

MardiGrass 2026



Thanks to the photographers who sent us their great pics. They are Jason Chan, Max Pike, Mel Williamson and Charlie Azzopardi, as well as Sue Stock and Bob Dooley.

Nimbin Artists Gallery Feature Artist: Brenda Bryant

by Linda Frylink Anderson

There is a quiet persistence to Brenda Bryant's story, a life shaped first by movement, then by stillness, and finally by paint.

In her early years, travel opened the world to her; later came marriage, children, and the steady rhythm of family life. Art, though always present as a quiet ambition, remained in the background.

It was only after retiring to the lush Tweed Valley in northern New South Wales some twelve years ago that Brenda was able to fully commit to her creative path.

Beginning with soft pastels, she gradually explored a range of mediums – acrylics, oil pastels and ultimately oils, where she found her strongest expression.

Today, her work reflects both confidence and sensitivity, shaped by experience and a deep engagement with her surroundings.

Brenda's paintings have gained wide appreciation. She has received numerous awards and commendations, and her work has consistently found an audience with buyers and collectors.

Over the years, she has exhibited

extensively throughout the Northern Rivers and surrounding regions, including Murwillumbah, Uki, Nimbin, Kyogle and Alstonville, and was represented for several years by Mist Gallery in Cabarita Beach prior to its closure in 2024.

Her achievements include major recognition at the Murwillumbah Rotary Art Prize, where she won both the Packers Prize and People's Choice in 2018, as well as first prize at the Coraki Art Prize in 2024.

She has also been a finalist in a number of respected competitions, including the Lethbridge Art Prize Salon des Refusés, The Doyles, the Stanthorpe Art Prize and the Australian Artists Awards.

Brenda's journey into art may have begun later in life, but it has developed into a strong and consistent practice. She continues to exhibit regularly, with her work gaining on-going recognition across the region and beyond.

Nimbin Art Fair success

The Nimbin Art Fair continues to draw strong support as one of the region's most loved annual events. Held in the town's fabulous hall,



the exhibition once again delivered an impressive and diverse collection of high-quality work from artists across Australia.

The Fair proved a great success, with many artworks sold and proceeds going directly to the artists. The event is made possible each year by a dedicated team of volunteers, whose time and effort are central to its success.

Each year, the Margaret McLaren Art Foundation awards prizes at the Nimbin Art Fair to several Artists.

Above: 'Cabarita Hill Littoral Rainforest'
Right: 'A Shifting Lightness'
Both paintings by Brenda Bryant



Bernard Pollock received recognition for 'Lucy in the Sky with Dandelions', marking his first public exhibition after taking up painting just two years ago. Evie Hope was awarded for her 'Paper Dolls' body of work, following her recent art studies at Southern Cross University and in Murwillumbah.

This year, the Margaret McLaren Art Foundation awarded the Best of Show \$3,000 Art Prize to Katherine Carson for her 'Under the Gaze of an Ancestor', oil on canvas. This large original painting drew the attention of many visitors. The \$2,000 Emerging Artist Prize was awarded jointly to Bernard Pollock and Evie Hope.

Ceramic studio celebrates its 10th anniversary

Gallery volunteers enjoyed a lovely afternoon celebrating with Heather Kimber and her dream of establishing a ceramic studio at Blue Knob Hall Gallery – a huge job completed with love and dedication.

The ceramic studio was established in February 2016 and has been continuing ever since.

The studio has been blessed to have the experience and devotion of Heather until she sadly retired. Genevieve Davies currently runs the studio with Lorraine Lintern and Ali Walker.

The current exhibitions *For the Love of ...* in the members' space; and *Reclaiming Ancient Wisdom* by Shannamay in the solo space will run until Saturday 16th May.

Kin Café is open Thursday to Sunday from 9:30am to 3:00pm, serving a delicious selection of fresh, seasonal dishes. Our menu celebrates the best local produce, with as many organic ingredients as possible, thoughtfully crafted into vibrant, flavour-filled plates.

