



WAMBALIMAN

The newsletter of the
Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland
Fraser Coast Branch



THIS ISSUE:

***COVID-19
restrictions
easing***

- Presidential Ponderings
- Branch Activity Report
- Backyard BioBlitz
- Nature Watch
- Conversation with Denise Young

WINTER 2020

WAMBALIMAN since 1967

In the language of the Butchulla people, who are custodians of land that includes the Fraser Coast, 'wambaliman' means 'to carry', and refers to the messages that the Newsletter is communicating.

Editor's Note

It's good to see some whole Branch activities re-commencing after the Covid restrictions, starting with a social get together at Arkarra Tea Gardens on Sunday July 19th. I hope to finish this Winter edition of Wambaliman in time for this (and save on some postage). Arkarra Lagoons was purchased by the Council after a campaign by our Branch and is where we are planning on contributing funding for new signs from money left to us by Joan Coutts.

I think we underestimate the impact of the scrapping of our local free papers and others going digital. I am sure I am not alone when I say that I am computer literate but I still enjoyed reading a paper copy of news. This is certainly a transition phase and ones who are going to miss out are the older people who do not have internet access to stay informed.

Considering the above it is a dilemma for Wambaliman also. For 53 years Wambaliman has been printed in grayscale. About 15 years ago we started putting it on the internet in colour – but the printed copy was the focus. Now we have about a third of our membership opting for a coloured digital file only. We have several members without computers who rely on the printed copy. I get many comments that people like the printed copy.

But these realities pose a problem for me. A photo that looks great in colour may look nothing in grayscale. While columns of text are the easiest to read in the printed copy they are more difficult to read on a screen. I am cognisant of these things when I put together Wambaliman – but I have to compromise all round.

I started doing occasional “volunteer profiles” for Wambaliman in 2004, but after nearly 30 of them, I have slowed down. But following a couple of chats with Denise this week I decided, rather than gathering information for a “profile” I was enjoying a “conversation”. So from now on from me it's going to be “A conversation with.....”

Thanks to all our contributors. And a special thanks to Carol who is always ready with a photo or an article to fill a space at short notice. ✿



WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND

known informally as

WILDLIFE QUEENSLAND

FRASER COAST BRANCH

PO Box 7396 Urangan, 4655

President:

Vanessa Elwell-Gavins
0428 624 366

Vice President:

John Williams 0428 980 019

Secretary:

Bruce Dick 41248142

Treasurer:

Contact - Jenni Watts

Facebook

Peter Duck 0432 250 213

Webpage

Head Office via Jenni Watts

Wildlife Matters articles

Carol Bussey: 41173483

Newsletter WAMBALIMAN

Publisher:

WPSQ Fraser Coast

Editor & Production:

Jenni Watts 0481289521

with assistance from Peter Duck

Proofreading:

Andrea Van Kampen

Mailing:

Jackie Henrion

WAMBALIMAN

Contents WINTER 2020

Presidential Ponderings	4
Quarterly Branch Activity Report	6
Branch Petition	8
Walks Team & EAG	9
Fraser Coast Backyard BioBlitz	10
Echidnas in SEQ	13
Koalas	14
Environmental Law	15
Nature Watch	16
Conversation with Denise Young	20
From the Wambi Vault	22
Book: Caring for Australian W/L	23

WAMBALIMAN

e-copy in colour
hardcopy in black and white

Let us know if you want the e-copy only.

Contributions for Wambaliman

We welcome contributions from WPSQ members and supporters. Articles can take the form of reports, observations of nature, anecdotes, quotes, humour etc.

Send contributions to:
ggduckz@gmail.com

**Submissions for the next issue
are due by Friday 9 OCTOBER 2020**

Opinions expressed in Wambaliman are not necessarily those endorsed by the Wildlife Preservation Society Queensland, Fraser Coast Branch unless specifically attributed to them.

NOTICE BOARD

Branch meetings

Usually held 3rd Sunday of month 2:00pm
Halcro St Community Centre, Pialba

15 July: Executive meeting
19 July: Social meeting at Arkarra 1:30pm
16 August: General meeting

Backyard BioBlitz #4

Last weekend in July

WILDLIFE TALKS IN THE LIBRARY

Hervey Bay Library

-usually third Friday of the month

Maryborough Library

-usually last Friday of the month

book online (FCRC) or ring library

cancelled until further notice

NATURE WALKS

usually first Saturday or Sunday of month

8 August - Beelbi Creek Nature Reserve

? September - Poona

*NB. Bookings do not open until
information sheets are distributed.*

OTHER GROUPS - EVENTS

FCRC—CEP

For information

tina.raveneau@frasercoast.qld.gov.au

FCRC - Land for Wildlife

For information

skott.statt@frasercoast.qld.gov.au

Don't forget to LIKE us on
Facebook @WPSQFraserCoast

Check out our page on

<http://wildlife.org.au>

Presidential Ponderings *with Vanessa Elwell-Gavins*

I can't help feeling that our earth has reached a tipping point as a whole, as well as in Australia and in our region.

Evidence of catastrophic climate change is all around us, the most stark of which for us was the dreadful summer of bush-fires, starting last September. Covid-19 has changed our lives and our global communities forever, and, given its probable origin in wildlife before jumping to humans, may make some people even more cautious than they usually are when they see our own wildlife.

In Australia, we see environmental laws and regulations being watered down, in the name of 'jobs and growth', just when we need them to be strengthened. In the Fraser Coast, land clearing for development continues apace. What always strikes me as I drive down Boat Harbour Drive and through most sub-divisions, is just how little shade there is, and just how unappealing the sight of endless concrete and asphalt is. I would be prepared to bet that during the weeks of Covid-19 restrictions, those people who had access to their own acreage, or to parkland or other natural areas, would have fared better mentally than those whose vistas contain only concrete.

