



LAND FOR WILDLIFE

SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

AUGUST 2022 VOL. 16 NO. 3

Enter the survey here!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Land for Wildlife Team
- 3 Editorial
- 3 Climate & Weather Outlook
- 3 Weeds to Watch
- 4 Post-fire Recovery
- 6 Art Trail
- 7 Members Honoured for 20 years
- 8 Franklin Tree
- 9 Fraser Coast "Walk and Talk"
- 10 Greater Gliders
- 11 Pale Field Rats
- 12 Thank you to our Survey Supporters
- 14 Clear Mountain Changes Hands
- 16 Our Survey



Greater Gliders p.10



Pale Field Rats p.11

Your Officers



Brisbane City Council

Amanda Maggs ☎ 3178 6767
Andrew Wills ☎ 3407 0215
Cody Hochen ☎ 3178 1001
Fflur Collier ☎ 3178 2489
Susan Nolan ☎ 3403 6777
Tony Mlynarik ☎ 3178 4294

City of Gold Coast

Adrian Cain ☎ 5582 8476
Andrew Attewell ☎ 5582 8344
Melanie Mott ☎ 5582 8915
Saul Hondow ☎ 5582 8022
Todd Burrows ☎ 5582 9128

Fraser Coast Regional Council

Jim Johnston ☎ 1300 794 929

Gympie Regional Council

Paul Sprecher ☎ 0447 051 329

Ipswich City Council

Dani Andlemac ☎ 3810 7173
Ko Oishi ☎ 3810 6666

Lockyer Valley Regional Council

Martin Bennett ☎ 5462 0310

Logan City Council

Janine Jungfels ☎ 3412 5145
Peter Copping ☎ 3412 5321
Nick Swanson ☎ 3412 5355
Jennie Bacon ☎ 3412 4522

Moreton Bay Regional Council

Adam Richardt ☎ 5433 2072
David Curmi ☎ 5433 2041
Nicole Byrne ☎ 3094 3632
Stefan Hattingh ☎ 3480 6362
Wendy Heath ☎ 3883 5636

Noosa Council

Dave Burrows ☎ 5329 6256

Redland City Council

Maree Manby ☎ 3820 1102 / 0438 776 535

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Catherine Madden ☎ 0458 486 008

Somerset Regional Council

Darren McPherson ☎ 5424 4000

Sunshine Coast Council

Alan Wynn ☎ 5439 6477
Danielle Outram ☎ 0408 665 826
De-Anne Attard ☎ 0477 795 231
Michael Reif ☎ 0437 112 071
Nick Clancy ☎ 5439 6433
Rhonda Bordonaro ☎ 0459 737 626
Nadia Joyce ☎ 0427 569 990
Kylie Gordon ☎ 0418 398 904

Toowoomba Regional Council

Fiona Gray ☎ 13 18 72
Sandy Robertson ☎ 13 18 72



Land for Wildlife South East Queensland Team, December 2021

Land for wildlife
**SOUTH EAST
QUEENSLAND
SNAPSHOT**

**5,339
TOTAL
PROPERTIES**

**4,266
REGISTERED
PROPERTIES**

**1,073
PROPERTIES
working towards
RESTORATION**

**72,775 ha
RETAINED HABITAT**

**8,388 ha
Habitat Under
RESTORATION**

**10,757
Facebook
Page Followers**

**19,368
iNaturalist
OBSERVATIONS**


[www.inaturalist.org/
projects/lfwseq](http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/lfwseq)

To join contact your local LfW Officer

*These above statistics reflect LfWSEQ membership across 14 Local Governments.

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

Land for Wildlife South East Queensland is a quarterly publication published by 14 Local Governments in south-east Queensland and distributed free of charge to their Land for Wildlife members.

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Front Cover: Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby © Steve Parish Nature Connect.

Front Cover Inset Photos: A Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*), photo by Josh Bowell; a Pale Field Rat (*Rattus tunneyi*), photo by Deborah Metters.

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The last time we asked all LfWSEQ members to take part in a survey was nine years ago. Listening to your views is long overdue. The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete - please let us know your thoughts so we can steer the program in a direction that meets the needs of our members.

Survey results will also help us calculate the investments that you are making to protect and manage your property for conservation. This is a powerful story of how much we value nature collectively. Why we willingly choose to spend our time, money and effort in getting scraped and stung while pulling out weeds or planting trees is a mystery to some. All Land for Wildlife members have their reasons, and we want to know yours. I do bush regeneration to connect with nature, to be around other like-minded landholders, and because I value Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

For the first time in a LfWSEQ survey we wish to explore your interests in learning more about Indigenous land management, climate change resilience and succession planning for your property. The recent bubbling property market has seen many Land for Wildlife properties change hands and we want to know if our program should offer more support for landholders who are leaving behind their much-loved property.

Upon completing the survey, you can choose to enter in a draw for some wonderful prizes detailed on later pages. Of note are two-nights' accommodation at five Land for Wildlife properties. Elegant cottages at Spicers Hidden Vale, treehouses tucked away in rainforest on the Sunshine Coast, a rustic stonehouse in the Somerset, historic lodges at the base of Mount Barney, and the iconic Binna Burra Lodge set on top of the world at Lamington National Park.

LfWSEQ turns 25 next year and we are proud that the program continues to grow and deliver services that help landholders, who in turn, help wildlife and their habitats. Guided by survey results, we can plan ahead for the coming years, adopt new technologies or services if needed, and let go of things no longer relevant. We can also take your collective voice to decision makers to secure continued support for nature conservation on private lands.

Thank you in advance for participating in the survey. Please don't hold back!

