

**BAYSIDE NEWSLETTER** **October - November 2009.**

Next Meeting Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009 starting at 7.30pm at Redlands IndigiScapes Centre

Guest presenter will be Brett Parnell who is widely travelled and an excellent photographer. He will present the land forms and wildlife of the south-west USA and Alaska. The journey will take you from the hot dry canyon country of Arizona and Utah to the chilly waters of the Arctic Ocean and the wildlife that calls the north slope home in summer then to Denali and Katmai National Park and beautiful Prince William Sound. Everyone welcome to attend.

**PRESIDENTS REPORT**

Steve Homewood

As you know the last month our branch hosted the WPSQ AGM, at the IndigiScapes Centre. I would like to thank all those involved in organising the event and those who gave their time over the weekend to ensure its success. It was a great effort.

Unfortunately I missed the main event and headed off to the UK on a family visit, but I thought I would give you an insight into some of the issues that were current and not unfamiliar.



There is major concern that the ubiquitous hedgehog population is in a major decline, this spiky animal similar to an

echidna has suffered badly from the loss of hedgerows, intensive farming, fragmentation of habitat, simply it has nowhere to hide. The urban hedgehog has almost vanished it cannot climb walls and fences and has a roll up defensive mode for cars. It has a new predator as well, the Badger, as a suspected carrier of TB it used to be culled but not any-more and has a taste for this spiky treat. The British

Hedgehog Preservation Society is organising research into ways to stop the population plummeting further; I think we all know the answer to that question.

Recently Wildlife and Conservation groups in Australia were successful in stopping the importation of the Savannah cat, a cross breed of wild (cheetah like) and domestic cats that would have been devastating to our wildlife.

No such restrictions in the UK where there already around 300 of these 16 kilo monsters and now there are plans to bring in the caracat,



a lynx-type cross, the cat club owners say any of these cats should never be left alone with children. I am glad that common sense prevailed herein Australia and hope we able resist further attempts to allow importation of these "pets". There are genuine concerns being raised in the UK about the potential threat to wildlife but it is too late. I hope they do not get a taste for Hedgehog!!!

See you at our next meeting at the end of the month

## My encounters with the friendly Eastern Water Dragons

By Rachael Attard

Who's had a close encounter with a water dragon? If you live in Brisbane, this wonderful experience is actually quite common. The Eastern Water Dragon resides near creeks, rivers, lakes and ponds, and is very abundant in Brisbane.

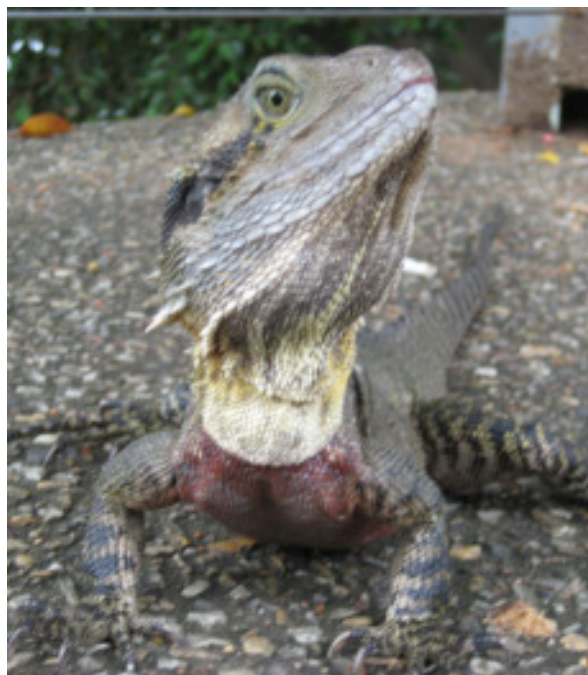
If you would like to get up close and personal with a water dragon, you only have to head down to the Brisbane River in the heart of the city, the Mt Cootha Botanic Gardens or the University of Queensland in St Lucia. You will find them basking in the sunlight on an open surface, or resting motionless among the trees and leaf litter. Sometimes they camouflage very well!



Last year I had the pleasurable opportunity of doing a short research project on the Eastern Water Dragon. My project was focused on their flight initiation distance, which is the distance between myself and the water dragon when it first takes flight or runs away. I was examining the difference between males and females, as females are thought to be 'flightier.'

My study was conducted at the University of Queensland lakes in St Lucia, which was lucky for me! Water dragons were not hard to come by, and I could leisurely wander down to the lakes on my lunch break to examine the dragons. I was to approach the dragon at a constant speed and then mark my position when it first fled.

