



Newsletter of the Land for Wildlife Program South East Queensland

JULY 2014 Volume 8 Number 3 ISSN 1835-3851



Open Property Scheme, until next time...

A fter running for one month with 25 properties and 450 participants, the 2014 Land for Wildlife Open Property Scheme officially ended on the 31st May. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from those who attended, which is encouraging to hear and gives us lots of ideas for future schemes. I thoroughly enjoyed the events I attended.

The Open Properties were diverse but there was a commonality of purpose and dedication. All landowners want to leave their properties in better condition than when they bought them and all are actively managing their properties to reduce weeds and provide habitat.

The main theme echoed at all Open Properties was the value of social connections. According to feedback, the best part of the Scheme was "Knowledge sharing with other participants", "Connecting with other LfW members" and "Meeting like-minded people".

Many participants reported that they will try new things on their own properties based on what they learnt and saw during the Scheme. In their own words, participants will try to "Prioritise weed species", "Become aware of the different ecosystems on a property", "Encourage natural regeneration", "Get a fox trap" and "Leave fallen timber in waterways".

Most participants visited Open Properties close to home. Some people met their neighbours for the first time and learnt about local landcare groups. It was great to see these connections unfolding.

The 2014 Open Property Scheme was made possible by the generosity of Land for Wildlife members who opened up their properties and welcomed other landholders. Eleven Local Governments and SEQ Catchments, with funding support from the Queensland Government Gambling Community Benefit Fund, all contributed to making the Scheme a success. Thank you all.

See pages 8-11 for more Open Property Scheme images and quotes. Photographs of Open Property Scheme events can be viewed via www.lfwseq.org.au/ops

Article by Deborah Metters

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editorial

A ay was a good month for me. I visited 16 Land for Wildlife Open Properties, drove 3,300 kilometres and met lots of Land for Wildlife members. Despite my carbon footprint and exhaustion, I thoroughly enjoyed it because of the people I met and the properties I saw.

There were many highlights and some recurrent themes emerged. My breath was taken away at one property. We were walking on impressive, contoured walking tracks at Doug and Marg Bettens' property at Cooran. These tracks help visitors access the beautiful waterfall and other steep sections of the property. Most of the walk was among young rainforest regrowth with lots of notable weed control undertaken. We rounded a bend towards the end of the walk, and there it was. One enormous stump of a once majestic tree. It was huge; at least two metres in diameter, with cuts in the sides that at one time held springboards that carried strong men with crosscut saws. These giants of the forest kept the soils cool, the weeds at bay and harboured guantities of wildlife that I will never see in my lifetime.

This one stump made me realise the importance of recent history in helping us understand the landscapes we manage today. History can help explain the weeds we fight, the feral animals we despair at and the wildlife or good pastures that bring us hope. Learning about the history of the area is invaluable.

Another theme that resonated with me was the personal journey of discovery for some landholders. I could respectfully refer to them as unlikely or reluctant conservationists. People who would have laughed dismissively if told a decade ago that they would be standing in front of a group of landholders promoting the benefits of Land for Wildlife! But there they were in May speaking proudly during the Open Property Scheme. Thank you!

I have allocated a few pages to the Open Property Scheme in this, and the next, newsletter edition. So if you have contributed a story and it hasn't yet been printed, please don't depair.

To date I have received only two entries for the competition to win a signed Limited Edition copy of *Tadpoles and Frogs* of Australia by Marion Anstis. It is a cracker of a prize, so put pen to paper or fingertip to tablet. Entry details are on page 13.

Thanks to all the fabulous contributions to this edition. Enjoy.



Deborah Metters Land for Wildlife Regional Coordinator SEQ Catchments

Landholder Registrations, Land for Wildlife SEQ - 1/6/2014

Registered	Working Towards	Total Area Retained	Total Area under
Properties	Registration		Restoration
3063	784	55,120 ha	5,034 ha

Forward all contributions to:

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Land for Wildlife is a voluntary program that encourages and assists landholders to provide habitat for wildlife on their properties.

Land for Wildlife Extension Officers South East Queensland

Brisbane City Council

All enquiries, 3403 8888 Peter Hayes Cath Cody Hochen Scot Tony Mlynarik Fflur

Catherine Madden Scott Sumner Fflur Collier

Gold Coast City Council

Darryl Larsen, 5582 8896 Lexie Webster, 5582 8344 Todd Burrows, 5582 9128

Ipswich City Council Stephani Grove, 3810 7173

Lockyer Valley Regional Council Kaori van Baalen, 5462 0376

Logan City Council

Lyndall Rosevear, 3412 4860 Melanie Mott, 3412 4859 Rebecca Condon, 3412 4979

Moreton Bay Regional Council

Zoe Samson, 5433 2244 Ainslie Wyer, 5433 2288

Noosa Shire Council Customer Centre, 5329 6500

Redland City Council Maree Manby, 3820 1106

Scenic Rim Regional Council Keith McCosh, 5540 5436

Somerset Region

Trevor Page, 5424 4000

Sunshine Coast Council

Alan Wynn, 5439 6477 Danielle Crawford, 5475 7339 Marc Russell, 5475 7345 Nick Clancy, 5439 6433 Stephanie Reif, 5475 7395

