

# Newspaws

For, of and by Q.NPWS staff

September 1983

## New look at park people

Understandably, the national park manager more often than not is preoccupied with the physical reality that confronts him and does not really come to grips with the social construct of the environment he is managing.

While the physical components are certainly important it is equally important to realise that social forces are acting on both the manager and the recreational space he is managing.

These may in fact provide the underlying key to the perplexity of some of the management problems he faces.

Work in the Research and Planning Branch currently being undertaken by Mike Harris is trying to make social sense of park environments managed by the Service.

A major facet of this work will be to design and supervise the implementation of standardized recreational monitoring systems across the State.

Once these systems are established, implementation will become the responsibility of park ranger-oversers who will feed data back to Brisbane for central compilation and analysis as is appropriate.

Consequently every effort is being made to minimise any additional workload in the field.

Field staff are, and will continue to be, an integral and important part of any park's monitoring system. Presently they keep monthly estimates of magnitudes of visitor use and administer the camping permit system in the field.

Work is now under way to centrally compile this permit information onto computer for on-going access and further analysis.

One of the most significant outcomes of this work will be the establishment of a recreational data base for the Service which will have a wide spectrum of potential uses

from quantitatively justifying staff and budget submissions to forming the foundation for broad policy and planning decisions on recreation.

The range of information that is proposed for collection includes user demographics, recreational catchment and demand fluctuations for specific reserves and the quality of use including a study of replicate elements within visitor activities and behaviour.

As part of this work, a series of questionnaire surveys is presently being conducted across the State in an attempt to obtain detailed objective information on the spectrum of uses to which parks are being put.

Park visitors are being asked some simple demographic questions such as age, sex, and place of residence, as well as specific information about their stay.

A basic characteristic of visitation on any national park is represented by the individual activities in which people participate, or at least, think they participate.

This 'reported' or perceived activity as well as statements made on visitors' main reason for coming to the park are being compiled and analysed from questionnaire survey responses.

The usual strategy for analysing lists of activities has been to individually address the raw frequency of occurrences of each activity. However, conclusions from such analysis tend to be superficial, and it is difficult to assign meanings to such data.

It would seem more useful to examine the level of association between the activities within the perceived activity responses taken from questionnaires.

Early work by Mike tried to address a theoretical hierarchy of activities from primary or direct actions such as 'walking', to potential secondary or composites of actions such as 'sightseeing', and finally to tertiary or overall psychological states such as 'relaxing'.

As an extension of this, Mike is now looking at actual associations through a statistical procedure called factor analysis. This technique is based on comparisons of inter-activity correlations which are in number form.

Computers are being used extensively in this work.

However using factor analysis it has been found that there is a significant level of association among certain perceived visitor activities which in turn can be used to begin to make social sense of what is physically happening on parks with respect to recreation.

This grouping of activities can be a foundation for the explanation of the differing and common motives that visitors may have in visiting the various 'park' areas managed by the Service across the State.

Such an understanding has considerable potential to refine and improve day to day park management decision making as well as having broader planning and policy ramifications.

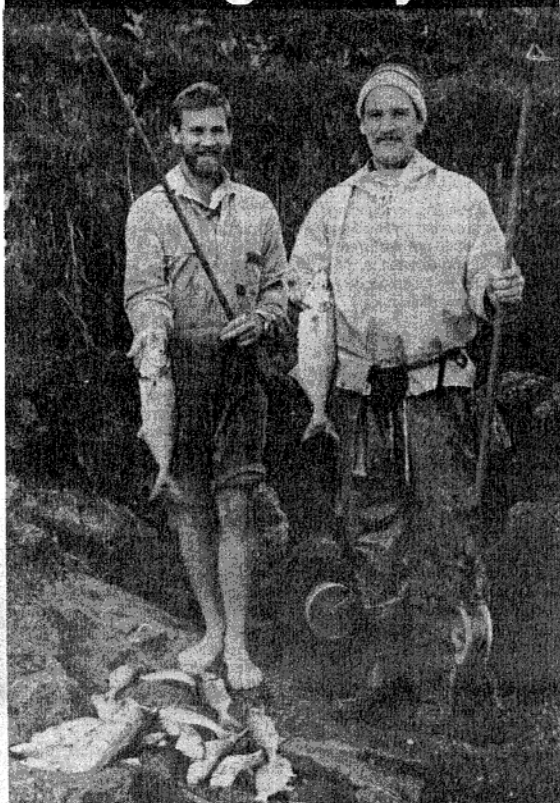
The realisation of a recreational data base for the Service estate using standardized systems which include the monitoring of social as well as physical parameters associated with park visitation will be a very powerful tool for all levels of management associated with our Estate.

Many of the Q.NPWS interpretive activities goals and approaches have been influenced by the 'acclimatization' program

The value to me in the workshop was in stressing the concepts to be acquired by the activities. Those few staff whose attendance was financed by the Service are grateful for the experience.

