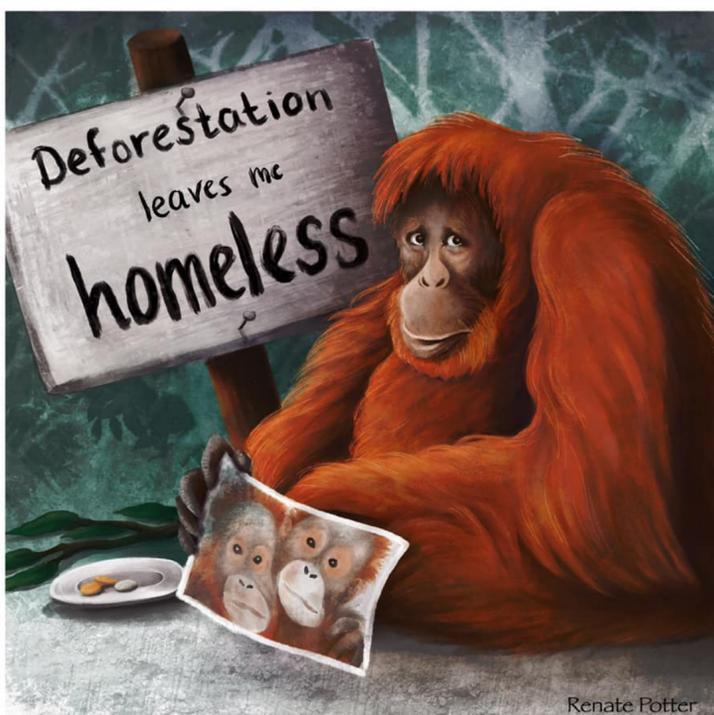




## AN UPDATE FROM OPCA

We kicked off 2021 by launching our partnership with **EditArtz**; a community of artists who are looking to make an impact in the natural world with their poignant artwork. We have joined forces with them to add scientific backing from our devoted conservation community.

The **'Planet Posters' project** sets an environmentally-focused theme each month for artists to send in their own unique narrative of the issue at hand. The aim is to run 12 themes over the year and put together a beautiful collection of art that can be used to gather support for the conservation projects in our network and raise awareness



Art by Renate Potter for EditArtz 'Planet Posters' project from 'Deforestation' month

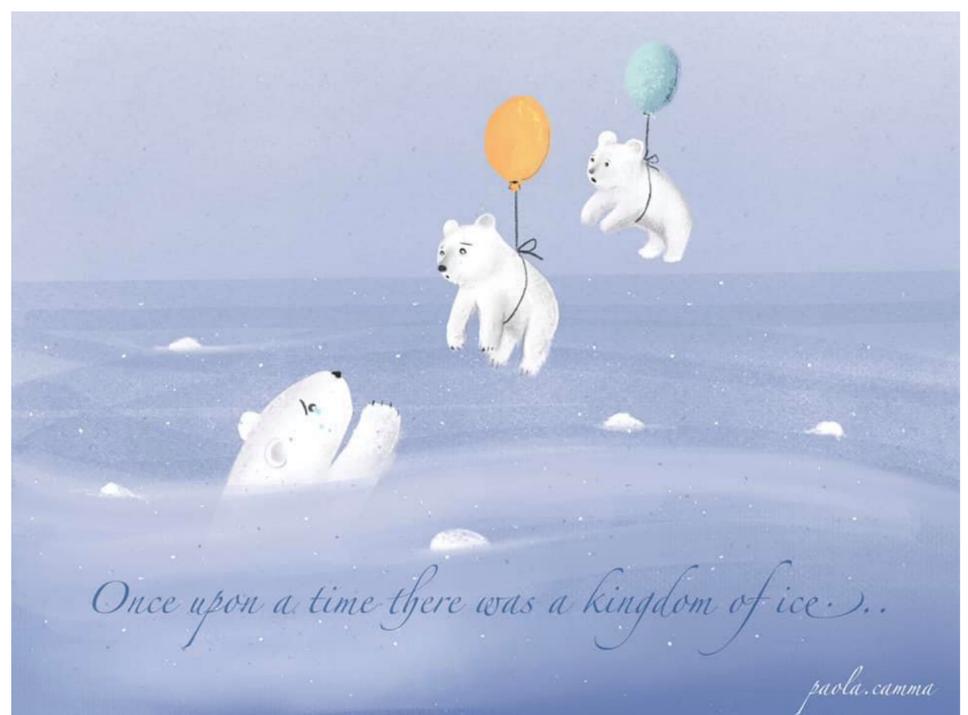
## IN THIS ISSUE...

- An update from OPCA
- Eco-education in Australia
- Coral Planting Success in Thailand
- Tackling Covid Related Poaching
- Discover: Bryde's Whale
- Joe and Xi give us hope

of global threats to wildlife.

So far, this year has been a time to reconnect with our projects after the festive break and lay out our exciting plans for the new year. We are thrilled with the future events and fundraisers we have in store.