I constantly ask myself how our Branch can be more effective in achieving our main objective, preserving the flora and fauna of our region, in the face of these challenges. With humans facing our own existential threats with Covid-19 and climate change, it may be harder to grab people's attention to focus on the challenges facing our wildlife.

It seems to me we need to get past the 'gee whiz' approach, which may be useful as far as it goes in providing

'entertainment' and not being 'threatening'. However, it rarely leads to long-term behavioural or attitudinal change and without either of those, our environment will continue to be decimated as people keep doing what they want, regardless of how their actions might impact on our wildlife.

Our community education program has been largely curtailed since March, but will, I hope, be ramped up again in coming weeks. This is a 'soft' way of helping us know a little more about our ecosystems and the threats to them.

Our Backyard BioBlitz has filled a valuable niche for participants, while our walks program has been in hibernation, and it will become a permanent fixture on a quarterly basis. I have thoroughly enjoyed the three Backyard BioBlitzes we have held so far, and was able to use them not just to improve my neglected photographic skills, but importantly to learn about the critters in my garden that I had overlooked. In the June BioBlitz, it was exciting for me to photograph and learn about a skink and two butterfly species that I had not been aware of seeing before. A sense of awe helps us appreciate the world around us. I hope that we may be able to use Backyard BioBlitz data to talk about changes over time, threats to biodiversity, or, thinking positively, how we can all have a thriving, biodiverse ecosystem in our own gardens, even if we live on a small block in a brand new sub-division.

The 2020-21 financial year promises us the opportunity to participate in the review of the Fraser Coast regional planning scheme. Urban development poses the single most immediate threat to our regional biodiversity, and the planning

scheme should guide all development. One of the biggest challenges, though, is that development applications are all considered by rules in place when the original development application was lodged, which may have been more than 25 years ago. Another challenge is that the current planning scheme appears to pay lip-service to environmental issues, but in practice appears to have limited 'teeth'.

Finally, I want to thank the many of you who gathered signatures for our petition asking Council to include green space and retain natural areas in all future developments - see separate article. Petitions like this do not have useful sta-

tistical validity, but nevertheless they give us a valuable litmus test of public sentiment. Politicians will be swayed by where they think there are likely to be votes. We have demonstrated that there is public support in our region for green spaces and natural areas.

Inevitably, though, there are many who do not share our views. Our challenge is not to 'shout louder', but to try to find common ground. It strikes me that, as with most challenges, we need to get better at 'working smarter', rather than 'working harder'.

We cannot afford to have our members suffering from burn-out! ❀

It is the humblest of people who usually surprise and impress me (perhaps all of us?) the most. Fraser Coast Branch member, Sharon White, who is a dear friend and 'almost a neighbour' on a 5-acre block in Dundowran Beach, is one of those hidden gems. We met fairly soon after we moved to Hervey Bay at much the same time, just over seven years ago.

I knew Sharon had been a wildlife carer before moving to Hervey Bay. What I did not know was that Sharon is a published author, with a fifth printing in a newly revised edition of her meticulously presented, stunningly illustrated, fascinating and important book, hot off the press -

Caring for Australian Wildlife.

Wildlife rehabilitation is a specialist subject requiring knowledge and accreditation. But ordinary members of the public often find sick or injured critters that might need early intervention before an accredited carer can arrive. This book targets that audience but should have a broad readership among everyone with any interest in the environment. Chapter 1 of Sharon's book provides a succinct over-

view of wildlife ecology including useful tips on attracting wildlife to your garden, while Chapter 2 looks at the effects of humans in creating the problems our wildlife is facing. The rest of the book focuses on the practicalities and principles of wildlife care, including ethical issues, and provides detailed guidance on rehabilitation for specific categories of wildlife, as well as some excellent appendices.

Wildlife rehabilitation may not be our Branch's 'core business'. We cannot do 'everything' so we leave the care and rehabilitation of sick and injured individual animals to those with the necessary skills and focus on wildlife preservation at the macro/species/ecosystem level through education, lobbying decision makers and trying to influence planning. But both roles are critical if our wildlife is to have any hope of surviving into the future.

Congratulations, Sharon, on your outstanding achievement in producing this beautiful and valuable publication! I commend Sharon's book to you all.

❀ *Vanessa*

see page 23 for more details of the book

Quarterly Branch Activity Report 2 April - 10 July 2020

In the Autumn 2020 quarter, Covid-19 restrictions played havoc with our nature walks program (which was due to start in May), a planned shorebirds workshop, the Library talks, the Schools program and Branch meetings. All activities scheduled in these programs for this quarter had to be **cancelled**. We had hoped the Library might be able to record the Library talk presentations, and load them onto its website, but in the end social isolation requirements probably made this too challenging at the time. All has not been lost, however, and the Branch has continued to be active.

Branch petition

A petition was submitted to Council in June - see *separate article next page*

Correspondence

- Council: The Branch sent two letters to Council about the land clearing for development of a triangular block on Murphy St in Point Vernon. We also sent a letter asking Council to take a strong stand against illegal tree poisoning on public land in Point Vernon. A letter is also in the pipeline asking Council to reconsider its current beach 'cleaning' practices, particularly on less-used beaches like Dundowran Beach, because of the significant environmental impact.

- Environmental Defenders' Office (EDO): We have been in communication with Revel Pointon, lawyer with the EDO, about the apparent failure of the current State Planning legislation to include a 'sunset clause' on development applications and what may also

be an apparent failure to insist on compliance with due process.

