



# An eclectic neighbourhood

Our theme of 'shared environments' is a good lead into an eclectic array of topics: marine rubbish, barbed wire fencing, climate change, black-breasted button-quail. Not surprising when you consider the many criteria by which we judge good or bad neighbours.

Rubbish is always a sensitive issue, especially when we think it's not ours. There's no shortage of the stuff. We generate so much that Ian Kiernan's brilliant Clean Up Australia concept is an annual event that has inspired Clean Up The World, involving an estimated 35 million volunteers from more than 100 countries. Unfortunately, our rubbish expands well beyond our densely settled areas. On the Gulf of Carpentaria's wild, remote, turtle-nesting beaches, ghost nets and other manufactured detritus washes ashore with a grim death-catch. Inger Vandyke joined a co-operative program to protect turtle nests from feral pigs and dogs, help hatchlings on their first crucial journey and develop long-term strategies so survivors can return to breed on safer, cleaner beaches.

Fences are a neighbour issue, and when neighbours include wildlife, barbed wire fences can be fatal. It's a cheap but nasty way to enclose large areas. Can it be less dire without increasing expenses? Carol Booth looks at options, while Lee K. Curtis follows the long, successful recovery of a 'lucky' endangered mahogany glider damaged by barbed wire entanglement.

Climate change reminds us, with some force, that we are all neighbours, and there's plenty of responsible advice about it. We also know that rainforests are tremendous repositories of biodiversity. Investigations into that biodiversity are now helping to establish important tools to monitor, measure and anticipate climate change impacts. The project, IBISCA, is global, co-operative and, like the rainforest, multi-layered.

On a quick visit to Inskip, courtesy of Mike West, a small population of rare black-breasted button-quail share their environment with an unlikely mix of birds, birdos, campers and dogs – a celebration of awareness, tolerance and responsibility.

The distribution of the endangered Leadbeater's possum, like that of the endangered mahogany glider, is restricted, but instead of north Queensland's tropical lowlands, Leadbeater's lives in the high ash forests of alpine Victoria. The good news is they've recently been found in snow gums. Is this



Photo ©

Our photo this time is from South Australian ranger Dylan Koerner, who writes: 'Rain falls hundreds of kilometres away, yet still brings life to Lake Eyre ... in March 2007, birdlife has begun to gather.... The waters can bring medium to large fish species, crustaceans and insect populations. These food sources bring both fish-eating birds and seasonal migratory waders.' This photo was taken as flood waters reached the Lake Eyre basin in 2003 – rare moments in our arid interior.

an aberration, or an extension of their habitat? Dan Harley explores the mystery of this tiny, cold country possum. We also visit a dinosaur stampede. Although Katrin Holmsten missed the event by 95 million years, a well-planned visitors' centre preserves the evidence.

Many thanks to all who have taken the time to tell us how they feel about the new look WAM, especially the new NatureWatch. Lots of positive feedback, which is great. All feedback helps. We're back with more for winter – traditionally a time of rest and recovery, but still plenty to see, from basking lizards and dasyurids to a summit view now that it's cool enough to climb a Queensland mountain.

SAREN STARBRIDGE, editor

## SWAMP by Gary Clark