Gil Field

## Nothing fishy



Proof that all the fish tales recently from Mark Planck, Mark Johnston, (above), Ron Walk, Peter Cavendish and even Michael Quinn are not false. This was their before-breakfast catch at Waddy Point back in July at the start of the season. Peter and Michael took holidays to join the massacre. Of course, Ron Walk (picture below feeding a dingo at Dundubara camp) is very blase about the fishing at Fraser. He lives there!



## What's in a name

Field staff were most impressed with the Service's newspaper — and it makes far better lunch wrap than the previous incarnation.

We've conceded the preferential use of 'Ringtail' for the public pages. We are still coming to 'grips' with Newspaws.

Paul Grimshaw (Moggill) suggested an

alternative title for the man in the field would be 'Menopaws'.

Given the politico-economic climate, how about 'Wages paws'; or for the park field staff 'Ring pull', or even 'Ring bark'!

Mabe 'Newspaws' is OK after all.

Just make a contribution to the next edition now. — Ed.

## Steve is a Bill Cosby

Some Service staff recently attended an 'acclimatization workshop' with visiting American Steve van Matre at Lamington Natural History Association Environmental Centre.

'Acclimatization' is a program which helps people of all ages build a sense of relationship in both feelings and understanding with the natural world.

Steve himself was a 'Bill Cosby'

type performer that alone was fascinating and at times hysterically funny.

Combined with the most ified program of environmental education I have encountered, it was an inspirational workshop.

Those interested in this field of interpretation could be similarly inspired by reading Steve's books, some of which are in the Q.NPWS Library.

# Rocky staff not all at sea

Thirteen marine parks staff have settled into duties in Rockhampton this year. With the exception of Alan Reeve, all were new to the Service although some of us have been conducting research on the Great Barrier Reef for a decade or so.

The senior officer, Steven Domm, was previously the director of Lizard Island Research Station and One Tree Island Field Station.

In the Capricornia region we find ourselves in the rather complex situation as Q.NPWS staff whose activities are tightly constrained by Federal legislation and directives from joint State-Federal committees.

I will attempt to outline some of the major points although I am still unravelling the legislative intricacies.

Initial capital funding for buildings, boats etc is provided by the Federal Government while our recurrent funding including salaries is provided 50:50 by Queensland and the Federal Government.

As a result of this, detailed instructions for our duties and expenditure are passed down from a joint State-Federal Ministerial council; funding is released at three-monthly intervals from a joint State-Federal account; and a detailed expenditure statement is required every three months by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

The reason for this is of course that the Capricornia Marine Park is in offshore waters which fall under Federal jurisdiction whereas the islands are part of Queensland.

Biologically, physically, geographically and socio-economically the reefs, islands, seabed and surrounding waters are a part of the same closely-linked system and there is considerable merit in having one overall managing agency.

In addition to the usual Acts administered by the Service on the mainland and on islands, we are operating under the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 and the Queensland Marine Parks Act 1982 (administered by the Queensland Co-ordinator-General).

Enforcement of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act necessitates our carrying Federal identity cards as well as State National Parks identity cards and we are also required to wear a uniform carrying both Q.NPWS and GBRMPA badges.

The upshot of the different Acts is that we are entrusted with management of a wide variety of multi-purpose regions.

The marine environment also brings us into dealings with numerous other State and Federal departments and authorities such as the Department of Harbours and Marine, the Water Police, Coastal Surveillance, the Department of Transport, the Volunteer Coastguard etc.

In fact the Capricornia area is more like a town plan than a park. There are regions where all of the following activities are allowed for — line fishing, spear fishing, trawl fishing, netting, collection of shells etc., camping, resort operations, research and commercial shipping.

Our work therefore includes such jobs as carrying out aerial surveillance flights eight to 10 times a month; carrying out regular field (boat) surveillance of all islands and reefs; planning and executing programs to monitor environmental changes in reefs, islands, the seabed and surrounding waters; monitoring the activities of park users including professional and amateur fishermen, collectors of shells or marine products, tourists, campers, divers, resorts, private and charter boat operators; assessing the effectiveness of the management plans and their implementation including socio-economic impacts on park users; establishing education centres within the park region and on the mainland; producing information materials and establishing information outlets at principal mainland points of entry to the park region.

On the land it is a simple (well, relatively simple) matter for a researcher to jump into a car, drive into a park, carry out some research and drive home.

Similarly the ranger can regularly check various aspects of his park at any time that suits him.

In the marine environment however there are severe logistical, economic and safety constraints on movement and activities.

Both people must go together, stay and work for a length of time economically sensible with regard to the high cost of getting there, and they must work together to get the different jobs done.

I hope this will help clarify what may at times appear to be rumours of: unprecedented things happening at the Marine Parks Section in Rockhampton.

Terry Walker



Our Minister, Tony Elliott, was one of the first people to go pushing the buttons at our stand at the RNA Brisbane Show. And, surprise, they all worked!

## How the RNA battle was won

Contemplate for a minute the task of building indoors a reasonably realistic rainforest complete with waterfall and rock pool. No problem you say — just get the landscapers in, sit back and wait.

