



# LAND FOR WILDLIFE

## South East Queensland

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Newsletter of the Land for Wildlife Program South East Queensland

### Detect and Control Water Weeds this Spring



Photos taken a year apart from a dam at Gympie where biocontrol weevils helped control this Salvinia infestation. Note the weevil activity in foreground (left). Photos by Barry Hardingham.

**W**ater weeds, such as Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) and Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) will start flowering in late spring / early summer, which means they need to be controlled in early spring. Both are Class 2 weeds under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* meaning that landholders and Councils have a legislative obligation to control them on their land.

Water weeds are invasive plants that grow rapidly and can quickly form large floating mats, dense underwater thickets or tall barriers along the water's edge. Most water weeds grow from small fragments making them easy to spread and difficult to control.

Water weeds can choke waterways, reduce oxygen in the water, destroy habitats of native wildlife (eg. fish, waterbirds and aquatic animals), create a breeding ground for mosquitoes and can seriously effect industries that depend on irrigation, fish stocks, recreation or tourism.

Early detection is the cheapest and most effective form of water weed management. If you detect a water weed early this significantly increases the chances of being able to eradicate it. It is recommended to regularly check your dam or creek and report any suspect water weeds to your local Council Weed Officer or Land for Wildlife Officer.

Some tips for helping our waterways:

- Never dump aquarium water or contents down drains or into waterways
- Thoroughly clean all vessels and trailers after use on waterways
- Do not clear native vegetation along waterways
- Prevent detergent and fertilisers from entering waterways.

Salvinia and Water Hyacinth can be reduced or eliminated on small dams by removing it by hand using rakes and burning it away from the dam. Biological control using insects may help reduce the vigour and spread of water weeds. Most biocontrol agents are active in spring and summer when temperatures and nutrient levels are high. For larger water weed infestations, chemical control is required.

There is a lot of good information available to help landholders identify and control water weeds. The Salvinia and Cabomba Control Manuals are very useful resources for anyone dealing with these weeds and are available free of charge by calling the NSW DPI on 1800 028 374.

For more information contact your local Council Weed Officers, Dept of Environment & Natural Resources (DERM) Fact Sheets or visit [www.weeds.org.au](http://www.weeds.org.au)



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# editorial

Last month marked the start of my sixth year in this job and I still feel fortunate. I work with a great team of Land for Wildlife Officers and I am privileged to visit some amazing properties across SEQ.

I hope that this newsletter acts as a connection point for the 3000+ diverse landholders who are LfW members in SEQ. Another way for LfW members to connect is through workshops and field days. Although not all members across SEQ have access to LfW workshops, they do continue to expand in popularity and scope. Pages 14-15 discuss some recent workshops held specifically for LfW members and I hope you find it interesting to see what is happening across the region.

If you are lucky enough to see babblers on your property, please report your sightings by following the simple steps on page 4. Babblers are one of the many bird species affected by the loss of woodlands in Eastern Australia and any activity that we can do to prevent further loss is essential.

There are lots of other great articles in this edition and I hope you find them useful for the management of your property.

Thanks to all contributors, and as always, I welcome any stories or photographs that you wish to share with other LfW members.



Deborah Metters  
Land for Wildlife  
Regional Coordinator  
SEQ Catchments

## tribute

Vale Ric Nattrass 22/12/1949 - 05/09/2009

Ric Nattrass, was not a member of Land for Wildlife, however anyone who has ever heard him speak will know of his passion for all things wild. His garden was not big enough to be part of LFW, but on his 1/4 acre block in Bellbird

Park he proved that you do not need a large property to be surrounded by native animals. His garden was a testimony to all he believed in, full of native plants, trees,

shrubs, grasses, and full to the brim of native wildlife. From the smallest insects to lizards, frogs, turkeys, parrots, possums and gliders.

Ric will be sorely missed but his legacy will live on with all those of us who have had the opportunity to be motivated by him to take that little bit more care of the world around us.

Written by Stacey Franks.

### Landholder Registrations, Land for Wildlife SEQ - 01/09/2009

Registered Properties	Working Towards Registration	Total Area Retained	Total Area under Restoration
2578	558	46,336 ha	2780 ha

Forward all Letters to the Editor, Fauna Vignettes and My Little Corner contributions to:

The Editor  
Land for Wildlife Newsletter  
SEQ Catchments  
PO Box 13204  
George Street QLD 4003  
07 3211 4404  
dmetters@seqcatchments.com.au

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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 6777

Fflur Collier  
Jenny Staples  
Greg Siepen  
Scott Sumner  
Susan Finlay

### Gold Coast City Council

Darryl Larsen, 5582 8896  
Lexie Webster, 5582 8344

### Ipswich City Council

Peter Copping, 3810 6608  
Mark Bell, 3810 6666  
Andrew Bailey, 3810 6666

### Lockyer Valley Regional Council

Martin Bennett, 5462 0376

### Logan City Council

Rachel Booth, 3412 5321  
Nicole Lechner, 3412 4859  
Lyndall Rosevear, 3412 4860

### Moreton Bay Regional Council

Amanda Sargeant, 3283 0291  
Stuart Mutzig, 3283 0296  
Ed Surman, 3283 1235

### Redland City Council

Melanie Harrison, 3820 1106  
Gavin Hammermeister, 3820 1102

### Scenic Rim Regional Council

Keith McCosh, 5540 5436

### Somerset Regional Council

Martin Bennett, 0428 198 353  
Michelle Ledwith, 5422 0516

### Sunshine Coast Regional Council

Dave Burrows, 5485 1318  
Josh Birse, 5475 7345  
Stephanie Reif, 5475 7345  
Nick Clancy, 5439 6433  
Alan Wynn, 5439 6477

### 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



[www.seqcatchments.com.au/LFW.html](http://www.seqcatchments.com.au/LFW.html)



# fauna vignettes

## Snakes and Dragons at School

After reading the latest *Fauna Vignette* I thought I should share some photos of the regular visitors to our school grounds. The snakes are regulars and the bump in the larger one is most likely the result of a possum lunch. We have recently become members of the Land for Wildlife program and are enjoying revegetating our school grounds with fauna friendly plants.

The water dragons live near the tuckshop in a cool damp area where students have limited access. The students, being teenagers are more intrigued than anything.

The snakes are a great attraction for many students and staff, particularly as we know when they are on the move by the cacophony of sound from the crows and

Noisy Miners. We find snake skins every year and last year we were lucky enough to witness one of our snakes slowly but surely consume a butcher bird (not lucky for the bird) while hanging precariously from a second storey gutter.

As the snakes are not dangerous we let them be and the photo of the snake around the down pipe simply resulted in a detour sign around that set of stairs until it had moved on.