Finally, I would like to thank Stephanie Reif for her 22-year dedication to delivering the LfW program on the Sunshine Coast. She helped establish the program and has been instrumental in its success. She was there at the first LfWSEQ meeting I attended in 2004 and has always supported regional initiatives. I wish her all the best in her new role at council Environment Visitor Centres.

Deborah Metters
Land for Wildlife
Regional Coordinator



We welcome all contributions.
Please send them to:
The Editor
✉ deborah@seqlfw.com.au
☎ 0437 910 687

Enter the survey here!



OR visit <https://tinyurl.com/lfwseq>

Climate & Weather

REGIONAL OUTLOOK Aug-Oct 2022



Daytime and Night-time Temperatures. It is likely that daytime temperatures will be below average, with increased chances of unusually high night-time (minimum) temperatures.



Rainfall. Above median rainfall is likely for eastern Australia. Large parts of eastern Australia are likely to have unusually high rainfall.



Streamflow. High streamflows are likely in South East Queensland.

- Most models predict a return to neutral El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) levels during our winter months. Higher than median rainfall is still likely, due to warmer than average sea surface temperatures around much of Australia.
- A negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is predicted for winter. Much of Australia is likely to receive above average winter–spring rainfall as a result.
- Australia's climate has warmed by about 1.47°C since 1910.

Sources

www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/
www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf

Weeds to Watch

July-Sept 2022

All of this edition's weeds are introduced leguminous vines. Originally brought over for cattle fodder, they now present a smothering risk to native vegetation. Control via livestock, manual removal or herbicide.

Glycine - produces numerous seed pods. Leaves consist of three dark green leaflets. White to mauve pea-like flowers form in elongated clusters.



Siratro - densely haired leaves are trifoliate. Pea-like dark red-purple flowers form into narrow seed pods. Mature seeds are forcibly ejected and dispersed widely.

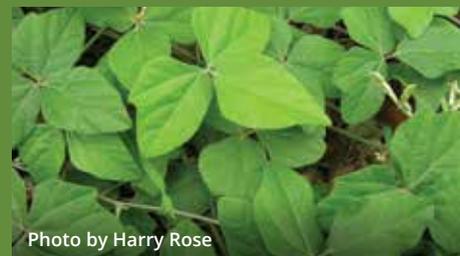


Photo by Harry Rose

Silver-leaf Desmodium - easily adheres to skin or fur and as such is commonly called Velcro Vine. Leaves consist of three dark green leaflets with a silver midrib. Pink-purple flowers form into long seed pods.





Mt Gillies pre-fire. Rhyolite intrusions show through the trees.



August 2020 shows the fire front approaching Gillies Ridge Nature Refuge.



November 2019, Mt Barney Wildfire.



This Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby has burn marks on its tail from the bushfires.

Post-fire Recovery

TARGETING BRUSH-TAILED ROCK-WALLABIES, GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOOS AND KOALAS

Adjoining Mt Barney National Park on the border of Queensland and New South Wales lies Gillies Ridge Nature Refuge. As beautiful as our property is, it doesn't have a reliable natural water source for our mountain colony of Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies (*Petrogale penicillata*). Most other rock-wallaby colonies in South East Queensland have access to water. Our colony has endured trying conditions, suffering from habitat loss both during the drought and for about six months after a wildfire in 2020. Our rock-wallabies even resorted to eating casuarina seeds rather than their preferred diet of native grasses.

As a buffer against future climate challenges to the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby colony and other local wildlife, such as Koalas and Glossy Black-Cockatoos, it was proposed to install water collection panels on the rocks above the caves that are scattered throughout our property. Water harvested from the panels was then fed into small water tanks placed inside the caves.

As well as providing for our mammalian neighbours, aboreal water troughs also allow for birdlife to thrive in the area. Glossy Black-Cockatoos, for instance, need to drink daily to survive. By providing an approved supplementary water supply for these vulnerable wildlife species, our property and others like it allow for populations to exist in otherwise uninhabitable areas.

During the drought I was carrying water up manually for the colony. I observed that the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby colony was drinking water at the rate of about one-and-a-half litres a day. We therefore chose to install multiple tanks, to ensure a secure water supply during dry times. The steep and rugged terrain also makes multiple tanks a necessity to be useful for fire preparedness.

Inspired by the system of a friend in Kangaroo Valley, New South Wales, I decided to install water collection infrastructure in each cave. These caves are a critical component of the rock-wallaby habitat that was largely destroyed in the 2019 November fires. Unfortunately, the August 2020 fires destroyed the PVC piping, of which there was no trace, and the roofing materials were badly scorched. Inside the caves remained untouched, indicating that our plan could still be successfully implemented. Thankfully, the colony survived.

This year, we started again from scratch, this time opting for all-metal materials for the exposed panels and guttering. To avoid fire damage, we built the water harvesting panels on a rock ledge above the cave, with the tanks and anything combustible set up safely inside the caves.

Carting the tools and materials up was a huge job. We could not have done it without the help of volunteers from the Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld. The outpouring of assistance has been enormously heartening in the face of many challenges.

Regular monitoring of the systems will be critical to ensure they remain disaster-ready. Because of the difficulties in climbing to the caves and the shyness of Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies, a remote system (we use a HyperFire Camera) is necessary for proper monitoring. This allows for world-wide remote access to the monitoring camera through email or Instagram.

Our colony will be ready for the next natural disaster.

