

WILDLIFE DIARY

September 2012



Great Finds

Buff banded Rail, *Gallirallus philippensis*

Forest Kingfishers, *Todiramphus macleayii* and **Collared Kingfisher**, *Todiramphus chloris* regularly sighted along Erapah Creek as were **Green Turtles**, *Chelonia mydas* around the mouth of the creek.

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>

Biodiversity Month

Biodiversity Month is held in September each year and aims to promote the importance of protecting, conserving and improving biodiversity both within Australia and across the world.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/month.html>

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. cunningharniana* 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 sheoak** at Coomera, Redland Bay/Victoria Point and Mary River, the butterfly caterpillar eats the larvae of its ant host communities.

Great Walks

Whether you walk along the bank of Erapah Creek or travel the waterway it's alive with wildlife both in and out of water. Birdlife is abundant and at the mouth of Erapah Creek are many Green



Turtles feeding on the seagrass meadows that flank the channel.

WWW

Glossy Black Cockatoo

<http://www.glossyblack.org.au/index.html>

National Threatened Species Day

http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/threatened-species-week/background_threatened_species_week.html

Magpie Season

<http://www.wildlife.org.au/news/2012/magpies.html>

Wildlife Queensland

wildlife.org.au

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 (*Xanthorrhoea* 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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