

WILDLIFE DIARY

March 2010



Great Finds

A magnificent camp of **Little Red Flying foxes**, *Pteropus scapulatus* at Pt Talburpin.

Carpet snake, *Morelia spilota variegata* visited Alexandra Hills home.

Two **Wedged-tail eagles**, *Aquila audax* sighted over Victoria Point.

POPULATION MATTERS

Balanced development in SEQ - There is nothing 'balanced' about taking a half of a half of a half of the greenfield lands or bushland habitats until there is nothing left; this is simply 'death by a thousand cuts'

Lavinia Wood 2010

Urbanisation affecting flowering

In addition to environmental modifications in towns due to human activities (e.g. pollution due to industry and fuel combustion, fragmentation due to urban sprawl, photoperiod modification due to public lighting), urban areas have horizontal and vertical surfaces that modify the physical characteristics of the lower layers of the atmosphere (temperature, wind and rainfall). This result in a variation in the net balance of radiation, which creates a dome of warm air called an urban heat island (UHI) above the town. Recent research shows that there is both a climatic gradient and a developmental gradient corresponding to the type of urbanisation in the town. The town influences plant phenology by reducing the diurnal temperature range and by increasing the minimum temperature as one approaches the town centre. Advancement of spring flowering development in the urban environment compared with a rural environment occurred via the urban heat island (UHI) phenomenon. Source: A. Mimet & V. Pellissier & H. Quénot & R. Aguejdad & V. Dubreuil & F. Rozé, 'Urbanisation induces early flowering: evidence from *Platanus acerifolia* and *Prunus cerasus*'. Int J Biometeorol (2009) 53:287-298.

Frogs are a calling

Recent rains have brought out a few frogs. **Beeping froglet**, *Crinia parinsignifera*, **Clicking Froglet**, *Crinia signifera* and **Striped marsh frog**, *Limnodynastes peroni*. <http://frogs.org.au/frogs/species/Limnodynastes/peroni/>

Did You Know?

Did you know 17% of SEQ is in public ownership and protected, significantly less than the amount of land now in public ownership in Sydney (42%) and Melbourne (33%)? And while the premier legal planning document for South East Queensland (SEQ), the SEQ Regional Plan, says over 80% of SEQ is protected from residential development it is not protected from the impacts of urban growth.

Did you know the vast majority of bats found electrocuted on powerlines are mothers carrying their babies? Adult victims rarely survive their injuries – 99.9% mortality rate. Please check for baby animals, during the months of October to January. What you can do: – Quickly report electrocutions with: type of wildlife, pole number OR house number, street and suburb – Report animals quickly so other animals are not also drawn to their death – Look for and report any live babies – Support underground electrical cables – Report areas which regularly kill wildlife in overhead wiring. Source: <http://www.bats.org.au/> email: info@bats.org.au

Fish stocks, sharks and dugongs have benefited greatly from protected marine reserves established on the Great Barrier Reef five years ago, a new study shows. The research found rapid increases in fish and some shark populations inside marine reserves that prohibit fishing. It also found no-fishing zones were located in areas that threatened species such as dugongs and marine turtles frequent and helped eliminate hazards such as fishing nets. The study was published in the journal Proceedings of the US National Academy of Sciences. Lead author Dr Laurence McCook (ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies) says the number of coral trout doubled in some reserves within two years of banning fishing. Red throat emperor and red emperor numbers were also up. The resounding pattern overall is there are more and bigger fish in the protected areas than the fished areas, source: AAP



Great Walks

Have a walk around Sovereign Waters foreshore and Jacob Street, Wellington Point to view a variety of coastal wetlands.