These photos were taken by staff over the last couple of years.

Mrs Cathy Menzler  
Acting HOD Science  
Holland Park State High School



Fauna Vignettes is a new feature designed for you - Land for Wildlife members - to send in images of wildlife from your property. In 2009, all contributors to Fauna Vignettes will receive a free *Suburban and Environmental Weeds of South-East Queensland* DVD valued at \$64.90. Send good quality images and explanations to the Editor (see pg 2).



Brush-tailed Phascogale.  
Photo courtesy of Queensland Museum.

## Water Tanks and Tuans: drinking or drowning?

An article in the Victorian *Land for Wildlife Newsletter* (June 2009) has alerted all Land for Wildlifers to the dangers of not properly screening water tank pipes. The author described how small climbing mammals, such as Tuans (Brush-tailed Phascogales – *Phascogale tapoatafa*), like to drink water from the entry and overflow pipes of water tanks. However, in some instances these little creatures could not climb out and drowned.

Fixing a fine wire mesh screen to the down pipes and overflow pipes can solve this problem quickly and easily. The phascogale's diet, dew and rain should provide all the water requirements needed for a healthy life.

Brush-tailed Phascogales are small carnivorous mammals related to the quolls. They have a distinctive bushy tail and a sharp snout. They are mostly solitary and

active at night and expert climbers, preying on invertebrates and nectar amongst the branches and leaves. They build a nest of bark, feathers and fur in tree hollows.

There are other small native arboreal mammals (e.g. antechinuses, dunnarts) which may also try and drink out of the water tank pipes.

Harry Ross  
Land for Wildlife member  
Kenmore Scouts, Western Brisbane

Editor -  
I was told that a Land for Wildlife landholder at Cambroon found a phascogale drowned in a bath tub that was used as a horse watering trough. It is recommended that a branch or large diameter rope is put into troughs to enable wildlife to climb out and prevent them from drowning.

# fauna profile

## Where are our Grey-crowned Babblers?

Article by Margaret Cameron  
Birds Queensland  
Photographs by Tom Oliver

Most of us who grew up in the country in southeast Queensland know the Grey-crowned Babblers – the “Happy Families” (sometimes called Yahoo birds, because of their calls), and remember seeing them regularly. When I was young, we lived at Tamborine Village, and there was always a group of them near the gate we rode through on our way to school.

When I returned to Queensland after nearly 40 years away, I was shocked at how few Grey-crowned Babblers I saw within range of my new home in Ipswich. People say things like, “They used to go through our back yard all the time but now I only see them about once a year”, or “We used to have a big group, but now there are only three or four birds”.

Our Grey-crowned Babblers are the Eastern subspecies *Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*, and they used to be widespread and pretty common throughout the woodlands on the slopes and alluvial plains of eastern Australia, from South Australia and western Victoria to Cape York in Queensland. However, due to the massive loss of woodlands in South-eastern Australia, they are now extinct in South Australia, endangered in Victoria and threatened in New South Wales. This decline in the babbler population appears to be gradually moving north, but we don’t really know what is happening in South East Queensland.

We need to get the facts!

So in 2009 Birds Queensland is carrying

out a project planned by the Dept of Environment and Resource Management to establish the present status of the Grey-crowned Babbler in South East Queensland, in an area roughly east of the Great Dividing Range and north as far as Gympie.

We are asking everyone, not just Birds Queensland members, to report all babbler groups you see in the area this year, especially where you live. Please try to count them – this is not always easy, as they jump about! Then report your sighting to me (contact information below) with the exact location (GPS if possible), the date and your own contact details.

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*“We are asking everyone to report all babbler groups that you see in the [SEQ] area...”*

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So far, it looks as if the babbler stronghold is the Lockyer Valley. There have been very few reports from the northern part of our area (from Kilcoy north), and from areas closer to the coast where there are historic records, like Mudgeeraba and Toorbul and Yandina – the habitat may be gone. If there is a really a serious problem, plans can be made to help our babblers.



Babblers forage for food in leaf litter and around fallen timber. Landholders can assist in the conservation of woodland birds, such as babblers, by not ‘cleaning-up’ fallen timber and by being mindful of habitat values when sourcing firewood.

Grey-crowned Babblers forage in groups of two to fifteen amongst leaf litter, fallen trees and the bark of shrubs and trees. Their diet consists almost entirely of invertebrates such as ants, spiders, beetles, etc., and occasionally seeds. They usually make their nests, roosting nests as well as breeding nests, in shrubs or the lower canopy of trees.

In Victoria, various types of revegetation activities have helped babbler groups survive. These activities include:

- ☒ Revegetation designed to link-up fragmented habitat
- ☒ Regeneration of the sapling and shrub layer, and
- ☒ Retaining and even placing logs and dead branches in babbler areas to improve the complexity of the litter layer.

Please support this project! Not only is participation easy, it is enjoyable (everyone likes babblers, they are fun to watch). This project is obviously worthwhile as it would be terrible to lose such an iconic bird.

### Please report your babbler sighting to:

Margaret Cameron, 07 32829151  
mcameron01@optusnet.com.au  
c/- Birds Queensland, PO Box 2273,  
Milton QLD 4064.



A Grey-crowned Babbler shows the grey plumage on top of its head.



# fauna research

## Bio-acoustic Monitoring of Frogs in the Upper Stanley River on Land for Wildlife Properties



Article by Alan Wynn  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Sunshine Coast Regional Council

Bio-acoustic monitoring is nothing new. Researchers have been using this technique in the field for as long as there has been portable recording equipment.

In its simplest form it involves the recording of animal calls so that identification can be carried out at a later date by a skilled person in the lab. Multiple sites can effectively be sampled concurrently and human error is reduced as identification can be carried out by one person instead of many.

As technology advanced, equipment was developed that allowed for recording of other environmental factors (such as temperature, humidity etc) at the same time as the animal call so that the animals activity could be correlated with environmental factors. Recently, digital recorders, smaller, more powerful computers and wireless networks using radio, mobile phone or satellite communications have allowed for some very sophisticated bio-acoustic monitoring.

Bio-acoustic monitoring is a very good way of surveying an environment for frogs, as each species has a distinctive call and they often vocalise at times when it is difficult for researchers to be in the field gathering data.

A benefit of this kind of frog survey is that there is no need for frogs to be handled, thus eliminating stress to the frogs and the risk of transmission of diseases such as chytridiomycosis. Other benefits of this technique include the ability to record information without the presence of people, improved detection of cryptic species and the ease of collecting information over different time periods.

