

WILDLIFE DIARY

February 2011



Great Finds

Fine-speckled Semi-slug, *Stanisicaron virens* found along riparian corridor through Birkdale

Pied Oystercatchers, *Haematopus longirostris* seen at Wellington Point.

Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus* appear to be nesting early in Birkdale while the majestic **White-bellied Sea Eagle**, *Haliaeetus leucogaster* seen over Black Swamp.

Frogs alive, **Tusked Frog**, *Adelotus brevis*, **Striped Marsh frog**, *Limnodynastes peronii*, **Great Barred Frog**, *Mixophyes fasciolatus* and **Dainty Green Tree Frog**, *Litoria gracilentata* have all been active of late.

WPSQBB fauna survey team found **Ornate Rainbowfish**, *Rhadinocentrus ornatus*, **Crimson-spotted Rainbow fish**, *Melanotaenia duboulayi* and **Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon**, *Mogurnda adspersa* at Carindale.

Owlet nightjar, *Aegotheles cristatus* at Ransome.

POPULATION MATTERS

Any talk of sustainability without a commitment to population stabilisation is not just spin; it is a dangerous lie.

Andrew McNamara former Queensland Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change Dissent magazine (No. 34, Summer 2010-2011).

Flowers and fruit

The **Moreton Bay fig**, *Ficus macrophylla* is often recognized by its massive trunk and thick, prominent buttressing, reaching a diameter of 2.4 m It is **monoecious**: each tree bears functional male and female flowers. However, did you know the flowers of this fig are inside the fruit? The fruits of the Moreton Bay Fig--like those of other figs--are actually composed of hundreds of tiny flowers completely enclosed within the inverted fleshy tissue of the receptacle upon which they rest. A tiny hole (called an ostiole) in the tip of the fruit allows minute symbiotic wasps, which pollinate and lay their eggs within the flowers, to enter and leave the structure.

Figs have an obligate mutualism with fig wasps, (Agaonidae); figs are only pollinated by fig wasps, and fig wasps can only reproduce in fig flowers. Generally, each fig species depends on a single species of wasp for pollination. The wasps are similarly dependent on their fig species in order to reproduce. The Moreton Bay fig is pollinated by the fig wasp *Pleistodontes froggatti*.

Did You Know!

Did you know there is direct connection between greenhouse gas emissions and population growth and reducing population can reduce greenhouse emissions far more effectively than other greenhouse mitigation strategy?

Did you know on the 17th June 1935, the SS *Mariposa* docked in Sydney with Reg Mungomery, assistant entomologist at Meringa, North Queensland and **102 cane toads**, one dead. He was acting on instructions of then Arthur Bell, plant pathologist in the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations (BSES) in Brisbane. With permits from the Director General of Health in order; *Bufo marinus*, cane toad, toxic amphibian, new arrival, defiled 120 million years of amphibian isolation. On the 19th August 1935 Mungomery released 2,400 toadlets in creeks and lagoons around Meringa. No prior testing, no idea of consequences, no going back – vale post Gondwanan fauna. **Sounds a bit like the same attitude applied to coal seam gas extraction doesn't it?** But the story becomes even more distressing. On Friday 8th November 1935 Bill Ker director of BSES received a telegram from John Cumpston, Commonwealth Director General of Health banning the release of any further toads on the advice of retired NSW entomologist Walter Froggatt. Kerr not happy took his complaint to the Premier who went to the Prime Minister who then over turned the ban. Premier Forgan Smith and Prime Minister Lyons championed the toad. Havoc now spawned at Meringa and those toadlets became the stock that wreaked havoc across the Australian landscape. Source:Trust News QLD Autumn 2010.

Great Walks

It was World Wetlands Day on the 2nd February. Why not visit some of the many wetlands that the Redlands and Bayside region is blessed with.



WWW

Super Quarry - it's back again

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

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjyQoQB8onA&feature=player_embedded#

Smart crows and hero rats

http://www.ted.com/talks/bart_weetjens_how_i_taught_rats_to_sniff_out_land_mines.html

http://www.ted.com/talks/joshua_klein_on_the_intelligence_of_crows.html

Native Fish

<http://db.angfa.org.au/>

Our Wetlands

World Wetlands Day is celebrated each year on the 2nd of February. It marks the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) in Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971.

