

WILDLIFE DIARY

July 2014

Great Finds

White Bellied Sea Eagles, *Haliaeetus leucogaster* continuing to poke about Birkdale, perhaps they have reinhabited their Tingalpa Creek nest site.

Striated Heron, *Butorides striata* seen in the mangroves along the foreshore between Birkdale and Wellington Point. These shy creatures are not uncommon but generally keep to themselves, a beautiful animal. This guy didn't seem averse to being the star of a few portraits though.



Photo: A Baltais 2014

Noisy Friarbirds on the Mainland

Many around the Redland's coastal areas have had the pleasure of waking up to the chock-chock of the Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus* in the past month.

This member of the honeyeater group is a notorious partial migrant and will persevere where there are flowering plants to feed on nectar.

If you are unfamiliar with these birds they have grey to brown backs, white bellies and a distinctive bald, all black head. They have a prominent casque or bump feature at the base of their bill.

Common companions include the Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*.

Population Matters

A UN Report to be issued tomorrow (July 10), the day before World Population Day, will note that by 2050 about two-thirds of all humans will live in urban areas. Most of the anticipated urban growth by 2050 will occur in Asia and Africa. Already, more than half the global population lives in cities...

...The Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) claims that the biggest threat to koalas is habitat loss. According to the DEH, much of the koala's habitat in Queensland overlaps with areas where significant clearing has occurred, and continues to occur, for urban, industrial and rural development.

The DEH also notes that 'in South East Queensland, the human population is increasing by more than 1000 people a week. This rapid population growth and increased need for houses is placing considerable pressure on the limited remaining koala habitat'...

<http://www.population.org.au/articles/2014-07-11/mr-global-urbanisation-good-some-bad-nature>

Did you Know?

Fish-eating spiders can catch prey five times their size! It isn't easy being a little fish. Predators dart at them underwater. Humans try to snare them with hooks. And other species—more than we'd thought, it turns out—can pounce on them from above. According to a new study, spiders in 8 of the world's 109 arachnid families can catch and consume small fish. Some of them can even subdue fish five times heavier than they are.

<http://focusingonwildlife.com/news/fish-eating-spiders-can-catch-prey-5-times-their-size/>

Butterflies

Great News for the Richmond Birdwing

Due to the community's generosity the target of raising \$25000 for the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly Project was exceeded. As a result it is now Wildlife Queensland's intention to plant 1250 host vines and expedite the spread of the butterfly across its natural range. To date, approximately 1000 vines have been purchased and housed centrally at a nursery in Morayfield from where they will be transported to the selected planting sites. Planting is well underway at Fig Tree Pocket and has commenced at Burleigh Heads National Park and near Pomona - approximately 300 vines have been planted so far. Planting is scheduled to start also at Witta in September 2014.

The planting of vines commenced at Fig Tree Pocket on adjoining freehold properties with enthusiastic 'land for wildlife' owners ensuring the vines get the care and attention they need. To date 225 vines have been planted and an additional 50 vines are scheduled for these properties.

Read more at.

<http://www.wildlife.org.au/projects/richmondbirdwing/index.html#rbcninaction>

Great Walks

Conondale National Park | If you've got some time on your hands. Conondale National Park comes highly recommended. It is about 130km north of Brisbane and 15km South of Kenilworth. The park has some magnificent scenery and walks to offer. Including the Conondale Range Great Walk, a 56km 4 day investment, taking you through some spectacular ancient rainforest and waterfalls, to shorter walks accessible from 4WD tracks. Booloumba Creek camp sites are lovely spots to camp with the family.

<http://www.npsr.qld.gov.au/parks/conondale/index.html>

Kondalilla National Park

Near to Conondale National Park is the Kondalilla Falls, which boasts a 90m cascade into the rainforest below. Kondalilla is an Aboriginal word meaning 'rushing waters'. A must see for Sunshine Coast hinterland day-trippers.