References and Further Reading

Birdlife Australia (2019) *Black-Cockatoo Conservation and Recovery: Guidelines for councils and land managers*, available online at: www.birdlife.org.au/documents/BirdLife_Black-Cockatoo_Guidelines_November_2019.pdf

**Article and photos by Ian Beale
Land for Wildlife member
Barney View, Scenic Rim**

To find out more about this incredible but vulnerable species, check out the Friends of the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby website at: <https://www.rockwallaby.org.au/>

To be presented with a property (Gillies Ridge Nature Refuge) with such high conservation values for my first Land for Wildlife property visit in my new Scenic Rim role was a privilege. Inspired by Ian and Susan's commitment to protect their wildlife populations through out-of-the-box thinking, I too got my thinking cap on. After investigating a few options, we landed on The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) Australia, which provides financial support to Australian landholders from international wildlife lovers.

These funds were used to support the conservation of target species including Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies, Koalas and Glossy Black-Cockatoos, following bushfire damage to critical habitat in 2020. The primary aims of the recovery projects were to install various types of nesting hollows and fire management infrastructure.

Where the fires had burnt out tree hollows, cockatoo-tubes, nest boxes and hollow carvings were installed. Water harvesting infrastructure was set up on rocky ledges leading down into caves, both in preparation to combat fires and, with approval from the Department of Environment and Science contact officer, to provide a water supply for fauna and habitat recovery during drought and after fire. I'm eagerly looking forward to seeing and reporting back the results from the fauna camera and opportunistic signs and sightings from this project.

While caution should be taken when interfering with the functioning of native wildlife populations, the installation of approved fire management and supplementary water infrastructure can be crucial for vulnerable wildlife in certain areas. The hard work of Ian, Susan and others like them gives Australian wildlife a fighting chance in the face of future predicted climatic extremes.

**Article by Catherine Madden
Land for Wildlife Officer
Scenic Rim Regional Council**



Water harvesting infrastructure set up safely inside a cave.



May 2021 - a mother and pouched joey Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby pair on camera at a macropod feeder. Burn marks are visible on the mother's tail.



Cockatoo-tubes are large, vertical nest boxes made out of PVC and will hopefully be used by Glossy Black-Cockatoos as nesting sites. Here they are being installed by Biodiverse Environmental.



Hayden and Hannah de Villiers help install an arboreal water trough at Gillies Ridge.



An installed roof panel to collect rainwater for rock-wallabies.

Wildlife Queensland is proud to announce the launch of the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby Conservation Network (BTRWCN), established with funding from the Australian Government's Environment Restoration Fund — Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan Priority Species Grant.

Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies were hunted for their fur in the 20th century, and their numbers were further reduced by the 2019–2020 bushfires. Fragmented populations still persist, particularly in the Scenic Rim and Toowoomba regions.

Activities undertaken by the Network will include:

- acting as a hub for volunteers, researchers and landholders who coexist with wallabies.
- mapping, monitoring and reporting sightings to better understand populations.
- awareness raising and community education.
- mitigating key threatening processes through weed and pest management.

The BTRWCN is seeking expressions of interest from volunteers and landholders who wish to assist with surveys or weed/pest management programs.



Email btrwproject@wildlife.org.au or visit <https://bit.ly/btrw-network>.

Land for Wildlife Art Trail

Every so often, a Wedge-tailed Eagle flies above the Obi Obi Valley.

It surfs the thermals, seldom beating its great wings, as it circles, swoops and scans below for a possible feed.

For me, a sighting evokes great pleasure. I stop what I am doing and watch it for as long as possible.

Out west I have seen a huge and ancient eagle's nest, three metres deep, in a squat tree. There are well over a ton of sticks and branches brought in by generations of eagles. Clean bones on the ground are testament to the many meals nesting pairs have brought to their chicks.

With this in mind, I set a stout post in a tree stump and fixed an old screen door as a platform on top of it. I covered it with sticks and wondered if it would ever appeal to my magnificent soaring visitor.

Cutting aluminium strips from an old Luxaflex awning, I fashioned my own Wedge-tailed Eagle to guard the nest. That was my first creation on my personal art trail.

At my Land for Wildlife acreage, the rainy season has prompted cowpea vines (a common term used to describe the weedy pasture legumes of Glycine, Siratro &/ or Silver-leaf Desmodium), to go berserk. Dozens of my juvenile trees were entwined in this ubiquitous creeper, resulting in shapes that closely resembled the Cookie Monster.

Those trees almost thanked me as I pulled away the vines and watched them spring back to full height.

It would be easy to get despondent about rampant weeds after so much rain, but an 'art trail' around at least a small part of the old-growth forest can be fun.

Friends and relatives who visit have been presented with a length of plastic downpipe. Painted up, decorated on top and plonked over a star picket, these

totems make an interesting feature along the circuit track.

For the grandchildren, friendly gnomes and a fairy dell (complete with castle), offer landmarks to visit and play near.

My latest creation is a twice-sized human figure, using up all the barbed wire I have removed from unwanted internal fences. One day I hope it will metamorphose from the 'Wire Man' to the 'Green Man'.

I have planted Richmond Birdwing Vines in the hope that they will run riot over the whole sculpture.

So don't be defeatist about the Year of the Cowpea vine. Carve something into a block of aerated cement (Hebel), or better still, stone. Recycle stuff in an unusual way.

Make your next guided tour for visitors a bit of fun.

**Article and photos by Phil Hammond
Land for Wildlife member
Kidaman Creek, Sunshine Coast**



Members Honoured

FOR MILESTONE DEDICATION TO CONSERVATION



Joan (centre) and John Dillon (right) with Mayor Mark Jamieson at the 20 year celebration.

Sunshine Coast Land for Wildlife members, who have been with the program for more than 20 years, were recently recognised for their long-term commitment to conserving and enhancing habitat within the region.

Joan and John Dillon's Hunchy property was registered in Land for Wildlife in November 1998, when the Sunshine Coast Land for Wildlife program had just begun in the region. At that time there were only 62 properties with the program. Today there are 1260 Land for Wildlife properties, approximating 9800 hectares of private land.

