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# August 2018

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## HERPUTOPIA NEWS

*Promoting the care and enjoyment of reptiles  
and amphibians through education.*

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### REPTILE RAMBLINGS

That's right it's here again, your all-time favorite piece of the newsletter, the cram packed extravaganza we all know and love, the Reptile Ramblings!

This month's speaker was absolutely fantastic and one not to be missed, if you did miss it I will be offering free cuddles of condolence at the next meeting to those that weren't there as I really feel sorry for your not attending this one! We had Amanda Brett come and talk to us about her work as a Reptile veterinarian (Exotic Vet) as well as new case study she's leading! Now you might be thinking what's so great about a vet giving a talk we have had them before? Yes, but in my experience genuine reptile vets are few and far between, most vet surgeries will take on reptiles but don't have the same level of understanding that someone like Amanda was clearly able to demonstrate on the night! The Talk she gave was great and many people were able to get answers not easily found by talking with their cat and dog type vets!

Amanda is also leading a new study on carpet python hearts and is specifically looking at Albino Darwin Carpets to try find anomaly's associated with the mutation! If you have one of these snakes I'm sure she would greatly appreciate you bringing it in for her to run some tests and answer any reptile related questions you may have! Amanda practices at the North Nowra Veterinary Hospital and can be contacted on (02) 4423 1688.

Our August (6th) meeting has Mitchell Hodgson giving a talk titled "Staying cool when it gets too hot – how do lizards cope with different temperatures?"

Mitchell Hodgson is a PhD Student at the University of New South Wales investigating the different ways reptiles respond to temperature variation in their environment. His research uses the well-known Jacky Dragon (*Amphibolurus muricatus*) to tease apart elements of behaviour and physiology that allow reptiles to persist in a wide range of different climates. In addition to having an academic interest in lizards, Mitchell is also an avid keeper of reptiles at home, having kept over 40 species of Australian native

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Meetings are held on the **first Monday of the month at 6.30pm at Fairy Meadow Community Centre, Guest Park**, cnr Princes Hwy and Cambridge Ave, Fairy Meadow (opposite Woolworths)

LUCKY DOOR PRIZE at each meeting! Sausage Sizzle \$2.00; Drinks \$1.00; FREE tea and coffee

For enquires, contact 0433064460

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Albion Park NSW 2527

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### IRS Committee

President: Andrew Horlor 0424 383 131	Vice President: Craig Everson 0420 483 338
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Secretary: Jo Payne 0433 064 460	Treasurer: Garth Rankin 0439 209 539
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Committee Members:  
Kathy Hicks  
Lisa Gale  
Mel De Bono  
Amie Czulowski  
Paula Pereira  
Nina Markwell

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reptile. As a herpetoculturalist, Mitchell's real passion is captive small dragons, a group in his mind that are horribly underappreciated in the hobby. His talk will be giving an overview of his PhD research and some of his experiences in the field as well as tackling the important question of whether you should take the plunge into keeping small dragons? The presentation should be well rounded providing interesting tidbits for naturalists, keepers and reptile science enthusiasts!

If you want your cuddle you better be there!

Andrew Horlor  
President

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## Dates for your Diary and IRS Information

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### DATES

**August 6<sup>th</sup> – Mitchell Hodgson** talking on Jacky Dragons.

IRS Meeting Fairy Meadow 6:30pm.

**September 3<sup>rd</sup> – Dan Rumsey**

IRS Meeting Fairy Meadow 6:30pm.

**October 1<sup>st</sup> –** Date to be confirmed. Might be moved. Bring your cold-blooded pet night!

**October 21**

**Shoalhaven Zoo.** IRS Members Family Day. RSVP by the 7<sup>th</sup> October.

**November 5<sup>th</sup> – Scott Eipper** talking about his 2 newly released books.

IRS Meeting Fairy Meadow 6:30pm

**December 2<sup>nd</sup> – ARP and HCN Family day** @ Australian Reptile Park

**December 3<sup>rd</sup> – Xmas Party. Ross McGibbon and Anthony Stimson.** RSVP by the 20<sup>th</sup> November.

Suggestions are always welcomed by your committee. A suggestion box is available at meetings or alternatively, contact us via email.

## **Bandy-bandy: Venomous new snake species accidentally discovered by scientists immediately declared at risk of extinction**



Scientists have stumbled upon a previously undiscovered species of venomous snake, but warned it could already be at risk of extinction.

The new subspecies of bandy-bandy, a family of burrowing [snakes](#) endemic to [Australia](#), was found by chance by biologists from the University of [Queensland](#), who have quickly applied for it to be given protected status.

The team came across it while researching sea snakes near Weipa, a mining town on the west coast of the state's Cape York Peninsula, in May.

“Bandy-bandy is a burrowing snake, so Freek Vonk from the Naturalis Museum and I were surprised to find it on a concrete block by the sea,” said Professor Bryan Fry, who was leading the research.

