

'The Chivaree Calling'

Supporting the Western Cape York Turtle Conservation Project (1st Edition)

August 2005

Turtle Camp at Janie Creek Opens



Councillor Chrissie Cooktown joins Troy Cassar-Daly and Ernie Dingo at the official opening and naming of the turtle base camp at Janie Creek; 'Chivaree'

The Traditional Owners of the Janie Creek area, Mapoon Council and many others enjoyed an afternoon of entertainment at the official opening of 'Chivaree', the eco-tourist camp established on the northern bank of Janie Creek, to base tourists as they visit the area to work with the Rangers as they protect marine turtle nesting sites and remove abandoned foreign fishing nest from Flinders Beach. The opening coincided with a visit to the camp by Ernie and Troy, there filming with Channel 7

The first three weeks of Turtle Rescue Expeditions based at camp 'Chivaree' have now been completed with already very significant results. The tourists have completed removal of 'ghost' fishing nets from nearly three kilometres of beach stretching south from Janie Creek. The nets have been removed to an area well above the storm surge line, where there will be little likelihood of a return to the Gulf this wet season to continue the killing of hundreds of endangered marine turtles. The tourists have found innovative ways to recycle the nets, with many carrying specially weaved 'Chivaree' draw-string bags as they boarded flights back home to Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and country NSW and Victoria. Ranger Lawry Booth has been kept busy demonstrating his skill weaving the nets into usable carry bags. Aside from the net work, the tourists have helped the Rangers place DPI & F designed Feral Pig Exclusion Devices (FPEDs) over about fifteen freshly laid clutches of eggs. Hatchlings should emerge within 60 days of laying.

After a slow start to the nesting season, where only a dozen turtles nested during the first week, the team onboard for the third expedition including Troy Cassar-Daly and Ernie Dingo were on the beach when eighteen Flat backs arrived and nested on the beach in a single night. The record so far this season.

A Rare Visitor to Flinders Beach...

Excitement amongst the research team and expedition members during the last expedition, with the arrival on Flinders Beach of the first recorded Hawksbill turtles. She failed to lay on that journey to the beach, but was tagged, measured and photographed for inclusion in the QPWS Turtle Conservation Data-Base.





First photos from a mainland beach in Queensland of a nesting Olive Ridley turtle, ninety four eggs in all. She will be back in about two weeks to lay a second clutch.

Unique Experience for Turtle Expedition

What a week it was on Flinders Beach for the third week of expeditions. Not only were record numbers of Flat back turtles arriving to nest, the added bonus of the arrival of a rare Hawksbill, but also the second recorded arrival on a mainland beach in Queensland of an Olive Ridley. This was even more significant than the first that occurred during 2004, because the turtle egg chambered and laid, with both video and digital photographic evidence. More valuable data was collected from egg counts and weights, along with tagging and measurements.

Danny Can Sing



Danny Cooktown Tjungundji Elder may have a job on the road as back-up singer for Troy Cassar-Daly after his support vocals during the official opening to 'Chivaree'. Oh Danny Boy.....

Stars Get To Work



Ernie Dingo and Troy Cassar-Daly got onto Flinders Beach to assist with the removal of abandoned foreign fishing nets. They helped remove over half a tonne of net on this morning.

**'Chivaree' Turtle Expeditions could not happen without the support of the Project's Corporate Partners, Thanks to:
 Qantas Link, Gough Plastics, Sea World, Australian Geographic, Tourism Qld, Rotary Club of Ashmore, Tourism Tropical Nth Qld, Weipa Travel, DPI&F, QPWS, DSG Management, Weipa Bulletin, Weipa Betta Electrical, DITR, Dave Donald Sport Fishing, Weipa Town Committee, Sarah Bush**

Important Qantas Link Partnership



Matt Trevett Lyell the Regional Manger for Qantas Link pictured at 'Chivaree' with the project team, including Traditional Owners Annie and Matthew with Ernie Dingo and Troy Cassar Daly.

The Partnership with the airline plays a significant role in flying researchers into the project site. The team looks forward to the proposed visit later in the season by company general manager Tony Edwards.

Volunteers Worth Every Cent.....

Research Volunteers Prove Their Weight in Gold

Joel Hodge and partner Stacey Bratby arrived at camp 'Chivaree' not knowing what to expect. They do now. With eighteen to twenty hours days on some days depending on tides and moon phases determining when the turtles nest, it's not uncommon for Joel and Stacey to crawl into bed just before dawn to rise again a few hours later to work at pulling nest buried in metres of sand. It is however their idea of a holiday, and their way to make a difference. They have proved a valuable resource for the Rangers, as they assist with collection of the data on nesting turtles, measuring, counting and weighing eggs and turtle; now three species confirmed on Flinders Beach.



Joel and Stacey with new recruits Troy and Ernie



First Class Facilities



New Hybrid toilet and tank from Gough plastics

Thanks to Corporate Partners Gough Plastics of Townsville, camp 'Chivaree' boasts world-class environmental facilities. The Hybrid toilets invented and developed by a consortium including Gough Plastics has received national recognition as one of the top 100 inventions of the last century. The Mapoon building and plumbing crews under Roger, Bob and 'Porky' worked many hours to have the facilities operational for the first expedition, and the amenities have all received top rating in feedback from the participants. The project team looks forward to a long association with Andrew Gough and the rest of the Gough Plastics crew.

'Ghost Nets' Begin to Disappear

Rangers and tourists have been working long hours on Flinders Beach removing discarded foreign fishing nets. During the first three 2005 expeditions nearly three kilometres of beach has been cleared. Whilst a small landing barge would solve a lot of the problems with full removal of the nets, the best that can be done in the interim is removal above the storm surge line. It is hoped eventually the nets would break down under intense UV light, but in the meantime act to protect the dunes from erosion. On average 12-15 nets per kilometre have been identified along the full 24 kms of Flinders Beach, and the aim this expedition season is to clear the beach fully. Nearly two tonnes of net have so far been removed, with most identified as either Indonesian trawl nets or of Taiwanese and Korean origins.



Mayor Peter Guivarra and Mapoon Grade 3 kids help the tourists and Rangers on the first expeditions for 2005.



Another Indonesian trawl net is removed from Flinders Beach during the first expedition. The Mayor looks on and provides expert advice.

More Information contact: Peter McCulkin, e-mail peter.mcculkin@dpi.qld.gov.au