This month, we have finally been able to wave a not-so-fond farewell to the **damaging leadership of Donald Trump**, a victory in the eyes of many nature lovers around the world. We hope that soon we can also wave goodbye to the equally frustrating COVID-19. We want to start fresh with a new, green and joyful normal!



Art by Paola Camma for EditArtz 'Planet Posters' project from 'Melting Ice and Rising Sea Levels' month





# ECO-EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

An update from Wild Education

Wild education’s mission is to educate and empower people of all ages to care more deeply for our planet. Through their holistic online educational resources, they have so far been able to **reach out and inspire over five thousand students internationally.**

The Wild Warriors education programme is an online sustainability course designed for primary school teachers to use from the classroom or via remote learning. Students gain an understanding of ecosystems from around the world, with exclusive access to Wild Education’s **two award-winning documentaries.**

The team at Wild Education are thrilled to announce a new partnership with **Eco-Schools Australia** that will allow even more students to engage and enjoy the incredible learning opportunity. When you sign up for the Wild Warriors Bundle course you will now receive a free annual registration with Eco-Schools Australia, allowing schools and teachers to broaden their green horizons.



Still from short documentary by Wild Education called 'Orangutans: Guardians Of The Forest'



Wild Education's Wild Apparel organic t-shirts

During this strange time where many children are having to learn from behind a computer screen, here at OPCA we think it is important that children are encouraged to engage with some alternative outdoor learning. Check out some top tips and ideas below, of how you can **incorporate some 'green' learning into your new home-schooling** roles.

<https://www.sunspaces.co.uk/news/post/home-schooling-garden>

Wild education has recently celebrated an amazing milestone of **planting 300 trees** through their Wild Apparel programme. With their beautifully designed organic t-shirts that plant 3 trees with each sale, Wild Education are having a real impact on Australia’s bush-fire recovery.



Wild Education founder, Roxy, looking at destruction from Australia's Bush Fires



# CORAL PLANTING SUCCESS IN THAILAND

An update from Sapir at KTTC (Kohn Tan Conservation Centre)

Wow, what a wonderful two weeks we just had!

Koh Tan Conservation Centre, led by the DMCR (Department of Marine and Coastal Resources), and with the amazing help from the team at Dive Point Samui, have just completed the **construction of 60 artificial reefs** on three different sites around Koh Tan and Koh Madsum. In total, we **planted over 4000 fragments of Staghorn coral**; a species that used to thrive in abundance around the south islands of Koh Samui, and now is almost completely decimated by human impacts.

Replanting coral fragments from a nursery created only 5 years ago is a fantastic achievement and living proof that these modern coral restoration methods work successfully in the area. By harvesting corals from a nursery, the coral cover on the natural reef is not affected. Therefore, this **method is considered sustainable** for all species that rely on coral reefs for food, shelter and habitat.

Spending the last two weeks in the company of the DMCR team was a great honour for us and a heart-warming reassurance of how much they care for the **marine life around our beautiful islands**. These guys are super productive, waking up in the early hours of dawn to start preparing for the day ahead. Going out to sea, mapping the coral around the islands, constructing the artificial reef in SCUBA, planting coral fragments, **cleaning the reef from ghost nets**, and after a brief rest, sitting with the locals and raising awareness about the environment. What heroes!



Ghost nets that have been removed from the reef

Sitting around the bonfire on the final night of our hard work with good food and cold beer, we celebrated a successful project and the beginning of a great partnership in taking care of the sea around us. We are already looking forward to next month, where we **will plant another 2000 coral fragments** on two more sites around Koh Samui.

**To be continued.**



Team from Koh Tan Conservation Centre, Department of Marine and Coral Resources and Dive Point Samui

## For those who are interested, here is more information about the restoration project:

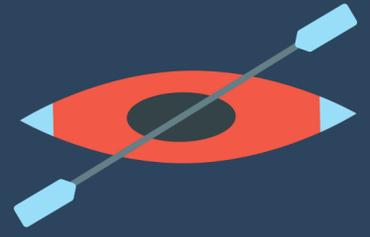
Every artificial reef structure is 1.2 square metres, spread along the existing reef at 3-5 metres depth.

These specific sites were chosen after researching water temperature, tide conditions, current directionality, and existing marine life surveys to increase the survival chances of young corals.

For obvious reasons we keep the location of the reef to ourselves and only authorised and trained personnel will be taken to maintain the site.

We welcome everyone to support us, either by donating or coming to visit us for a while.





## TACKLING COVID RELATED POACHING IN MOZAMBIQUE

An update from Love the Oceans

Love the Oceans is working with fishermen in Jangamo, Mozambique to ensure that locals who have lost their income due to a lack of tourism, can continue to fish for their families in a more sustainable way.

The global pandemic has **reduced the income from tourism by over 95%** in this developing nation, leaving huge amounts of the population without an income. This has resulted in increased pressure on the oceans as people have turned to **illegal poaching to feed their families**. This unsustainable fishing could result in a collapse in local fish stocks, ultimately leaving people to starve. Love the Oceans' **sustainable fishing project** offers an opportunity for people to continue to fish for their families legally and sustainably - a massive win for the people and the oceans!