Toowoomba Regional Council All enquiries, 4688 6611

Burnett Mary Region

Gympie, Fraser Coast, North & South Burnett, Bundaberg and Baffle Creek Regions

For all regions contact the Burnett Mary Regional Group, 4181 2999

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www.lfwseq.org.au

fauna vignettes

Built it and they will come

Here are some pictures of bat boxes that my five year old son and I built in January this year. We installed the three boxes about 5 metres up trees around our little dam. I can't say that we have seen any evidence of use yet, but fingers crossed.

Jeremy Patten Land for Wildlife member Mundoolun, Logan



The Supermarket Tree

We have always loved the redflowering gum planted thirty years ago near our Tallebudgera home. A northern Australian bloodwood, with twisted branches and large leaves, it produces bunches of 'Snugglepot and Cuddlepie' buds and, of course, clusters of gold tipped red eucalyptus flowers followed by large, tough gum nuts.

We call it the 'supermarket tree' because, when in flower, there is an endless stream of creatures coming to feed on its bounty. Birds and insects by day, the occasional nocturnal possum or glider and the nightly fighting and noisy complaints from fruit bats make up its visitors. This year, over the first weeks of March, the tree has seen a new 'customer', the Richmond Birdwing butterfly.

A few years ago, I attended a Land for Wildlife education day in Tallebudgera Valley and learnt more about this most beautiful butterfly and its dependence on the Richmond Birdwing Vine (*Pararistolochia praevenosa*). Great efforts have occurred over the years to plant



PRIZES!

SEQ Catchments is giving away a set of three copies of various Queensland Museum pocket guides (RRP \$30) to three selected Land for Wildlife members who contribute published articles in 2014. Limit of nine free books per newsletter edition. Please send your article and/or photographs to the Editor (details pg. 2)



this vine, the only food source for this butterfly's caterpillar. Despite several failures we now have a well-established vine in the adjacent bushland.

Nearby neighbours have reported yearly sightings and even pointed out a few in the neighbourhood but this year they have appeared, up to a dozen at a time, attracted by the 'supermarket tree'.

The large females, constantly attended by the smaller and more colourful males, dance around the open garden with frequent returns to top up on nectar. When feeding, it is possible to approach closely and be entranced by the truly amazing colours and iridescent greens of this most beautiful creature.

Congratulations to everyone in the area who has nurtured a birdwing vine. We hope that you all get to share the experience of seeing the Richmond Birdwing butterfly at your place.

Peter Biddle Land for Wildlife member Tallebudgera, Gold Coast



fauna profile

Monitoring and Restoring Habitat for Quolls on Land for Wildlife Properties near D'Aguilar National Park

"Quolls are an umbrella species, if we protect quolls and their habitat, by default we look after everything else in the landscape." Dr Scott Burnett

The Quoll Seekers Network is thrilled to have received an Everyone's Environment Grant from the Queensland Government to undertake surveys of the Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) around D'Aguilar National Park. The 18 month project will involve revegetation, weed control and monitoring of quolls with infrared cameras on Land for Wildlife properties that are contiguous with D'Aguilar National Park.

The project was launched with a Quoll Discovery Day at Burpengary which provided community members with important information about quolls. Renowned wildlife ecologist, Dr Scott Burnett, delivered a fascinating presentation on quoll ecology, threats, monitoring techniques and management considerations. This was followed by an exciting live quoll demonstration by Martin Fingland from Geckoes Wildlife Presentations, where participants got to see the beauty and power of these carnivorous marsupials up close. Quolls require large, continuous tracts of vegetation – males can have home ranges that can span several thousand hectares! Subsequently, quoll populations have dwindled as a result of land clearing and habitat loss. The species is also threatened by competition from foxes and cats, being hit by cars whilst scavenging for road kill, persecution at chicken pens (by people), poisoning from Cane Toads, poison baits and predation from dingoes and foxes.

The Quoll Seekers Network encourages Land for Wildlife members to:

- Retain bushland.
- Retain fallen timber and thick ground cover (these features provide habitat for quolls' preferred food source – small to medium sized marsupials).
- Build quoll-proof chicken coops and encourage neighbours to do the same to avoid quolls killing domestic poultry.
- Advocate for quolls and raise awareness of the threats that are contributing to their decline.
- Avoid using baits, particularly strychnine baits and second generation rat baits.

