

# CONSERVATION NEWS

Feb-Mar 2020

## Meetings

Third Wednesday of the month, 1.30 pm

Bribie Room, Caloundra Library Support Building (at rear of the Library), Omrah Avenue, Caloundra

## Executive

**President:** John Roberts

**Vice-Presidents:** Jill Chamberlain, Paul Smith

**Secretary:** Jude Crighton  
(Ph: 5491 4153)

**Treasurer:** Judy Burns (Ph: 5441 3913)

**Minutes:** Jenny Gursanscky

## Contact

PO Box 275, CALOUNDRA  
Q 4551

## Email

[sunshine@wildlife.org.au](mailto:sunshine@wildlife.org.au)

## Faunawatch

**Coordinator:** Paul Smith

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## Branch Report with Jude Crighton & John Roberts

February is our AGM month, and nominations for the Executive positions are most welcome! Nomination and Proxy forms are with your newsletter.

Further to our suggestion to donate to charities caring for injured and displaced wildlife, members at the January meeting voted to donate \$500 each to the local Koala Rescue Qld, and to WILVOS. [www.koalarescueqld.org](http://www.koalarescueqld.org) and [www.wilvos.org.au](http://www.wilvos.org.au)

The devastation to wildlife in the recent and continuing bushfires brings home the urgency for stronger planning and development laws to support the Queensland State government's **Draft Koala Protection Strategy**. We understand that Wildlife Queensland is preparing a submission on the draft.

Residents of Mt Lofty on the Toowoomba Escarpment are lobbying the Toowoomba Regional Council to prevent the Defence Department clearing 38 ha of Critical Koala Habitat for housing, most of it to be developed by private interests. The Council has environmental grounds in their Planning Scheme to protect this habitat and will make a decision in the next month. The residents' petition is at <https://www.change.org/p/toowoomba-council-save-the-mt-lofty-koalas>.

## WindanSea Clubhouse

The legal team for the appeal against the Council-approved clubhouse for WindanSea Boardriders at Buderim Street, Currimundi are still gathering information for the mediation/court procedures, pending appeal dates, possibly in March. Interestingly, Terry Landsberg, the President of the WindandSea Surf Club who lobbied for the approval, is now running for Division 2 in the up-coming local government election. His platform includes 'Coastal rehabilitation and preservation of our waterways and nature reserves', as well as an interest in 'voluntary groups and research for wildlife conservation, local support for turtle care and our koala populations' [Election flyer authorised by Doctor David Heazlewood, PO Box 275 Moffat Beach Q 4551]. We will certainly take this opportunity to discuss wildlife preservation issues with Mr Landsberg.

## Advance Dates

### Friday 7 February:

Weeding at Watson Park, Moffat Headland, from 7 am + morning tea. Contact Jude at [sunshine@wildlife.org.au](mailto:sunshine@wildlife.org.au).

### Saturday 29 February (leap day!), 9am-1pm

World Wetland Day at Aura, sponsored by Healthy Land & Waterways, with talks, plantings, Linsey Pollack frog music & a free bbq. We'll have a stall; like to help? Contact Jude.

**Sunday 1 March: Clean Up Australia Day session at Ben Bennett Bushland Park, Caloundra (details emailed closer to date)**

**Sunday 1 March: Batty Boat Cruise on the Brisbane River.**

<https://www.trybooking.com/book/event?eid=593482&>

**Saturday 14 March: WPSQ 1-day symposium, Mt Cootha Botanical Gardens, Brisbane. Protected Areas Matter: Protected areas and the future of wildlife**

## Council Elections March 2020

For candidates in the Sunshine Coast Council and Noosa Council elections, visit the OSCAR (Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents) website for candidate policies, and public candidate forums run in conjunction with the Sunshine Coast Environment Council and other member organisations: <https://www.oscar.org.au/governance/elections/council-elections-2020/>

## Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve

While the Air Museum is openly displaying its plans for expanding into the Reserve, we have not yet heard from Council, who is expecting a response from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy in relation to any approval for alternative status or use of the reserve. We will contact Council again.

## Ben Bennet Bushland Park

It appears that all options for the proposed road from Nicklin Way at the southern end of the Park will intrude into the Park. President of the Caloundra Residents Association Brady Sullivan has been informed that no State funding is available for the foreseeable future, despite dates of 2021/22 being mentioned. We enjoyed the end of year break-up on 15 December at the Park and met a mycological expert looking for a fungus endemic to Ben Bennett. The dryness of the habitat had defeated him. This expert from the Queensland Mycological Society has subsequently shared the Society's mapping of Ben Bennett Bushland Reserve and drawn our attention to the species *Austroboletus viscidoviridis*. Their website map of Ben Bennett explains:

*'There have only ever been 6 functional individuals found and they probably represent two sub-populations. In the south, Fraser Island and Cooloola have been intensively studied by bolete specialists but this species has only been recorded in the southern section of the Noosa National Park and at the Ben Bennett Reserve in Caloundra. (The Global Fungal Red List Initiative 2019)*

*For this reason it is specifically identified by the International Union of Conservation for Nature as vulnerable for reasons of impending development; this is the holotype [single physical example, as a reference] location for this species. This species is known from one other location only and has not been seen there for some time following the widening of a fire trail, so there is a significant risk of extinction if this site is lost to or affected by development.*

*This may well be the last place that this species appears, and while fungi may survive many things, earth-moving and the construction of infrastructure is not one of them. (QMS 2019)'* <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=0765a684ccfa495aa0874ad6446b649d>

conservation: threats and opportunities.

