccessible by vehicle. There no way that buckets, shovels and crowbars could have been carried into some areas.

We did find some negatives though. It is possible for small ants to pass through the netting and attack any captured animal. It would be difficult to use insect repellent on such a large piece of equipment, so care is needed when locating each funnel. Also, the funnels were a bit flimsy, with stitching unravelling around the metal frame creating an escape hole. One funnel was discovered with holes gnawed in the floor.

In summary, the reptile funnels provide an important addition to the suite of techniques used to capture reptiles (and mammals). They can be used alone, with a drift fence and in combination with pit traps and they have proved to be largely successful in a range of environments. They are sufficiently small and light to be carried into areas outside the reach of pit traps.

*Martin Denny* for Mount King Ecological Surveys



Copperhead in Funnel

A footnote to Martin's article on these traps. I have used them in conjunction with buckets (a bucket at each end

of the line and 3 pairs of funnel traps, side by side, in between.

I prefer to use these side by side (although it means you use two at a time) because there is no fitting the fence onto each end of a trap. Makes it quick, just pegging the traps up against the drift fence and making them nice and enticing to any roving reptile. They are easy to transport, easy to set up, easy to check and easy to dismantle.

Despite the fact that the area in which I was using them was badly drought affected, and it was autumn as well, some animals were moving. We got dragons, skinks and geckos in the funnel traps and in the buckets, but twice as many in the funnel traps. The area had always been good for pygopods and I was hoping to find out how the funnel traps would cope. But unfortunately none were moving, nor were the goannas or snakes. We did get a couple of invertebrates in the funnel traps, a pie dish beetle and a weevil, so I guess they are good for centipedes, spiders and the rest as well.

We got a Mallee Ningauai (*Ningauai yvonneae*) in one bucket, but none in the funnel traps. I always suspect that these beasties (which are very common at this site) jump into the buckets after invertebrates or lizards. They will even chomp up house mice. I noticed that some of the smaller skinks and geckos in the funnel traps tended to get in under the funnel and into the loose dirt. This would

provide them with better shelter than being in the bottom of a bucket, even with an inch or two of sand in the bottom. These traps might also offer better protection from goanna predation as well.

There are a couple of good opportunities to really test these traps out next spring in western NSW, so we will get a chance to give them a really thorough workout. I am hoping to be able to put in duplicate lines, one buckets and one funnels to see how they compare. So that could be a follow up article next year. Just hope we get good winter rain out there.

*Gerry Swan*

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Have you built a better mouse trap? Or discovered a better method than a random meander? If so, let us all share it with you and write for the newsletter.

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## **Unsatisfactory Conduct and Professional Misconduct.**

Some members have asked me what is the difference in the 2 terms – almost as if it is my fault that they cannot understand the difference. As promised, I am writing this short piece to try and clarify the issue.

**First, these terms are almost universal in the context in which they are used. Almost all professional bodies use them in matters relating to ethical conduct and/or behaviour.**

Second, each authority puts a different meaning to these terms and these can vary with time and expectations created by the professional and social environments at any particular point in time.

Third, the bar of what is acceptable conduct is being raised continuously. What is tolerated activity or bold and robust behaviour today will be improper behaviour and unacceptable activity tomorrow.

In its most simplistic term, when you conduct yourself in a manner that can have or will bring about disrepute to the Profession, you will have engaged in *unsatisfactory conduct*. This can happen due to oversight, lack of discipline, inadvertent omission, etc. Often it is purely unintentional, notwithstanding the presence of “constructive knowledge” (ie what you should or would have known if you were more diligent). However, it can lead to *professional misconduct*.

The more serious charge of *professional misconduct* involves the element of wilfulness. Often covering up a relatively minor *unsatisfactory conduct* can lead to the committing of serious action(s) amounting to *professional misconduct*.

Similarly, if you have engaged in even minor *unsatisfactory conduct*, and doing it repeatedly knowing that it is wrong, improper or otherwise questionable then you will have clearly engaged in *professional misconduct*.

If you know its wrong, illegal, unprofessional or improper to be engaged in a particular activity or behaviour and you still go ahead and do it anyway, bringing disrepute to the Profession, you will have committed an act of *professional misconduct*.

Taking a moral rather than a professional and scientific stand when giving advice as an Ecological Consultant or giving advice beyond your expertise will amount to either *unsatisfactory conduct* or *professional misconduct* depending on the circumstances.

Not accepting that it is unprofessional and improper to take a personal moral or biased, rather than an impartial, position when providing professional advice is no defence to *professional misconduct* or *unsatisfactory conduct*.

In all these, you will have been guided by your ECA Code of Business Practice, Professional Conduct and Ethics.

*Leong Lim*

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# Membership Report

At the time of writing the number of members of the ECA was 51, comprised of 45 practising members, three associate members and three non-practising members. It's great to see the numbers growing – in 2003 we had 33 members. Please encourage any ecologists you know (whether working as consultants or in the public sector) to join as the strength of the organisation will be aided and there will be a greater diversity of views.