- Keep an eye out for quolls and their traces including looking for scats, prints and latrine sites. Sand traps and infrared, motion detection cameras can also be used for monitoring.
- Report any quoll sightings back to local Land for Wildlife Officers and the Quoll Seekers Network.

The Spotted-tailed Quoll (south-eastern mainland population) is listed as Endangered under the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and listed as Vulnerable under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992.

Previously, the Quoll Seekers Network has undertaken a number of other surveys on Land for Wildlife properties across South East Queensland. In March 2013, a quoll was captured on an infrared, motion sensor camera on a property in the Mt Alford area, with funding assistance from Scenic Rim Regional Council.

For more information on how you can get involved in the conservation of quolls, visit the Quoll Seekers Network webpage at www.wildlife.org.au/projects/quolls or call Wildlife Queensland on 3221 0194.

Finally! After years of having fauna monitoring cameras out in the field, one successfully captured an image of the threatened Spotted-tailed Quoll in the Mt Alford area. Photograph © Wildlife Queensland.



Article by Danielle Crawford Land for Wildlife Officer Sunshine Coast Council



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fauna profile

A rare find in Western Brisbane, the Greater Glider is not extinct!

The Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*) was presumed extinct in the western part of Brisbane, however recent photo evidence indicates something completely different. Land for Wildlife member, Prue Cooper-White, in Upper Brookfield recently reported seeing two pterodactyl-like shapes flying over her house at night. She thought her mind was playing tricks on her because what could be that big?

One morning she heard a strange noise of screeching and screaming coming from a tree less than 10 metres away from the house. The noise was being made by a mammal that looked like a Koala, but was bigger and had a fluffy tail. The penny dropped – it was a Greater Glider! This one was defending its hollow from a Lace Monitor.

Discoveries like this on Land for Wildlife properties are positive indicators that protecting habitat and raising community awareness are valuable ways to retain Brisbane's unique biodiversity.

After my initial wow factor response to Prue's spectacular photo of the Greater Glider and Lace Monitor, it got me thinking – was this Lace Monitor drawn to the hollow because of the Greater Glider's smell, or was it looking for a hollow itself to take a nap? I suppose it may have been doing both of these activities?

This part of Moggill Creek Catchment is in great condition with limited sightings of invasive weeds due to the diligence of dedicated property owners and a high percentage of residents being actively involved in the Land for Wildlife program. However, as with most of South East Queensland (SEQ), this area was selectively logged and there are now limited numbers of large hollow-bearing trees. I am astounded at how many species of animals require numerous hollows for breeding and shelter - over 300 just within the SEQ region. Greater Gliders need 3-18 den sites (hollows) within their home range of about 1.5 hectares.

Greater Gliders are one of six species of gliders found throughout SEQ. The Greater Glider's diet differs markedly from the other five glider species in that over 95% of its diet consists of eucalypt leaves. The Greater Glider shown in Prue's photo is in a Spotted Gum (*Eucalyptus citriodora* subspecies *variegata*) tree – one of its food sources.

I recently heard a figure that has haunted me ever since. Within every fox, feral cat or wild dog stomach there is an average of 20 native animals. Reducing feral predators on your property can make a real difference and assist with wildlife protection.



Article by Catherine Madden Land for Wildlife Officer Brisbane City Council



"I was lucky enough to photograph this elusive creature in the daytime while it was defending its nesting hollow against a curious and cheeky Lace Monitor. With ears like a Koala, a small ratty face and a huge bushy tail, it was one of the most interesting looking animals I had ever seen." Prue Cooper-White.



"My family and I have lived here for almost ten years and in that time we have enjoyed exciting encounters with many unusual types of wildlife such as Brush-tailed Phascogales, Satin Bowerbirds, Giant Wood Moths as large as bats and more recently a Greater Glider. For many years we had noticed giant shadows soaring over our rooftop at dusk. We couldn't work out what we were seeing. Now the mystery is solved!

Since taking this photograph of a Greater Glider, my children and I have been out every night with our torches and we've noticed a pair of Greater Gliders that regularly like to feed in the trees near our house. They stick very close together which surprises me, as Greater Gliders are thought to be solitary animals.

It has been rewarding to share my curiosity about nature with my children and to watch their own interest in our natural environment flourish. They are now learning to identify birds just by their calls and are also keen to get further involved in the soft release program for injured wildlife. What a privilege to live so close to nature and to be able to observe it up close. I can't wait to see what we spot next! " Prue Cooper-White.

fungi profile

A Fascination with Fungi and their Role in Restoring Rainforest

Over the last 20 years I have become fascinated with fungi. During that time I have lived at Maleny and been working on our property to help turn a run-down dairy farm back into a living, growing subtropical rainforest. This will provide habitat for wildlife, corridors of rainforest along Obi Creek and enhance the quality of the Sunshine Coast water supply. Over this period, we have produced lists of the plants growing on the property; the birds – both resident and visitors; and some of the mammals, frogs and invertebrates.