"People have become desperate, turning to illegal poaching for food. This project is the first of its kind in this area and builds on our 5-year coral and fisheries research which provided invaluable evidence of the damage being done to fish stocks through spearfishing and netting," says Love the Oceans founder Francesca Trotman.

This initiative provides fishermen with kayaks, allowing them to reach deeper waters and target larger carnivorous fish - the fish that predate on the herbivores, allowing the **herbivore population to recover**. To participate, the fishermen must give up their other unsustainable methods of fishing (netting and spearfishing) and take part in a sustainability workshop, ultimately alleviating pressure on local reefs and **restoring balance in the marine ecosystem**.

The project is designed to eventually become financially sustainable in itself, with the fishermen earning enough to maintain it.



Fisherman using Kayak to fish sustainably



Turtle entangled in fishing net

"This is a locally led project, working in partnership with the fishing community. It has the potential to **change the face of fishing** in this region and save the coral reefs while we still can." says Francesca Trotman, Founder at Love the Oceans.

**Check out their website to see if it's a worthy cause you could get behind.**

<https://lovethеоceans.org/>



## DISCOVER: BRYDE'S WHALE

### COMMON BRYDE'S WHALE (*Balaenoptera brydei*)

The Common Bryde's whale is a **baleen whale**, more specifically a rorqual belonging to the same group as blue whales and humpback whales. Rorquals are slender and streamlined in shape, they **have no teeth** but two rows of baleen plates. These plates coupled with a mouth that can open extremely wide shape their distinct feeding behaviour. They engulf a huge amount of prey and water in a single lunge, using their baleen plates to filter out the water and retain their food. Bryde's whales feed on a wide variety of fish, planktonic crustaceans, and cephalopods. They regularly dive for about 5-15 minutes. Bryde's whales can **reach depths of 1000 metres**.



**Conservation status:** Data Deficient

**Population size:** Some populations of Bryde's whales were seriously depleted from historical whaling practices. As a result, they are now protected worldwide. An estimated population of **80,000-100,000** animals exist in the wild.

**Distribution:** Wide distribution and occur in tropical, subtropical, and warm temperate waters (16°C to 22°C). Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.

**Size:** 35 to 50 foot in length

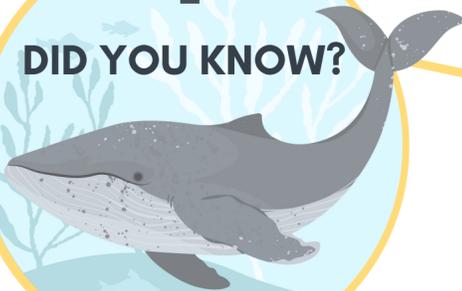
**Weight:** Ranges from 12-25 tonnes

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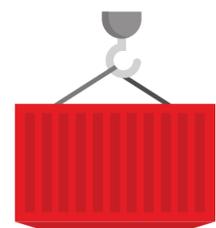
These marine mammals generally travel at speeds of less than 5 miles per hour, but when threatened, they can reach speeds of up to **15 miles per hour**.

Known for spectacular feeding behaviours, which involve **lunging mouths** agape through schools of fish and krill, Bryde's whales have a diverse diet.

#### DID YOU KNOW?



Bryde's whales are named after Norwegian commercial whaling pioneer **Johan Bryde**. The pronunciation of the name Bryde's is not, as is generally thought, the same as bride – but rather, BROO-dus.



Calves are about 11 to 13 feet long at birth and **weigh about a tonne**, or about the same weight as a cargo container.



## JOE AND XI GIVE US HOPE



World leaders have the power to shape our future. Despite this, all they seem to do is dream of eternal economic growth without addressing the most pressing issue of human times, **the climate crisis**. They are of course scared that they would become unpopular if they suggested that instead of pumping money into our consumerist society, we use the money to conserve biodiversity, or perhaps enhance it.

Here in the UK we have Boris, who promises to plant millions of trees whilst at the same time **ripping down irreplaceable ancient woodland** for his ridiculous vanity project HS2 (don't get us started). In Brazil they have president Jair Bolsonaro, who views the amazon rainforest, the lungs of the world, as prime land for real estate.

It is the developed countries that must lead the way. Developing countries have every right to dream of economic growth and a better standard of living.

There is hope on the horizon! Chinese president Xi Jinping has **vowed to tie economic growth with ecological conservation**. China will soon become one of the world leaders in green energy, a huge statement considering it is currently one of the most polluting countries in the world in terms of CO2 emissions.

We also have one of the greatest upgrades of our time in the form of Joe Biden replacing Donald Trump as president of the USA. President Biden has already in his short time in office **re-signed the Paris Climate Agreement** and put a stop to the Keystone XL oil pipeline that would have destroyed fragile ecosystems and undermined the vision of moving away from fossil fuels. Way to go Biden!



Both Joe and Xi regard the ecological emergency as high priority. If a few more of the major superpowers follow suit, we will soon be able to slow global warming and **protect vital biodiversity**.

