

WILDLIFE DIARY

June 2010



Great Finds

Bobuck, Short-eared possum, *Trichosurus caninus*, seen a Corinda. Photographs taken.

Pacific Baza, *Aviceda subcristata* sighted at Greencamp Road, Wakerley.

Did You Know?

Did you know that **bioluminescence** produced by fungi is the result of a biochemical reaction involving several components: **luciferin** - a product of the organism containing a specific molecule that undergoes a chemical change when affixed by an enzyme; **luciferase** - the enzyme that acts upon luciferin; **adenosine triphosphate** - the energy molecule; **oxygen** - as the catalyst? All these combined make an electronically excited product capable of emitting a blue-green light. Spectrometer readings show the colour is actually in the green colour spectrum. See: http://springbrook.info/glow_worms/bioluminescence.htm for a more detailed explanation.

Did you know protecting biodiversity isn't about protecting the cute and the furry? Protecting our precious biodiversity in SEQ is central to providing humans with many economic, social and physical benefits. The importance of biodiversity to humans is now more clearly understood and the science around eco system services highlights these benefits. In its simplistic form biodiversity is important for the provision of the air we breathe and drinkable freshwater. More specifically, biodiversity is responsible for the health of our forests and crops through pollination. There are literally hundreds of free services biodiversity deliver and yet State Government planning allows it to be readily destroyed. In essence it creates a situation where it appears we are living like there is no tomorrow.

POPULATION MATTERS

"Working on elephant populations in Zambia, I was visited by Sir Peter Scott, founder of the World Wildlife Fund," says Professor Short. "He said, 'You know, I have often thought that at the end of the day, we would have saved more wildlife if we had spent all WWF's money on buying condoms.' He was right, and human overpopulation is ultimately the greatest threat to wildlife."

- Prof. Roger Short & Sir Peter Scott, founder of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

International Year of Biodiversity

The United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity. It is a celebration of life on earth and of the value of biodiversity for our lives. The world is invited to take action in 2010 to safeguard the variety of life on earth: biodiversity <http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/>

World Environment Day

World Environment Day (WED) 2010 is aimed to be the biggest, most widely celebrated, global day for positive, environmental action. Commemorated on 5 June since 1972, WED is one of the principal vehicles through which the UN stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and encourages political attention and action. Through WED, we are able to give a human face to environmental issues and enable people to realize not only their responsibility, but also their power to become agents for change in support of sustainable and equitable development. <http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/about.asp>

Broad-leaved paperbark

Broad-leaved paperbark, *Melaleuca quinquenervia* are in flower. This is a very important species for our resident and visiting migratory wildlife, utilised by many as a vital food source. ***Melaleuca*** comes from the Greek *melas*; black and *leukos*; white, referring to black marks on the white trunks of some species due to fire. ***Quinquenervia*** comes from Latin *quinque*, 5 and *nervus*, a nerve, referring to the pattern of veins on the leaves. Redlands has many wetlands in reserves and these are great locations to see the many species that rely on this beautiful tree.

Great Walks

Have a look around the coastal bushland areas of Wynnum North, Ormiston, Wellington Point, West Mt Cotton and Victoria Point for Noisy Pittas, *Pitta versicolor*. With cold weather on the way some will be on the move from their mountain habitats to their coastal retreats. Let us know if you seen any this year, record date/time/place. Good spots to start are the Wynnum board walk, Erapah Creek Environmental Park or bushland between along Empire Vista, Ormiston.



WWW

Biodiversity

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1VYmpTkgw&feature=player_embedded#

Save Wellington Ponds

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0O6Es9VwbA>

Mary Street Birkdale

<http://www.savemaryst.com/>

Whales need your help

http://www.customercommunity.com.au/communities/Newsletter.asp?issue_id=1854&t=3115158

Birds on the move

Winter is a time that we see an influx of some species of birds. Some of these birds travel thousands of kilometres as they following the flowering forests of Australia. Here are but a few.