Submissions

- The Branch made a submission to the 10-year review of the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (**EPBC) Act 1999**. This is the legislation that is supposed to protect all 'matters of national environmental significance', including nationally listed threatened species and ecosystems, and is used by the minister in determining whether development or other activities might cause 'significant' or 'material' environmental harm to these 'matters'.
- The Branch made a submission to the **Single Use Plastics** survey.

Urban Development & Land Use Change Sub-committee

Peter Duck, John Williams and Vanessa Elwell-Gavins had two foiled attempts to meet with a wildlife spotter who had raised concerns with us that wildlife are served very poorly by the current arrangements for wildlife spotting in land clearing for development.

Wildlife Matters

Two articles were published in The Independent and the Maryborough Herald in each of May and June. These included two articles by Carol Bussey on the Flying Duck Orchid and the St Andrew's Cross Spider (reproduced in this Wambaliman), an article by Peter Duck on the magnificent display of butterflies this autumn, and an article by Diane Christensen on the right sort of nets to be used on fruit trees to protect

flying foxes who might want to raid a fruit crop. Sadly, the closure of both The Independent and The Maryborough Herald at the end of June has now removed this avenue for reaching the general community.

Grants

All monies from the FCRC Community Environment Grant for the signage and track markers in Parraweena Park Bushland Reserve and BMRG grant for Common Myna awareness program have been expended. Both projects are ongoing in the community.

Backyard BioBlitz



In May, we introduced a new 'citizen science' program for members and anyone else with an interest in learning more about the wildlife in our own backyards. Many thanks to new member Charmaine Savage and her reference group for setting up the BioBlitzes and for reporting on the findings of each. Participants in these weekends got a lot out of it, and found a treasure trove of species in their houses and gardens. Once the coronavirus restrictions have

eased and our nature walks program has resumed, we will hold the Backyard BioBlitz quarterly, so we can monitor seasonal changes in our local and backyard wildlife over time. All you need to participate is a camera (your mobile phone camera will do) and the iNaturalist app downloaded onto your mobile phone, and/or an account set up with iNaturalist on your desktop computer. Good luck!!

Communications

•Our Facebook Page is expanding its reach. We have 427 followers which gives us a powerful conduit to get messages out there effectively. For example, a post encouraging participation in the Council's illegal vegetation survey was shared multiple times and ending up reaching 4,640 Facebook accounts. The information and results of the first BioBlitz reached well over 1,000 users. Peter Duck is keen for members to feed material to him to keep issues running and education happening. Many thanks to Peter for keeping this going so well.

•The Branch's webpage on the Wildlife Queensland website is constantly updated and looks fabulous. We no longer have a Branch Blog and the page is now administered by Head Office.

•The Autumn issue of Wambaliman was circulated in April. Many thanks to editor Jenni and all contributors!

✿*report by*

Terry, Vanessa, Jenni and Peter

Branch Fundraiser - CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

Vice president, John Williams has set up a code in his name with all monies being deposited straight into our Branch's bank account. Here are the details you will need:

Code: C10192159

Contact Phone: 0428980019

Branch Petition

Back in November 2019, the Branch agreed to a proposal from Jackie Henrion to conduct a petition on the need for green space in all new developments. The petition was conducted over Summer 2019-20. The original closing date of 27 February was extended at the February general meeting to 27 March, the day before the local government elections, as we realised it would be best to present it to the new Council, rather than the old one.

We lost two weeks of potential signature gathering to the COVID-19 restrictions, but we still managed to get 533 signatures. Of these, 526 were Fraser Coast residents.

The petition was presented to the Mayor, George Seymour, by President Vanessa and Secretary Bruce in early June. When we met with him, the Mayor commented that this was the biggest petition he had seen in several years. I am not sure whether he was speaking about 'all petitions' or just paper-based ones when he made that comment. I do know that the minimum requirement for a petition to be presented is 10 signatures, and that on a population basis our petition compared very favourably with number of signatures obtained on a similar one conducted over a six-month period in South East Queensland a couple of years ago.

The mayor invited Vanessa as President to speak to the petition in the 'public participation session' at the Council meeting in Maryborough (held in the hall) on Wednesday 24 June. Because of Covid-19 restrictions this was a closed session, with only one member of the public (ie in this instance only me as presenter) able to be present in the Council chamber at any one time. Five minutes were allocated for presentations, and there was no opportunity for questions or discussion, so it felt a bit like an audition or an oral exam. I received a very gracious email of thanks from one new Councillor. I understand that Council will reply formally at some stage.

Many thanks to all those members and supporters who worked so hard to get signatures on the petition, particularly Jackie and Ruby Rosenfield who between them secured nearly 50% of the signatures, before the mid February Branch meeting.

It can be very 'tough' asking people to sign things like this. Sometimes people simply did not want to be seen as 'greenies' by their friends and fellow-community group members. On the other hand, I was hugely heartened by the number of signatures we did get and the willingness of all those I approached to sign. 🌟 *Vanessa*

Council has also conducted a well-publicised survey of residents on the issue of tree poisoning at Point Vernon, which many of our members participated in. It appeared from comments generated on the Council's Facebook page the vast majority of residents are appalled by the practice and encourage the Council to increase their efforts in an attempt to apprehend offenders and ensure punitive measures discourage further vandalism.

Walks Organising Team meet



The nature Walks organising committee met at Arkarra on Saturday 11 July to discuss the commencement of the walks program. Pictured here is John Williams, Frank Ekin and Tina Raveneau. Unfortunately Terry and Roland resigned from the committee - so if any one wants to help out - they would be more than welcome to join the team.