About 8 years ago, my interest in fungi changed from just appreciating their beauty to wanting to know their names, their function in the ecosystem and to make a list of the fungi on Dilkusha. I mentioned this new interest to a mycologist (one who studies fungi) friend and he laughingly replied, "that would be the work of a lifetime!". Always one to like a challenge, I decided to make a start!

I very quickly realised that I had a lot to learn, and so I joined the Queensland Mycological Society where I could take part in forays, workshops, conferences and lectures to learn from knowledgeable 'experts' in the field.

It surprised me to find out that for a Kingdom as huge as Fungi (at least six times more fungi than plants in the world), there are very few expert mycologists in Australia and they are stretched thinly over the fields of taxonomy, molecular (DNA) analysis and environmental studies. So every time I discover a 'new' fungus on the property, there is a very good chance that it is the first time it has been described or collected in Queensland, or even in science. This is of course frustrating when I want to put a name to it, but it is exciting to know that 'citizen science' really can make a contribution to mycology. Observations made in one's own backyard can provide new insights to old issues.

One of the first things I noticed at Dilkusha was that when we poisoned the Largeleaf Privet (Ligustrum lucidum), our major weed tree, the fungi very quickly moved in to break down the dead trees. The most common pioneer fungus on dead privet is Lentinus sajor-caju. It occurs in vast troops on the trunks, along fallen branches and on half buried roots. The fungus invades the trees almost as soon as they are killed. Fruiting of the fungus occurs in 6-12 months and then continues repeatedly over the next 3-4 years, until the tree is completely rotted and can fall down with almost no damage to surrounding vegetation.

After the initial onslaught with *Lentinus sajor-caju*, other fungi follow. These are often Turkey Tail (*Trametes versicolor*), which may cover the trunks with their brightly coloured fan shaped thin, leathery brackets. Both of these fungi produce enzymes that break down cellulose and lignin in the plant and produce a white fibrous residue. They are thus commonly termed 'White Rotters'.

Another group of fungi that work on dead trees, both exotic and native, are the *Auricularias*, or 'Cloud Ears'. Four different species of this Genus can be found in South East Queensland. They are often included with the group of fungi called 'Jellies', but may be quite tough and rubbery rather than jelly-like.

As well as these large flamboyant fungi on the trees, there are many small fungi at work on the fallen leaves and twigs. The delicate white *Campanella* species are commonly found on Lantana sticks immediately after rain.



Lentinus sajor-caju (on tree and in closeup insert image). This white, funnel shaped fungus bursts through the bark of dead Large-leaf Privet in vast numbers and successive fruitings. It continues to decompose the wood for 3 to 4 years until the tree is completely recycled. This fungus is widespread from South-east Asia to Africa.



Trametes versicolor (Turkey Tail). This velvety, fan- shaped bracket comes in many colours with alternating concentric bands of brown, grey, orange and black with a white growing edge. It often follows *Lentinus sajor-caju* in the process of decomposing weedy trees.

These include tiny *Mycenas* and *Marasmius* species, many of which have not been named.

What most people refer to as fungi is usually the colourful fruiting bodies that we see above the ground. However, the majority of any fungus lies hidden in the wood, leaf litter or soil where the fruiting body is growing. The mycelia, or threads of fungus that are growing through their substrate, form a mat binding leaves and twigs together, which help prevent surface erosion and retain moisture while breaking down individual leaves and twigs.

Dead Lantana comes with its own suite of 'rotters'. These look delicate and the fruit bodies last only a few days, e.g. *Campanella* species. Yet we have seen repeatedly that Lantana is completely broken down within about 18 months by these powerful little rotters. Eventually, all the dead material has been recycled into rich humus, perfect for growing a new rainforest. Without the whole group of decomposers recycling dead organic matter, we would be head high in debris!

And that is only the beginning of the story of how fungi and plants interact in mutually beneficial ways.

All fungi shown here are described in Australian Subtropical Fungi - the first field guide to fungi covering the region from Coffs Harbour to Gladstone. See page 13 for book review.



Mycena viscidocruenta (Ruby Bonnet) are tiny glistening scarlet fungi with sticky red stems. They work on Lantana sticks reducing them to soft white frass.



Auricularia cornea (Hairy Cloud Ear) is a tough rubbery jelly that often grows on Tobacco Bush as well as other weed species.



Marasmius species are tiny, colourful fungi that are commonly found binding leaf litter and decomposing twigs and leaves.