Bronte is hosting a weekly Dinner & Jam night each Thursday after the singing group.



'Indigo Dreaming' by Heather Kimber



Ceramics by Ali Walker and Genevieve Davies



'Consciousness of Water' by Shannamay

Visit: <https://blueknobgallery.com> phone 6689-7449 or email: bkgallery@inet.net.au

Double opening + book launch

by Liina Flynn

May is bursting with colour, creativity, and community at the Serpentine Community Gallery – featuring a double exhibition opening and a soulful book launch you won't want to miss.

Friday 15th May kicks things off with *Art of Sport*, a bold and energetic group exhibition celebrating the spirit of sport and its power to unite us. From grassroots games to iconic moments, this show captures the passion, pride, and stories that live both on and off the field.

Expect an exciting mix of painting, photography, sculpture, ceramics and more from a wide range of local artists. Think community sport, local legends, personal triumphs and a healthy dose of nostalgia – plus a few creative surprises along the way.

A highlight is 'Twist Kick' by Lionel

(Johnny) Pink – a striking small sculpture born from a found piece of wood, transformed into a dynamic martial arts form through carving and paint. It's a perfect example of imagination meeting movement.

Opening alongside is *Rosy Recollections*, a stunning solo exhibition by Warwick Wright. Rich, warm, and deeply personal, this collection explores memory and place through lush landscapes and evocative scenes.

From the rainforests and coastlines of the Northern Rivers to the romance of European cities, Warwick's work invites you to see the world through a softer, more nostalgic lens – where every moment glows just a little brighter.

Opening Night: Friday 15th May, 5:30-8pm. Celebrate both exhibitions, meet the artists, and soak up the atmosphere.



'Twist Kick' by Lionel (Johnny) Pink

Then on Wednesday 20th May, 5:30-7:30pm, shift gears and join us for a special and heartfelt book launch: *Days of Wisdom: A Spiritual Journey with Archangels and Archeiai* by Black Crow Walking.

This intimate and uplifting evening invites you into a space of connection, reflection, and gentle



'Through Rose-coloured Glasses' by Warwick Wright

wisdom. Meet the author and explore the deeper themes of the book, including spiritual guidance and the relationship between Archangels and Archeiai – their feminine counterparts or 'twin flames.'

Enjoy live readings, a Q&A session, and an opportunity to engage with the ideas and inspirations behind this evolving body of work. Whether you're spiritually curious, seeking insight, or simply love an engaging



'I Remember Paris' by Warwick Wright

author talk, you'll feel welcome here – let's gather in spirit and celebrate the journey together.

All events take place at Serpentine Community Gallery, 3/104 Conway Street, Lismore, and are free and open to all.

Come for the art, stay for the connection – May at Serpentine is different but good.

Find out more at: www.serpentinearts.org

nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com



The Creative Artisans Gallery is a non-profit organisation for the promotion of art and crafts in the Northern Rivers.

The gallery has been operating since 2013 and is run by artists and artisans to showcase and sell their works. It is located in Wigmore Arcade, Ballina.

Opening hours are 9.30am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday, and 9.30am to noon on Saturday. Contact by phone on 0435-941-591 or email: info@creativeartisans.org.au

Fast and loose with watercolour



The long running Lismore Art Club continues its monthly program of workshops with a May watercolour tutorial. Facilitated by Lesley Ryan at the Tullera Community Hall on Saturday 16th May from 9.30am to 2.30pm, this tutorial is focused on working fast and loose, landscape, animals and birds, and will include instruction on mood, tone, colour and composition.

Lesley brings a wealth of experience as both an artist and teacher having exhibited her work extensively in both solo and joint shows.

She has been actively teaching for 17 years and has a wealth of knowledge to help students get the most out of their watercolours.

The workshop cost is \$55 with Lismore Art Club members receiving a \$20 discount.