<https://wildlife.org.au/protected-areas-matter/>

## Faunawatch Outings

See Paul's report within this newsletter.

## How's your membership?

Your membership fees (\$12.50 - \$45) allow for the smooth running of our branch and are the life blood of Wildlife Queensland's Head Office. The scientific expertise that defines WQ's excellent submissions to government comes from passionate volunteers, but equally dedicated paid part-timers provide the administration, and state-wide communications to all branches via the website and Facebook.

If you haven't received an emailed or posted reminder from Head Office about an overdue membership, please give them a ring (07) 3844 0129 or email [wpsq@wildlife.org.au](mailto:wpsq@wildlife.org.au). All memberships are paid to Head Office, and funds are disbursed to branches.

## The Cottonwood Tree Study

We have now received confirmation from Cr Dwyer that a meeting that he attended on Shelly Beach with First Nation members was organised by a third party and was unofficial. Other issues from the meeting with Council officers and Cr Dwyer remain to be clarified.

## Moffat Beach Heritage Norfolk Pines

A recent chance meeting with the Council Arborist at the northern end of Moffat Beach has led to our expressing a keen interest in future plans for preserving the trees, and importantly, the dunes below the area on which they are planted. This is the area which we helped plant with groundcovers in 2016, with subsequent loss of this planting to pedestrian traffic. We have asked to be kept informed in advance of public consultation in early 2020, leading to a Shore and Erosion Management Plan for this part of Moffat Beach.

## Shelly Beach Turtles

The turtle nesting season is now reaching the midway point with nesting nearing an end and hatchlings starting to emerge from the nests. There are still a few turtles laying their clutches on our beaches and it is quite normal for a mama turtle to lay several clutches in a season. The species is primarily Loggerhead with an occasional Green turtle. Nesting will now slowly reduce as the turtles lay their last clutch and start their homeward migration. Officially the turtle season commences on the Sunshine Coast in mid-November, and 22 November 2019 saw the first nest on Shelly Beach, where there are now 14 nests. Hatchlings have emerged from the first two nests in the last week of January. The incubation period for eggs averages 60 days with the number of eggs in each nest totalling anywhere from 80 to 150. Interestingly the temperature of the sand determines the sex of the hatchlings: eggs incubated below 28°C give rise to males, and above 31°C, females.

The Sunshine Coast Turtle Care volunteers are doing a wonderful job in protecting the nests, shepherding the emerging hatchlings into the sea, and keeping vital statistics to help ensure the sustainability of these highly endangered species. **Thanks to John Roberts, also a Turtle Care volunteer, for this article.**

## The Fate of a Kookaburra Family

While walking near a tree bearing a low-slung termite mound in George Watson Park late last year I was very excited to hear soft crooning sounds. To my surprise when I looked through my binoculars there were two (or maybe three) pairs of little eyes looking back at me from a nest hole. Fortunately, I had my camera and quickly managed to snap a couple of photos, clear enough to confirm what I'd seen.

## '2040': The Film

The recent Australian-produced '2040' is a truly uplifting and inspiring film created by award-winning writer/director Damon Gameau ('That Sugar Film'). It takes the audience on a journey to explore what the future could look like by the year 2040 by simply implementing the best solutions existing today. It demonstrates how climate change could be reversed and the environment of our planet restored using current scientific knowledge and practices.

Structured as a visual letter to his 4-year-old daughter, Damon merges traditional documentary footage with dramatised sequences and sophisticated visual effects to create a vision board for his daughter and the planet. Viewers explore fascinating technology and then are taken into the daughter's future world where this technology has been implemented and environmental problems have been solved.

The director holds to the position of inspiring and motivating people rather than alarming them or



Laughing Kookaburras (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) are found on the East Coast from Cape York to the Eyre Peninsula and live and roost in family groups, with a life span in the wild of 11 to 15 years. Couples pair for life and usually breed from September to January. Nests are made in a chamber in a tree hollow or by excavating a burrow in a tree-dwelling termite mound, as in Watson Park. Usually three eggs are laid, incubated by both parents, but rarely are there enough resources to support three chicks. The order of hatching affects the chance of survival, with the third egg often the smallest. The mother lets the chicks fight it out to determine the weakling. Unusually the older offspring from the previous couple of years support the parents in raising their younger siblings.