Nature Walks will start again in August with a walk in the Beelbi Creek Nature Reserve. The reserve was purchased by Council with Environmental Levy Funds a few years ago. It has diverse vegetation types from woodland to wallum heathland to saltmarsh and mangrove communities. A special feature is the occurrence of patterned fens. At this stage the committee is looking at restricting numbers. ❁

Environmental Advisory Group (EAG)

Meetings of the Council's Environmental Advisory Group are currently postponed. The last meeting occurred on February 27. Two items to report from that meeting are that the Council has initiated an 'Improved Vegetation Management Framework' project and is working on mapping products as related to Locally Significant Species identified in the Threatened Species Action Plan, and that approval has been provided to develop a Biodiversity Strategy.

A significant item to report from Council that has received public attention has been the announcement of the purchase from former Environmental Levy funds of a 60 ha property at Takura which includes 25 ha of endangered microphyll/notophyll vine forest (RE 12.5.13) . Some of the species recorded in a vegetation survey in 1993 were Kauri Pine, Yellow Pearfruit, Python Tree, Crows Ash, Bumpy Ash and Lignumvitae. ❁**Peter Duck**



The Takura land purchased by the Council contains flora uncommon to rare in the Fraser Coast area due to the poor representation of this vegetation type generally. Bird life is abundant and numerous platelets were observed on initial visits indicating button quail feeding sites. The presence of button quails demonstrates that this is a healthy functioning ecosystem. A subsequent visit has provided sightings of Noisy Pittas.

Fraser Coast Branch Backyard BioBlitz

Hello everyone,
I hope you have enjoyed following our Backyard BioBlitzes. As a new member I have enjoyed coordinating them with the help of other members and associates, mainly including Vanessa Elwell-Gavins, Scott Gavins, Peter Duck and Tony van Kampen; but others have also helped along the way.

A BioBlitz is a concerted effort to discover and record as many living things as possible within a set location over a limited time period. It is also a great way to engage the public to connect to their environment while generating useful data for science and conservation. The idea of running our own BioBlitz for the Branch was first floated to continue active participation within our group while adhering to Covid-19 social distancing laws, and hence why we limited the BioBlitz to the backyard.

As you would be aware from the correspondence that has been sent out, observations for the BioBlitz were recorded using the iNaturalistAu web based program, which meant that each event could be followed in real-time by anyone. This program is free and can be set up on your computer or phone. Anyone who wished to actively participate had to sign up, log in and record observations by taking close up photos or sound recordings of any wild plant, animal or fungi. Once an observation is uploaded, other users of the program help to identify it.

iNaturalist Australia is a member of the iNaturalist Network. Observations submitted are added to the global iNaturalist database and shared with the Atlas

of Living Australia to help scientists find and use recorded data.

To date we have run three Backyard BioBlitzes, concentrating on recording wild plants, animals and fungi. The table (next page) shows a summary of observations made, the number of species recorded, the number of observers who participated and the number of identifiers who helped to identify the species recorded. Not all observations were able to be identified down to species level. Identification to species level is not always guaranteed and/or may take many months.

I hope during the events you enjoyed the many wonderful photographs uploaded to the Branch's Facebook page of the many fascinating plants, animals and fungi recorded by our members who participated. For me, the consecutive events definitely captured the explosion of insects and the birds following the change in seasons.

I think it would be fair to say that those who participated discovered that their own backyard held a fascinating ecosystem in its own right. Often as naturalists we think of the importance of protecting vast areas of natural habitat, and rightly so, but we must also be reminded that change starts at home, and we can do much to protect our local species and offer refuge in our own backyards.

Backyard BioBlitzes will continue to occur monthly until the Branch's regular nature walks can resume. After that, the BioBlitzes will be run on a seasonal basis. Hope you continue to join us! **◆ Charmaine Savage**

Fraser Coast Branch Backyard BioBlitz



Summary as of 15 July

Date	No. of Observations	No. of Species	No. of Observers	No. of Identifiers
1-4 May 2020*	158	123	17	40
30-31 May 2020	255	188	17	70
27-28 June 2020	202	156	16	52

* Starting 5pm on 1 May and finishing 9am on 4 May.

BioBlitz#2 uncovers some interesting plants

The Fraser Coast Wildlife BioBlitz held over two days at the end of May resulted in observations of 255 different species. This included a wide variety of spiders, birds, butterflies, moths, fungi, plants, frogs, wasps and more.

One notable plant observation was of ***Flacourtia jangomas*** (Indian coffee plum) observed at River Heads which has been officially recorded only once in the Fraser Coast region. This is also the first time this species has been observed in iNaturalist. Although the plant has edible fruit it is also spiny and a potential new weed species in the region. Information such as this is important and so it is good to know that all iNat observations are incorporated into

the Atlas of Living Australia and can be accessed by future researchers.

Another plant observed during the BioBlitz was ***Lysiana subfalcata*** (northern mistletoe). This species with attractive orange-red and yellow flowers has never been officially recorded in the Fraser Coast region, although it is known from other locations scattered across a large part of Australia.

Everyone is invited to participate in further BioBlitzes planned by the Fraser Coast branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. You never know what unusual and interesting living things you will come across.

✿ ***Tony van Kampen***

Fraser Coast Branch Backyard BioBlitz

All the species observation photos, comments and identifications can be viewed online in the project summary page of the iNaturalist Australia website. Our Facebook page has some and here is a selection. (photographers given their iNat names)



Echidna hotspots in SEQ



Echidnas are one of Australia's most loved and unique animals, and have the honour of being on the 5 cent coin. The four extant species of echidna and the platypus are the only living mammals that lay eggs.

