

# WILDLIFE DIARY

## March 2011



### Great Finds

Young **White-bellied Sea Eagle**, *Haliaeetus leucogaster* seen over Victoria Point.

**Great Barred Frog**, *Mixophyes fasciolatus* continue to be active in the West Mt Cotton area.

**Wellington Ponds** is teeming with native fish, mainly **Firetail Gudgeon**, *Hypseleotris galii*. Very few exotic species found in the ponds.

### POPULATION MATTERS

It's evident in the environmental degradation that one sees, the loss of biodiversity, species extinction and so on, it's very clear that the population growth that we've experienced to date, to give us a population of 21, 22 million has not been sustainable population growth in that sense.

Ken Henry, Federal Govt. Treasury Secretary 2011.

### Flowers and fruit

**Native Frangipani**, *Hymenosporum flavum*

Medium tree to 20m found in all types of rainforest from Sydney, NSW to Windsor Tableland near Cairns, Qld.

Leaves simple, alternate, 6-15cm in length; blade soft, dark green above, paler and sometimes a little hairy below. Juvenile leaves toothed.

Handsome, hardy fast-growing tree with eye-catching two-toned flowering; flowers highly scented.

These trees are now commonly planted in Brisbane's bush regeneration activities as they are fast growing, and very attractive. When in bloom they are covered in flowers visible from quite a distance. The scent of the flowers is not unlike the traditional Frangipani. Source: [http://www.brisrain.webcentral.com.au/01\\_cms/details\\_pop.asp?ID=249](http://www.brisrain.webcentral.com.au/01_cms/details_pop.asp?ID=249)

### Sundews love eating flies

The Bayside and Redlands support a number of sundews (genus *Drosera*). These are insectivorous plants using their sticky hairs located over their flowers or length to trap insects. Forked sundew, *Drosera binate*, is a reddish plant to 20cm tall with forked green leaves 15 – 20 cm long. While Tall Sundew, *Drosera peltata*, is a delicate plant growing to 25cm with dainty round yellow leaves with sticky glandular hairs.

### Did You Know?

Did you know the Minister for Science, Kim Carr, gave a speech recently in which he had this to say about climate change sceptics: We don't have to accord superstition and wishful thinking the same status as science. This is much more than fairness requires and much more than reason permits.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/bigideas/stories/2010/3057366.htm>

Did you know Sea level around Australia has risen some 130mm since 1820, with 70mm of that rise since 1950? Rising sea levels will result in greater impacts from storm tides; a major natural hazard for coastal communities. Severe storms and cyclones account for a third of the total damage cost to the Australian community from natural hazards; estimated at \$40 billion between 1967 and 1999 (calculated in 1999 dollars).

Did you know on the 29th January 1967 Tropical Cyclone Dinah caused a 1.5m storm surge in the Broadwater and Moreton Bay?

Redland Council Koala LED signs are reducing speeds and therefore saving koalas and people.

Cool Refugia - two major climate change adaption strategies for habitat management include the protection of existing cool habitat and restoration of foliage cover in deforested areas that formerly supported cool habitat. While this strategy applies to rainforest it may well be applicable to riparian corridors and other similar cooler habitats along coastal plains.

### Great Walks

Nothing beats the Glider Reserve for its combination of wonderful bush, bushland birds and night time critters. Noting the bushcare group and Redland Council have made this possible.



### WWW

**Super Quarry – it's back again**

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

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjyQoQB8onA&feature=player\\_embedded#](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjyQoQB8onA&feature=player_embedded#)

**Kinross Road Structure Plan threatens koalas**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAzRhKrmhWM>

**Climate Change Watch**

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

**NCCARF**

<http://www.nccarf.edu.au/>

# Ornate Rainbowfish

The Ornate Rainbowfish, *Rhadinocentrus ornatus*, is truly a unique and beautiful, native, freshwater fish found only in a few locations in the Greater Brisbane area and in the Redlands, and has a patchy distribution through coastal creeks of Queensland and New South Wales ([Wildlife Queensland](#)).

Ornate Rainbowfish (Soft-spined sunfish) are an iridescent fish that, depending on which population they belong to, can be blue or red or any shade in between. They are identifiable by the colour variation on their second dorsal fins and anal fins. (hancox et al) Generally these fish have two rows of black scales in their mid-lateral region and an iridescent lateral line of red or blue. More often than not the males have a much more intensive colouring while the females appear more pale and brown ([ANGFA 2008](#)) 1.

*R. ornatus* are an omnivorous surface eating species and feed on macroalgae, small insects and some larvae of other fish. (Brisbane City Council 2010) 2. It is a small fish and has a maximum size of 7-8cm, but are most commonly 5-6cm. They are recognizable by the two dorsal fins which are very close together on their spine. One is significantly larger than the other.

The Ornate Rainbowfish spawn from October to December each year. The females lay several eggs each day for up to a week. The eggs usually hatch within the next ten days. ([Brisbane City Council 2010](#)) 2.

Thus far, four populations of *R. ornatus* have been identified by their genetic differentiation. This has occurred due to long term isolation from other population members. These populations can be corresponded to their geographic locations. ([ANGFA 2008](#)) 1

1. Byfield (Water Park Creek) south to Tin Can Bay and Fraser Island.
  2. Searys Creek (Rainbow Beach) population.
  3. Noosa River south to Brunswick River in NSW, including Bribie, Moreton and Stradbroke Islands.
  4. Northern New South Wales south of the Brunswick River. (Page, Sharma and Hughes, 2004)
- Local creeks that support the species include Erapah Creek (Redlands), Tingalpa Creek (Redlands & BCC) and Spring Creek (BCC).

*R. ornatus* are species restricted to freshwater. They are found in the coastal wallums, low lying waterways in sandy heathlands, of Eastern Australia 1, 2. This species is found in abundance where waterways are slow moving, unpolluted, tannin-stained and have a lower than average acidity, pH5.0 to 6.8 2. Native vegetation cover also appears important.

Native fish species of the greater Brisbane area are experiencing population declines as the number of introduced species increases. Exotic species have been introduced since European settlement in 1788. Species such as the mosquito fish *Gambusia holbrooki* out compete and displace *R. ornatus*, while also displaying aggressive behavior towards *R. Ornatus*. Rainbowfish eggs and larvae are also preyed upon by *G holbrooki* ([ANGFA, 2008](#)). While the urbanization of South East Queensland (SEQ), one of the fastest developing areas in Australia results in natural vegetation being destroyed to make way for commercial businesses, industry and residencies for an increasing population. As natural areas disappear so does the habitat for *R. ornatus*. When urbanization occurs, habitats are also fragmented. A waterway may be undisturbed in a few sections but when urban areas occur in sections, the fish are no longer able to move from one un-disturbed section to another.

Pollution is also a significant problem in maintaining this species. Their preferred habitat is undisturbed and non polluted streams. Habitats of this nature are being increasingly rare due to urbanization.

Conservation status changes from local to national. Nationally *R. ornatus* is not a significant species and is not listed nationally as endangered or threatened. However it is 'significant' within the Brisbane area (conservation action statement September 2010).

## References:

1. ANGFA 2008. Ornate Rainbowfish. <http://rainbowfish.angfaql.org.au/Rhadino.htm>
2. Brisbane City Council. 2010. Wildlife Conservation Action Statement: Soft-spined sunfish. [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/environment-waste/wildlife/threatened-species/index.htm](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/environment-waste/wildlife/threatened-species/index.htm)

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.