For bookings, enquiries or to join the club, email: lismoreartclub@gmail.com

COLLECTED: Prints from Grafton Regional Gallery at Roxy Gallery

The Roxy Gallery is proud to present an exhibition showcasing outstanding works on paper, generously loaned from the collection of Grafton Regional Gallery.

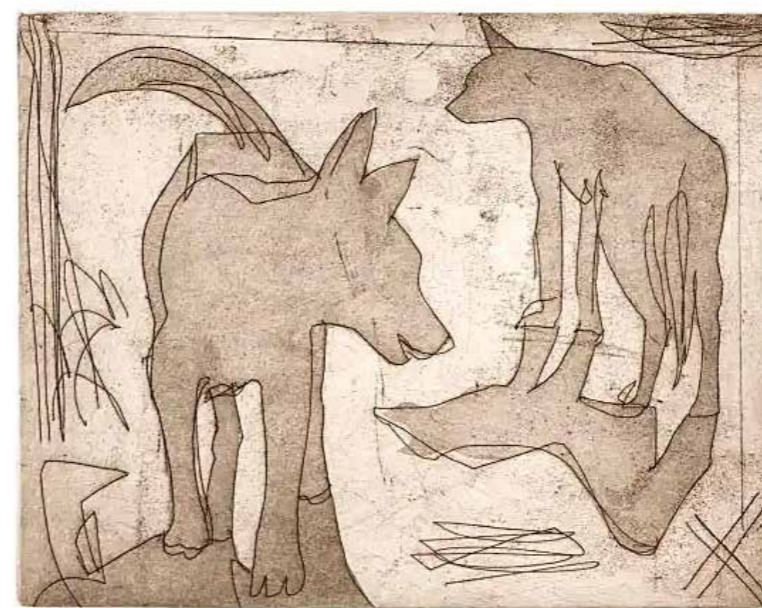
Focused on Australian printmaking, this exhibition brings together etchings, linocuts, woodcuts, drypoints, and lithographs from established masters and emerging voices.

From the technically exquisite etchings of Jorg Schmeisser and the bold woodcuts of John Pratt to the drypoint intimacy of Noel McKenna and the powerful lithography of Judy Watson, the exhibition traces the rich history and contemporary vitality of the print medium in Australia.

The exhibition includes distinct works by Dickie Minyintiri (Kapi Tjukurpa), Nyukana Baker, and Mapiya Davery from the APY and Pitjantjatjara lands.

Also featured are acclaimed printmakers Dean Bowen, Peter Lyssiotis, Lucust Jones, and Pia Larson, alongside the infamous Michael Leunig with some distinctive etched works.

Rounding out the collection are prints by Alison Williams, Ben Reid, Bill Moseley, Cat Poljski, Charles Blackman, Cleo Wilkinson, Darren Bryant, Graham Nudge, Gwen Scott, Heather Shimmen,



'Bali Dogs' by Alison Williams

James Pasakos, James Whittington, John Marshall, Kate Zizys, Leonie Lane, Melissa Smith, Barbie Kjar, Rochelle Summerfield, Vera Zulumovski, and Allison Carroll.

New music video released

by Jimmy Willing

The light that pours into the Joy Love Studio is the best that I've ever had. It's like it was purpose-built for painting, so each day I paint away until the sun goes down.

However, I don't stop being creative because the light has gone, as a dark room is the best thing for editing music film clips and after decades in the making, I am now able to present to you *Mad Dan Morgan*, the minor motion picture event of North Lismore's year.

My song *Mad Dan Morgan* was written last century, and for a time it was only sung in the car with the kids as the music was incomplete.

Resolving the song was too much for me, so I took it to my songwriting mate, the late Cameron Muir, who gave it a once-over glance and told me that what I needed was a lick to turn it around.

"Something like this," he said and carelessly picked out the now well-known lick that made the song instantly viable.

Mad Dan loved to set things on fire, especially the woolsheds of wealthy



squatters, so I decided to use fire as a theme and tell the tale around the campfire like an old-time storyteller.

