



MEDIA RELEASE

Darwin Hosts ANGFA Convention

Wildlife experts from around the world will be in Darwin this weekend to share more than a few fishy tales.

The get together is part of the biennial Australian New Guinea Fishes Association (ANGFA) 2007 Darwin Convention where some of those attending will discuss the discovery of new fish populations and other issues affecting fish management and conservation.

Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) Curator of Fishes, Dr Helen Larson, helped organise the convention and is looking forward to hearing other people's presentations after she presents the introductory talk.

"Many Territorians would be amazed at the many different and beautiful native fish species they can keep as pets and through this they become more aware of how native fish should be managed," Dr Larson said.

"People who keep fish often observe them closely and it is these same people who often go out bush and are then able to pass on vital information about wild fish to us.

"So this convention is basically good old fashioned awareness-raising to either create new links and connections or strengthen existing ones."

Territory Wildlife Park (TWP) curator Dion Wedd is also set to present a talk titled *Wildlife Utilisation for Sustainable Conservation* at the convention.

"My point of discussion is aimed at altering the attitudes among people towards conservation," Mr Wedd said.

"One way of doing that is to allow people to get up close and personal with animals that they would not otherwise get a chance to see in the wild.

"At the Territory Wildlife Park people can have close encounters with animals such as reptiles, birds of prey, whip-rays, mammals and fish.

"An encounter that allows people to touch and even hold some of these animals may help to change some in-grained attitudes toward animals in a way that supports a conservation mind set.

"I think that as people are becoming more aware of processes affecting our environment such as climate change and the potential impact this can have on the environment they're becoming more aware of other environmental issues such as conservation.

"Animals are the medium we use to promote a conservation message to a wider audience.

"We hope that by providing a non-threatening encounter with say a snake for example, people will be more inclined to support a conservation mind set.

“To be actively involved in conservation you need to be actively involved in maintaining habitat and we as humans need to realise that if we don’t maintain the environment we eventually won’t have much to live in.”

The Convention is being held this Saturday and Sunday at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Ballroom with tickets \$130 for ANGFA members and \$150 for non-members.

A post-convention party will take place at the Territory Wildlife Park on Sunday night.

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact Dr Helen Larson on 8999 8253 or Dion Wedd on 8988 7200

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