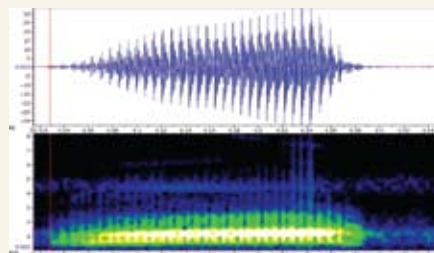
Earlier this year, Seqwater initiated a project in the Upper Stanley River aiming to gather information on the species of frogs found in this area. Frogs have long been considered to be reasonably good bio-indicators of ecosystem health and water quality. The data gathered will be used to gain further understanding of the health of the Somerset dam catchment and contribute to the conservation of frog species in the region.

Several Land for Wildlife properties in the Peachester area were identified as having suitable sites for the study and were approached by their local Land for Wildlife Extension Officer, Nick Clancy, to see if they would agree to have the equipment sited on their land.

While most of the sampling sites or "nodes" for this study only had simple digital recorders, one node had wireless satellite and mobile phone technology coupled with an onboard computer that allowed it to communicate directly via the internet with a computer back in the lab.

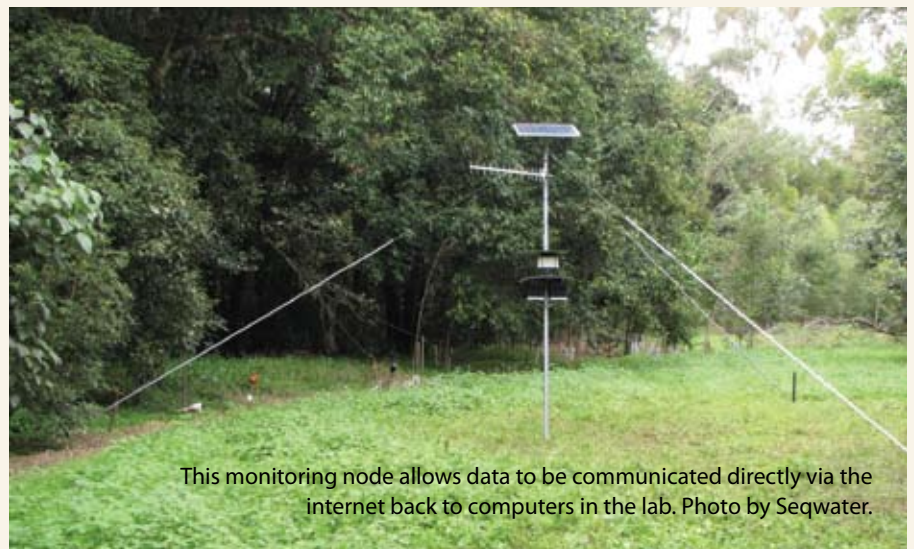
In future deployments the equipment will have software, currently being developed by Andrew Taylor from the University of NSW, loaded on to the on-board computer. The software will allow the frog vocalisations to be recorded and identified in-situ by the equipment and the resulting data sent via the internet to a remote site.

Similar equipment and associated software has been developed for bird and bat calls.



Bio-acoustic monitoring node with Land for Wildlife member, Kim Rawson.  
Photo by Darren Moore.

Giant Barred Frog and the spectrogram showing its call. Frog photo by Amber Brown and spectrogram provided by Andrew Taylor, UNSW.



This monitoring node allows data to be communicated directly via the internet back to computers in the lab. Photo by Seqwater.



# fire & biodiversity

## Integrated Control of Monkey Rope Vine



Article and photographs by Gavin Hammermeister  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Redland City Council

It's not often we talk about controlling a native species in this publication, however there are instances when a vegetation community becomes so out of balance that even a native plant can act like an environmental weed. Monkey Rope Vine (*Parsonsia straminea*) is one of those native species.

The following integrated control actions to reduce populations of native Monkey Rope Vine relate specifically to the Redlands IndigiScapes Centre. Monkey Rope Vine has become increasingly out of balance in areas of the centre's Scribbly Gum open forest community, to the point that it is becoming the dominant ground cover and climber. In other areas of South East Queensland, monkey rope doesn't require control and is in fact used in rehabilitation plantings.

Even though leaves of Monkey Rope Vine are food for local butterflies Blue Tiger (*Tirumala hamata*) and Common Crow butterfly (*Euploea core corinna*), when it becomes the dominant species it can have negative impacts on vegetation communities. These negative impacts include the reduction of native germination and therefore biodiversity through the

smothering effect of monkey rope (similar to environmental weed vines).

Dense monkey rope inhibits Koala movement and access to food trees due to nature of thick growth. It can also kill and bring down small trees due to weight of vine and completely cover the crown.

At IndigiScapes it was decided to trial an integrated control plan for 3000m<sup>2</sup> of open Scribbly Gum forest that was heavily infested with Monkey Rope Vine.

*"there are instances when a vegetation community becomes so out of balance that even a native plant can act like an environmental weed"*

The first stage of control was a low intensity ecological burn followed by 6 post burn chemical control visits to spray germinating monkey rope and environmental weeds over a 12 month period. Both stages were undertaken by Redland City Council conservation crews.



Picture taken 2 years after an ecological burn at IndigiScapes showing open Scribbly Gum forest structure. Photo taken 20/8/09.

The end goal of this plan was to reduce the population of monkey rope, restore balance and structure to the vegetation community and, through the use of fire, provide conditions for the germination of fire-dependent species.

Before the burn was undertaken, two monitoring points were selected consisting of one metre square quadrates at intervals of 10 metres for 50 metres. The most dominant species recorded on site was monkey rope (*Parsonsia straminea*), with low recordings of Many-flowered Mat Rush (*Lomandra multiflora*), Bracken Fern (*Pteridium esculentum*), River Club Rush (*Schoenoplectus validus*) and Wiry Panic (*Entolasia stricta*).

Interpretative signage was placed around the site at IndigiScapes to advise the public as to why we were doing the burn. We took this opportunity to turn the possible negative attributes of a fire to promote the positive environmental outcomes for this area as a result of implementing a burn.



On one side of the walking track is an area that was burned showing an open Scribbly Gum forest structure.



On the other side of the track is the same Scribbly Gum open forest heavily infested with monkey rope. Photos taken 20/8/09.



The three photos below are taken from the same monitoring point.



Picture taken on July 11 2007 approximately 3 weeks before the burn. As you can see it is heavily infested with monkey rope.



Picture taken on October 23 2007 approximately 3 months after the burn. The monkey rope population has been significantly reduced, the area is now open with bracken fern germinating.



Picture taken on September 3 2009, 2 years after the burn. There is some monkey rope, however the area is resembling a typical open Scribbly Gum forest.