Sunshine Coast Council Mayor Mark Jamieson, Councillor Maria Suarez, Councillor Jason O'Pray and Councillor Terry Landsberg presided over the celebration with the Mayor presenting a commemorative sign to the landholders present.

At the event, Mayor Jamieson expressed his gratitude to the landholders and acknowledged their achievements.

"We recognise and thank the Land for Wildlife members for their time, hard work and financial dedication to our region," Mayor Jamieson said.

Of the 101 new members that joined the Sunshine Coast Land for Wildlife program last year, about a third purchased a property that was previously part of the Land for Wildlife program and decided to continue the previous owners' work.

"This demonstrates the incredible legacy of past owners and how the value of their ongoing commitment to conservation is carried forward," Mayor Jamieson said.

John and Joan Dillon display this commitment to conservation in spades. They have consistently worked at revegetating and regenerating their 4.5-hectare property back to local rainforest habitat. Working in stages they have stabilised steep slopes and gullies in the upper Petrie Creek catchment.

In 2011, they signed a Voluntary Conservation Agreement with council to protect their forest forever with a conservation covenant.

Mrs Dillon said there were plenty of challenges as they began working on their property, including prevalent weeds and very steep country dissected by one small creek and several deep gullies.

However, through the Land for Wildlife program, the Dillons were able to tap into advice and resources that transformed their property.

The Dillions have found much joy in the increase in wildlife they have seen over their 20 year tenure. They love seeing the Wedge-tailed Eagles soaring above the back paddock on the updrafts from the escarpment, or the almost-resident goshawk flying at high speed through the trees. They sometimes watch wallabies grazing well into the morning.

"It has been a fascinating journey, not quite over and we've learned so much along the way – natural regeneration is now taking over. My greatest pleasure is hearing a Noisy Pitta in the early morning or at dusk telling me to 'Walk to work, walk to work!'" Joan Dillon said.

We'd like to thank all of our long-term Land for Wildlife members, regardless of how long they've been with us, for their dedication to nature conservation, their community and to protecting the environment for future generations.

**Article by Danielle Outram
Land for Wildlife Officer
Sunshine Coast Council
Photos thanks to Sunshine Coast Council**



Joan Dillon speaks on the challenges and rewards of managing a Land for Wildlife property for over 20 years.



Sylvia Hood (left) celebrating 20 years with Mayor Mark Jamieson.



Rhonda (left) and Terry Boyle (right) standing with Sunshine Coast Mayor Mark Jamieson, celebrating 20 years of commitment to nature.



Franklin Tree

THE ANGOPHORA THAT CHANGES GENUS HALFWAY UP

While recently visiting a Land for Wildlife property, I was shown a tree that had grafted to another. This natural phenomenon, although not so rare, can be hard to notice. The landholder, Trevor Franklin, led me to what looked like a Rusty Gum (*Angophora leiocarpa*) that changed to a Pink Bloodwood (*Corymbia intermedia*) halfway up. I stood astounded, looking at a free-standing tree with a trunk of one species and a crown of another. In fact, not just another species, but another genus, and it had all happened naturally.

Likely about 50 years ago, this Rusty Gum grew beside a smaller Pink Bloodwood. Possibly due to strong storm winds, the bloodwood fell eastward, onto the Rusty Gum. They then would have rubbed against each other's trunks for some time, eventually wearing away their bark to uncover the cambium layer beneath. Somehow, they held still in this position long enough for a graft to form. This is like what is called an 'approach graft' in horticulture, albeit on a much larger scale and without the help of grafting knives and tape.

The Pink Bloodwood's trunk then died, but the graft enabled the crown of the bloodwood to survive. The old leaning trunk had lost all sapwood through natural attrition, probably helped by termites, borers, and fungus. A thin heartwood core is all that remains of the bloodwood trunk, pointing to where it once stood upright decades before.

As for the Rusty Gum, a once healthy wide-spreading crown, as seen in a photo taken in 2008, is now completely dead above the graft union approximately five metres from the ground. A massive scar extends down the length of the merged tree, which appears to have been caused by a lightning strike. The graft union was amazingly spared, while the Rusty Gum's top was so severely damaged that the Pink Bloodwood's crown completely replaced it.

Just ponder what this tree has been through in its life. It was probably a handsome, perfectly formed, upstanding tree before any of this drama started to play out. Although it would not win any beauty contest now, like many of us, the good form of its youth has been more than surpassed by its interesting presence.

Many would not notice this venerable tree, but its existence is truly significant. I call it the 'Franklin Tree', after Trevor, who has owned this bush block for over 20 years. In the past he ran a native tree nursery in the corner of his block, near the 'Franklin Tree'. He is a Land for Wildlife member, managing this 16-hectare block as wallum woodland, conserving this ecology in an area of rapid population growth and social change.

Jim Johnston
Land for Wildlife Officer
Fraser Coast Regional Council

The graft point of the 'Franklin Tree' in 2008 prior to the suspected lightning strike, showing a healthy crown of Rusty Gum merging with the Pink Bloodwood branch. Photo by Trevor Franklin.



This Pink Bloodwood branch is all that is left of the crown of the 'Franklin Tree' after the suspected lightning strike.



The Rusty Gum trunk of the 'Franklin Tree'.

Fraser Coast "Walk and Talk"

FROM SUGAR CANE FIELDS TO LUSH VINE FOREST

Almost thirty years ago, Craignish landholder Darrell Searle planted a mixed timber plot on his land where his father had previously grown sugar. The plot was on scrub soil, depleted by a generation of cane growing. While planting the plot, Darrell had in mind that he would profit from the mixed specialty cabinet timber species, which included Hoop (*Araucaria cunninghamii*), Bunya (*Araucaria bidwillii*) and Kauri (*Agathis robusta*) Pines. Nowadays, Darrell walks through the plantation, delighting in the soil and microclimate improvement that the planting has facilitated. He no longer considers harvesting these trees because of the extra life they have generated on his property.