Article and photos by Frances Guard Land for Wildlife member "Dilkusha" Nature Refuge Maleny, Sunshine Coast



LAND FOR WILDLIFE OPEN PROPERTY SCHEME 2014 SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

OM-BER-PEE " 26TH MAY

Mount Cotton, Redland Eco-tourism retreat • Qualified arborist

"The Land for Wildlife program was easy to get involved in... Sometimes weeds feel endless, but being a part of LfW gives you the support to keep persevering. Together we have cracked purple succulent and the polka-a-dot plant... Boom-Ber-Pee means 'koala' in the local indigenous language." Sue Panuccio, owner Boom-Ber-Pee

"Only do target pruning in high traffic areas or over fixed structures. Otherwise leave dead timber as this is important habitat. Use a good pruning saw that leaves a smooth cut, and prune to branch collars. No flush cuts!" Andrew Stovell, arborist

Here are some snippets from ten of the 25 Open **Properties held** recently. Enjoy!









"SMITH" 5TH MAY Lower Mount Walker, Ipswich Ex-grazing property • Swamp Tea-Tree forest

"This property is part of habitat for possibly the healthiest Koala population in South East Queensland. About six years ago I decided to remove cattle completely from this property and in effect I have given this land back to nature." Ron Smith, property owner

Ron has also converted an old paddock dam into a wetland for wildlife. There are now fields of native Kangaroo Grass - a highly palatable grass that was once eaten by stock.

VIEW MORE PHOTOGRAPHS VIA www.lfwseq.org.au/ops

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GOWIAH" **24TH MAY Conondale, Sunshine Coast**

Grazing & conservation • Creek restoration

"When we bought this property it was run down, overgrazed and the weeds were up to our windows. We are still fighting the weed battle, but it is much better now. We have installed 2km of fencing from here to the National Park. Glossy blacks [cockatoos] come down to drink in the early evening and we have platypus and sometimes koalas." Scott Woolbank, owner Balgowlah

"Our works at this site have allowed for the movement of fish and have had a minimal impact on the adjacent environment. The works included the installation of bed logs in trenches across the stream as close as possible to existing knickpoints." Peter McAdam, hydrologist



KAFE

"We call ourselves the Swamp People - it is a dirty old swamp but we think it's great. About 22 years ago we started planting trees and now the group has planted over 5000 native plants. We have involved local students in this swamp. You can teach about the environment, but it doesn't mean anything if you don't actually work in the environment." Val Martin, Somerset Regional **Environment & Education Group**



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LAND FOR WILDLIFE OPEN PROPERTY SCHEME 2014 SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND





Guy and Alec Vickerman Cr Matthew Bourke and Nancy Cramond

"VICKERMAN" 3RD MAY Carindale, Brisbane

Nature conservation in suburban Brisbane

"I am deeply grateful for the volunteers and contractors who have worked here to control weeds. Where we meet today used to be 12 foot high with lantana.

We feel privileged to have this 'job' of bush regeneration as part of our lives.

Governments can change their spots, but humans need refuges - nature refuges - places to be treasured. My motto is: keep going, accept help, take advice!" Nancy Cramond, property owner



"SWEETWATER" 14TH MAY Booroobin, Moreton Bay Lowland rainforest • Habitat restoration

"We used to live out west, but there were too many roos and dingoes. When we moved here we didn't know what lantana was. We soon learnt." Dal Fea, property owner

"My grandmother used to say that there were too many trees, but they had to derive an income from the land. There has been lots of regrowth in the last 30-40 years and it is a real buzz to see new species show up in an area once the lantana is cleared. It is ecology in action." Brendan Stephan, bush regenerator



UNDER MILKWEED " 15TH MAY

Stockyard, Lockyer Valley Ironbark woodlands • Valuing gullies & waterholes

"We are relatively isolated here with solar power, rainwater and the mailbox 5km down the road. Our neighbouring properties are mostly farming but my principle interest is habitat development.

There is no way that I can manage all the lantana, but I control it in this small area." Peter Darvall, owner Under Milkweed

"This region is a giant biological eco-tone. A spillover of western species into the woodlands of the Lockyer." Rod Hobson, ecologist















ROGERS & KING" 17TH MAY Cedar Creek, Logan Creek remediation • Erosion control

"Part of our remediation work along the creek was to repair erosion of the dam, which is well used by wildlife. We have installed three gabions with geo-fabric to slow the water and, over time, this will fill with silt and seal the dam. Sedges and lomandras have been planted to support this process." Trisha Rogers, property owner





These casuarina cones have been chewed by Glossy Black Cockatoos to extract the seeds to eat

YOUNG & HAYES" **17TH MAY**

Perseverance, Toowoomba Weekender property • Glossy Black Cockatoos

"We are lucky that we don't need to plant here as there are lots of native grasses and natural regeneration. The lack of old trees though is a key issue. Many native species depend on hollows so we have installed boxes for bats, owlet nightjars and parrots.