The burn was undertaken on July 30 2007 and in the 2 years since, the site has undergone a massive transformation from a Scribbly Gum forest heavily infested with monkey rope to a Scribbly Gum forest displaying the structure of a typical open eucalypt forest with increased diversity of species.

Species now recorded on-site include Many-flowered Mat Rush (*Lomandra multiflora*), Bracken Fern (*Pteridium esculentum*), River Club Rush (*Schoenoplectus validus*), Wiry Panic (*Entolasia stricta*), Monkey Rope Vine (*Parsonsia straminea*), Soap Tree (*Alphitonia excelsa*), Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Graceful Grass (*Ottocloa gracillima*), Fan Flower (*Goodenia rotundifolia*), Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia scandens*), Scribbly Gum (*Eucalyptus racemosa*), Coastal Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*), Pointed-leaf Hovea (*Hovea acutifolia*), Wild May (*Leptospermum polygalifolium*), Early Black Wattle (*Acacia leiocalyx*), Coastal Geebung (*Persoonia stradbokensis*), Native Iris (*Patersonia sericea*), Cheese Tree (*Glochidion ferdinandi*), Melicope elleryana, Poison Peach (*Trema tomentosa*), Hop Bush (*Dodonaea triquetra*), Forest Boronia (*Boronia rosmarinifolia*), Swamp Box (*Lophostemon suaveolens*), Black She-Oak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*), Sweet Sarsaparilla (*Smilax glycyphylla*), Crinkle Bush (*Lomatia silaifolia*) and Blueberry Lily (*Dianella caerulea*).

With the site now displaying an open eucalypt forest structure there has also been an increase in the number of bandicoot diggings, recent evidence of fresh Koala scratching on food trees and an increased presence of both Swamp and Red-neck Wallaby scats. Before the burn there was very little evidence of any of these.

This burn was undertaken as part of council's overall fire management plan, however the site will require future ecological burns and post chemical control to keep the monkey rope in balance with the vegetation community and to maintain the diversity that has re-established from this first burn. It is envisaged burns will be undertaken every 7–12 years.

If you do intend to undertake a burn on your property you will need to consult with your local council and Queensland Fire Service Officer to comply with any permits and plans that may be required.

# practicalities

## Spring has Sprung! What to do with Orphaned Chicks



Article by Nicole Lechner  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Logan City Council  
Photos courtesy of Mimi Dona



Creating a makeshift nest for a bird that has fallen from its nest can be easy by following the steps below. Tips and photo courtesy of *The baby bird brigade*.

*'Spring has sprung, the grass has ris',  
I wonder where the birdies is?....'*

Spring is the season of warmth, growth and most importantly, the season of love! Most species of birds take advantage of spring's warmer temperatures and plentiful food supplies to start their breeding season. However survival isn't always dependant upon having a full belly; young birds are vulnerable to a range of threats which can hinder their survival. These include cat attacks, habitat destruction, natural predation as well as accidentally falling out of the nest.

But it is not all doom and gloom for the young chicks, healthy baby birds which fall out of the nest are easily able to be reunited with their parents, however every year wildlife carers are unnecessarily inundated with these 'orphans'.

In 2008 the problem became so pressing it prompted a whole movement dedicated to reuniting chicks and parents, aptly named, *The baby bird brigade*. This campaign is the initiative of both Mimi Dona, Senior Vet Nurse at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and Renee Rivard from Wildcare Australia. They have developed a step-by-step guide to baby bird rescue that consists of a poster, a bucket (sponsored by Bunnings), a brochure and a sticker with contact numbers for advice.

At the start of each spring, Wildcare, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary Hospital, RSPCA QLD, the Australian Wildlife Hospital and Provet join forces delivering the rescue packs to 300 veterinary clinics in South East Queensland. This way if a member of the public brings in a healthy baby birds to a veterinary clinic they can be provided with a bucket and advice on how to reunite the chick and parents. Parental care is always the preferred option for raising chicks.

So become an 'unsung' hero this spring and lend a helping hand (or wing!) (pardon the puns...) by following these simple steps:

- ❶ Correctly identify the baby bird. Some birds nests are on the ground (eg. Masked Lapwing/Plover) and some babies are independent from the day they are born (eg. Brush Turkey), so these babies don't require rescuing!
- ❷ Determine if the baby bird is suitable to be re-nested. If the parents are dead then a registered wildlife carer needs to be contacted. If the baby is injured it needs to be kept warm, dark and quiet (usually in a box with towels and air holes) and be seen by a vet ASAP.
- ❸ If the baby bird is healthy, uninjured and its parents are nearby then it is suitable to re-nested. The baby should be placed in a makeshift nest and the nest placed in the same or near the same tree to the original nest. Also

make sure the nest is well protected from direct sun and predators. A makeshift nest can be made from a bucket with several drilled holes in the bottom to provide drainage. Then place a layer of leaves and grass in the bottom and place a stick in the bucket and secure it into one of the drainage holes.

- ❹ Observe the makeshift nest from a distance to ensure the parents return to feed it. If the parents do not return within a couple of hours or by dusk, then retrieve the baby and contact a wildlife carer. It is important that the baby is handed over to registered and qualified wildlife carer so that it can be given proper care.

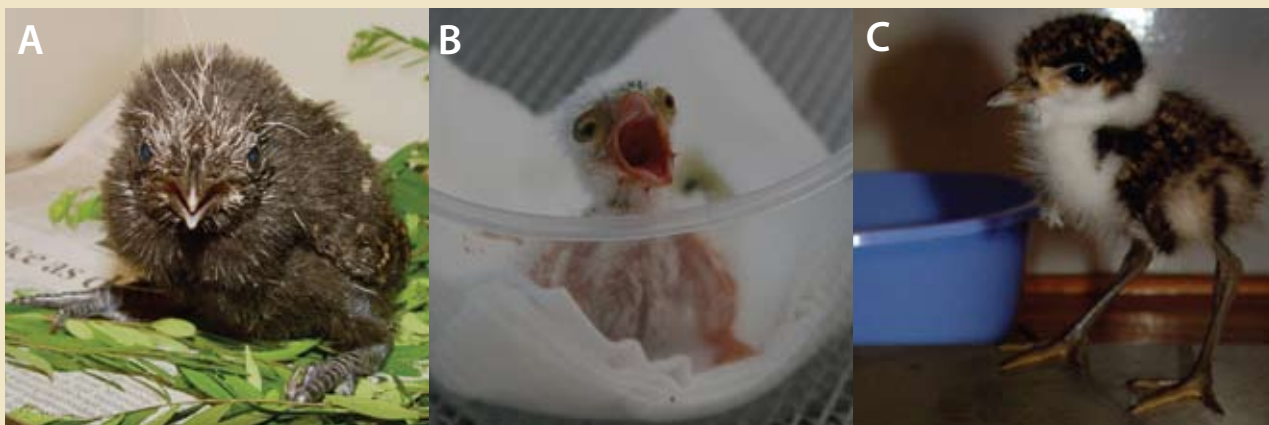
For more information on *The baby bird brigade* please contact Mimi Dona at [vets@cws.org.au](mailto:vets@cws.org.au) or visit the following websites:  
[www.wildcare.org.au](http://www.wildcare.org.au)  
[www.cws.org.au](http://www.cws.org.au)  
[www.rspcaqlld.org.au](http://www.rspcaqlld.org.au)  
[www.wildlifewarriors.org.au](http://www.wildlifewarriors.org.au)

### For sick or injured native wildlife:

Wildcare Australia ☎ 5527 2444 (all hours)  
RSPCA ☎ 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625)  
or your local wildlife carers organisation.

