WILDLIFE DIARY

September 2010

Great Finds

Glossy Black-Cockatoo, *Calyptorhynchus lathami* three seen at West Mt Cotton.

Powerful owl, *Ninox strenua* also seen at West Mt Cotton

Wompoo fruit dove, *Ptilinopus magnificus* found at Victoria Point.

POPULATION MATTERS

Carrying capacity refers to the number of individuals who can be supported in a given area within natural resource limits, and without degrading the natural social, cultural and economic environment for present and future generations. The carrying capacity for any given area is not fixed. It can be altered by improved technology, but mostly it is changed for the worse by pressures which accompany a population increase. As the environment is degraded, carrying capacity actually shrinks, leaving the environment no longer able to support even the number of people who could formerly have lived in the area on a sustainable basis. No population can live beyond the environment's carrying capacity for very long.

http://www.gdrc.org/uem/index.html

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/

The value of trees

The stress, hard work and pace of life characterizing our times have caused urban populations to become irritable, unsociable and lose their enthusiasm for accomplishing other deeds. Researchers confirm that visual and physical contact with natural surroundings produce other physiological states that can be less stressful for humans. A study carried out by Honeyman (1992) demonstrates that youth who saw scenes of natural landscapes, including those who observed scenes of urban vegetation, had their levels of stress considerably lessened. When exposed to urban scenes, however, stress levels increased. Honeyman concludes that "the exclusion of vegetation in urban areas negatively affects human psychology, increasing the levels of stress" and that therefore, "the inclusion of vegetation in the city has positive impacts on population". Furthermore, contact with nature affects work satisfaction and well-being, lessens mental fatigue, changes moods and reduces pressure.

Climate Change - impacts upon wildlife
http://www.abc.net.au/news/video/2010/08/30/2996774.htm

Did You Know!

Did you know research on SEQ koalas found the distribution of mtDNA control region haplotypes identified distinct coastal and inland clades suggesting that historically there was gene flow between koalas along the coast (though little interchange between coastal and inland animals)? In contrast, koalas from the Koala Coast (Brisbane City, Logan City and Redland Shire) were shown by microsatellite analysis to be genetically distinct from adjacent areas.

Did you know **Coastal Sheoak**, *Casuarina glauca* hybridizes with other *casuarina* species through wind pollination. a hybrid with *C. cunninghamiana* has been reported in Australia and identified in Egypt, and a hybrid with *C. equisetifolia* is recognized in USA and Egypt? Also, did you know they were dioecious; male and female trees occur in approximately 1:1 ratios in natural stands? Male flowers appear as 4-7 cm long, light-green spikes. Female flowers are small dark red, and inconspicuous. Male trees flower at 2-3 years of age and female trees produce fruits one year later.

The relationship between ant and butterfly is tenuous at best, and sometimes the evolutionary pendulum swings more towards one than the other. In the case of **Illidge's ant-blue**, *Acrodipsas illidgei*, a rare butterfly found only in small pockets of mature Queensland **mangrove**/**coastal sheaok** at Coomera, Redland Bay/Victoria Point and Mary River, the butterfly caterpillar eats the larvae of its ant host communities.

Great Walks

Walks near Creekwood Street and also West off Cineplex Road, Victoria Point are worth a visit. While parts are still under construction natural and man made wetlands abound with wildlife. Early morning seems best. Cineplex provides you with a unique opportunity to view into Eprapah Creek, one of Redlands most important wildlife corridors. Wallabies, flying fox camps, abundant bush birds are just some of the wildlife you will see. Note the impacts of erosion. Uncontrolled stormwater from ever increasing hardened surfaces, due to urban sprawl, results in fast water flows damaging the creek bank.

WWW

Glossy Black Cockatoo
http://www.glossyblack.org.au/index.html

Save Wellington Ponds
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0O6Es9VwbA

Power Boat Race for Moreton Bay Marine Park
http://www.wildlife.org.au/news/2010/powerboats.html

Redlands, Queensland most sustainable city
http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2010/08/redland-city-vying-for-title-of-australias-most-sustainable.html?site=brisbane&program=612_breakfast

Small carnivores

In the Bayside and Redlands region we can still find a number of native carnivores, small in stature but big in heart, they are unique and wonderful creatures deserving our attention and protection.