The worst weed here is privet. We have concentrated our efforts on controlling the largest fruiting trees and we have trialled a few different methods of control." Peter Hayes, property owner

VIEW MORE PHOTOGRAPHS VIA www.lfwseq.org.au/ops

my little corner





Left: Noisy Pitta photo by Todd Burrows. Above: Cracked rainforest snail shells photo by Deborah Metters.

A Pitta and a Snail

Whack! Whack! What's that? Coming from our bush, which is mainly rainforest on Woogaroo Creek. Sounds like someone whacking rocks with a big stick.

This was just after the last big rain and it was still drizzling and everything was dripping wet. A good time for snails to be out and about, or so they think. Not much for humans though especially significant others.

Our property is part of a corridor for mobile rainforest species and we get various 'visitors' at different times of the year. A recent arrival is the Noisy Pitta and he gives a lively "walk to work" call at dawn and dusk.

Now the Noisy Pitta is a snail specialist! And there he was, all wet and bedraggled, bashing a big snail on a rock. Whack! Whack! Bits of snail shell began to fly off. A lot more whacks and the snail shell fell apart - and down the hatch. Yum. Breakfast! Like a hammer and nail is a pitta and snail.

The Noisy Pitta is a largish bird and quite colourful - yellows and greens with a little brown hat. They spend their time on the ground. But they are very secretive - I have never seen one whacking a snail. You often see bleached snail shells (broken of course) on the rainforest floor - breakfast for pittas. They must catch these native rainforest snails when it is wet or raining as a special feast and scratch through the leaf litter for bugs the rest of the time.

So it was quite a treat to see this one eating a treat. The next time it rains, I am positive I can convince my wife to go out looking for snails and pittas. You think?

Article by Keith McCosh Land for Wildlife member Bellbird Park, Ipswich



Day and Night Herons

Quarterly bird surveys have been in full swing for the past few years on Brisbane City Council's Land for Wildlife properties. These surveys are done in partnership with Birdlife Southern Queensland.

We have also been getting great shots of birds with motion sensor cameras. Twice in one week, I was fortunate enough to see the exquisite Nankeen Night Heron. The first instance was an image captured on the motion sensor camera next to a waterhole in Upper Brookfield (upper photo). It was an adult displaying its droopy head plumage.

This is a typical shot of the bird as it is predominantly nocturnal, feeding at night in shallow water. The diet of this bird consists of a wide range of frogs, fish, crustaceans and insects. Keep an eye out for it when you go spotlighting!

The other sighting of this bird was of a juvenile (lower photo). We must have disturbed it while it was feeding in the creek as the photo suggests it has a full crop. On the day that we were doing the bird survey at Mt Crosby, we had to rely on our eyes only as the calls of the Double-drummer Cicadas (*Thopha saccata*) were totally deafening, so capturing this photo was a real highlight for the morning!

Article by Catherine Madden Land for Wildlife Officer Brisbane City Council

book reviews

Australian Subtropical Fungi

By Sapphire McMullan-Fisher, Patrick Leonard and Frances Guard

Fungi are the underdogs in the world of biodiversity conservation. Despite being one of the five Kingdoms of Life and some being quite beautiful, they often get overlooked. Of course Earth would not function without fungi, and if you are interested in what makes the Australian environment tick, then a basic understanding of fungi is a must.

This book champions fungi and is a musthave resource for those who want to start identifying some of the fungi of SEQ.

I own a few books on fungi and find this one to be the most inviting. The ecology and biology of fungi are simply explained as is the scope of this book. This book only covers macrofungi; that is fungi that have easily visible fruiting bodies. It does not describe microfungi such as plant rusts, smuts, moulds or mildews, nor does it venture into the world of lichen identification.

The book states up front that it is not a comprehensive guide to macrofungi of



subtropical Australia, as such a document does not exist. There are still thousands of undescribed macrofungi in Australia.

The macrofungi described in this book are grouped according to their growth form and there is an easy-to-follow, colour coded key. Of the 115 species shown, each has its own page with colour photographs, descriptions, habitat and etymology (an explanation of the scientific name).

Given the extent of undescribed macrofungi, this book promotes citizen science whereby the general public contributes to scientific knowledge. One of this book's co-authors, Frances Guard, and author of the article on pages 6-7 demonstrates the importance and enjoyment of being a citizen scientist. I encourage other Land for Wildlife members to follow her lead.

This is an excellent book with an affordable price tag. I commend the authors on writing and publishing this book.

WIN A BOOK!

SEQ Catchments is giving away ONE free, signed by the author, *Limited Edition* copy of *Tadpoles and Frogs of Australia* by Marion Anstis valued at \$150 to a chosen Land for Wildlife member who contributes a story about a wetland or creek project on their property. Winning story will be printed in the October 2014 newsletter. Prize drawn 1 Sept 2014.



