WILDLIFE DIARY
June 2016

Great Finds

Eastern Water Dragons, *Itellagama lesueurii***,** are still active despite winter arriving!

White bolly gum, *Neolitsea dealbata* (LAURACEAE) are in flower. It's a very attractive tree when the apricot/red colour new leafs are out.

Melaleuca quinquenervia (Cav.) S.T.Blake are certainly in flower and many creatures great and small are enjoying the feast, particularly our flying foxes.

Population

It's coming home to roost over the next 50 years or so. It's not just climate change; it's sheer space, places to grow food for this enormous horde. Either we limit our population growth or the natural world will do it for us, and the natural world is doing it for us right now.

David Attenborough
http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/d/david_attenborough.html

Winter brings new friends

With the cooler weather approaching new winter friends will arrive. **Silvereyes**, *Zosterops lateralis,* move North in the Autumn. The Tasmanian sub-species being a regular visitor to the Redlands. What an amazing fete for such a diminutive sweet bird? The rainforest birds, The **Rose-crowned fruit dove**, *Ptilinopus regina* and **Noisy Pitta**, Pitta versicolor can been seen for a short period in our mangrove forests as they move further a-field to Peel Island and North Stradbroke and other coastal locations. The **Rufous Flycatcher**, *Rhipidura rufifrons* can we seen in our conservation parks. Likewise, with the **Golden Whistler**, *Pachycephala pectoralis.*

Human population Growth is Killing off our koalas

More people means more land is required to accommodate them and to provide the goods and services they require. It means more habitat loss, roads and cars and dogs. All noted as key threats to the koala's survival. Its little wonder our koala populations has been decimated.

Did you Know?

Did you know The larvae (glochidia) of **freshwater mussels** are parasitic on fish? They are released into the water by adult mussels and, when a fish passes close enough to disturb them, the glochidia attach themselves to the skin or gills of the fish by means of their barbed valves. Irritated host tissue then grows and forms a cyst over each glochidium. Development from glochidium to small mussel takes about 10 weeks, at which time the mussel bores through the cyst, leaves its host and settles to the substrate. The presence of a large number of glochidia is indicated by numerous white or greyish "bladders" on the gills, skin and fins of the fish. Glochidia are able to utilise most native species but are not known to attach to introduced species.

Did you know there are several species of freshwater and terrestrial crustaceans in the Redlands and Bayside Region. There are tiny **Atyid** shrimps, small semitransparent and fast moving, common among water plants and leaf litter in shallow water. One such shrimp is ***Caridina indistincta***, tolerant of acidic conditions it is found in places like Brown Lake of Nth Stradbroke Island and also many of Redlands local creeks. Then there is ***Macrobrachium tolmerum***, a large 100mm long and usually reddish brown animal, readily recognised by their slender long claws, they too tolerate acidic water. Then there are the crayfish. These belong to three genera: ***Cherax*** (Smooth Freshwater crayfish or Freshwater Yabbies), ***Euastacus*** (Spiny Freshwater Crayfish) and ***Tenuibranchiurus*** (Swamp Crayfish). **Orange fingered yabby** or Inland Yabby, ***Cherax depressus*** is readily identified by size, about 90mm and distinctive orange coloured fingertip. A very strong burrower they can survive through drought periods by burrowing deep down into the water table.

Great Walks

Some really easy and great walks at the Northern end of Moreton Bay are along the beach at Sandstone Point, Beachmere Conservation Park and Beachmere towards Caboolture River. These are low tide walks.

Web Sites

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

Redland Planning issues?

http://carp-redlands.org/

Reef Check

http://www.reefcheckaustralia.org/

Corridors & Core habitat

Ormiston koala trees face destruction as locals express anger at Council: http://www.redlandcitybulletin.com.au/story/2605911/trees-face-axe-as-locals-lash-council/

Council guilty of illegal tree clearing: http://www.redlandcitybulletin.com.au/story/2441642/updated-council-guilty-of-illegal-tree-clearing/

More vegetation clearing in Redlands: http://www.redlandcitybulletin.com.au/story/3947254/residents-want-eprapah-pathway-dropped/

Redland Council appear to be repeat offenders when it comes to clearing wildlife corridors or allowing others to do it. So what are wildlife corridors and core habitat. Why are corridors important?

There is one theory in ecology that has held true since its creation and that is that a larger patch of bushland will support more species. For this reason, core habitat, that area of habitat essential for the long-term survival of a species must be secured if we are to save our biodiversity.

So what is a corridor? One definition is that habitat (an environment suitable for a particular species) corridor is a linear habitat, embedded in a dissimilar matrix (land that surrounds the patches of habitat) which connects two or more larger blocks of habitat and which is proposed for conservation on the grounds that it will enhance or maintain the viability of specific native species populations in the habitat blocks.

Corridors do rely on a matrix of existing but discontinuous natural areas to realize their full potential. In most urban areas the wildlife habitat that does exist is rarely connected and therefore creates a dangerous environment for there are no opportunities for safe migration and little, if any biodiversity which is essential in creating any sustainable habitat.

When one looks across a landscape made up of fragmented natural bushland, farms and urban environments it is not apparent how difficult this landscape can be to traverse for some species. The dispersal capability of a species influences its ability to move through the landscape if at all. One would think flight for example provides ample capability for a species to move between core habitats. Not so, species that are specialists can find it very difficult if not impossible to move across our fragmented landscapes. Research shows that some butterflies could not traverse areas of tall conifers while small bushland birds without understorey could not safely make it between patches of habitat. This same impact can be found with roads and residential subdivision devoid of much vegetation.

Without suitable corridors small patches of bush suffer rapid extinction rates and unless they can be connected they will remain impoverished. This is more so when the remaining patches of habitat are all relatively small in size and the ability for a species to migrate to one or more of these patches is all that saves the entire population from becoming extinct. It is also another reason why councils must purchase what seem to be insignificant small patches of bushland. In the urban landscape entire populations of species are found within such patches. Some if not many of these patches will be source patches, that is, producing more of their kind thus enabling migration. If such a patch was lost the entire population of a species could be lost. Purchasing small patches of bushland because they are recognised as source patches or critical to establishing corridors between habitats can be difficult for those ignorant of the reasoning to understand.

Corridors are essential to any species for every species is required to migrate for survival. Without corridors and diverse landscape available to species, extinction rates increase exponentially. With natural disasters such as flood and fires, wildlife needs options if their current habitat is destroyed. Our landscapes are considered to be a sea of habitat islands and the only way to bring them together is through connectivity brought about by corridors.

Corridors also have positive human function such as barriers for property lines and landscape elements. Tree lined footpaths also create a safety environment for pedestrians, provide shade thereby reducing the heat sink effect, slow down traffic and can reduce noise.

Wildlife need core habitat and it needs corridors for without them extinction for many is assured. When council acquires land for conservation whether it be a small or a large parcel of land be mindful that size and or connectivity maybe the basis of their decision to purchase that property.

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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