New members for this year are as follows:

Name	Location
Colin Bale	Armidale
Phil Burrel	Scone
Trent Doyle	Alstonville
Brian Hawkins (Associate)	Bellingen
Toby Lambert	Wamberal
Jeremy Pepper	Sydney
Martin Predavec	Sydney
Andrew Staniland (Associate)	Sydney
Karen Thumm	Sydney
Sally Waller (Associate)	Sydney

*Paul Burcher*

## Free Adult Sex Shows

(or what happens when computer software is given

the power to rule on political correctness)

*Now that we have your undivided attention.....this may seem like a flagrant use of an overused attention-grabbing tactic, but it is quite relevant to what follows. Read on.*

It seemed innocent enough. The draft Flora and Fauna Constraints Report for an Industrial Investigation Area in the lower Hunter Valley area was complete. All that remained was to email the report to the local council that had commissioned us to produce it. The result was bemusing to say the least (or should we say amusing).

Who'd have imagined in their wildest dreams that a dry old analysis of the relevant legislation and planning instruments that might constrain development on the designated land could be deemed to be so ... well ... smutty! Potentially quite offensive to our dear gentle readers in Council it seemed.

The emailed message and attachment 'bounced back' instantly. Must have got the address wrong we thought. On closer inspection, it soon became apparent there was an 'error' message appended to the returned document. It read:

"Subject: ----- Industrial Investigation Area - Draft Report  
Quarantine Area: Dirty Messages  
Scenario:  
Scenarios/Incoming

Your message was found to contain possible profanity. Results from the text analysis may be attached to the message to allow you to review why this message was rejected.

Please note that your message has not been delivered to your intended recipient.

Thank you."

What the hell was going on here? How on earth could such seemingly innocent (even boring) subject matter be construed as a 'dirty message' with 'possible profanity'.

Examination of the 'text analysis results' provided some clues:

### "Text Analysis Results

This report describes the search expressions found in this message.

**Scenarios/Incoming/Text Analyzer - Spam** found the following search expressions in **'WordDocument'**:

- The phrase 'sex' was found at the location(s): ...
- The phrase 'adult' was found at the location(s): ...
- The phrase 'free' was found at the location(s): ...
- The phrase 'shows' was found at the location(s): ...

**Scenarios/Incoming/Text Analyzer - Profanity** found the following search expressions in **'WordDocument'**:

- The phrase 'sex?\*' matched 'sex' at location : ...

- The phrase 'tit' was found at the location(s): ...
- The phrase 'guinea' was found at the location(s): ...

So that's what all the fuss was about. The key offending words according to the Text Analyzer for Spam, it seems, were:

1. sex

Definitely guilty on that count. Yes, we confess (shock, horror) that the word 'sex' had indeed appeared several times in the text of our report. Now why would we include such risqué terminology in our reports? Yep, you've probably guessed. The context for the use of the word was the reference to the '**Sex**/Age' of animals caught in Elliot traps. OK, fair enough. 'Sex' is probably the first obvious word that any anti-spam software would latch on to, no matter how innocent the context. We forgive it for being a bit twitchy here. But there's more.

Next offending word:

2. adult

Rapidly becoming a really obscene report this one. Context: 'Two **adult** female Squirrel Gliders were caught...' A bit more puzzling as to why this was picked on, but the word 'adult' used in certain contexts could be 'unsuitable for family viewing'.

Next unsavoury offering:

3. shows

Context in the report: 'The mapping **shows** two major areas devoid of natural vegetation...' What on earth was the problem with the word 'shows'?

From here our report was just descending into a cesspit of filth.

Next one:

4. free

Well, it is a four-letter word - that's about it, in our estimation. But really, look at the context in the report: 'East-coast **Freetail Bat**' (*Mormopterus norfolkensis*).

So what did this all mean? Simple rearrangement of the words soon revealed that Council's extremely over-zealous 'Text analyser - Spam' component of the software had very ingeniously succeeded in stringing these four words together to form the phrase:

"FREE ADULT SEX SHOWS"  
!!

So obviously we were strong suspects as spam merchants bent on trying to lure the poor employees of the council out to a depraved evening at some inner-city establishment of ill-repute.

Aspects of the 'Text Analyzer - Profanity' component of the software were rather puzzling, and we are still scratching our heads.

The relevant words earning disapproval were:

1. sex (again!)

Yes, we get the message. Maybe we should use 'gender' next time. But judging from the above analysis for spam, nothing can ever be regarded as completely safe.

Next offending word:

2. tit

Yes, filthy. This vernacular term for an anatomical feature may constitute inappropriate usage during afternoon tea with Great Aunt Agatha. Once again look at the context in the report: '**Crested Shrike-tit**' (*Falcunculus frontatus*). So, it's actually the accepted common name for a little birdie, how about that.

Finally, there was one highly offensive word in the report that the very diligent 'Text Analyzer - Profanity' picked on. Read on - if you dare - this one is a REAL SHOCKER:

3. guinea.

