

Assets with Eyes (and the green things they live in) July 2008



Sydney Olympic Park staff planting seedlings in the future demonstration garden

Nesting Birds

Black Swans (above left) are nesting again in the Northern Water Feature with terrific views of one nest to be gained from the end of Haslam's Pier. At present the birds have two eggs, but may lay up to 6 in the one nest.

Great Black Cormorants have been nesting on the islands of Lake Belvedere for many months. Space has become such a premium that birds are looking outside the usual market to construct their nest. For the first time, a nest has been built on one of the floating pontoons in the Lake (above right, photo Michael McGown).

Chat survey

Sydney Olympic Park supports one of only two remaining populations of the White-fronted Chat in the Sydney region. The population, which inhabits the saltmarsh and adjoining mangroves of Newington Nature Reserve, has been regularly monitored for several years and appears to currently comprise only 9 individuals, a decline from around 60-100 in 1996. The cause of the decline is unknown, but is thought to be related to nest predation by species such as the Australian Raven and European Red Fox along with habitat reduction during past remediation of the Park.

In collaboration with SOPA and the Australian Museum, a University of Wollongong student Honours project has commenced to further investigate factors affecting the conservation of Chat population. Mist-netting is currently being undertaken in order to capture as many of the Park's chats as possible. The aim of capturing the birds is to:

- Ascertain the current size, sex ratio and age structure of the population;
- Mark each individual with a unique combination of coloured bands to provide a means of monitoring survival and recruitment; and
- Obtain feather samples for genetic analysis, to determine the extent to which genetic variation within the population has been lost as a result of its isolation from other populations.

Five of the Park's birds (three males and two females) have been banded to date. Examination of wing feather colouration revealed that two of these birds (one male and one female) are young birds. This indicates that the Park's population, although small, is still breeding successfully.

Further mist-netting sessions will be undertaken to target the remaining, un-banded birds. The Honours project is due for completion in November 2008. Monitoring of the chat population will be ongoing.

Extending the woodland

Sydney Olympic Park contains approximately 20 hectares of Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest (an Endangered Ecological Community), 7 hectares of which is regenerating.

Areas with poor natural regeneration are being planted with seedlings grown from locally collected seed. Seed from the forest was collected in 2007 and propagated for planting. During June 2008, these plants were installed in three areas to assist in the extension of the forest. Planting was undertaken by contractors Total Earth Care and by Sydney Olympic Park staff who came out for a day to assist.



Male White-fronted Chat banded with red over white on left leg and red over silver on right leg