World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997. Since this time government agencies, non-government organisations and community groups have celebrated World Wetlands Day by undertaking actions to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits and promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

We are very lucky in the Bayside and Redlands region to have a great number and variety of wetlands.

These wetlands are priceless. They make a positive contribution to water quality by filtering out toxins and sediments and are therefore essential to the healthy functioning of our waterways and Moreton Bay. Wetlands support the regions' diverse wildlife and flora, are the basis for industry such as fishing and tourism, provide recreational benefits and protect and enhance our lifestyle.

Moreton Bay represents 3% of QLD coast line yet generates 13% of QLD seafood products and supports about 30% of Queensland's recreational fishing effort. Moreton Bay provides the raw resource for tourism. Example, Tangalooma generates over 25 million dollars, employs about 226 people.

Our Wetlands are many and varied, such as the estuarine systems found around Moreton Bay. Boardwalks at North Wynnum and Lota Creek provide ample opportunities to watch the comings and goings of a great variety of native creatures, from Ospreys, *Pandion haliaetus* to majestic White bellied sea eagles, *Haliaeetus leucogaster* to small bushland birds to crabs, shrimps and fish. The seasons also brings variety to these tidal wetlands, rainforest birds, such as the Noisy Pitta, *Pitta versicolor* and Rose crowned fruit dove, *Ptilinopus regina* are often sited on the boundary of mangrove forests at North Wynnum and Ormiston while on their winter migration. Summer brings the tens of thousands of migratory waders from the Northern hemisphere and Kingfishers from Nth Qld and New Guinea. For something different, take a spotlight on a warm balmy night and you are likely to find a host of marine creatures. It is unfortunate that we have destroyed so much of them, between 1946 – 2002 in the greater Brisbane subregion alone we destroyed 1513 ha of tidal wetland comprised of 543 ha mangroves and 973 ha of saltmarsh. For Moreton Bay between 1974 – 1997 there was 3353 ha (19.5 %) of tidal wetland lost, which saw a net loss of 313 ha of mangroves and 3041 ha of salt marsh.

Our estuarine systems not only include mangrove forests but they include samphire and salt water couch communities, while suffering a height deficit they are still major contributors to the health and well being of Moreton Bay. They too provide habitat and food for many native animals. I have often found magpies snoozing in tussocks of salt water couch for reasons un-explained but it does look relaxing.

Then there are Casuarina forests, such as those found at Pt O'Halloran and Boondall wetlands that line the claypans or border mangrove forests, the home of mistletoe and rare butterflies and small bushland birds whose sweet calls are often heard but are rarely seen. The wind through these forests has rightly earned them the name chloroform trees, if only one carried a hammock.

Behind these tidal wetlands are the Melaleuca wetlands, with their huge Broad leaved paperbarks, *Melaleuca quinquenervia*. These wetlands support a host of species; reptiles and frogs, fish and crustaceans and particularly major aggregations of waterbirds and flying foxes can be found. They are utilised for breeding, a food source and a refuge during periods of drought. Deagon wetlands, Black Swamp, Egret Drive, Serpentine Creek, Native Dog Creek and the Southern Moreton Bay Islands support the remaining few remnants of what were vast forests across lowland SEQ.

This mosaic of coastal wetland systems not only provides a home and food source for our wildlife but also provides an excellent sea wall defence system.

Apart from our coastal wetland systems there are our multitude of waterways, supporting a variety of habitats from woodlands to dense riparian habitat to rainforests. Probably some of our best hidden secrets are the remnant rainforests found along Tingalpa Creek, providing a home for rare fish and frogs, and mammals not often seen in this part of the world, such as Short eared brushtail possum, *Trichosurus caninus*, which varies from Black to Chocolate brown in colour and the Long nose bandicoot.

Yes, our wetlands are wonderful and precious, contributors to our well-being and that of our wildlife.

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.