Wildlife Queensland's EchidnaWatch project collects information on the distribution and abundance of echidnas in Queensland. Wildlife Queensland partner, ecological research consultancy BioGeo, has mapped public echidna sightings reported to EchidnaWatch between 2013-2018 and supplemented with data from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). This was used to map and identify 'hotspot' sections of road with high numbers of observations. A total of 47 hotspots were identified, with the Tin Can Bay Road having the largest number of hotspots.



*photos by Matt Head.
Above "Puggle in care"*



This study is an important contribution to the knowledge of this iconic species, and should be useful for planning future developments.

The report and distribution maps are available at <https://wildlife.org.au/echidnawatch/>.

✿ **Rick Hayward**

Congratulations to member Ruby Rosenfield

*for winning first prize in the senior section of the
Burnett Mary Regional Group*

"Celebrating Nature's Resilience" Photo Competition

You can see Ruby's photo and those of the other winners
on the BMRG's Website: <https://bmr.org.au/>

Koalas on track for extinction

Stopping koala extinction is agonisingly simple. But here's why I'm not optimistic.

by Christine Hosking Conservation Planner/Researcher, UQ. 2 July 2020

<https://theconversation.com/stopping-koala-extinction-is-agonisingly-simple-but-heres-why-im-not-optimistic-141696>

It is worth reading this article which has a number of links. Here is an excerpt which contains information that is just as easily applied to the Fraser Coast.

A recent New South Wales parliamentary inquiry revealed the state's koalas are on track for extinction in the wild by 2050, without urgent government intervention.

Habitat destruction and fragmentation for agriculture, urban development, mining and forestry has been the number one koala killer since European occupation of Australia. This is compounded by the unabated impacts of climate change, which leads to more extreme droughts, heat-waves and bushfires. (Koala populations in NSW were already declining before the 2019-2020 bushfires).

Leadership needed at the local level:

Real, on-ground koala conservation actions take place at the local level. "Local" is where councils give development approvals, sometimes to clear koala habitat. And it's where communities and volunteers work on the front line to save and protect the species.

Recommendation 10 in the report addresses this, suggesting the NSW government provide additional funding and support to community groups so they can plant trees and regenerate bushland along koala and wildlife corridors. Another two recommendations build on this: encouraging increased funding from the NSW government to local councils to support local conservation initiatives, and suggesting increased resources to support councils to conduct mapping.

Mapping, such as where koalas have been recorded and their habitat, is a critical component for local councils to develop comprehensive koala management plans.

Stop offsetting koala habitat:

One recommendation suggests a review of the "biodiversity offsets scheme", where generally developers must compensate for habitat loss by improving or establishing it elsewhere. It is embedded in the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, and other state and territory governments commonly use offsets in various conservation policies.

But the report recommends prohibiting offsets for high quality koala habitat. Prohibiting offsets is important because when a vital part of koala habitat is cleared, it can no longer support the local koalas. Replacing this habitat somewhere else won't save that particular population.

Why is the author not optimistic?

The failure of the 2012 inquiry and the EPBC Act to protect koalas should serve as a wake-up call to the NSW government. It must start implementing the recommendations of the current inquiry without delay to ensure Australia's internationally celebrated species doesn't die out.

Koala conservation must take priority over land clearing, regardless of the demand for that land. That principle might seem simple, but so far it's proved agonisingly difficult. ❁

Environmental Law

“You would be forgiven for assuming our national environmental icons would be protected by national environment laws.”

The following is an excerpt from an article in the Environmental Defenders Office newsletter EDO INSIGHT by Rachel Walmsley, Director Law Reform and Policy, Sydney, 30 June 2020

Koalas. Extinct.

This is where environmental law is at. Our state environment laws are failing to protect even the most iconic, charismatic, internationally adored creature we have. This begs the question, if our laws can't even save the koala, what hope do we have of saving the less charismatic obscure shrubs, grasses, pollinators and lesser-known species that are actually vital for healthy ecosystems, healthy soils and productive landscapes?

You would be forgiven for assuming our national environmental icons would be protected by national environment laws.

This assumption is about to be in the spotlight. The 10 year statutory review of the EPBC Act is at a critical point, with the release of the Interim Report by Prof Graeme Samuel expected any day now.

Following the scathing report by the National Audit Office last week that confirmed utter failure of the federal department to administer the EPBC Act, there is increased pressure on the Samuel review to provide a new vision that will deliver positive environmental outcomes.

However, it is clear that other pressures are at play as well. Federal Government commentary on the review to date has focused on 'streamlining', 'efficiency,' cutting purported 'green tape' and has suggested that the sole metric for a complex regulatory regime is how quickly approvals can be signed off. Calls for efficiency measures – such as single approvals (formerly called “one stop shop” now “single touch approvals”) - are not new.

This deregulation agenda pre-dates both the horrific bushfire season and the COVID 19 pandemic. Part of this agenda is delegating environmental responsibility to the states. Yes, the states with the laws that cannot even protect koalas. Under the guise of COVID recovery, changes may be made to the EPBC Act before the independent review has been completed.

Short-term responses to the COVID-19 pandemic that focus solely on immediate economic stimulus measures – by reducing environmental protections or public involvement through fast-tracking infrastructure projects – may in fact have damaging long-term consequences and significant costs. 🌱

The audit report that was released toward the end of June (referred to in the above article) was scathing in its assessment of the referral, assessment and approval processes undertaken by developments, in particular, mines, farms and the tourism industry. “The implementation of conditions is not assessed with rigour.” It said the measurement of how well the environmental laws were working was limited by the “absence of effective monitoring, reporting and evaluation arrangements”. And that the EPBC Act is “complex and difficult to administer, and any of the decisions made are contested”.

NATURE WATCH

Last year Upper Dawson Branch hosted the Central Branches Get-together in Theodore, a most wonderful experience. Here we met Ann and others and it is a delight that she has sent us some articles for reprinting in Wambaliman.