Published by Suncoast Fungi, 2014 Soft cover, colour photos, 160 pages. ISBN: 9780646915524 Price: \$30 Available from Fungimap at www.fungimap.org.au or Suncoast Fungi at www.suncoastfungi.org

Book review by Deborah Metters

Australian Medicinal Plants: A complete guide to identification and usage

By Erich Lassak and Tara McCarthy

ooking for a book on the use of garden herbs in the City of Gold Coast library online catalogue, I saw this book and was instantly curious. This 303 page tome is a thoroughly researched and well-structured scientific guide to Australian plants.

The introduction notes that information for this book was gathered from many fragmented sources after J.H. Maiden's initial work *The Useful Native Plants of Australia* was published in 1889. That's a long time between drinks.

The authors begin with indigenous information and cross-reference their sources nationally and internationally to ensure an accurate representation. One of their credited sources, Dulcie Levitt, says that the Aboriginal people were excellent botanists and rarely made mistakes.

Chapters include: narcotics and painkillers, headaches, colds and fevers, tonics, antiseptics and bactericides, skin disorders and, digestion and elimination. Most plant entries include family, synonyms, vernacular names, Aboriginal names, description, habitat and distribution, medicinal uses and active constituents.

Having recognised a plant from my garden, which was sold to me as Native Sarsaparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*), I eagerly looked it up to find that whilst the plant I was looking at had the same common name, it was in fact a different species. Accompanying advice recommended I not get the two confused.

Accurate science is the underlying premise, with few illustrations but exact labelling and a wealth of exhaustive research. There is also an extensive table of plant uses, and bibliography and references. While I found it interesting and bewildering (I'm sure the more botanical of you will love it) I was very sad to realise we don't value our native plants which sustained Aboriginal people for 40,000 years and colonials for a short time. Why aren't we exploring this natural resource?



New Holland Publishers, 2011 Soft cover, 240 pages. ISBN: 9781877069864 Price: \$39.95 Available from most online and inperson bookshops.

Book review by Sandra Watkins Land for Wildlife member Tallebudgera, Gold Coast "They can travel up to 500 metres away from their home."

fauna profile My Tetragonula carbonaria

t was that time of the late afternoon when the sun's golden light illuminates the wings of flying insects that I noticed that certain wings were on a mission. They weren't flying around willy nilly as most insects appear to do, but were flying with a purpose, all eventually disappearing into the lower parts of an old ironbark.

The ironbark has old wounds, possibly from early clearing, and it was into one of these wounds that the insects were flying. As I bent down for a closer inspection, I noticed several little, bulldog-like faces staring back at me. I had discovered my first native bee hive. That was some thirty years ago and I am still in awe. The hive in the old ironbark is still thriving.

Some 15 years ago I came across an extraordinary fellow who once worked in the forestry industry. He took an interest when he realised how many native hives were being destroyed, mostly unknowingly, by logging. So he set about rescuing and re-homing the little bees in hives that he made from old, thick, recycled hardwood timber. He very kindly gave me one of his many 'boxed' hives. This hive has had a couple of layers added to allow for expansion.

My backyard has large trees and the original spot where the hive was placed was becoming increasingly shady. Not so bad over summer, but not very good over winter. I made the decision to try to winter out the bees in suburban Cannon Hill where my parents-in-law live. (Bees will perish if only shifted a short distance). We picked a sunny spot and in no time at all they were absolutely thriving. At the end of winter when the weather was warming up we bought them home again to a different spot in the backyard that was well protected from the harsh summer sun. The location is against a south facing buttress of a Silky Oak; their entrance towards the east. Because the Silky Oak is deciduous, there was ample sunlight over winter and the hive is still working as strong as ever.

Within the last few years another native hive was discovered not more than 20 cm from the ground, in the base of a *Eucalyptus curtisii* (Plunkett Mallee). This little tree rewards the bees in spring with masses of creamy, white, nectar-filled flowers. What I found interesting is that this tree is in our front yard right next to our driveway. The postman rides past on his mail run. It's not a quiet, restful place.

Within the last few months another hive appeared in the front yard, not more than six metres from the one in the Plunkett Mallee. Even more surprising, this hive is actually underground. The bees have decided to excavate under a cracked paving brick that meets the house. The hive faces north east, but by 11am it is completely shaded by the house. When it rains the hive gets a little damp, but not flooded. It's fascinating to watch the bees bring out little balls of rolled up mud and place them neatly in piles away from the entrance.

There are over 1500 species of native Australian bee. Stingless Social Bees (Tetragonula carbonaria, previously known as Trigona carbonaria), with a scientific name that sounds more like a seafood dish than a species of bee, are quite similar to the commercial honey bee. They have queens, workers, drones and they make honey. But their behaviour is amazingly different. They don't leave the nest before 8am and if it's rainy or cold they won't come out at all. They're mostly back in bed by 4.30 in the afternoon. They can travel up to 500 metres away from their home, but prefer to forage no more than 100 metres away for their food supply.