Okay, now try getting your hands on 15 or so museum specimens of possums, bandicoots, frogs, butterflies, snakes and water rats and place each in the display in such a position that they represent all the many 'creature homes' one would expect to find in such a forest.

Now locate a rough bush bridge to give the public access to the display and locate along the railing of that bridge back-lit colour photographs of the animals in the display.

Set up a small spotlight adjacent to each photograph and link it to a press button switch, toss in a few long-playing tapes of whip birds cracking and bellbirds tinkling and cover the lot with a 4m square photograph of a rainforest canopy (I won't go into detail about the painted wall murals and the 20 000 handout newspapers).

Still think it's simple? Take our advice — it's not, and we are in quite a good position to offer such an opinion. You see, we in the Production Unit at Q.NPWS, have just completed such a task for this year's Brisbane Royal National Show display.

Our main problem was time. We couldn't bring plants in too early as the long period indoors would severely retard many of them. Until the plants were in, nothing else could go in.

You can imagine the last few days. Our main worry in the landscaping stage was puncturing the rock pool and having 1000 litres of 'chlorinated' rainforest water trickle through the pavilion carpets.

The Queensland Museum generously offered us the loan of their museum specimens and things here went smoothly until a sound technician, upon spotting our coiled fibreglass python, took fright and trampled part of our rainforest.

The request to a Brisbane sound studio to produce an endless tape of rainforest calls resulted initially in a rather dubious reaction. The end product, two hours later, was six minutes of brown pigeons cooing, golden whistlers whistling and a sound technician with a new-found interest in the natural world.

A program of beg, borrow or steal produced 15 high quality colour photographs; a bent

knee attitude convinced Queensland Lighting Services that we were sincere in our need to have our electrical needs fulfilled two days before opening day.

The whole display came together with hours to spare.

Surprise, surprise, it all worked! (If you ignore blowing in the first few hours all 15 of the 4 volt bulbs that should have been 6 volt and having the bridge clog because we forgot to mark the entry and exit ends).

Come closing day, we removed the coins from our rock pool (turned wishing well) retrieved a very purplish python (a little water damage) from our display and seemed to sweep dead leaves for hours.

Feedback from the public indicated we had produced and managed a very popular display. Just how many of those 500 000 visitors gleaned the message we were trying to impart is another matter.

But such is the lot of display makers. Perhaps next year we might better impart our ideas.

Damian McGreevy

## Psssssst . . .

'Walking Books' is not a new guide to the top 25 walks of Queensland but an appeal from Damian McGreevy of Information Services Section.

He asks Service officers past and present who have borrowed books from his private collection and failed to return them to do so as soon as possible.

Having finally established himself in a fixed place of abode in one of Brisbane's trendier suburbs, he would love dearly to reassemble the

collection as a feature of his 'cosy' lounge. (Cosy is the latest real estate buzz word for small.)

Those wishing to own up can phone Damian on 224 6545 or find him at the smarter end of the 6th floor of head office.

Alternatively dump them on his desk when he isn't there or isn't looking, or accidentally put them in the library where they might be 'serviced' for him.

★ Pity Pamela Harmon-Price and Marc

Hockings. They had deprived childhoods.

Marc revealed he dislikes Vegemite intensely. Pam is allergic to chocolate (among other things).

★ Reflections from the Gattin short course in September . . .

Bob Beeton has been promoted from guru to God, Rob Skerman is the Great White Hope, a new ranger skill has emerged (the art of drop kicking), and a prominent senior ranger's sexuality has been put to the test.

Wildlife rangers disgraced everyone in the drinking department (including themselves).

And who was the tall blonde promoting lady fingers that had nothing to do with bananas!

★ One paragraph about weed control you will not read in the Annual Report is this:

'The other major weed destroyed in vast quantities last year was Cannabis Sativa, carried out by burning tiny bits at a time in darkened rooms after hours with no overtime claims being made!'

Long serving Tom Ryan has left the Service. The Maryborough regional superintendent was chosen ahead of 30 other applicants for the job of Maryborough City Council director of parks and recreation.

A presentation was made to Tom from head office staff during the regional superintendents' conference in head office.

★ Tom will welcome any Q.NPWS staffer under the banyan tree in Queen's Park, Maryborough.

★ Diminutive Di Charles (Mackay) is another to leave the Service

recently. Di was one of the first Gattin students to join the Service and spent some time with the old TSS in Brisbane.

★ Linden Seale has put down her artists' pens and brushes to go overseas.

New faces to head office are those of Lenore Wedgwood and Jenny Schultz.

★ Lenore transfers from the Queensland Museum.

★ She has been given the task of handling Honorary Protectors among others. Who is 'Pies'? Jenny brings drafting and

bushwalking talents from DMS.

★ Robyn Kreis, our touch football fanatic, will have a change of scene soon. She is transferring to Rockhampton.

★ Clive Price was smiling recently thanks to his wife Val's talents. She won a contest and the prize was a week in Hongkong.

★ Marc Hockings returned to Townsville after a stay with ISS in Brisbane. 'Captain' Hockings took the wheel of Don Marshall's boat for a staff farewell visit to the Jumpinpin environmental park proposal area!