

WILDLIFE DIARY

August 2015

Great Finds

Three-clawed worm-skink, *Anomalopus verreauxii* Duméril & Duméril, 1851, found at Birkdale.
<http://www.arod.com.au/arod/reptilia/Squamata/Scincidae/Anomalopus/verreauxii>

Population

A very Faustian choice is upon us: whether to accept our corrosive and risky behavior as the unavoidable price of population and economic growth, or to take stock of ourselves and search for a new environmental ethic.
E. O. Wilson

What's in flower

Forest Red Gum, *Eucalyptus tereticornis* are out in bloom, which seems early but much to the delight of many birds. **Late flowering wattle**, *Acacia. concurrens* are still about. *Concurrens* is a Latin adjective meaning running together, which is a suitable epithet for this wattle. It describes the manner in which all the primary veins join together into the lower vein near the base of the phyllode. **Eprapah wattle** is also out in flower.

Climate Change and koalas

Climate change has been recognised for its potential to affect the continued survival of many species across their current range and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has recognised that the koala is a species highly vulnerable to climate change. Recent scientific publications have identified the implication of climate change for koala distribution in Queensland and predicted that South East Queensland may become increasingly important to the long-term survival of Queensland's koala population as other parts of Queensland become more hostile to the species' survival (Adams-Hosking *et al.*, 2011). Cool refugia like Eprapah and Tingalpa Creek will provide valuable safe habitat for koalas and of course many other species.

Extinction is forever

Urbanisation and the consequential loss of bushland have seen the following notable extinctions in the Redlands.

Tiger Quoll, *Dasyurus maculatus* maculates one of Australia's largest carnivorous marsupials lost from the shire within living memory. **Yellow-bellied glider**, *Petaurus australis*, last seen in the German Church Road / Valley Way Mt Cotton area in the early 1990's. Urbanisation destroyed their habitat.

Common species now under threat as council continues planning for further urban expansion.

<https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/threatened-species-week/index.html>

Did you Know?

Did you know a 2010 study of Eprapah Creek in the Redlands found one hundred and nineteen species of spiders from 36 families were recorded during the survey? Forty-one new species found. The lack of tramp species (Redbacks, Daddy Long Legs) indicated a lack of disturbance of studied sites, while the diversity of environmentally sensitive spider groups was high indicating that these groups would provide target species for monitoring health of bushland patches within the Redlands. Two water spider species were found in the survey. One, *Megadolomedes australianus*, is a very large spider (leg span greater than a hand) and is found only in the least disturbed streams that have slower flowing regions. These spiders feed on fish and possibly frogs. They are found under large logs or rocks near water. BAAM 2010.

Great Walks



It's a small park but well worth the walk. Have a walk along the park that runs parallel to Sycamore Parade Victoria Point. Mature koala food trees, some rainforest

species and understorey makes for an appealing walk and significant buffer to development. Perhaps reclaiming our parks from antisocial behaviour is the best way to stop our Council selling them off to developers.

Web Sites

WPSQ Coastal Community Science
<http://wpsqccs.wordpress.com/>

Good and bad news

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamrazor/goulds-petrel-sue-taylor-conservation/6655960>

'No way' say residents over public land sale plan

<http://www.redlandcitybulletin.com.au/story/2775825/no-way-say-residents-over-public-land-sale/>

Putting the spotlight on Mangroves

<https://wpsqccs.wordpress.com/2015/07/06/putting-a-spotlight-on-mangroves/>

Climate Change and Adaption

<http://us3.campaign-archive1.com/?u=649afeac2ce54baf23874dbc2&id=2dab986003&e=14af2be0fb>

Cruel decisions

The urbanisation process causes loss and fragmentation of natural habitats and places high pressure on the remaining areas of nature in urban regions. Urbanization also threatens our greenspaces.

'Greenspace' broadly describes the 'great outdoors' and includes the open spaces and landscapes we use as a community to connect to nature and enjoy an active, healthy outdoor lifestyle that is the envy of the world. <http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/resources/plan/greenspace-strategy-2011.pdf>

We have known for years that only 17 per cent of South East Queensland (SEQ) is national park or state forest, compared with 43 per cent of the equivalent land mass in the greater Sydney region. Even the more optimistic figure of 19% as highlighted by the State Government in 2010 is dismal. <http://www.dilgp.qld.gov.au/resources/plan/greenspace/draft-greenspace-strategy.pdf>

Within the past 10 years private amenity space has largely disappeared from the rear of new suburban houses in Australia. This is characterised by an increase in plot coverage from 30-40% to 50-60% or even more. The change appears both permanent and uniform, as it is to be found in all major Australian cities, except Adelaide. It appears to be confined to Australia as in other parts of the world where back gardens have been standard features, North America, New Zealand, Northwest Europe, this trend is not to be found. The outer suburban landscape in Australia has ceased to be one of large gardens with trees. Such landscapes are now confined to the inner suburbs.

It is of little surprise then that we have seen a decrease in open woodland and forest birds as this is consistent with land clearing and urbanisation. The consequences for humans are no better either. Greenspace has consistently been shown research as contributing to health and wellbeing. This is just one recent report that highlights this. <http://www.nature.com/srep/2015/150709/srep11610/full/srep11610.html>

It would seem our politicians equally recognise the importance of our greenspace as shown in recent media articles. <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/queensland/green-belts-must-be-protected-as-seq-population-grows-mayors-20150807-giueak.html> and <http://www.dilgp.qld.gov.au/resources/plan/greenspace/draft-greenspace-strategy.pdf>

Greenspace and the lack thereof is becoming a major issue in our over-crowded urban centres. Greenspace is an important part of complex urban ecosystems and provides significant ecosystem services. It benefits urban communities environmentally, aesthetically, recreationally and economically. A big natural and semi-natural forest area can act as an ecological buffer and protect the environmental quality of a city and provide habitats for wildlife. At the city level, a green network system of green wedges, parks and green corridors helps to limit future urban expansion, improve urban environmental quality and serve as habitat and corridors for wildlife. At the neighborhood level, green extensions and connections of riverside greenway, road greenway, parks and vertical greening permeate into the built-up areas. They provide open space close to residential areas and offer places for recreation. This three-level green system can constitute an integrated ecological network for urban sustainable development for a city. Corridor networks developed within a framework of landscape management to integrate native conservation with production.

The science is clear. Greenspace is important to people and wildlife. The dedication of Greenspace to public purpose as was the case near Sycamore Parade Nature Belt is a case in point. This land was dedicated to the community as part of a large development approved by Redland Council. The purpose of the nature belt was to provide a buffer between the harsh commercialised environment and local residents.

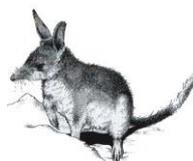
To date the Sycamore Parade Nature Belt continues to buffer residents from commercial development and provides a valuable environment for a whole host of species.

The council says the land no longer serves its purpose so it hands public greenspace to State Government with the likelihood it will be turned into a Carpark. <http://www.redlandcitybulletin.com.au/story/2775825/no-way-say-residents-over-public-land-sale/>

Rather than deal with the root cause of inappropriate behavior in the park it seems the preferred action is to erase our greenspace and turn it into a carpark. Just how cruel can one get? When land dedicated to the public as a buffer to a massive development, a development approved by council, is then later sold off to developers?

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



Published by
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August 2015