The planting is beside remnant dry rainforest, on a steep rocky site that was never cleared. Since he planted, Darrell has noticed that the edge of the remnant rainforest had become lush and green, where it had previously been dying back where it had been buffeted by the prevailing winds.

In March this year, Darrell, who is a Fraser Coast Land for Wildlife member, hosted a "Walk and Talk" for other local members. The "Walk and Talk" entered the timber plot, comparing the growth of the different cabinet timber species. Apart from the Hoop, Bunya and Kauri Pines which dominated the site, other species that grew quite well were White Beech (*Gmelina leichhardtii*), some of which were fruiting, and the local Marblewood (*Acacia bakerii*). Masses of rainforest understorey plants were also establishing through bird-drop.

The walk continued into the remnant vine forest where large emergent trees such as Crows Ash (*Flindersia australis*), Kauri Pine, Marblewood, Lignum-vitae (*Vitex lignum-vitae*) and Myrtle Ebony (*Diospyros pentamera*) towered over the mid-storey of twisted lianas and small trees. We then left the sounds of whip birds and the flutter of Caper White butterflies, so characteristic of the rainforest on the slopes, to descend to the open woodlands below. There we discussed fire regimes and contrasted the ecology of the open Grey Box/Blue Gum flats to that of the vine-forested slopes.

Some 15 years ago Darrell was concerned about the loss of stringybarks, such as White Mahogany (*Eucalyptus acmenoides*) in the district, mainly due to their favoured use for fence posts. So he propagated and planted a plot of stringybarks on an exposed rise. That's Darrell for you.

Because of the varying ecosystems on Darrell's property, there were takeaway messages about weeds and property management for each of the participants, but the main delight was the extra life in the soil and arboreal environment that planting trees has given the property.

Jim Johnston
Land for Wildlife Officer
Fraser Coast Regional Council



Darrell standing next to a Marblewood (*Acacia bakerii*) in the remnant vine forest on his property.



Sol Thornton was delighted as she explored the vine forest on Darrell's property during the "Walk and Talk" session.



The "Walk and Talk" enters a 28 year-old plantation on Darrell Searle's Craignish property.

Greater Gliders

GLIDING BACK FROM THE BRINK

Tipping the scales at almost two kilograms, Greater Gliders (*Petauroides volans*) are the world's largest gliding marsupials. With their huge fluffy ears and long bushy tails, they are the tree-dwelling teddy bears of eastern Australia. Until recently, these languid gliders were one of the most common arboreal animals in eastern Australia's forests and woodlands.

However, habitat clearing and fragmentation, combined with the devastating 2019–2020 bushfires – which burnt almost one-third of all Greater Glider habitat in eastern Australia – have resulted in them being listed as endangered in Queensland.

With a diet of eucalypt leaves closely akin to that of the Koala, Greater Gliders are typically found in the uppermost canopy of the tallest trees in any forest. By day, they shelter in tree hollows. This species has one of the highest demands for hollows of any arboreal Australian mammal. Individual Greater Gliders have been recorded using as many as 20 hollows within their small home range of one to ten hectares, variable

depending on habitat quality. The historical and ongoing loss of hollow-bearing trees seriously threatens the survival of Greater Gliders in southern Queensland.

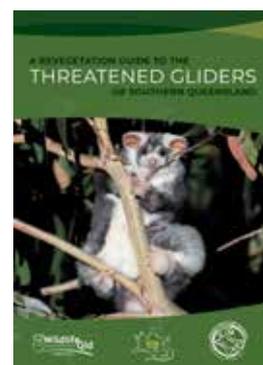
Funded by the Australian Government's 'Bushfire Recovery for Wildlife and their Habitats' program, the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland has been working to protect Greater Gliders throughout South East Queensland.

Through a series of workshops, their Queensland Glider Network project officers have been teaching landowners how to recognise gliders and their habitat and how to build nest boxes to supplement natural tree hollows. In concert with Healthy Land and Water, glider surveys have been undertaken to map the distribution of gliders within the region. The Queensland Glider Network has also produced a glider-specific revegetation guide to assist landowners in making their properties 'glider-friendly'. The guide is freely available for download.

**Article and photos by Paul Revie
Wildlife Preservation Society of
Queensland**



**DOWNLOAD
THE GUIDE**



Away from the Rat Race

THE PALE FIELD RAT

A Pale Field Rat caught on camera.

The recent good rains have resulted in a profusion of grass seeds, insects and left-over agricultural grain causing a boom of rats and mice. In addition to our suite of native rodents, there are also a handful of introduced rats and mice and it can be tricky to tell the difference.

I was recently visiting my friends, Diane Guthrie and Paul Stevens on their Land for Wildlife property in the Upper Lockyer. Like many Land for Wildlife members, they have been battling rats and mice over the past year and aim to keep the native ones while humanely disposing of the introduced Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*) and House Mouse (*Mus musculus*).

Around Paul's shed and throughout the property, there are indicators of small animals busy at work. Tunnels are everywhere. There are tunnels under shrubs and Lantana. Tunnels through grass clumps and diggings abound. The tunnels are shallow and more horizontal than deep. Martin Bennett, Lockyer Valley Regional Council Land for Wildlife Officer has been seeing such tunnels on several properties lately. Martin is familiar with the maker of these tunnels as he has surveyed them extensively on the Darling Downs and has fallen into their shallow tunnels on many occasions.