A small bird with a big heart (figurately) is the **Silvereye**. See video: <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/video/silvereye-zosterops-lateralis/bird-foraging-tree> The Silvereye, *Zosterops lateralis* is mainly migratory, travelling large distances, particularly along Australia's east coast, where movements of up to 1600km have been recorded. Southern populations, especially '*lateralis*', exhibit clear migratory patterns, regularly traversing Bass Strait in early autumn and extending as far as Rockhampton, Queensland, by May. In eastern Australia, seasonal movements increase with latitude; hence northern races such as '*vegetus*' rarely migrate large distances. Instead, they are mainly sedentary or display regional nomadic movements in response to fluctuating food supplies. In Western Australia, silvereyes ('*chloronotus*') are also primarily nomadic. This race travels inland when coastal food sources diminish and return to utilise spring flowering species, rather than displaying innate migratory movements. In comparison, numerous individuals of the south-eastern mainland races regularly move north during winter and are replaced by the Tasmanian race as they advance north. Most migrate at night following established routes and visit particular sites in consecutive seasons. Some pairs and individuals will not migrate and certain silvereyes migrate in some years but not others

Another winter visitor en masse is the **Eastern Spinebill**, *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*. See video: <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/video/eastern-spinebill-acanthorhynchus-tenuirostris/bird-feeding-nectar-first-flying-then-perched> This species is a honeyeater found in south-eastern Australia in forest and woodland areas, as well as gardens in urban areas. It is around 15 cm long, and has a distinctive black, white and chestnut plumage, a red eye, and a long down curved bill. This species is dependant upon nectar and is a known short distance migratory honeyeater. During May to August this species build up fat reserves, an adaption that meets the greater energy consumption needs occurring during low temperatures and needed for migration. Migratory wader birds are similar, reducing the size on non essential organ and transferring it the same to wing muscles. Another migratory honeyeater is the **Scarlet honey**, *Myzomela sanguinolenta*. This is a beautiful honey eater readily identified by its curved bill and vivid scarlet red and black body with whitish under parts. While this species is a resident in the north of its range it is seasonally migratory in south, with movements associated with flowering of food plants.

Another small inquisitive bird incredibly also a migratory species is the **Grey fantail**, *Rhipidura fuliginosa*. See video: <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/video/grey-fantail-rhipidura-albiscapa/close-bird-calling-wagging-tail> It is readily *recognised* by its constantly fanned tail and agile aerial twists and turns. Both sexes are similar in appearance, grey above, with white eyebrow, throat and tail edges. This bird travels north in winter but there is also an altitudinal movement with birds also moving to lowland forests in winter. It is thought the effects of climate change may influence the timing of seasonal movements by the Grey Fantail. If you would like to help scientists understand the impact of climate change on this and other species visit http://www.climate-watch.org.au/plants-animals/factsheet.aspx?ContentID=grey_fantail It should be noted that there are many different colour patterns and calls associated with the Grey Fantail so much so that this species has been divided into ten separate races, five of which occur in Australia with the remainder in New Zealand and the South Pacific islands. Its redder looking cousin the **Rufous Fantail**, *Rhipidura rufifrons* is also migratory. This species has bright red eyebrow and rump and is found in rainforest, dense wet forests, swamp woodlands and mangroves, preferring deep shade, and is often seen close to the ground. During migration it may be found in more open habitats or urban areas, it is found often in the larger forested areas of Mt Cotton in winter. This species is strongly migratory in the south of its range moving north in winter and virtually disappearing from Victoria and New South Wales at this time.

Probably one of the more attractive migratory birds is the **Noisy Pitta**. See video: <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/video/noisy-pitta-pitta-versicolor/bird-feeding-short-grass> The Noisy Pitta, *Pitta versicolor*, is a species of bird in the Pittidae family. It is readily identified, the top of its head is chestnut in color with a black central streak. The rest of the head and neck are black. The back is green with a turquoise stripe on the shoulders. The breast and belly is a yellowish buff or light tan-brown. The tail and flight feathers are black with the centre of the lower belly and under tail being a shade of red. It is found in Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. It eats earth worms, insects and snails. Its natural habitats are temperate forests, subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests, and subtropical or tropical moist mountains. The name Pitta is derived from the word *pitta* (meaning small bird) in the Telugu language of Andhra Pradesh in India and is a generic local name used for all small birds. In winter this bird will move from the mountains to the lowland forests with rainforests like those found at Lamington almost devoid of them during Autumn.

If you would like to see these birds why not visit the Hilliards Creek Reserve at the end of Weippin Street, Thornlands or Ford Road Reserve at Mt Cotton. Many of the birds mentioned above are very active around the flowering paperbark, *Melaleuca quinquenervia*.

Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead.