<http://www.npsr.qld.gov.au/parks/kondalilla/about.html>

Chytridiomycosis

Amphibian Chytrid Fungus Disease

Chytridiomycosis is an infectious disease that affects amphibians worldwide. It is caused by the chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*), a fungus capable of causing sporadic deaths in some amphibian populations and 100 per cent mortality in others. The disease has been implicated in the mass die-offs and species extinctions of frogs since the 1990s. However, its origin and true impact on frog populations remains uncertain and continues to be investigated

Ecology

Chytrid fungi typically live in water or soil, although some are parasites of plants and insects. They reproduce asexually and have

spores that 'swim' through the water. Only the amphibian chytrid fungus is known to infect vertebrate species. Individual frogs are thought

to contract the disease when their skin comes into contact with water containing spores from infected animals.

Chytridiomycosis mostly affects amphibian species associated with permanent water, such as streams, moist bogs or soaks and ponds. The disease is strongly mitigated by high temperatures and disease outbreaks have been observed to occur seasonally. However, much is still unknown about the fungus and the disease in the wild, including reasons for the death of hosts, how the fungus survives in the absence of amphibian populations and how it spreads. Interactions between the fungus and environmental factors are known to be important. For example, Australian upland frog populations have suffered the greatest number of declines and extinctions, leading to the suggestion that environmental stress, perhaps from climate change or increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation, may be reducing resistance to infection.

Control

There are no proven methods to control the disease in the wild to date. For amphibian species currently listed as endangered, emergency measures are needed to increase population sizes via reintroductions, translocation and the establishment of captive disease-free assurance colonies. Since *B. dendrobatidis* is now widely distributed in Australia, control efforts should be aimed at protecting uninfected areas. As strains vary in virulence, reducing the risk of spread between infected areas is also important. Developing a greater understanding of how the impact of chytridiomycosis in infected wild populations can be better mitigated would help in controlling the threat of the disease.

Monitoring and surveillance is necessary to:

- monitor the impact of the disease on frog populations
- detect new outbreaks in currently uninfected populations or locations of unknown disease status
- establish restricted and control areas to which quarantine and movement restrictions are applied

- establish infected and non-infected areas/zones
- monitor the progress and success of a control strategy

Frequently asked questions

What should I do if I come across an accidentally relocated frog or amphibian?

An accidentally relocated amphibian is an individual (native or introduced species) that has been unintentionally transported from one place to another. This can happen with the transport of landscaping supplies or, more commonly, in boxes of produce such as bananas—hence the commonly used term banana box frogs. DO NOT release any accidentally relocated frogs into the wild. These frogs can be collected by a licensed wildlife carer organisation. For contact details of these organisations in your area, please contact your state environment department or check their website.

How should I handle a displaced frog if I need to?

All species of frogs should be handled with washed single-use vinyl gloves. If gloves are not readily available, a single-use, lightweight plastic bag will suffice. Cleaning of hands and handling equipment should be carried out with a disinfectant.

How do I house amphibians temporarily if I need to?

Individuals should be housed in single-use containers, such as plastic bags, for a short time only. Temporary housing items should be disinfected before and after use.

What should I do if I find dead frogs in the wild?

If you observe mass mortalities of frogs please notify your state environment department. Dead amphibians or live animals showing clinical signs of chytrid disease should be collected—using gloves and sent for disease diagnosis. More information on handling sick and dead amphibians is available on the James Cook University website at: www.jcu.edu.au/school/phtm/PHTM/frogs/pmfrog.htm

How can I help stop the spread of chytrid disease?

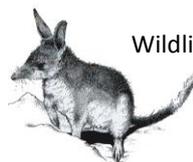
You should only purchase amphibians from licensed suppliers who are certified chytrid free. Do not release any pets into the environment under any circumstances. Tadpoles and frogs must not be moved between habitats as this is a major cause of the spread of the deadly chytrid disease

Article from:

http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/279bf387-09e0-433f-8973-3e18158febb6/files/c-disease_1.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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