The tunnels are created by the native Pale Field Rat (*Rattus tunneyi*). Most tunnels will have excavated soil at the entrance and can be up to 1.5m in length. The tunnels I saw at Diane and Paul's place look more like half a metre long. These shallow tunnels have thin ceilings only a few centimetres thick and are probably deliberately thin so that if a predator was to enter, the Pale Field Rat could break through the ceiling and escape.

At a glance, the Pale Field Rat can look a bit like the introduced Black Rat, but there are differences to keep in mind, as shown in these photos.

Many of our small to medium-sized native mammals are diggers – think of the bilby as an example. Their excavations are incredibly important ecologically as they recycle nutrients, improve rainfall infiltration, create habitats for other wildlife and disperse seeds and fungal spores. As we know, Australia has a terrible reputation of leading the world in extinctions of small to medium-sized mammals since colonisation. The Pale Field Rat was once found across mainland Australia. Early European explorers cursed their dense tunnels as horses found it hard to keep their footings. It is estimated that Pale Field Rats now occupy only 10% of their former range, confined to coastal Top End and parts of coastal Queensland.

The Pale Field Rat probably moves more soil than any other native mammal in SEQ and, as such, should be revered. It is a legacy of a landscape that is hanging on.

So, I want to say thanks to Diane and Paul and all other Land for Wildlife members who have taken the time to carefully identify rodents before disposal. The fact that Pale Field Rats are still here today in SEQ, at the southern limit of their range, is a testament to their survival despite overwhelming odds. They provide us with a small insight as to what this country looked like under Indigenous management, before rabbits, cats, foxes, cattle, roads and land clearing.

If you catch a rodent and are unsure of its identification, please send a photo through to your Land for Wildlife Officer or the Queensland Museum before making an irreversible decision.

References and Further Reading

Braithwaite RW & Baverstock PR (1995) Pale Field-rat. *The Mammals of Australia Revised Edition*. Edited by R. Strahan. Reed New Holland.

Article and photos by Deborah Metters
Land for Wildlife Regional Coordinator
South East Queensland



Native Pale Field Rat (*Rattus tunneyi*)

- Pale pink tail same size or smaller than the body
- Bulging eyes and a flatter face giving it a 'cute' look.



Paul Hocksenaar www.flickr.com

Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*)

- Dark tail that is longer than its head and body
- Smaller eyes and a pointier face.



Tell-tale burrows mark the presence of Pale Field Rats.



Thank-you

A big thanks to the following eco-accommodation businesses that generously offered prizes for the LfWSEQ membership survey. They are all active Land for Wildlife properties that offer wonderful places for us to stay while also providing homes for our wildlife.

Spicers Hidden Vale



SPICERS HIDDEN VALE

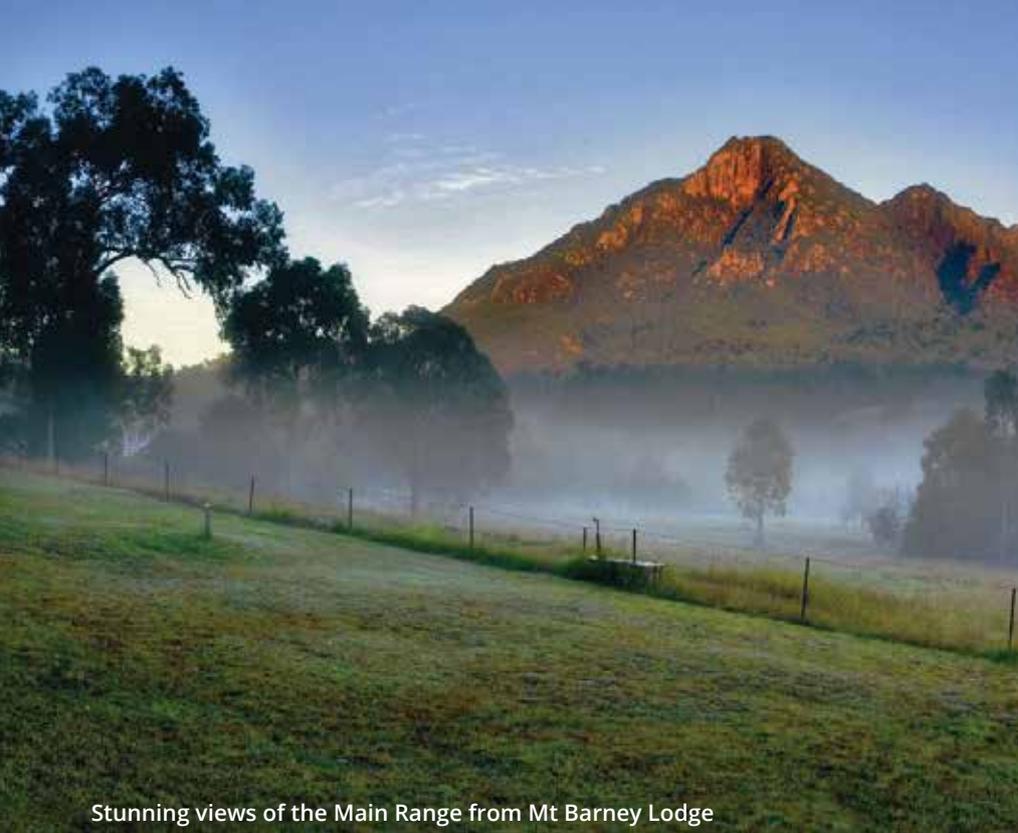
Nestled within 485 hectares of bushland on this stunning property are elegant guest rooms and sophisticated paddock-to-plate restaurants of Spicers Hidden Vale. Restored colonial cottages, a grand homestead and farmhouse open fires create a country atmosphere with modern comforts. Spicers Hidden Vale puts conservation into practice through protecting habitats for threatened species like Koalas and Glossy Black-Cockatoos. Located within the Little Liverpool Range, Spicers Hidden Vale has been central to many conservation projects in the region and regularly partners with neighbouring Land for Wildlife properties to achieve on-ground outcomes. In the coming year, Spicers Hidden Vale is looking to re-instate Indigenous cultural burning on parts of the property to encourage native grasslands and associated wildlife. Thank you to the Turner Family Foundation and the team at Hidden Vale.