“We later discovered that the snake had slithered over from a pile of bauxite rubble waiting to be loaded onto a ship.

“On examination by my student, Chantelle Derez, the bandy-bandy turned out to be a new species, visually and genetically distinct from those found on the Australian East coast and parts of the interior.”

The team found another specimen in its natural habitat near Weipa and another that had been killed by a car close to a mine. Two more were discovered in museum collections.



The bandy-bandy, a species of burrowing snake, is thought to be at risk because of mining (University of Queensland)

More

Biologists were previously aware of five species of bandy-bandy, also known as the hoop snake, which carry a mild venom, can grow to about a metre in length, and feed almost exclusively on blind snakes.

DNA analysis confirmed the discovery of a new species, which has been formally named *Vermicella parascauda*.

The Queensland biologists' study, published in the journal *Zootaxa*, also established that the species was more closely related to bandy-bandies which live in Western Australia's tropical forests than those found in the Cape York Peninsula.

But Prof Fry warned the new species may be in danger due to mining of its habitat.

"Bauxite mining is a major economic activity in the region, and it may be reshaping the environment to the detriment of native plants and animals," he said.

The biologists this week formally applied for the Queensland government's Department of Environment and Science to declare the snake a threatened species. The status, if granted, would mean mining companies are required to consider the welfare of the species and avoid destroying its habitat.

"The importance of such discoveries goes beyond simply documenting what is out there, as venoms are rich sources of compounds that can be used to develop new medications," said Prof Fry.

“Every species is precious and we need to protect them all, since we can’t predict where the next wonder-drug will come from.

“The discovery of this enigmatic little snake is symptomatic of the much more fundamental problem of how little we know about our biodiversity and how much may be lost before we even discover it.

## Chris Baynes

The Independent July 18, 2018

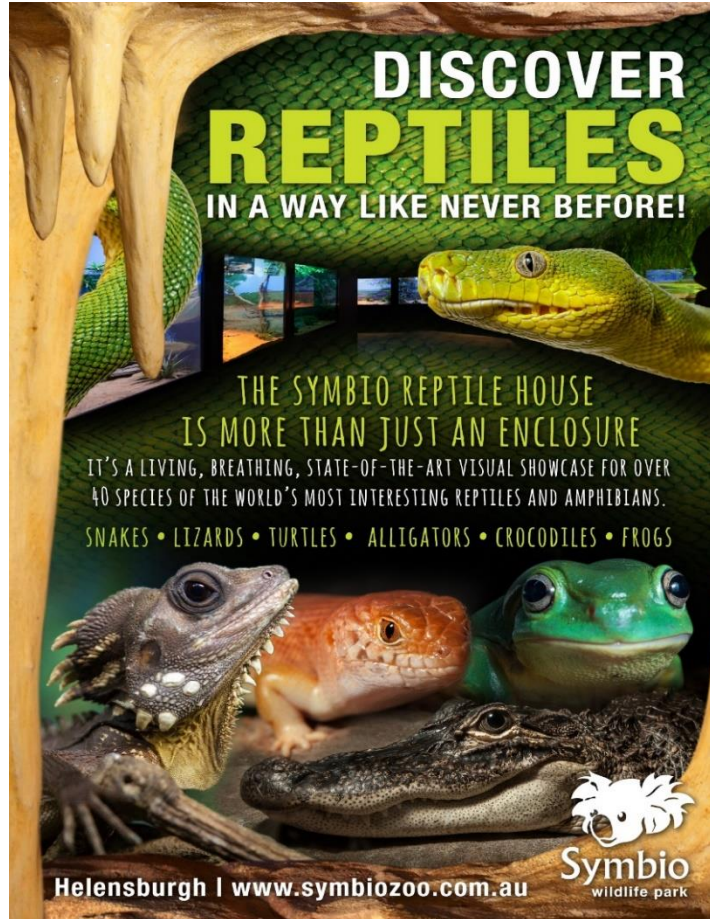
## Classifieds

IRS Members wanting to place an Add please email the IRS: [illawarrareptilesociety2015@gmail.com](mailto:illawarrareptilesociety2015@gmail.com)

<p>FOR SALE: Baby Longneck Turtles</p> <p>Bob 02 9521 2727</p>	<p>FOR SALE: 1 x Striped Male Jungle \$250.00 1 x Axanthic BHP 100% het male \$500.00 Aaron 0431 526843</p>
<p>FOR SALE: 2 x hatchling Wheatbelt Stimsons female \$150.00 each 1 x hatchling Albion Darwin male \$350.00</p> <p>Andy – 0424 383 131</p>	<p>I have a 6yr old spotted python that needs rehoming. Please contact via email if you are interested. <a href="mailto:illawarrareptilesociety2015@gmail.com.au">illawarrareptilesociety2015@gmail.com.au</a></p>



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