Aerial tactics

Three dark blobs can be seen silhouetted against the early morning light high up on bare twigs whose leaves had been sacrificed to keep the tree alive during the harsh drought months. Clearly parrot-shaped, bigger than galahs, a low-pitched plaintive *caa-aa-aak*, gives them away as black cockatoos. Moving quietly closer, I make out the large crest of the male red-tailed black cockatoo, accompanied by two, presumably females, lower down the tree. It seems to be preening time, heads ducking down to peck into wing-pits, displaying the under-wing. Tails are shaken out, showing the barred under-tail with white edges, the females' pale, and males' bright red oblongs lit up by the back-light.

They flap away across the paddock to a tall dead iron-bark. Again, the crested male perches high while the others seem to be exploring the jagged ends of hollow branches, maybe looking for a nesting site or bugs for breakfast. A magpie in a nearby tree is ignored until he suddenly bursts forth in their direction. With a leisurely *caa-aa-aak*, the three flap lazily off towards the scrub. The male then drops down, below and behind the females as the magpie kamikaze homes in on him.



Photo courtesy Allan Briggs

With his consorts well ahead, the male swings upright, flares his tail, its bright red stop-lights flashing. He's a bit like a more colourful Titanic leisurely out-maneuvring a speed-boat. The furious aggressor can't land a beak on him before he gets away safely with his harem. Perhaps it's not just his size : perhaps he's also smart enough to be Cocky?

✿ *Ann Hobson*

There is a phrase in our (Wiradjuri) language *Yindyamarra Winanghanha*. It means to live with respect in a world worth living in. This is where our hope comes from. -Stan Grant, 2020

NATURE WATCH

Grey-crowned Babbler



A new resident bird that has arrived in Parraweena Park (Point Vernon) in the past year is the Grey-crowned Babbler. Not usually seen close to the coast this busy bird obviously shares our affection for this patch of bushland. It is quite a communal bird, usually one breeding pair and a coterie of attendees which actually will keep food up to the brooding female. They have built several large domed stick nests, one perched precariously in a melaleuca tree hanging out over the Esplanade.



Its call is a distinctive strident two note pitch which sounds like “yahoo” and gives rise to its alternative name. The numbers of Grey-crowned Babblers are believed to have reduced 95% since settlement. It is near threatened in the eastern states and endangered in the southern states. It’s a forager scratching through leaf litter and dead fallen timber. And that’s what this bushland park provides for it. ✨ *Jenni and Peter*

THECONVERSATION.COM

<https://theconversation.com/birdwatching-increased-tenfold-last-lockdown-dont-stop-its-a-huge-help-for-bushfire-recovery-141970>

Extract:

When Australians first went into lockdown in March, the combination of border closures, lockdowns and the closure of burnt areas from last summer’s bushfires meant those who would have travelled far and wide to watch their favourite birds, instead stayed home.

Yet, Australians are reporting bird sightings at record rates – they’ve just changed where and how they do it. In fact, Australian citizen scientists submitted ten times the number of backyard bird surveys to BirdLife Australia’s Birdata app in April compared with the same time last year.

But it’s not just a joyful hobby. Australia’s growing fascination with birds is vital for conservation after last summer’s devastating bushfires reduced many habitats to ash. Australia’s native plants and animals are on the slow path to recovery after the devastating fires last summer. In our research that’s soon to be published, we found the fires razed forests, grasslands and woodlands considered habitat for 832 species of native vertebrate fauna. Of these, 45% are birds.

The huge rise in birdwatching at home has even given rise to new hashtags you can follow, such as #BirdingatHome on Twitter and #CuppaWithTheBirds on Instagram .

Beauty and the Beasties

On the Fraser Coast we are blessed with a beautiful delicate terrestrial orchid whose flower resembles a flying duck. The orchid grows to approximately 40 cm high and has up to five flowers on a wiry stem. The orchid, *Caleana major*, (pictured) occurs in coastal dry forest areas to swampy heathland from Queensland to Tasmania.

The beasties, who are also appealing in their own way, are the larvae of long tailed sawflies. They munch away on eucalyptus or melaleuca leaves until grown, then fall to the ground, pupate in the leaf litter and emerge up to a year later as adult sawflies. Sawflies are not actually flies but are a very primitive type of wasp. The larvae (pictured) are of the species *Lophyrotoma interrupta*. The adult male has feathery antennae, bluish wings and a black and orange body – it lacks the “wasp” waist of the more common wasps we see.

What is the connection between this leaf munching insect and the orchid?

The orchid flower emits a chemical that is similar to the pheromone produced by female sawflies and this attracts the male sawflies. The male is deceived into thinking that the orchid flower is a female sawfly. He lands and tries to mate with the orchid's “duck head”. The wiggling of the wasp causes the duck's “neck” suddenly to spring downwards, trapping him momentarily in the body of the flower. As the insect backs out of the flower, he collects pollen on his thorax which may then be carried to the next flower he visits.

Like many native orchids, the flying duck orchid requires a special fungus for survival. It cannot be cultivated artificially.

In some areas the orchid is becoming rare because of habitat loss and destructive fire regimes. Deliberate and overfrequent burning of the understorey kills the orchids and the pupae of the sawfly.

So if you are lucky enough to spot one of these cuties, please enjoy this little wonder of nature in its natural habitat.

★ **Carol Bussey** This article was written for *Wildlife Matters* printed in *The Independent*.



photo: Ruby Rosenfield



photo: Carol Bussey

It's a Spider



Around 60 AD, St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter, was martyred by crucifixion. St. Andrew felt unworthy to die on a classical crucifix like Jesus so he asked to die on an X shaped cross.