Anyone in the biz will tell you that movies light fire scenes with red, yellow and orange lights, however we were deep in the scrub on no budget, so we used real firelight which meant I had to get right on top of the fire to be seen. The outtakes are hilarious as several times I caught fire and had to pat myself down and put myself out.

The expensive fake blood was also another moment, as it got in my eyes and stung like all hell. It's not an act as the pain was real. Needless to say that scene was one take only.

Mad Dan is an historical character

and as such he was real but my story telling, songwriting and film-making are fantastical and fictional. There is no evidence that Mad Dan drank "rum and kerosene", Dan's "hole up in the mountain" is actually one of 'Thunderbolt's' caves and the murder poster was for the Kelly Gang at Stringy Bark Creek.

As for burning woolsheds, they are not an everyday event in my neighbourhood so when the old high school caught fire across the road from my studio I captured it on film and said, "That'll do Pig" and put it into the clip.

Truth be told I've punked Dan and spaghetti westerned him. I've used the methods of tall storytelling, poetic licence and even outright lies, but when it comes to Morgan banishing Colt 45's I may have pushed the envelope too far, because everyone knows that the Colt 45 first became available in 1873 while Mad Dan Morgan was shot at Peechelba Station in 1865!

You can find *Mad Dan Morgan* on my Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCINJFJVGicnuqPTI2VnCFnA Please check it out, as it's worth a look.

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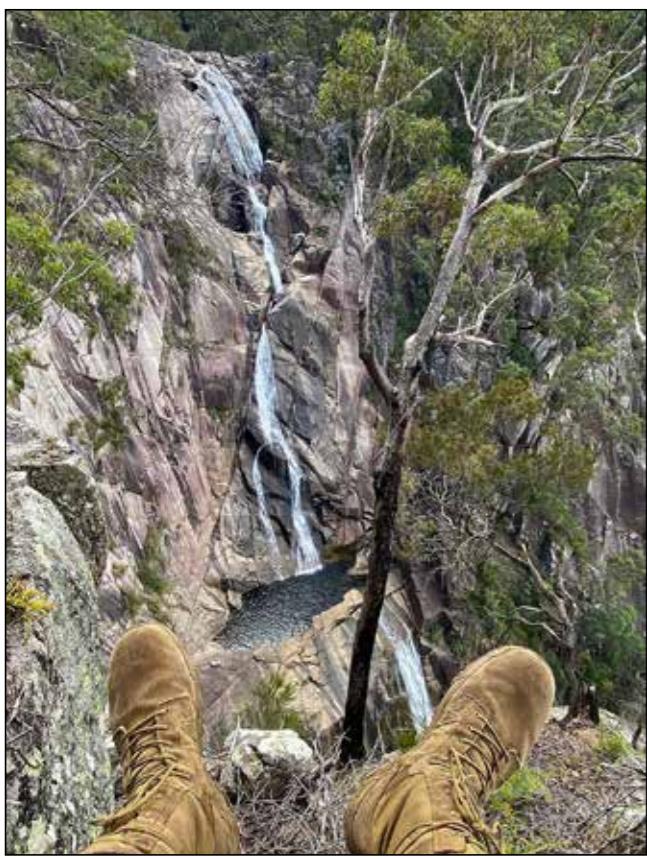
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Mark at Dandahra Falls

Great experiences and facilities in National Parks

by Peter Moyle, Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

We have been blessed with great warm and dry weather, a change from the last few years with the heavy rains.

We have had some very well attended walks in some of our great National Parks. The Unicorn Falls/Whiskey Creek the standout.

Fourteen walkers attended and it was a bit dry, but the stunning creek and waterfalls were still flowing nicely, most had a swim to finish the day.

In April, 16 of us headed out to the Gibraltar Range National Park, west of Grafton for five days; some of the best presented camping facilities we have experienced, half the price of the coast, free firewood and well-maintained sites and facilities.

Leader Mark had us out and about each day with the many varied walks and even a day trip to the Washpool for a look and a lovely loop walk.