WWW

Population matters

www.population.org.au

Bat Care Brisbane

<http://www.bats.org.au/>

Enviro News

<http://econews.org.au/>

David Attenborough

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LF15YAvT9G0>

Yabbies &

There are several species of freshwater and terrestrial crustaceans in the Redlands and Bayside Region. There are tiny **Atyid shrimps**, small semi transparent and fast moving, common among water plants and leaf litter in shallow water. One such shrimp is *Caridina indistincta*, tolerant of acidic conditions it is found in places like Brown Lake of Nth Stradbroke Island and also many of Redlands local creeks. Then there is *Macrobrachium tolmerum*, a large 100mm long and usually reddish brown animal, readily recognised by their slender long claws, they too tolerate acidic water. Then there are the crayfish. These belong to three genera: **Cherax** (Smooth Freshwater crayfish or Freshwater Yabbies), **Euastacus** (Spiny Freshwater Crayfish) and **Tenuibranchiurus** (Swamp Crayfish).



Species of the genus *Cherax* are commonly referred to as 'Yabbies' or 'Lobbies'. The **Slender Yabby**, *Cherax dispar*, is 75mm long and slender. Body is greenish – grey or brown. They can be found in perennial creeks and coastal sand lakes, often with *Macrobrachium tolmerum* and *Caridina indistincta* in acidic waters. The upper sections of Tingalpa Creek still supports all three species. **Orange fingered yabby** or Inland Yabby, *Cherax depressus* is readily identified by size, about 90mm and distinctive orange coloured finger tip. A very strong burrower they can survive through drought periods by burrowing deep down into the water table. They are an

extremely hardy species, surviving in a wide range of habitats over almost one-third of Australia. In Queensland, its natural distribution is west of the Great Dividing Range, apart from the Dawson River catchment. It was introduced into the Brisbane River catchment. It is very common throughout the Redlands and Bayside region. They can be distinguished from spiny crays (*Euastacus*) by the smoother body and claws (few spines or tubercles), and are widely distributed in Australia and southern New Guinea. Approximately 10 species are currently known from Queensland.

The sole member of the genus *Tenuibranchiurus* (*glypticus*) differs from all other freshwater crayfish in Queensland by its tiny size (fully grown at 25 mm) and by the arrangement of its nippers. They open and close vertically rather than horizontally or obliquely like other crayfish. It was only recently re-discovered in the Redlands.

Freshwater crayfish are bottom dwelling opportunistic scavengers. A large part of their diet consists of rotting leaves and other plant detritus. They are an important part of the food chain and ecosystem.

Mussels

Freshwater mussels are native Australian animals and there are approximately 50 different species of mussels in Australia. Many of these species have small environmental tolerances. However, the Freshwater Mussel *Velesunio ambiguus* is a native of Queensland, NSW and Victoria and a very tough, hardy species that thrives in still static water. Most rivers in Eastern Australia have species of mussels in them but these are river mussels and unsuitable for the still, static water found in wetlands and dams. The Flood Plain Mussel *Velesunio ambiguus* is a mussel that thrives in static water and will readily breed and multiply to massive numbers if the conditions are right.



Freshwater mussels are a small clam like animal with 2 shells hinged together. They have a relatively smooth shell that helps them burrow into the mud of the dam etc. They have a large long foot/tongue that they extend out of the shell and use this tongue to move themselves around. When the waterway dries up the mussels will move up and down the banks using their tongue for travelling. Mussels are a very tough, hardy animal that survives extremely well in our wetlands and dams. They will survive very high temperatures over 30°C and very low temperatures around 4°C. Source: <http://www.aquablueseafoods.com.au/other-mussels.shtml>

Freshwater mussels are biological filters; they spend their time sucking water in, filtering the algae and bacteria from the water and discharging pure clean water.

The larvae (glochidia) of freshwater mussels are parasitic on fish. They are released into the water by adult mussels and, when a fish passes close enough to disturb them, the glochidia attach themselves to the skin or gills of the fish by means of their barbed valves. Irritated host tissue then grows and forms a cyst over each glochidium. Development from glochidium to small mussel takes about 10 weeks, at which time the mussel bores through the cyst, leaves its host and settles to the substrate. The presence of a large number of glochidia is indicated by numerous white or greyish "bladders" on the gills, skin and fins of the fish. Glochidia are able to utilise most native species but are not known to attach to introduced species. Source: Victorian Dept. Primary Industries.

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.

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