Unfortunately, due to the extremely tame nature of the water dragons, some of them didn't even move! Flight initiation distances



were expected to be much larger, but I was able to approach some of them so close that I could actually touch them. The tamest dragons were the males, who had very distinct red bellies as you can see in the photographs. Photograph four is a female. Most females fled as soon as they saw me, but there were the odd few that were just as bold as the males.

Although my project didn't turn out as I expected, I still managed to attain some results and write up the project. It was a wonderful experience, and I had the opportunity to take some great photographs!



### David Renn Art Exhibition

Opens Friday 13 November at 6.30pm and continues Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 5 pm

The exhibition is being held in the historic Hughesville House at 2497 Logan Road (cnr Padstow Road) Eight Mile Plains. Access is from San Mateo Bvd.

Enquiries ph 3206 8982 or 0431 064 162



### PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION – Redlands Wildlife

Conducted by Redland City Council's IndigiScapes Centre. Numerous categories for great cash prizes. Photographs to be displayed at IndigiScapes 9-21 December. For more information go to the Redland City Council website or telephone IndigiScapes on 3824 8611.

## Wildlife Event in Redlands

Wildlife Queensland in Your Community a weekend of fun, field trips and education was held on 11 to 13 September. Bayside Branch WPSQ hosted this program of speakers and events in conjunction with the society's AGM.

The Redlands, on the shores of Moreton Bay, turned on fabulous weather and provided a stunning venue at the IndigiScapes Centre, with its lagoon, walking tracks, native gardens and a variety of meeting rooms.

Visitors to Redlands came from throughout south east Queensland as well as a few from further a field. We were particularly pleased to see representatives from the Upper Dawson branch of the society. Visitors were welcomed on the Friday night with a BBQ and presentation by acclaimed photographer Robert Ashdown.

The proceedings were opened on Saturday morning by Mayor Melva Hobson and Councillor Debra Henry also made an address. We thank both Mayor Hobson and Cr Henry for their participation and also thank Redland City Council for their financial support of the event.

The AGM and other business was conducted on Saturday morning. Branch secretary Simon Baltais was re-elected as President of the society's council with two other Baysiders also re-elected to council. These were John Payne and Steve Homewood. (The Head Office

newsletter will carry full details of the election.)

Geckoes Wildlife presentation was a popular start to the afternoon activities and was followed by a selection of workshops which were open to members of the society and the general public.

The relaxed and informative presentation included large and small pythons, freshwater turtles, a squirrel glider and a short-nosed bandicoot.

Speakers from SEQ Catchments, Redland City Council and Koala Coast found eager audiences and photographer Robert Ashdown, a former Bayside resident now based on the Darling Downs, took participants behind the scenes on Saturday with a workshop on nature photography.

Chris Pfitzner, who coordinates Mangrove Watch led an expedition from Empire Drive into the marvellous muddy world of the mangroves where trees grow in salt water with the help of pneumatophores, arching roots and salt-encrusted leaves.

The Annual Awards Dinner on Saturday night was a winner. The delightfully decorated room was welcoming and the meal very enjoyable. Professor Hugh Possingham proved to be a speaker with a difference when he decided to give the diners an exam.

The two questions set up hypotheticals and asked which choices would make the most efficient use of available resources to protect biodiversity. A number of dinner guests got the answers right - a better response than Prof Possingham has generally experienced when talking with politicians.

A number of members opted to join the early morning Sunday bird walk to the Glider Reserve adjacent to IndigiScapes. Most of them then proved their stamina by also joining the Bush Tucker Walk in the grounds after a quick reviver of morning tea.



Simon Baltais gives a round up of WPSQ for the last year.

*Threatened Species Week 2009 Seminar  
Whales and dolphins of Moreton Bay &  
Koalas of South East Queensland*



Organised by Moreton Bay Coastcare and WPSQ Bayside Branch two speakers, Mr Paul Hodda, President, Australian Whale Conservation Society and Simon Baltais from WPSQBB gave great talks on whales and koalas respectively.

Paul did a great job on highlighting the whale species that can be seen in Moreton providing information on how to identify the many species. It was interesting to know that there are 8 whales and 19 dolphin species that we could potentially see in Moreton Bay. Paul highlighted since the cessation of whale hunting whale numbers, particularly the Humpback whale population, had bounced back from the brink of extinction. Unfortunately climate change appears to be changing the chemistry of the ocean and increased boating traffic is generating troublesome noise pollution. (The October Wildlife Diary provides further details on these problems.)

Simon clearly highlighted the plight of the koala and how it is now or never to save them. With numbers plunging below long term sustainable numbers it is critical to protect their remaining habitat. There is a need for the State Government to take stronger action. With the release of the draft State Planning policy for koalas due out shortly for public comment it's a good time to send a message to our politicians and remind them of the need to do more for the koalas.