Coming up some walks that are great in the wetter conditions and as usual new members and visitors welcome.

Walks Programme

Sunday 24th May Goonengerry National Park

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498. Please register with Peter to help with planning and car-pooling.
Grade: 3-4. 10km approximately 4 hours. There are some off track sections that may be slippery. Good walking shoes/boots needed. We will be walking into an area with some nice waterfalls; I can guarantee a bit of water. This is a great walk even in the wet as it is on top of the ridge so not boggy.
Meet: 9am at the Goonengerry NP at the end of Mill Road. Bring the usual including hat, water, and lunch.

Monday 8th to Friday 12th June Lake Arragan in Yuraygir NP near Broomes Head

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498
Grade: 3 - 4 We will be walking parts of the multi day coastal walk, especially the section from Angourie to Lake Arragan. We may also do some paddling if enough interest.
Meet: at the Campground, contact Peter to register your interest. You can come for a day walk or you can camp for a night or two. Sites 25, 26 and 27 have been booked to share or book your own nearby. NSW Parks vehicle daily access fee applies, or yearly better value.
Walks: There will be walks Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 9am. Short walk Friday from 8am.
Camping: Peter Moyle is taking bookings, ring to reserve your stay.

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Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Peter Brooker

Russell and Cherie are now well acquainted with the famous Act 111 Scene 1 speech from Shakespeare's *Henry V* as they have stepped into the breach many times over the seven years they have lived on Jarlanbah. Janus, the god of doorways, beginnings and endings must be permanently stationed at their gate.

For those who have not yet made it to Russell and Cherie's garden, I would suggest you are missing out on an experience worth having, from the delightful gathering on the verandah to the stroll through the 'rooms' of their garden along winding pathways.

In the relatively short time they have lived on their property they have not only made their garden more private but somehow made the half-acre they actually have, appear more like five acres. They have achieved this, not by overcrowding, but by use of space and variety of plants.

There are now three water tanks, the third added by rolling it into position, not ideal but options were limited. The space around that tank is used to grow a garden, no space is wasted.

While Cherie tends to the more ornamental plants and the ginger, Russell's interest lies with the vegetables. It is on the first tier of the garden that we come upon the first vegetable bed, fully netted and under full production. Just beyond that bed a raised garden awaits being cut down to form two smaller raised beds.

This one had proved a little problematic



due to the amount of soil needed to fill it and some mystery 'bug' killing off plants that had just become established. Another problem is posed by the towering bungalow palms and their falling fronds and seeds, damaging plants beneath them and threatening the gutters of the house.

These palms will probably be removed. The greywater system now has a shallow-rooted tea tree planted in it, replacing the lomandra.

Beyond the mango tree we descend to a lower tier and find the citrus orchard, a Meyer lemon, an orange tree, that last year was loaded but this year offers nothing, and a blood orange that always fruits well.

The lemon myrtle has taken off, but so have the paperbarks, the pond is still there, the one used as a fire pit by the previous owner to burn rubbish having damaged its ability to hold water. The new plastic seal is leaking, but the frogs still come.

There are still places to be worked on: areas on top of the swales once scalped by the ride-on mower of that previous owner; places where the morning dew



lingers, dew thought to be droplets from the bit of Hrimfaxi the horse of the Norse goddess Nott, mother of Dagr (day) as she brings night to the world.

There are frangipani, hibiscus and a kadamba tree with its fragrant golden-orange flowers, a favourite of Krishna, and a cheese tree, then we cross the new bridge to the potting area, and pass the turmeric, Vietnamese mint, a curry tree, lime tree and a white mulberry.

There are chickens scratching along the boundary to keep the invasive weeds out, a lemonade tree, Mexican tarragon with its pretty yellow flowers, Cherie's Japanese garden, a lilly pilly hedge and a poinciana, and above us a place for meditation.

We could easily come again, as this garden changes every time we visit. It was a very pleasant afternoon as Sol crossed the sky in her chariot pursued by the wolf Skoll, sending down her warm sunlight.