Many thanks to Mimi Dona for her help with this article.

**Q: Guess what species of baby bird I am?**



Answers: A: Pheasant Coucal B: Nankeen Kestrel  
C: Masked Lapwing (remember my nest is on the ground, so please leave me be unless I am sick or injured)



# my little corner

## Where did the goannas go?

Dotted around my house and driveway on my property are several large goanna holes. In one hole hidden under a geranium bush was a fairly big goanna who would sun herself on the gravel drive.

I later discovered she was in fact a 'he' when the mating season started. Their mating lasted most of the day. At one interval he was confronted with a butcher bird and then rose up on his fat back legs to scare the bird. After recent flooding rains, I have noticed that toads are now living in the goanna holes and I have not seen the goannas for months now. If goannas take 260-270 days to lay their eggs, where did the eggs go? I felt very privileged that these two goannas choose to live here.

Around the same time, I was lucky enough to witness a rare sight of two sand goannas fighting on a nearby property. This apparently is the mating ritual of sand goannas. The landholders have told me they too have not seen any goannas for months. What happens when their holes fill up with water? Where did they go?

### Robyn McIntosh

Land for Wildlife member  
Coominya, Somerset Region

PS. I also have lots of photos of my large mob of black striped wallabies who also live here if ever you want a story on their behaviour. The koalas were always here but now it is months in between sightings. Energex removed a prominent corridor that lead from the creek into surrounding areas.

### Editor -

Thanks for these photos Robyn and your questions. Steve Wilson from the Queensland Museum confirmed that these goannas are Yellow-spotted Monitors (*Varanus panoptes*). The colloquial name 'sand goanna' is still used in SEQ to describe the large goannas found in the dry forests and sandy soils of Esk and Somerset region.

Sand Goannas (*Varanus gouldii*) are found further west in Queensland and are of a slighter build with adults weighing up to 1.5 kgs. The big male Yellow-spotted Monitor at your place may weigh up to 4 kgs. Sand Goannas are much less prevalent in SEQ than previously assumed.

The 'mating ritual' that you observed on



A male Yellow-spotted Monitor standing up to intimidate a Pied Butcherbird.



A Yellow-spotted Monitor digging in the garden.



Yellow-spotted Monitors mating in the shade.



Male and female Yellow-spotted Monitors.

your neighbours property is actually two males engaged in chest-to-chest combat fighting for access to potential female partners at the beginning of the mating season.

Yellow-spotted Monitors are known to dig a lot of holes. They do this primarily to forage for food such as eggs, small reptiles, small mammals, frogs and insects. They also dig large burrows to shelter in and to hibernate in during winter (probably why you have not see any around for a few months).

The holes that they dig to lay their eggs are covered up for incubation, so we can assume that the holes you see filling up with water do not contain eggs.



Two male Yellow-spotted Monitors engage in combat at the beginning of the mating season.



# pest profile

## Deer are now a Declared Pest Animal in Queensland



Article by Greg Siepen  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Brisbane City Council  
Photographs by Glen Alchin, Brisbane City Council

The number of deer in Queensland has significantly increased in recent years with negative environmental impacts becoming of increasing concern. The number of reported deer-related vehicular accidents has also risen, resulting in the need to support the management and control of deer via regulatory means.

Recent changes to the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* have formally recognised the significant environmental and social impacts of wild deer in Queensland.

Rusa (*Cervus timorensis*) and Chital (*Axis axis*) Deer are now Class 2 Declared Pest animals, meaning Council and landholders have a legislative obligation to control the number present on their land.

Red (*Cervus elaphus*) and Fallow (*Dama dama*) Deer are now Class 3 Declared Pest animals, meaning Council and landholders must control the pest if it is impacting, or has the potential to impact, on neighbouring 'environmentally significant areas' (eg. National Parks).

It is an offence to introduce, feed, supply or release feral deer without a permit.

### Impacts

All deer species found in Australia were

introduced and now threaten native flora and fauna. Wild deer can cause significant damage to native bushland as well as agricultural properties when competing for pastures or browsing orchards and native trees. Such behaviour results in the trampling and compacting of soil, disturbance of mulch, ring-barking of trees, spreading of weeds, creation of trails, concentration of nutrients, erosion of soil and subsequent degradation of water quality in waterways.

Other impacts include colliding with motor vehicles, damaging residential gardens and fences, attracting illegal hunting, damaging agricultural crops and increasing the risk of spreading disease (all of which can affect humans as well as stock).

### Protect Your Property

There are a number of methods available to protect your property from the negative impacts of wild deer with fencing and deer-shelter removal being the most effective.

Frightening devices such as strobe lights and gas-fuelled explosives are not recommended as they are of great disturbance to neighbours and are ineffective as deer become accustomed to the technique. Odour-based chemical

repellents are also not recommended as they are ineffective over large areas with plants needing re-treatment after rain.

Fencing is recommended to protect vegetation on your property. For larger properties, it may be expensive to erect 2.5 metre high deer exclusion fences around the entire property boundary. An inexpensive and effective method of protecting property vegetation is fencing small patches of trees and shrubs. For example, protecting orchards and native trees with lengths of builder's reinforcing mesh. Suitable electric fencing may protect smaller patches of bush being restored.

*"There is a strong correlation between the presence of lantana and the presence of deer..."*

Another recommended method of deer deterrence is the removal of particular types of deer-shelter. There is a strong correlation between the presence of the exotic weed Lantana (*Lantana camara*) and the presence of deer on properties. Lantana is used as a shelter by deer during daylight hours. Lantana is another Class 3



### Deer in Brisbane

In the Brisbane City Council area, Land for Wildlife (LfW) members are working together with Council to control Rusa, Red and Fallow Deer numbers. Council assigns priority to LfW properties when dealing with deer problems because of the contribution LfW members offer in protecting and restoring native wildlife habitats and ecosystems.

