

# WILDLIFE DIARY

## April 2012



### Great Finds

**Green tree snake**, *Dendrelaphis punctulata* taking a snooze on a comfy chair on the back deck at Thornlands.

**Bush Curlew**, *Burhinus grallarius* heard at Thornlands and Birkdale recently. Great to see this very special bird still making the Redlands home.

## POPULATION MATTERS

Kelvin Thompson, Federal Member for Wills in Coburg, Melbourne, has again pointed out that "A bigger Melbourne is not a better Melbourne". Filmmaker and SPA member Fred Zervas has recorded his speech which you can see at: <http://vimeo.com/36865208>

### Population a big issue then and now

Harry Nelson MHR wanted to people the centre. He wanted to humiliate Griffith Taylor (Australia's first Geographer). Emboldened by Stefansson's findings and determined to publicise the suitability of central Australia for large-scale settlement, Nelson climbed aboard his motorbike. He put on his goggles. He announced that he was about to tour this rich and promising country himself. He would ride from Alice Springs to Darwin. Waved off by a small group of well-wishers, the good parliamentarian buzzed off. He disappeared over the horizon, confident that fresh fields and perfectly useable pastures awaited his gaze.

Nelson no doubt dreamt of the impact his findings would have in federal Parliament and the damage he might do to Taylor's miserable musings about arid Australia. Putting the Northern Territory on the map and filling its empty spaces with robust white settlers was Nelson's great passion. Like so many others at the time, Nelson feared that unless Australians got on with the business of northern development, a.s.a.p., populous Asian nations to the north would take matters into their own hands and settle empty Australia for themselves. More people had to be got in and got in quickly. It seemed to him that time was short.

The rather portly Nelson rode into the silence of the great interior. When nothing was heard of the local adventurer, people grew concerned. An Aboriginal tracker was sent off to ascertain Nelson's whereabouts. He came upon tracks that 'zig-zagged about the bush in a hopeless fashion'. Nelson had ridden in appalling heat into desperately dry country for which the term 'arid' was so so true. He drank the water he had taken with him. When that ran out, he could find no more. Driven to desperation Nelson began to drink lubricating oil from his motorbike. On his last legs, Nelson was rescued just in time.

Source: <http://www.hyperhistory.org/images/assets/pdf/anxpdf.pdf>

### Did You Know?

Did you know Council elections are on 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2012? Ensure your vote is a vote that will help our wildlife.

Did you know *Melaleuca quinquenervia* are flowering at present? This is a species found in our local wetlands and is important as a habitat and food source for many species great and small.

If you want to view a great television series about the geological and biological history of **Australia** visit the ABC at: <http://www.abc.net.au/iview/#/view/919064>



### Great Walks

There are some wonderful walks in the Redlands amongst the suburbs. Wellington Ponds, Thornlands; the walkway along Erapah Creek as you leave the Victoria Point Shopping Centre.

The long walk from the end of Weippin Street to Wellington Street, Thornlands. The foreshore walk from Thornlands to Cleveland. The walk to the artificial wader roost site from the top of Empire Vista Ormiston and beyond if you are adventurous. :)

## WWW

**Super Quarry - it's back again**

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

**Save Moreton Bay**

<http://www.savemoretonbay.com.au/>

**Wildlife Bayside Blog**

<http://wildlifebayside.wordpress.com/>

**Seagrass Watch blog**

<http://seagrassmb.wordpress.com>

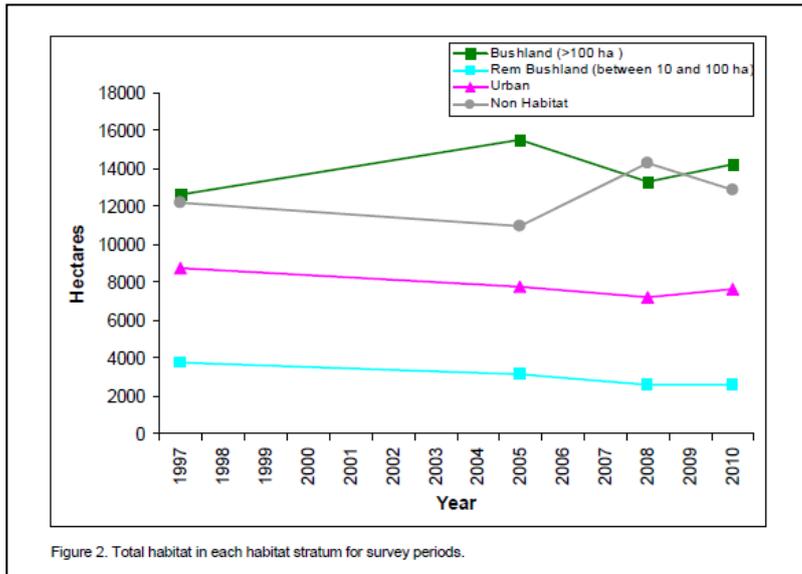
**Biomimicry Institute**

<http://biomimicry.net/>

# Koala population - status

The Koala Coast is located 20 km south-east of Brisbane, Queensland, which covers an area of 375 km<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1) and encompasses portions of three local government authorities: the mainland portion of Redland City, the eastern portion of Logan City and the south-eastern portion of Brisbane City. It is regarded nationally as one of the most significant koala populations because of its size and genetic structure.

The Queensland Government has monitored the Koala Coast koala population since 1996, investigating koala distribution, abundance, comparative ecology and population dynamics. This continues to be the most detailed regional monitoring study of koalas undertaken to date in Queensland or indeed elsewhere in Australia.



Between 1996 and 1999, the Koala Coast koala population was estimated at approximately 6000 animals (Dique *et al.* 2004). A re-survey of the Koala Coast between 2005 and 2006 indicated that the population had declined by 26 per cent to an estimated 4600 animals (EPA 2007). In 2008, another round of comprehensive surveys revealed that the population had undergone a steep decline and was estimated at about 2300 animals, more than 50 per cent population loss in less than three years (DERM 2009).

An analysis of the raw survey data for the 2010 survey led to a population estimate of around 2000—a result that might mistakenly be interpreted as a 13 per cent decline in population based on comparison with the population estimate for 2008. As with all population estimates, the methodology used in these surveys involves a margin of error, in this case + or – around 500 koalas. The results were statistically analysed against the 2008 survey to determine whether the apparent change was statistically significant (i.e. that the change was not simply due to the margins of error). The apparent difference between the 2008 and 2010 surveys was revealed to not be statistically significant, meaning there was no clear evidence of a decrease between the two years when margins of error are considered. Further, it is also not possible to definitively conclude that koala population decline has stabilised either.

The long term downward trend since the 1996-1999 survey is still statistically significant, showing a 68 per cent decline between 1996-1999 and the latest (2010) survey. Additional surveys in future years will be required to establish whether the koala population continues to trend downwards or whether it has stabilised. An analysis of koala habitat also indicated that there was little change in tree cover in the Koala Coast between 2008 and 2010.

It should be noted that all prior survey findings involved margins of error also. However unlike the current survey findings there was no doubt, following similar statistic analysis that took into account these margins of error that there had been a significant decrease between all previous surveys. Source: <http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlife-ecosystems/wildlife/koalas/research/pdf/koala-coast-report2010.pdf>

*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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