Our thanks to Cherie and Russell for an interesting visit.

Next meeting will be at Lureen's, 2/10 Robb Road on Saturday 16th May at 2pm. As usual, bring a cup, a plate and something to share.

Koala Advisory Group checks out local habitats



Councillor Virginia Waters and Shae at Durham Road with culvert in background

by Shae Salmon

I live in a core koala area just outside Lismore and am most dismayed at the decline of koalas in our district. I decided to join the Lismore Council Koala Advisory Group (KAG) to see what I could do and get more information on the state of our koala population in Lismore.

Earlier in April with other KAG members, I checked out some koala localities. We first went to Durham Road in East Lismore where there is a koala fence running up the hill. It was erected in 2004 and was one of the first of its kind in NSW. There are seven culverts where koalas can travel under the road to the other fenced side.

Grids on the road where the fenced area begins are also in place, however new grid designs are necessary as koalas learn how to navigate these old ones and can escape onto the road.



A veterinary nurse at the Friends of the Koala hospital in East Lismore

Rather troubling was that suitable koala trees are on private property, so it is up to the landowner to plant more trees, or to give permission for others to plant. Loss of suitable habitat and corridors is the main reason for our decline in koala population. Council has a 'Land Owners Initiative' that provides grants for such planting (check LCC website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au).

The next stop was the Tatham turn-off on the Bruxner Highway. There were nine koala hits in the past year, which is nine too many. This area urgently needs fencing, culverts and more koala alert signs. Most importantly road speed reduction is essential in these areas - even a 60 kph would help save our beauties.

Friends of the Koala (FoK) in East Lismore, who do brilliant work with koala rescue and rehabilitation, was our last stop. The rehabilitation pens all had fresh leaf, which the tireless volunteers

collect each day. The nursery had dozens of gum tree saplings ready to be planted out and the hospital was caring for a young male koala who was getting ready for release. He had received the immensely important new Chlamydia vaccine which is being trialed at FoK.

Work on the vaccine began in 2008 so it has been a long procedure. Chlamydia is one of the main killers of koalas, along with dog attacks, road hits and of course habitat clearing. The hospital at FoK provides for X-Rays, ultrasound and surgery for koalas.

Expansion of these essential hospital services are greatly needed via donations! Go to the FoK website and specify 'donations for the hospital'.

So please, for the love of koalas, do not clear koala habitat, plant more food trees, monitor your dogs and drive slowly and carefully on our roads! We want our furry friends to survive and thrive!

Grey nomads - the best tree planters

by Scott O'Keeffe

Every autumn I encourage hundreds of grey nomads to turn up at my place. If you're planting trees, you should also take advantage of these long-distance travellers. If you're in the Northern Rivers watch for them passing overhead.

When they pass, you'll hear the roar of their wings, but you won't get a good look at them until they perch. Even then observation will be difficult since they mostly confine themselves to the canopies of tall trees.

Topknot pigeons (*Lopholaimus antarcticus*) inhabit tropical, sub-tropical and warm temperate rainforests from eastern Cape York to southeastern NSW. Despite this broad geographical range their numbers crashed as their habitat was cleared, fragmented and degraded. In the past, topknots were also commonly hunted.

Prior to the mid-20th century, flocks of several thousand were commonly seen through much of their range. Some sources claim that habitat destruction and hunting reduced their population to only a few hundred. Fortunately, their numbers have partly recovered. To understand how this recovery was possible, we need to understand the ecology of the species: their biology and place in the landscape.

Topknot pigeons inhabit rainforests with high tree species diversity. A large proportion of the tree species in these forests produce fleshy fruits that are consumed and dispersed by mammals and birds. One of the most



Topknot pigeons are a keystone rainforest species. Look for them through the winter in the canopies of tall trees.

Photo by the author

important of these dispersers is the topknot pigeon. One study in Queensland's Conondale Range showed that topknot pigeons consumed fruits of 84 tree, palm and vine species from 39 different plant families. Most of these produce fruit irregularly and/or for short periods. This variable food supply explains the topknot's nomadism. The birds must move in response to the patchy availability of food.

