

Broad-Spectrum-Academics' Forum Essays

SINCE its inception in 1993, *Pacific Conservation Biology* has brought its readers more than quality peer-reviewed research. It has promoted science and science communication among research biologists, conservation managers and administrators with its editorials, opinion pieces, news and views and forum essays. The essays published have advocated policies and procedures that have been either broadly accepted or have met with colourful and insightful debates. For example, the series on ethics engendered strong and varied opinions (Fulton and Ford 2001; Tidemann and Vardon 2002; Dyson and Calver 2003). Fora are not generally available in journals where I have published and I have appreciated the opportunity afforded to me by this section of *Pacific Conservation Biology*.

Since becoming an Editor at this journal, I have championed the forum essay section as a place to advocate the knowledge of eminent researchers through inviting their scholarly treatises on major conservation of issues. For example, in 2009, Harry Recher and I pursued informed overviews on the drought stressed ("climate-changed") river systems of eastern Australia, which spawned two enlightening essays: Richard Kingsford's "Managing Australia's scarce water resources for the environment" and David Paton *et al.* "A future for the Coorong and Lower Lakes" (Kingsford 2009; Paton *et al.* 2009).

More recently, I extended invitations to authors, taken from a broader catchment, to advocate their conservation position in the forum essay section. Notably, Carol Booth and Tim Low (2009) expounded on "The conservation hunting con.", while Ian Kiernan AO of *Clean up Australia* and *Clean up the World* quoted some salient figures on "The true cost of bottled water" (Kiernan 2009). My general intention was to bring alternate perspectives on conservation to *Pacific Conservation Biology's* readership.

Now, and into the future, the forum section will host a series of conservation essays written by prominent authors from a broader selection of scientific and allied fields, including some that are not immediately seen as the "usual suspects" in conservation biology, including astronomers, bio-statisticians, social scientists, paleontologists, economists and historians. For example, astronomy has brought us iconic photographs that promote the Earth's environment. Most among us will be moved to see a human footprint on the moon and awe at the thin blue atmosphere seen in the NASA's

famous Earthrise photograph. That thin blue atmosphere is inescapably connected to climate science and conservation, its thinness a stark reminder of the risks we run in changing its chemical composition. The uniting themes of the essays will be conservation and advocacy in conservation. Most of the essayists will be conscripted (otherwise known as invited), but unconscripted graduates, academics, managers and administrators are strongly encouraged to submit. All essays will be peer reviewed and preceded, in print, by a short biography.

The first of these invited essays is in this issue and aptly authored by the prolifically published Rick Shine who discusses an evidence-based approach versus an emotion-based approach in conservation management and advocacy while giving emphasis to "preaching to the unconverted masses" (Shine 2010). I thank Rick, who like many of us is very *busy*, yet he has still managed to find the time to make a contribution. I hope these innovative essays will engage readers to think outside their usual sphere and to be encouraged by quality and diversity of a very broad conservation community.

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Graham R. Fulton

School of Natural Sciences, Edith Cowan University, 100 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup, WA, 6207, Australia.

grahamf2001@yahoo.com.au