STONEHOUSE RETREAT

Cameron designed this unique hand-built home as a private eco-lodge for couples and families to enjoy spectacular views and the peacefulness of nature. Sustainability is front and centre at the Stonehouse with all building materials recycled, all water harvested on site and all power from off-grid solar. Near the Stonehouse are significant remnant eucalypt trees with large hollows providing homes for gliders and owls. Cameron has controlled hectares of lantana and has undertaken several cool ecological burns to promote an understorey of native grasses and wildflowers. He has welcomed other Somerset Land for Wildlife members onto his property to explore his property's birdlife and conservation work. Thank you Cameron.

LYOLA PAVILIONS

When Jane purchased Lyola 15 years ago it was already a Land for Wildlife property. In addition to managing the stunning, treetop retreat of Lyola Pavilions, she also spends a great deal of time restoring the lush rainforests. She initially focused on lantana and privet control to enhance the wildlife corridor through to Conondale National Park. More recently, she has been concentrating on controlling Broad-leaf Paspalum, which has crept into her property and requires hand-pulling. Jane has planted out cleared sites, is revisiting trouble weedy spots and regularly sets traps for feral cats. To protect the wonderful rainforest and her hard-earned restoration work, Jane has entered into both a Voluntary Conservation Agreement and Nature Refuge. Thank you Jane.



Stunning views of the Main Range from Mt Barney Lodge



MT BARNEY LODGE

Tracey and Innes have owned Mt Barney Lodge since 2006 and joined Land for Wildlife shortly afterwards. They have created a stunning place to stay and a gateway to spectacular World Heritage rainforests, mountain peaks and secluded waterholes. Mt Barney Lodge offers guided adventure activities, Indigenous-led retreats and has supported numerous environmental initiatives for many years. Tracey and Innes are actively restoring the creeks through planting and fencing off livestock. They have undertaken numerous fauna surveys on their property to search for threatened species and help protect wildlife habitats. Thank you Tracey and Innes.



BINNA BURRA LODGE

Back from the devastating bushfires of 2019, Binna Burra Lodge sits next to Lamington National Park and showcases how an ecotourism business and a national park have worked together for conservation for nearly 100 years. From Binna Burra, visitors can easily walk to 2000-year-old Antarctic Beech trees and clear mountain streams while listening to sub-tropical rainforest birds. Although the bushfires destroyed the heritage listed buildings at Binna Burra and affected thousands of people associated with the lodge, recovery has been steady. Binna Burra's charred Land for Wildlife sign has been replaced and they are planting trees, controlling weeds and helping restore fire-affected areas. Thank you Steve and the Binna Burra team.

Take the survey
FOR YOUR
CHANCE TO WIN!

Head to the back cover for full details.

Other Amazing PRIZES TO BE WON

Four Nest Boxes

Made by Hollow Log Homes including glider, possum and small parrot boxes. Prize kindly donated by City of Gold Coast. Valued at \$400

One Faunatech Wide-Angle Fauna Monitoring Camera

With 32GB SDHC Memory Card and 8 NiMH AA batteries it is ready to use straight away. Five Megapixel colour image sensor, video option and infrared flash – it can be used day or night. Prize kindly donated by Brisbane City Council. Valued at \$300

Solid Wooden Chopping Board Set

Including one medium-large chopping board and one small charcuterie board. Sourced from Camphor Laurel trees from SEQ and skilfully handcrafted by Adam Richardt, these boards will last for years and help support the removal of weedy camphor trees from our landscape. Valued at \$200

Collection of Reference Books

Including *Mangroves to Mountains*, *Weeds of the Sunshine Coast*, *Wildlife of Greater Brisbane* and *The Australian Native Bee Book*. Prize kindly donated by Sunshine Coast Council and Scenic Rim Regional Council. Valued at \$160

Clear Mountain Changes Hands

PROTECTED IN PERPETUITY, THE LEGACY LIVES ON

On south-eastern slopes of Clear Mountain is a forest of various eucalypts and Brushbox (*Lophostemon confertus*). The understorey is dominated by Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea latifolia*), some of which have trunks, while others grow low to the ground.



Dominating the forest on the ridge are Spotted Gum (*Corymbia citriodora* subsp. *variegata*) with varying degrees of spots, indentations and colours.



Orange Coral Fungi (*Ramaria* sp.)



Pink Coral Fungi (*Ramaria* sp.)

Scattered amongst the vegetation you can sometimes spot various ground and epiphytic orchids, as well as numerous ferns some of which you can see pictured here. We have also seen many different kinds of interesting fungi over the years.

We bought our piece of bush in 1985. There was a dirt road, no house, water or power. A vague track on a grassy ridge led to a suitable site for a house. In the first year we had picnics on the land and even camped overnight before we finally decided to build a house. On one of these occasions, we discovered that someone had chopped down some of our trees along the track. Fortunately they survived and grew four trunks rather than just the one, now reaching at least 15 metres tall.

On another occasion, a picnic with friends was nearly cancelled because the bush was black from a fire which had burnt the understorey and revealed a couple of rubbish piles of old cans and bottles. In later years we would conduct several hazard reduction burns on our property in conjunction with the local Rural Fire Brigade.