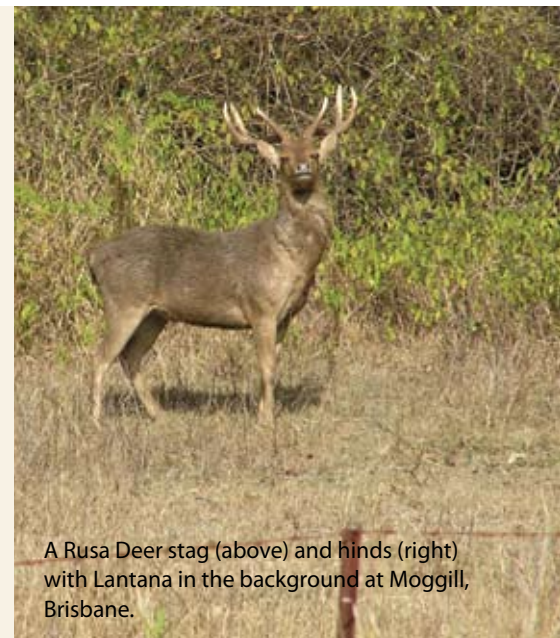
Wild deer create a variety of problems for landholders such as spreading of weeds, ring-barking trees and shrubs, destruction of native tree and shrub saplings, and degradation of water quality in waterways.

LfW members are being encouraged to reduce areas of Lantana which deer

use for shelter. The development of a management plan is offered to all LfW properties to detail techniques to control Lantana and other invasive weeds.

Council's Invasive Species Management Team has commenced a deer control program targeting Rusa Deer stags during the rutting season. After rutting season, the program focuses on trapping, with emphasis placed on reducing the number of adult hinds (female deer) and young.

To report a deer sighting phone Council on 3403 8888 and mention you are a Land for Wildlife member or for more information about deer in Brisbane visit [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au)



A Rusa Deer stag (above) and hinds (right) with Lantana in the background at Moggill, Brisbane.





A Fallow Deer herd (left) and stag (above) on properties in Western Brisbane.

Declared Pest and landholders must legally remove Lantana if it is impacting, or has the potential to impact, on a neighbouring 'environmentally significant area'.

#### Other Control Methods

If you would like advice on best practice control methods for feral deer on your property, contact your local Council Land Protection Officer or Pest Management Officer. These contacts have a significant knowledge base of the requirements for different methods of control such as shooting, darting and trapping. People who wish to control deer must have appropriate skills, licences and permits as well as adhere to local police laws and animal welfare laws and standards.

#### Know Your Rights

The declaration of pest status to deer does not give recreational shooters any right to enter another person's property to hunt deer. Landowners have control over who can enter their property.

**Class 2**  
Declared Pest



# weed alert

## Leaf Cactus (*Pereskia aculeata*)



Article and photographs by Alan Wynn  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Sunshine Coast Regional Council

This nasty looking weed was found growing in a backyard near Beerwah about a year ago and recently I found a large infestation growing on a Land for Wildlife property on the upper section of Coochin Creek. Keep an eye out for it and if you find it, please seek control advice immediately.

Leaf Cactus is a perennial, spiky, climbing shrub that grows vine-like into the canopy of trees. It has clusters of long spikes along the main stem and pairs of short recurved thorns at the leaf nodes.

The leaves are waxy, slightly succulent and elliptic in shape, approximately 45-110 mm long by 15-50 mm wide. The scented flowers can be white or pale yellow, sometimes ageing to pink and are approximately 20-55 mm in diameter. The unusually shaped fruits are yellow to orange and 25-45 mm in diameter.

The plant is spread by plant fragments or by birds consuming the fruit. All parts of the plant are viable including the leaves.

It has escaped cultivation in areas from near Sydney to Cairns and is a significant threat to natural areas throughout the tropics and subtropics.

Although it is not yet a declared species in Australia it is one of the 12 most significant weeds in South Africa.

*"This plant is particularly difficult to eradicate... so if you think you have seen it... please contact your local council for advice."*

This plant is particularly difficult to eradicate so if you have this plant on your property or if you think you have seen it in bushland near you please contact your local council for advice.

For a fact sheet go to [www.weeds.gov.au](http://www.weeds.gov.au) or contact your local Land for Wildlife Extension Officer.



Sections of mature stem showing clusters of thorns that may be up to 40 mm in length.



New growth of Leaf Cactus - note the paired thorns located at the leaf nodes.



# plant profile

## Some Favourite Grasses of South East Queensland

Article by Sonia MacDonald

Land for Wildlife member

Doonan, Sunshine Coast, and

Author of book reviewed on facing page

Grasses cover more of the Earth's surface than any other family of plants and include the largest number of individual plants. Economically, they are the most important of all flowering plants because they include the cereal grains such as wheat, barley and rye and they are the main food of domestic livestock. Where would we be without milk and meat?

However, grasses are not noticed by many people because trees and shrubs dominate the landscape. Grasses seem only to form the background, but they certainly deserve a closer look.

Some grasses are best seen in a mass; although, if one takes the trouble to examine a single flower head, one can only admire the beauty of its complex structure.

Some of the native grasses can be really eye-catching. The large, pinkish flower heads of Scented Top (*Capillipedium spicigerum*) can look quite spectacular in a group, especially when they are caught by the rays of the afternoon sun. This grass is found primarily on the east coast of Australia from Cape York to about Sydney. It is commonly found on open edges of eucalypt forest and under taller trees with occasional shading. It grows to about 1.5m tall and is a clumping perennial grass that would make an excellent landscape feature. Its ornamental, feathery flower heads emit a pleasant scent when crushed.



The pinkish flower heads of the native grass, Scented Top (*Capillipedium spicigerum*).



Barbed Wire Grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*) is a useful addition to a bush garden as it is drought tolerant, grows on poor soils and has a nice lemony smell when crushed.

Another of my favourite grasses is Basket Grass (*Oplismenus imbecillis*). This one could easily be overlooked as it is very low-growing and is found in shady places in woodland and rainforest. It is an attractive grass with small, sparsely hairy green leaves that are often purple on the undersides. It roots at the nodes and is a very useful groundcover for shady areas. It is found all along the eastern coast of Australia. A similar grass, *Oplismenus undulatifolius*, is found only along the tropical and sub-tropical coast, has densely hairy leaves and is without the purple undersides.