Huh?? This one has us really stumped. The others were all plausible (at least in the highly contrived combination in which they were arranged). Can anyone offer any enlightenment on this one? Context in the report: '**Guinea Grass**' (*Panicum maximum*) appeared in the flora list in the report's Appendix. What a stinker this word 'guinea' must be. It presumably is (or was) grossly offensive to

someone out there, but we must admit it is totally lost on us.

Needless to say, the returned email was cause for considerable mirth and laughter in the office on the morning it was received.

To be serious, though, how useful is software that prevents a clearly legitimate attachment being delivered because it manages to find smut where there is none? We can understand organisations such as councils wishing to filter spam from their email systems, because we abhor it as much as anyone else. But creating software that in effect *generates* smut rather than preventing it is clearly counter-productive.

The lessons from this story are, as a sender, nothing you write can be guaranteed to be considered completely clean and therefore deliverable if you send it by email. Use snail-mail instead. Otherwise warn the recipient to temporarily disable their anti-spam software to allow your attachment through.

As a recipient, if you wish to install anti-spam software on your organisation's email system, be very careful about what you use, or you may find you never get any emails at all!

Now to email this article to the newsletter editor. If you are reading this now, then Gerry's anti-spam software may be either non-existent or very

ineffectual. Otherwise it must be VERY discriminating. This is the sort of software you want!

*Stefan Rose and Ray Williams*

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## **“A Big Dummy's Guide to Conservation Genetics”**

**Book Review:** *A Primer of Conservation Genetics* by Frankham R, Ballou, JD and Briscoe, DA (2004). Cambridge, UK 220pp with well-illustrated 9 Chapters.

In an earlier newsletter I alerted fellow members to Frankham R, Ballou, JD and Briscoe, DA (2002) *Introduction to Conservation Genetics*. Published by Cambridge, UK. 617pp. It is a beautifully illustrated book that includes a number of practical exercise problems with answers at the end of each chapter and has now been translated into several languages.

I reviewed this earlier text book in *Pacific Conservation Biology*, 2001, Vol 7 (3): 217 – 218 and called it “*What you should know, or should have known, about Conservation Genetics but was too Afraid to Ask?*”

The authors have recognised the busy lives Ecological Consultants and the likes must lead so they have produced a primer! – so that you don't

have to wreck your mind trying to understand the details as presented in the introductory text (aka Population and Conservation Genetics 101 pass mark requirements only).

Consider this, you need to only effectively read an equivalent of just over 1 out of every 3 pages of the introductory text book!

I think this primer should be called: “*A Big Dummy's Guide to Conservation Genetics*”. It has worked examples with the correct answers and even has a glossary.

What relevance, you ask? Remember, .....Section 5A (a) and Section 5A (b) in the EP&A Act 1979 as modified by the TSC Act 1995 requires you to take into account the viability of local populations of listed threatened species and endangered populations.

Yes,.....*Viability* (no, its not about your likely survival as an Ecological Consultant), it has to do with genetics - population genetics at that; yes, ....yes, conservation genetics!

I am almost forced to embrace the opinion that there is only one solution for any member of the ECA who doubts if conservation genetics is relevant to his/her practice – a very extended stay in a re-education camp (held in an appropriate place like the Baxter Detention Centre and apply the latest High Court decision on indefinite detention - Ms Vanstone's

bleeding-heart recent policy change on temporary release on a bridging visa aside).

Perhaps there should be a test for all practising members of the ECA, based on these books as part of the condition for their accreditation.

(Please, please, don't knock me over getting past trying to secure the last copy of this book on the Uni Co-op Book Shop shelf!)

Price: unknown.

I got mine free as a complimentary copy for assisting in its preparation (with comments, etc). So there - I have declared any conflict of interest I may or could remotely be perceived to have.

Recommended further reading:

Spielman, D, Brook, BW and Frankham, R (2004) *Most species are not driven to extinction before genetic factors impact them*. PNAS 101(42):15261-15264.

Compare with:

Caughley, G and Gunn, A (1996) *Conservation Biology in Theory and Practice*. Blackwell, USA.

The next instalment:

Akaike's Information Criteria, Model Selection and Multi-model inference.

I can see you all just can't wait for it.

To Enlightenment - See the Light - Don't go over to the

Dark Side! May the Force be with you, ALWAYS.

Happy reading.

*Leong Lim*

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## ECA Web Page

The ECA web page is at [www.ecansw.org.au](http://www.ecansw.org.au) so go and have a look, then let others who might be interested know about it. The site contains some information on the history of the ECA and why it was formed, and a Mission Statement on what the ECA stands for. As well the Office Bearers are listed as well as the Committees and their members.

There are details on how to join with the various categories of membership, and a list of current members with their contact details.

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SPACE IS  
AVAILABLE, FREE,  
FOR YOUR  
ARTICLE. AVAIL  
YOURSELF NOW  
OF THIS UNIQUE  
OPPORTUNITY TO  
BECOME AN  
AUTHOR.**