The **Brush-tailed Phascogale**, *Phascogale tapoatafa*, is a nocturnal, arboreal, carnivorous marsupial of the Family *Dasyuridae*. *Tapoatafa* meaning pouched-weasel. It is known to some aborigines as tapoa-tafa. It is very agile in trees though its brush-tipped tail is not used for clinging to branches. They are a very solitary living animal. Their fur is a bluish deep grey with pale cream underneath and large ears with no fur on them. They are over 400mm long (Head, body & tail) and weigh around 230 gm for males and 150 gm for females. They have a patchy distribution across Australia.In the Redlands they can still be found in the more extensive bushland areas. As an arboreal (tree dwelling) animal, they eat insects, spiders, ants, beetles, centipedes even cockroaches, mainly found on trunks and branches of rough-barked trees and fallen logs, usually during the night. Eucalypt nectar sometimes is also eaten. Its nesting habitats are nesting by day in a leaf-lined nest in a tree-hole. The Brush- tailed phascogale becomes sexually mature at the age of one and mating occurs around June. One month later 3 to 8 young are born, which then attach themselves to the 8 available teats. The mother carries them around for about six weeks and cares for them by herself because the male dies soon after breeding. The juveniles remain in the nest until summer time.

Yellow-footed Antechinus, *Antechinus flavipes*, is the most widespread member of its genus. It occurs from south-west Western Australia to north Queensland's wet tropics. Males have a body length of 121mm weighing 56grams while females grow to 105mm and weigh 34gm. Three discrete populations in Queensland exist and are located in the wet tropics of north Queensland; near the Clarke Range,close to Mackay; and from about Rockhampton south to the NSW border (Queensland Museum database) and widely distributed from about Bundaberg to the NSW border and west to about Roma. They occur in wet or dry sclerophyll forests, woodland and closed forests from the coastal plains to the mountaintops and westwards into the semi-arid interior. They prefer habitat with predominance of hollow-forming tree species (Eucalyptus/Lophostemon) and a shrubby, grassy or sparse understorey for denning. Adults often nest under sheets of corrugated iron on the ground.

Common Dunnart, *Sminthopsis murina*, occupies a wide range of coastal and subcoastal grassy or heathy sclerophyll habitats including wet coastal heaths, wet and dry sclerophyll forests and woodlands and partly cleared areas. They have a body length of 70 – 120mm and weighs 16 – 40gm. They prefer Eucalyptus and Lophostemon species and a grassy or shrubby understorey for denning. They appear to have adapted to a mid-successional vegetation complex. Resting by day in a nest typically of dried grass and leaves within a hollow log, clump of grass or in grass trees (Xanthorrhea sp.) they too can be found beneath corrugated iron, logs and bark. The species can reach high abundance at some sites especially within the first three to four years after fire.

Common Planigale, *Planigale maculata*, occupies a wide variety of coastal and sub-coastal habitats including grasslands, woodlands, wet or dry sclerophyll forests, swamps and vine forests. Body length 70mm and weighs only 11grams. It prefers Eucalyptus, Lophostemon and Casuarina species for denning, and a grassy or shrubby understorey. They can be found sheltering under corrugated iron, under rocks, bark and logs.
Source: http://www.northerncatchmentsnetwork.org.au/_dbase_upl/Small%20Marsupial%20Carnivores.pdf

Unfortunately in our region we seem to be losing our native carnivores. Loss of habitat due to urban growth is a big factor. Other impacts are competition for tree hollows from other animals such as feral bees; predation by cats and foxes, road kills and bush fires which destroy suitable habitats.

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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Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld Bayside Branch
P.O. Box 427 CAPALABA Q 4157
bayside@wildlife.org.au
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