We were fortunate that only a few large trees had to be removed to build our home. We decided to install solar power rather than clearing a ten metre path across our property to wire in to the grid via our nearest neighbours. Once we lived at Clear Mountain, we were able to explore and enjoy our bit of bush, and its wildlife of wallabies, goannas, Koalas, echidnas, and antechinus.

We have also shared our garden produce with possums, bush rats and melomys. There are many birds to see – wrens, honeyeaters, kookaburras, parrots, raptors and owls to name a few. We have seen and heard Powerful Owls, and White-Throated Nightjars have bred in the bush near our house on several occasions.

There are many different habitats within the nine hectare block. Eucalypt forest lines the ridges, dominated by Spotted Gum (*Corymbia citriodora* subsp. *variegata*). There are also abundant Stringybarks, such as Tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*) and White Mahogany (*Eucalyptus acmenoides*), for which our property was named ('Gunderlong' means place of many mahogany trees).

Grey Gums (*Eucalyptus propinqua*) and Ironbarks (e.g. *Eucalyptus crebra*) can be seen in abundance. There are also some Bloodwood (*Corymbia intermedia*) trees.

The ephemeral creek that makes its way across our property is lined by many rainforest species such as Lilly Pillies (*Acmena smithii*), Plum Myrtles (*Ptilidostigma rhytispermum*), Glossy Acronychia (*Acronychia laevis*) trees, Tree Heath (*Trachocarpa laurina*), Muttonwood (*Myrsine variabilis*), Lomandras (*Lomandra longifolia*) and Barbed-wire Vine (*Smilax australis*). A short distance from the gully there are often many Purple Pea Bushes (*Hovea acutifolia*) which are beautiful when in flower.

In 2015 we joined the Land for Wildlife program and the two Council Environment Officers who walked much of the land were impressed and asked why we had not applied to join before. Life was busy with other things until then!



Staghorn (*Platycterium superbum*)



Giant Boat-Lip Orchid (*Cymbidium madidum*)

The weeds on the property were mainly Lantana and Corky Passionfruit as well as a large patch of Fishbone Ferns. Fortunately the Lantana was usually in clumps rather than vast areas so these were mostly pulled out by hand. On the rare occasion when they were on very steep hillsides, we used the cut and paint method with herbicide. On the northern border many kinds of weeds encroach our neighbour's uphill property. These are slowly being dealt with by hand weeding and by planting natives to compete with the weeds.

In late 2020 we decided to apply for a large part of our property (about six hectares) to be protected under a Moreton Bay Regional Council's Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA). In early 2021 we were successful and were presented with our Voluntary Conservation Agreement sign. This area is now protected in perpetuity, with a conservation covenant. This means that there is now a protected corridor for wildlife between the Council's Dobson Rd Reserve on our western border to the Clear Mountain Conservation Park across the road on our eastern border.

Having achieved much of what we set out to do regarding the conservation of our land by way of a covenant on the title deed, we came to the realisation that maintaining our acreage and house would soon become too onerous at our age. We were unsure how easy it would be to sell with the covenant restrictions.

Fortunately for us and the land, a family with similar interests in preservation of the land's values has bought the property. To them, the existence and conditions of the VCA agreement were very important in making their decision to purchase.

**Article by Jan Blok and Dennis Arnold
Former Land for Wildlife members
Clear Mountain, Moreton Bay**



Purple Pea Bush (*Hovea acutifolia*)



Slender Hyacinth Orchid (*Dipodium variegatum*)



A favourite place of ours lies at the junction of a steep gully with the main ephemeral creek. There is a lovely area of large rocks which often holds small puddles after rain. Small birds such as honeyeaters, fantails and whistlers love this spot as well.

Land for Wildlife
South East Queensland
proudly delivered by:



Dedicated to a better Brisbane



PLEASE HELP US MAKE A BETTER LAND FOR WILDLIFE PROGRAM BY *Completing Our Survey*

We would love to know what you need to help manage your property.

Survey results will help us tailor the program to make sure we are offering what you need. The last regional survey was nine years ago, and since then, the membership has grown by over 1800 Land for Wildlife properties, so please let us know your experiences and how we can help.

The survey will take 15 minutes and there are fabulous prizes to be won:



Take the survey

Survey will be open 1 August - 15 September 2022. Prizes drawn on 20 September 2022. Winners will be notified shortly afterwards. Winners drawn will have a choice of their preferred prize until all prizes are allocated.

Local Government employees or contractors involved in the delivery of the LfWSEQ program are ineligible for prizes.

OR visit <https://tinyurl.com/lfwseq>

Do more weed control - can Land for Wildlife help?

Meet more Land for Wildlife members.

Fence off my cattle from the creek.

Connect with city folk who want to help.

I'd Like to...

See what a planned burn for conservation looks like.

Know more about the birds on my property.

Fabulous PRIZES TO BE WON



Two nights accommodation for two people at Spicers Hidden Vale including dinner, breakfast and \$200 to spend on beverages, valued at \$1300*



Two nights accommodation for two at Lyola Pavilions including breakfast, wine and cheese, valued at \$700*



Two nights accommodation for up to four people at The Stonehouse Retreat, valued at \$700*



Two nights accommodation for up to six people at Mt Barney Lodge, valued at \$640*



Two nights accommodation at Binna Burras Safari Tents, valued at \$150*

*Accommodation is for midweek only and prizes have been kindly donated and are subject to availability, not redeemable or transferable with 12-month expiry.

OTHER PRIZES INCLUDE:

Four Hollow Log Homes nest boxes, valued at \$400

One Faunatech wide-angle fauna monitoring camera, valued at \$300

Solid wooden chopping board set, valued at \$200

Collection of local flora and fauna reference books, valued at \$160