These little bees do in fact have stings, but the sting is so small it has no impact. However, they can make themselves quite unpleasant to interfering humans by crawling all over them, getting into eyes, ears and hair.

Keep an eye out for those wings of glittering gold in the late afternoon. I know you will be amazed when you find them. You'll get to know and appreciate these great little Aussie insects.

Article and photographs by Glenys Passier Land for Wildlife member Camira, Ipswich







Top two photos: A native bee hive in cracked paving. Lower photo: The old native bee hive with a couple of extension layers added.

app reviews

FREE Field Guide to Pest Animals of Australia

By Invasive Animals CRC

his is a great app detailing 53 vertebrate pest species in Australia.

Each pest animal profile has a detailed description, at least five good colour photos, audio files (for birds, toads, most mammals and a gecko), maps, control information, excellent resource links and even a guide to their footprints and scats (using images from Barbara Triggs' excellent reference book).

A must-have free app.

Yugambeh FREE Language App By Yugambeh Museum

inyung gulli? or What is this?

In the 18th century there were about 700 distinct indigenous Australian languages. Of these, less than a handful have been translated into apps. This Yugambeh Language app is the first to cover an indigenous Queensland language group. The Yugambeh region includes the Gold Coast, Scenic Rim and Logan areas.

This app introduces users to basic Yugambeh phrases, words and grammar with a vision to re-introduce Yugambeh language into everyday use. It is easy-to-use and all words or phrases can be read or heard.





his is an ambitious app that the Queensland Museum aims to expand over time. It currently covers 560 species of animal, including vertebrates and invertebrates, both terrestrial and aquatic.

Most of the information for each species is sourced from the Victorian Museum with maps derived from the Atlas of Living Australia. There are limited frog calls and only a couple of bird calls, but it is a good starting resource.



Weeds of Southern (\$2.49 **Oueensland**

By The Weed Society of Queensland Inc.

here are 132 species of weed covered by this app, about half of which occur in SEQ.

Only one photo per species and a limited description is provided. The focus of each species is on registered herbicides and their method of application. The section on control methods, which includes non-herbicide treatments, would be greatly enhanced by short videos or more instructive images.



FREE Freshwater Macro Invertebrates By Tallebudgera Beach **Outdoor Environment**

his app is only available for iPads, not smart phones, and currently has only 38 species of aquatic fauna. However, it is a great start and has some clever features including easy sorting filters. These filters include size, shell, legs, tail and sensitivity to water quality.

The information for each species includes habitat, diet and interesting features. Some species have video links



to see the animal in motion. There is a GPS locator too for those who want to record their own sightings.

Sustainability Training





App reviews by Deborah Metters



Turkey Tangentials

Focus on Flora - Bleeding Heart (Homalanthus populifolius)

S ometimes a plant can be so common in your field of view that it's easy to miss its significance to ecosystems. It can be so much a part of the landscape and so self-sustaining that it can be forgotten in favour of all the rare and threatened plants and those things that are hard to grow; and so it is with your common, runof-the-mill *Homalanthus populifolius*!

Homalanthus populifolius (previously called Homalanthus nutans or Omalanthus populifolius) has had a few name changes over the last few decades (just to keep us on our toes) and is a member of the Euphorbiaceae family, a very large Family of plants spread across the globe. It is dioecious - having separate male and female plants.

This species is one of those ridiculously fast growing plants that kicks starts ecosystem change by colonising open ground, whether that be an opening in the forest, along roadsides, disturbed edges, and at our place just about anywhere and everywhere. Favoured germination conditions are open ground with high light levels and reasonable moisture holding capacity in the soil. From seedling to maturity and fruiting could be as little as 18-24 months. In open conditions they develop into small trees up to 5-7 metres, but I have seen a few spectacular specimens topping 10 metres in lowland rainforest.

As for kick starting ecosystem change, within 24 months you can have a deep leaf litter providing shelter and habitat for macro-invertebrates and all those critters that eat them. It is a tree that is often as wide as tall, providing shade and humidity for secondary rainforest plants to recruit. The fruit of *Homalanthus populifolius* is highly sort after by birds, particularly the Brown Cuckoo Dove that readily spreads seed.

I love *Homalanthus*, it's hard to imagine a rainforest planting being successful without them. They are our ultimate rainforest pioneer species and well worth planting – that is if they aren't popping up by themselves! Bleeding Heart leaves and a flower spike (above), fruit (below), and a distinctive red heart-shaped leaf (lower).







Spencer Shaw Land for Wildlife member Owner, Brush Turkey Enterprises Reesville, Sunshine Coast

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