Barbed Wire Grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*) is a distinctive grass that is a useful addition to a bush garden as it is drought tolerant and grows on poor soils of low fertility. It is widespread in eucalypt forests and woodlands of eastern Australia and is a long-lived perennial. It can form a large clump and the fine, grey-green leaves and tall, arching stems up to 1.5m long, make a very effective statement. The leaves emit a lemony smell when crushed. It is most notable for its seedheads which resemble barbed wire. The seedhead branches are reflexed at obtuse and opposite angles and change from green to red-brown at maturity. It provides shelter for wildlife and is the host plant for the Evening Brown butterfly.

I must mention Swamp Barnyard Grass (*Echinochloa telmatophila*) a fairly uncommon native grass that has been confused with exotic Barnyard Grasses. This one is found growing in or beside ponds and streams, mostly near coastal areas of tropical to warm temperate areas of Qld and NSW. It is a robust annual grass, 50-200 cm tall, with a large, dense flower head that is erect or slightly nodding. It looks extremely hairy as it is covered with long purplish awns and to many people it doesn't look like a native at all!

Lack of space does not allow me to enthuse about Kangaroo Grass and other native grasses in our area. There are many of them out there and they all play a useful part in the ecology of the bush.



Basket Grass (*Oplismenus imbecillis*) is a useful groundcover for shady areas.



Above 3 images show Swamp Barnyard Grass (*Echinochloa telmatophila*), a native grass that can be confused as a weed.



# book reviews

## Grasses: native and introduced grasses of the Noosa Biosphere reserve and surrounding areas

by Sonia MacDonald and Stephanie Haslam

Long-term Land for Wildlife member, Sonia MacDonald, and *Noosa Native Plants* author Stephanie Haslam have combined to produce a stunning book of grasses for the Noosa region. The project started when Noosa Parks Association's Botany Group studied the plant family Poaceae (the grasses) in 2007. The collection of grasses the group made forms the majority of the book.

Funded by the sale of Noosa Integrated Catchment Association's (NICA) previous book *Noosa Native Plants* and with additional funding from SEQ Catchments this book covers 108 grasses of the Noosa area (63 native and 45 exotic). Some of these are found throughout the rest of South East Queensland. What I like about this book is you are looking at the pressed specimens of the grasses rather than a line drawing. Each image also has a description of the plant's characteristics.

The book is well put together with a range of photos of grasses in different habitats. The introduction covers general

information on grasses including the structure of a grass plant, types of inflorescence and reproductive parts. Information on weedy grasses and their control, pasture grasses and the use of grasses in landscaping is also presented. The information on controlling grasses is particularly helpful for landholders who have weedy grasses.

The only criticism is that the book covers a limited area and therefore a limited number of species. There are over 400 grass species in South East Queensland. However most of the common native and introduced grasses of South East Queensland are presented and will be of use to landholders outside the Noosa and wider Sunshine Coast area. Overall another superb publication from NICA and well done to its authors!

*Book Review by Stephanie Reif  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Sunshine Coast Regional Council*



Published by Noosa Integrated Catchment Association Inc, 2008  
Soft cover with plastic covering  
Full colour, 144 pages  
ISBN: 978 0646 50982 2  
Price: \$40  
Available from NICA on 07 5449 9650  
or specialist bookshops.

## The Complete Field Guide to Stick and Leaf Insects of Australia

by Paul Brock and Jack Hasenpusch

Did you know that the Gargantuan Stick-insect of North Queensland rainforests can reach 61 cms in length? That's the length of my outstretched arm. As revealed in this colourful book, stick insects are the longest insect in the world with Australia supporting 101 known species with probably many more undiscovered.

Stick and leaf insects (collectively known as phasmids) are nocturnal, leaf-eating insects that have perfected the art of camouflage. A single species may come in many different colours to help it blend in with its habitat. They need to stay well hidden to avoid predators such as Crested Hawks that specialise in eating phasmids.

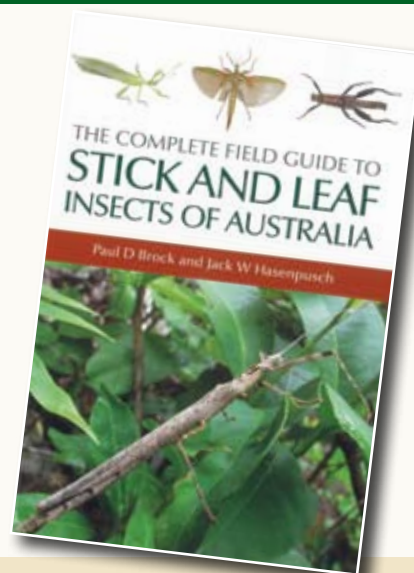
As with many insect families, phasmid ecology and taxonomy is poorly known. The authors state that this lack of

knowledge about phasmids inspired them to write this book.

This is a well presented book packed full of photos with 1-2 pages allocated to describing each of the 101 Australian species. According to the distribution maps, I counted 19 species that are found in the SEQ region.

There is also a detailed section on how to collect, preserve, photograph and rear phasmids. This is a useful guide for finding these cryptic animals in the bush, or for those readers who are interested in expanding their pet collection to include a foot-long, low maintenance stick insect.

*Book Review by Deborah Metters  
Land for Wildlife Regional Coordinator  
SEQ Catchments*



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all good bookshops.

# land for wildlife workshops

## Moreton Bay Regions Camp Out



Article by Amanda Sargeant  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Moreton Bay Regional Council

On Saturday 18th July 2009, Moreton Bay Regional Council hosted a Land for Wildlife Camp Out and spotlighting night at a very popular Land for Wildlife property - the Woodford Folk Festival (WFF) site.

It was a fantastic opportunity for Land for Wildlife members of the new amalgamated Council region to get together over a camp fire and enjoy the natural and relaxed environment of the WFF property. Participants were able to exchange ideas on how to protect habitat for wildlife and chat with existing (Amanda Sargeant) and new Land for Wildlife Extension Officers (Stuart Mutzig and Ed Surman). Over 100 people attended with about half dragging their tents out of their sheds to camp on the WFF site.

Participants were taken on informative walks by Troy Baxter (former Environmental Officer for WFF) and Donna Farrell (volunteer for WFF). The informative walks demonstrated to participants how areas of devoid of vegetation can be restored for wildlife and how areas can be rehabilitated to their former glory (prior to weed invasion and recent human activities).

Donna Farrell also presented a special education component on weed identification, declared plants, how to tackle weeds on your own property and what natives to use in place of weeds.

The highlight of the evening for most people was observing a family of Squirrel Gliders in a nest box using an infrared camera and laptop computer set up and presented by Stacey and Alan Franks of Hollow Log Homes. A number of nest boxes have been setup by Alan and Stacey Franks around the WFF Site. These efforts have been rewarded with native wildlife taking up residence in a number of the nest boxes.



The Camp Out at the WFF site offered entertainment for both adults and children.