In turn, this nomadic behaviour has made it easier for topknots to take advantage of novel food resources. Enter the camphor laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*). It's not native but it is closely related to some of the topknot's important food trees. As native forests were thinned, cleared and fragmented, camphor laurels were planted as ornamentals, avenue trees and to mark property boundaries. These hardy, adaptable trees rapidly colonised areas where native forests previously grew. They also gained a foothold in disturbed rainforest remnants.

One special trait of the camphor made it the topknot's rescuer - not

just another pest plant. Camphors produce a reliable and abundant fruit crop in April, and they continue producing fruit through winter. Camphor laurels fruit just as the topknot's two primary food species finish. The pepper vine (*Piper novae-hollandiae*) fruits heavily and reliably from December to January and Bangalow palms (*Archontophoenix cunninghamii*) from February to March. The paucity of rainforest fruits that follows is compensated by camphors. Camphors produce fruit reliably from April right through to August.

Don't underestimate the importance of this landscape-wide event. The tree cover that remains in the cleared landscape consists largely of camphor trees. These grow in clusters and linear strands of trees on the watercourses that connect remnant vegetation. A large camphor tree can produce 30,000 fruits in a season. At a landscape scale that is a massive food resource for the topknots. These are the grey nomads that we see through autumn and winter as they spread tree seeds though the landscape.

While camphor seeds make up the bulk of what topknots eat in the autumn and winter, they still consume some native tree fruits. The intact seeds of the natives are voided with the camphor seeds. You'll see seedlings of some of these natives amongst the hundreds of camphor seedlings under Topknot roosting trees.

The population of topknot pigeons has partly recovered. In NSW the population is currently estimated to be around 70,000. In Northern Rivers we are lucky enough to be at the centre of their abundance. Camphor laurels are undeniably a big factor in the recovery. Legal protection for at least some of our rainforests is another.

There's a third factor. Prior to 1930, topknots were shot for food in significant numbers but starting with the *Birds and Animals Protection Act (1918)*, hunting topknots was prohibited. Enforcement was erratic for many years but eventually the practice ceased.

The topknot pigeon's story shows how ecological knowledge can improve our land management practices. It's too easy to dismiss camphor trees as simply exotic and pernicious. Ecologists are less interested in the camphor's origin but very interested in their function. What matters is that camphor laurels have rescued and sustained a keystone rainforest species. Topknots are essential in maintaining and improving native forest diversity in an altered landscape. In the Northern Rivers we are lucky enough to be at the centre of topknot abundance.

So, I'm not exterminating camphor laurels. I'm using grey nomads to help me replace them.

Values of visitation outweigh logging

North East Forest Alliance is calling for the NSW Government to stop logging State Forests and protect them as National Parks in light of the latest visitation statistics which show that national parks attract millions of visitors to regional areas, injecting billions of dollars into regional economies and generating thousands of jobs.

The Government identifies that the 65.6m visits to NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) parks last year injected \$19.5 billion into the state's economy and supported 62,000 jobs.

National parks in north-east NSW, north from Gosford, attracted 14.9 million visits last year. With 22.8% of NSW's visitation, on a pro-rata basis, national parks in north-east NSW are responsible for injecting around \$4.4 billion into the regional economy and supporting some 14,100 regional jobs.

"Conservation groups have fought hard over many decades to create most of our national parks, so it is reassuring to see that our efforts have been good for the environment and regional economies," North East Forest Alliance spokesperson Dailan Pugh said.

"Visitation to National Parks is rapidly increasing, over the past decade growing 25% in north east NSW. Creating new parks will

increase future recreational opportunities.

"Last year we lost \$32 million logging our public native forests to prop-up a declining industry being out competed by cheaper plantation timber.

"It's time we stopped logging and degrading our public native forests as it is in the community's best interests to protect them and allow them to recover," Mr Pugh said.



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