That is why the white X shaped cross on the Scottish flag is known as St. Andrew's cross.

And this harmless beautiful spider is called a St. Andrew's Cross Spider.

In nature, she lives in the warmer parts of Australia and weaves her web in the branches of bushes and other vegetation. Around our homes she occupies any suitable outside niche that seems to be a good site to snare flying insects.

The female spider weaves an orb web and then constructs the 4 arms of the cross with special silk.

She sits in the centre of her domain with her legs aligned in pairs to match the cross on the web. It is thought that the silk of the X strongly reflects UV

light at night and attracts moths and other nocturnal insects (like mosquitoes, we hope!).

When threatened, she vibrates the web madly making it impossible for the predator to focus.

The little drab males wait hopefully on the edge of the web. A courting male will spin a thread, attach it to the web and vibrate it to test if the female is receptive. Males with missing legs attest to the fact that they sometimes misjudge.

Once the female is fertilised, she produces hundreds of eggs which she lays in a spindle shaped nest with a white downy lining. The tough outer covering of the nest is pale green to help camouflage it from parasitic wasps and other predators.

She is a lovely and beneficial creature to share our garden with.

✿ **Carol Bussey**

This article was written for Wildlife Matters printed in The Independent.

A conversation with Denise Young Branch member since 1996

By my reckoning Denise Young is our longest serving Branch member. She joined the Hervey Bay Branch in 1996. That group later had a name change to the Fraser Coast Branch. While some of our Branch members do have WPSQ membership predating Denise's, they have transferred from other branches or have not had continuous membership over the years.

Denise (left) with former Branch president, the late Joan Coutts



It's very easy to have a conversation with Denise. She likes a chat, is broadly knowledgeable and interested in all sorts of issues. Amongst the tranquil surrounds of her home she began by telling me about a mature Eucalypt near her boundary that had been recently felled. She was devastated at its destruction and a tear came to her eye (and mine). This is why she is a WPSQ member: her love of the natural environment and the wildlife. As a fellow WPSQ member this is what we have in common and why conversation is easy.

Denise is not our oldest member, but she is our longest serving. While living with Multiple Sclerosis for over 40 years her participation in activities has diminished. Denise has held executive positions and has been involved in varied Branch activities in the past. She stresses it is her reduced mobility which now precludes her from more participation rather than her enthusiasm and commitment to wildlife preservation. She says what she can do though is be a financial member, so adding to the Branch's support base. She understands a solid membership adds credibility and clout to our group.

Denise was living up north in Townsville with her husband and two children when they decided to move a bit further south in search of cooler climes. Denise was working as a veterinary nurse and had started to do some wildlife caring so that interest in wildlife had to be met also. Hervey Bay ticked the boxes for them with whales and other natural wonders. And so, in a rather slow move, via 12 months in Rockhampton, the family settled at Toogoom.

Tragically in the early 1990s, Denise's husband John was killed in a work-related accident. Denise had a friend in Maree Cliff, a well-known local wildlife carer and WPSQ member who lived close by in Toogoom. They shared many things including wildlife care. Maree invited her to join the group and so Denise joined the Hervey Bay Branch in mid 1996.

Denise now lives close by her two children and two grandchildren on a beautiful property in Dundowran surrounded by two acres of native garden and happily reflects on her 25 years with the Branch.

When Denise joined the Branch Joan Coutts was the President. There were 25 members which included some Maryborough people as their Branch was

in decline. Other members included well known local environmental activist Ronda Cook (deceased) and Alan Peebles (who has re-joined the Branch). Denise has memories of lots of stalls and activities where the group would promote themselves and raise money through raffles. She enjoyed the camaraderie of the excursions and activities.

One outstanding memory is of a trip she did with several members out west to Currawinya National Park for the opening of the Bilby fence. WPSQ had been a big player in its construction with fundraising and volunteer labour. At the Branch level many individuals had made a financial contribution by “buying panels”. And so a group of Hervey Bay people set off to see for themselves. Only Joan was housed in a dorm – the others camped. Denise remembers being horrified at the roadkills – the sheer numbers of native animals killed (mostly) by trucks travelling at night. In their naivety the group took an injured kangaroo to a wildlife carer in Charleville – only to discover that kangaroos lives are not as valued in the outback as they may be on the urbanised coast.

A few years later when the Branch was included in the fight to save the Toosan Toosan Creek flying foxes, Denise and a few other Branch members went to the Gold Coast to meet and speak with a group who had saved a bat colony there.

In a very diplomatic way Denise said there had been many ups and downs and personality clashes in the group. We both questioned “why” when our objectives are so aligned. Our passion for our wildlife and our natural environment should surely be the cementing factor in our Branch. However, it is clear to see, different personalities and different ways of working, have, over the years, interfered with the running and effectiveness of the Branch

and its membership. Perhaps we are no different to other community groups?

After Denise and I had solved most of the world’s problems in two hours we took a closer look at the issues, activities and ways of working in the Branch in the last couple of decades. We agreed there were still many common issues, such as tree poisoning. While Denise had been involved in saving bilbies and flying foxes our major concern now is habitat destruction. While Denise recalled the enormous impact of a letter Joan had written to the paper about the flying foxes we thought about what we have to do these days for the same reaction. It seems in the past you could run a very simple public campaign (such as letters and articles in the paper, displays at stalls) but these days it requires a more strategic behind the scenes campaign trying to influence decision makers while negotiating the complexities of bureaucracies (submission writing, letters to directors, representation on committees).