Humpback whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>
Bryde's whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>
Minke whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>
Sei whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>
Southern right whale	<i>Eubalaena australis</i>
Sperm whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>
Blue whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>
Fin whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>

Bottlenose dolphin	<i>Tursiops spp</i>
Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin	<i>Sousa chinensis</i>
Common dolphin	<i>Delphinus spp</i>
Killer whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>

Melon-headed whale	<i>Peponocephala electra</i>
Risso's dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>
Blainville's beaked whale	<i>Mesoplodon densirostris</i>
Pygmy sperm whale	<i>Kogia breviceps</i>
Irrawaddy dolphin	<i>Orcella brevirostris</i>
Spotted dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuate</i>
Spinner dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>
False killer whale	<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>
Rough-toothed dolphin	<i>Steno bredanensis</i>
Short-finned pilot whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>
Pygmy killer whale	<i>Feresa attenuata</i>
Long-finned pilot whale	<i>Globicephala melas</i>
Cuvier's beaked whale	<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>
Striped dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>
Fraser's dolphin	<i>Lagenodelphis hosei</i>



**REDLANDS ANNUAL PHONE-IN  
KOALA SURVEY**  
SATURDAY & SUNDAY - OCTOBER 24 & 25

Koala Action Group will again conduct their phone in survey this year. The project is supported by Redland City Council and DERM.

The annual survey is an extremely valuable tool, providing both a clearer picture of koala distribution throughout the Redlands and an opportunity to gather information from residents about their local koalas. Callers will be asked to provide information on the location and health of the koala. The details will then be entered onto a data base which will be passed on to local and state government authorities.



If you see or hear a koala anywhere in the Redlands on Saturday 24th October or Sunday 25th October please phone in. Whether it's in your own backyard, in a street tree or a park, the information is valuable. Telephone 3820 1103 between 8am and 5pm on either day to report the sighting.



## **A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A WILDLIFE CARER** (Part two)

Within days of being home I took into care Silk a 700gm Red Neck who had been left behind when the group her mother was with moved off. She was only just furred so it would have been one of her first times out of pouch and she may not have been able to get back in quick enough. She was very timid. I couldn't speak when I fed her for at least a month as the sound of my voice sent her head down into her pouch. Her fur was so silky and soft hence her name. She is now a happy and healthy little 1.5kg girl.

Around this time I had also had two pinkie wallabies who had not survived.

In July I received a call from a friend who had seen a dead wallaby on West Mt Cotton Road with a young joey trying to get into her pouch. He picked her up and wrapped her in a towel. I met him and brought her home. She was a Swamp Wallaby weighing 700gms. I called her Lace as I had just read a book titled Silk and Lace. She was incredibly frightened as a Swamp Wallaby of this age knows she is not supposed to live in a house with humans. Silk was curious but this frightened her even more so I had to keep them separated. They are just beginning to bond, although they often have little sparing matches.

Next came Denim, whose mother had been hit by a car at Fernvale. The couple were driving home to Wellington Point so were able to bring him to me. He weighed 400gms, had no fur so it was difficult to know what type he was. After checking his measurements on a chart I assumed he was a Whiptail also called Pretty Face. He needed artificial heat and complete quiet and isolation as Whiptails are very stressful wallabies. He had no injuries and was a good feeder and still is. He is now 570 gms and is thermoregulating so does not require heat. Apart from a bout of Thrush is doing

very well. He is very sweet and beginning to stay awake for short periods when he likes to be carried into the sunshine in his pouch. I hope to get another for him to bond to as Whiptails are very gregarious and live in mobs. He will not be ready to leave when Silk and Lace move on. He has now cut his first teeth and his fur is just visible under the skin.

Before long baby bat season will be upon us and no doubt I will take in some of these delightful little orphans. In a perfect world there would not be a need for Wildlife Carers, but as that is not the case I will continue to give my orphans the love and care necessary to give them every chance to succeed in the wild.



### **Wetlands Walk**

On Sunday 4 October we met for a walk at the Eagleby Wetlands in Logan. Our guide was Rod Bloss who has been associated with this area for a number of years.

This was different type of habitat to our previous walks being a large area incorporating a number of waterways. We were fortunate to see a variety of water birds including a large flock of pelicans that were doing some co-operative fishing. It was fascinating to watch them as they spread their wings to shadow the water and then dipped their bills to catch the fish.

It was interesting hear about the history of the area from Rod and to see the results of the revegetation projects. We were also fortunate enough to come across some bushcarers at work.