If you missed this campout, you can still watch the family of Squirrel Gliders in this WFF nest box by visiting <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plsgLYh8mOY>

The spotlighting expedition was not so successful as most arboreal mammals were not very active. This may have been due to a number reasons such as noise, flashlights but was most likely due to the season and/or cold weather.

The feedback from the majority of our participants was that they had a great time and would like to see more of these activities in the future!

I would like to thank the Queensland Folk Federation for allowing us to host the Camp Out on their premises, providing great facilities and for organising the event. I would also like to thank Troy Baxter and Donna Farrell for their outstanding efforts, enthusiasm and volunteering their own time to present on the day.



Alan Franks talked about the value of nest boxes and then treated Camp Out participants with the opportunity to watch, via infrared camera, a family of Squirrel Gliders wake-up and emerge from a nest box at dusk.



Left - Donna Farrell showed local weed specimens and discussed weed control.



Right - Moreton Bay Regional Council has two new Land for Wildlife Extension Officers - Ed Surman (pictured offering a free book to Camp Out participants) and Stuart Mutzig (pictured in the background). Photo by Lauren Appleby.





The endangered Spotted-tailed Quoll is a big hit at Fauna Forensics workshops.



Land for Wildlife members learn how to identify animal tracks and skulls at the recent Fauna Forensics workshop, Witta.

## Fauna Forensics Workshops



*Article by Stephanie Reif  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Sunshine Coast Regional Council*

**A**re you a bush detective or fancy yourself as one of the cast from CSI Wildlife? A number of Land for Wildlifers across South East Queensland have now attended a fauna forensics workshop and have been skilled up to interpret the clues wildlife leave behind long after they have gone.

Presented by Martin Fingland from Geckoes Wildlife Presentations these workshops aim to give participants the skills to discover which species are on their properties based on the signs they leave behind.

The workshop discusses a range of the signs wildlife leave behind - skins, bones, scats, regurgitated pellets, nesting materials, prints, sounds and even odours. A range of live animals are shown to reinforce the signs and show some of the complexities. The hands-on format means you get a feel for the animals, their behaviours and the evidence they leave behind.

### Did you know?

- Snake skins can stretch by up to a third after an animal has shed one. So fear not, that 4m Carpet Python is only 3m!
- Ringtail Possums are the only mammal to make a nest (called a drey) in trees where they shelter during the day.
- Not every brown snake is a Brown snake – it could be a Brown Tree Snake, Marsh Snake, juvenile Carpet Python or a Keelback, or not even a snake! It could be a legless lizard or skink.



Martin Fingland shows bandicoots, snakes, snake skins, owl pellets, bones, quolls, dunnarts and lots of other animals, and their traces, at recent Fauna Forensics workshops held at Beenleigh (above) and Witta (below).

- Geckoes, snakes and legless lizards clean their eyes with their tongues.
- Larger insects can leave scats including rhinoceros beetle larvae and stick insects.
- The introduced Asian House Gecko is our only reptile to regularly vocalise (others will make occasional noises).

To build your fauna forensics skills start taking photos of the signs wildlife leave behind and keep a notebook or diary of your observations. This will help build your knowledge of the wildlife on your property and in your area.

The Queensland Museum's Reference Section can help with identification as can your Land for Wildlife Extension Officer. Whilst most workshops held have been the general introduction there are also specialist reptile, mammal and frog workshops. So look out for a fauna forensics workshop and start taking note of the signs wildlife leave behind.



### Useful References

Queensland Museum, Reference Section,  
Ph: 3840 7635 or visit [www.qm.qld.gov.au](http://www.qm.qld.gov.au)  
The Museum can attempt identification from photographs, descriptions and material fragments.

*Tracks, Scats & Other Traces: A Field Guide to Australian Mammals* by Barbara Triggs, Oxford University Press, 2006

*Wildlife of Greater Brisbane - new edition.* Queensland Museum, 2007





Land for Wildlife Regional Coordination is proudly managed by SEQ Catchments with support from the Australian Government.

Watch out for all wildlife such as this Bearded Dragon on roads this spring.



*"Seeing roadkill is not only upsetting but can be a major factor in population declines..."*

## Watch Out, Wildlife About!

With the on-set of spring, native wildlife are on the move! Unfortunately increased wildlife movement means increased roadkill. Hitting an animal or seeing roadkill is not only upsetting but can also be a major factor in population declines for many species. For example, 5000+ Koalas within SEQ have been hit in the last 10 years, with approximately 80% of those hit not surviving.



Changing driver behaviour could lead to a dramatic decrease in roadkill. In fact an article written about a Tasmanian stretch of road suggested that if night-time speed limits in 'roadkill hotspots' were reduced from 100km to 80km along a 200km stretch of road it would reduce roadkill in that area by 50% whilst only adding an extra 3 minutes onto the drive. Similarly, research conducted on the Koala Coast found that the proportion of Koalas that survived being hit by vehicles was slightly higher on roads with lower speed limits.

With the following few tips and a minor change in driver behaviour you can help to decrease the risk of roadkill this spring. The first tip is pretty simple; beware of wildlife when driving especially around your local roads. In fact, most roadkill is caused by locals who know the road well and are often driving around dawn and dusk.

When you are driving, especially in vegetated areas or areas with roadside vegetation, please always be alert to the possibility of wildlife. Take extra care through gullies, approaching corners and on crests. Whilst there is the possibility of hitting animals at any time of the day, animals are generally most active or vulnerable around dusk and dawn so be especially wary whilst driving during these times. If you do spot an animal on or near the road please be prepared to slow down, briefly dim the lights and sound horn.

If you do hit an animal or spot an injured animal, stop and check if the animal is alive (be aware of your own personal safety too). If it is an injured Koala or macropod please call a registered wildlife carer. If it is a bird or small mammal, place the animal in a ventilated box and keep warm, dark and quiet whilst transferring it to a vet.

There are now several vets open 24 hours

or alternatively contact a wildlife carer. Also remember to check any dead mothers pouch's and if you do find pouch young do not pull them off the teat, rather cut the teat from the mother and pin the teat to some material or alternatively pick up both mother and baby. Seek veterinary or registered carer's advice immediately.

Remember; do not handle snakes, bats, Koalas and adult kangaroos or wallabies as they can cause you serious injury.

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*A Guide to Driving Through Wildlife Habitat.* Brochure produced by the Brisbane Koala Bushlands Bushcare Group.

Article by Nicole Lechner  
Land for Wildlife Extension Officer  
Logan City Council

*Opinions expressed by contributors to the Land for Wildlife newsletter are not necessarily those of the Land for Wildlife program nor any of the supporting agencies.*

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