Denise wondered if we still had experiences like she had at Currawinya. I pointed to the Central Branches Get-together last year at Theodore, which had a similar type of camaraderie and eye opening wildlife experience (and some members even tented). Yes, our Branch doesn’t presently do the tree planting activities and displays and stalls it once did but we have a strong walks program, talks program, an ongoing Facebook account and webpage, and many of our members are very active in a number of Council’s CEP groups doing bush regeneration.

While Denise is restricted in participating in the more physically demanding aspects of our group she is acutely aware that her ongoing membership is an endorsement of what we do and represent, and we thank her sincerely for that. ❀ *Jenni Watts*

From the Wambi vault

I was given a job of ploughing through the Wambaliman archives in search of some details on the formation of the Hervey Bay Branch of WPSQ (1989), which was succeeded by the Fraser Coast Branch (2004) after the Maryborough Branch folded. While the purpose of the search would I feel fail to interest most of you, I could not resist being side tracked by some of the extraordinary tales by the then editor, the late Fay Smith. Along with her husband Ted, Fay was a remarkable and highly respected conservationist. In Wambaliman she details many of the local and national struggles of the 80s and 90s fought by those committed to nature conservation.

Her piece in the April-June 1989 edition on foreshore trees rings of irony for us in 2020. *Vandals are still felling half-grown trees and some mature trees on the Esplanade. Most of the destruction is in the prestigious Point Vernon area, and it's thought people are doing this to get a better view of the sea. They can't wait for the trees to grow up, by which time they'll be able to see through the trees.....it's a sad indictment on society, especially the affluent society, that this destruction could happen on such a wide scale, and nobody sees it happening.*

I felt dismayed that we have progressed little with this issue, although our Council is endeavouring to make the running lately, echoing the words of Fay from thirty years ago.

Skimming through the following issue (July-September 1989) I was rather alarmed by what Fay reported in Nature Corner.

- *Brahminy Kites were shot at Toogoom last month, and we were called to rescue their chicks in the nest.*
- *Maryborough Branch was contacted about a swan caught with a hook and sinker in its mouth at a tourist complex in Hervey Bay.*
- *The fourth headless pelican in the last 18 months has been found on Hervey Bay beach.*
- *Another Dugong has been found dead on Hervey Bay beach, it had a rope tied around its tail.*

Hopefully our frontier mentality has moved on a bit since then. Certainly interesting to look at the context in which our green predecessors plied their activism.

✿ *Peter Duck*



Recently a neighbour noticed some bones in the sand - exposed from a combination of children digging and erosion. Citizen scientists (including two 4 year olds) helped expose these vertebrae and ribs from the Point Vernon beach. Initial investigations (Museum ID) say they are possibly from a dugong. Local residents of 40 years have no recollections of a dugong washed up or buried. We doubt this animal's story will ever be known.

CARING FOR AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE

Revised Edition – June 2020

In *Caring for Australian Wildlife*, author Sharon White has written a practical guide for the management of sick, injured and orphaned native animals in Australia. This revised edition provides the most up-to-date information on caring for our native fauna.

The first part of the book incorporates the principles of wildlife care, touching on wildlife ecology and the importance of natural habitat. When native animals come into care, they usually require treatment for shock, so please don't feed them. The first 24 hours of care are so important when looking after sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

Find out how to:

- rescue a native animal safely
- handle a native animal securely and methods of transporting them
- provide first aid and emergency care to an animal in shock
- care for a native animal, including identification, food, housing and equipment
- release a native animal back into the wild

The second part of the book includes the rehabilitation of wildlife and provides detailed information on the specific needs of native animals in care, including

- Feeding tables for birds, possums, macropods, bats, reptiles and more ...
- Growth charts for orphaned possums and macropods
- Specialised products and food mixes for wildlife

This comprehensive manual has a place in every home and provides a handy reference guide for all wildlife emergencies.

Now available at the Hervey Bay and Maryborough Visitor Information Centres - cost is \$29.95.

Or shop online at www.caringforaustralianwildlife.com.au/shop



About the photo on page 20

The photo was taken in 2006 and supplied by Carol Bussey. It shows Denise Young (left) and former President of 18 years, the late Joan Coutts, manning a display at John Eggleston's property in Dundowran Beach at a very successful Open Garden Day. They are also selling raffle tickets for a painting donated by Ben Gerdson. With donations the Branch made \$300 on the day.



The objectives of Wildlife Queensland are to:

- (1) preserve the fauna and flora of Australia by all lawful means;
- (2) educate by all means possible all sections of the community, particularly the young, in understanding the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment;
- (3) discourage by all legal means possible the destruction, exploitation or unnecessary development of any part of the natural environment;
- (4) encourage rational land use and proper planning of development and use of the natural environment and management thereof.

Want to join Wildlife Queensland?

<http://wildlife.org.au/shop/membership/membership/>

or download the membership form at

<http://www.wildlife.org.au/support/image/membershipform.pdf>

Membership for 1 year

\$30 Individual

\$45 Family / non-profit group

\$20 Concession

\$12.50 Youth

Once you have joined Wildlife Queensland you may elect to be assigned a Branch such as Fraser Coast.

Wildlife Queensland and its branches are not wildlife rescue or care organizations.

However, we thank you for caring for our wildlife and if you wish to report sick, injured or orphaned wildlife contact: RSPCA Qld on 1300 ANIMAL or preferably contact our local rescue service. Our local service has the expertise and will eliminate delays in taking action.

WILDLIFE RESCUE FRASER COAST

for ***all*** species of native wildlife

Phone **4121 3146 *anytime*** (backup number 0419988240)

WRFC rescue and care for all species of native fauna - such as injured or unwell koalas, kangaroos and wallabies, micro bats, flying foxes, birds and reptiles.

For marine strandings ring the QLD Government Wildlife Hotline 1300 130 372