Prey includes small reptiles, insects, worms, snails, frogs, rodents and occasionally small birds. Kookaburras' large beaks reduce agility, so most prey is caught moving through leaf litter, watched from a branch or from sitting still on the ground. Once caught, a meal is carried up to a branch to be bashed, killed and softened before being swallowed. Bones and hair are regurgitated later in pellet form.

The number of families living in an area depends on the area's productivity, and territory can vary from 40 to 2000 hectares. Available nest hollows determine numbers, especially in those urban areas providing habitat for invertebrates and lizards in parks and gardens. Kookaburras also compete with other hollow-nesting birds, and habitat destruction means suitable hollows are harder to find.

So, further to my excitement in witnessing chicks in the nest, it was particularly distressing to hear that the home of the Kookaburra family in Watson Park, confirmed by locals as used for

catastrophising our future. The film leaves the viewers wanting more of these sorts of productions and also wanting to share the experience with others. It fills one with a sense of hope.

The film is being distributed worldwide and is available in several shops here on the Sunshine Coast, JB-HIFI for one. It is also being distributed to schools. Below is a link to the official trailer should anyone wish to explore further.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-rTQ443akE>

*Thanks to John Roberts for this review.*

many years, had been deliberately smashed. Thankfully the little family had fledged prior to the destruction. How must they have felt if they had witnessed the loss of their home, or when they returned?

We'll watch with interest to see if this Kookaburra family makes use of the nesting box that has been installed nearby, hopefully out of reach of destructive vandals.

George Adams, 2018, *The Complete Guide to Australian Birds*; <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/species/Dacelo-novaeguineae> <https://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2009/10/14/2712935.htm>

Thanks to Jenny Gursansky for this article and photo.

## Faunawatch with Paul Smith

**Fourth Monday Walks (8 am):**

**24 February 2020:** Kawana Forest, Meridan Plains on a part of the Climate Watch trail. We will start in Kurrajong Park before walking into Kawana Forest. The open grasslands to the west and the wallum sections provide a good mix of species.

**Meeting point:** The picnic shed in Kurrajong Park, with parking along and next to Kurrajong Crescent, Meridan Plains.

**Second Wednesday Walks (8 am)** continue at Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens on **12 February, 11 March and 8 April.**

Council surveys have started, and while Rob Kernot has completed two, he is also assessing audio recordings from the USC's survey of Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve. Currimundi Creek Catchment Group will be contacted to consider a bird survey instead of a full fauna survey.

Tony Bright has commenced reptile surveys, including at Aura, but has said he will be retiring in April. It will be difficult to find a replacement with his expertise, and enthusiasm for Faunawatch.

## Response with Jill Chamberlain

Jill sends a strong message to Council re this variation request to remove a substantial buffer of old vegetation at Wises Farm, Maroochydore, and replace it with something less.

**Re: MCU19/0143 & RAL19/0063**

Preliminary Approval for Material Change (Variation Request to Vary the Effect of the Preliminary Approval for the Wises Farm Mixed Use Development)

Development Permit to Reconfigure a Lot (1 Lot into 103 Residential Lots)

Where: Sunshine Cove Way Maroochydore

On: Lot 3000on SP306280

## Clive Palmer's Waratah Coal

The date for objections to the Land Court re Palmer's application to the State Government for a mining lease over the Bimblebox Nature Reserve has been moved to 3 April due to a technicality regarding the application lodgement. The Bimblebox Alliance, represented by the EDO, is seeking donations to support a legal challenge.

<https://www.edo.org.au/farmers-against-galilee-coal-mine/>

## Weeds never sleep!

Join us in 2020 for our regular morning weeding sessions at **Watson Park, Moffat Headland** on the first Friday of each month, and at **Kathleen McArthur Conservation Park, Currimundi Lake** on the first Wednesday of each month. Contact Jude at [sunshine@wildlife.org.au](mailto:sunshine@wildlife.org.au).

'We object most strongly to this variation request, on environmental grounds. Currently, the Precinct is separated from existing residential development to the north and west by an area of retained vegetation incorporated into the open space network for Wisers Farm, and I quote from the Town Planning Report by Innovative Planning Solutions:

*This open space area services (sic) as an effective buffer between the adjacent existing residential areas. New development should also seek (to) take advantage of the amenity and aesthetic opportunities afforded by such open space.*

'...However, the landscape buffer solution proposed in this Variation Request is to replace the 30 to 50-metre-wide retained native vegetation area with a densely planted linear landscape buffer a mere 6 metres wide along the full interface of the proposed development with adjoining properties.

**Dumbfounded by the stated equivalent benefits of this proposition, Jill counters with:**

'The existing vegetation...provides, as well as its buffering, visual, amenity and aesthetic effects, habitat and foraging areas for a wide range of native fauna, including birds, flying foxes, bats, arboreal mammals, and terrestrial wildlife which utilise the ground cover and leaf litter'.

**The existence throughout this wide strip of a number of Eucalypts bearing large and small hollows is significant for providing nests and roosts for wildlife:** 'Loss of hollows equals loss of fauna.' **Jill notes that:** 'The proposed 6-metre-wide buffer will take several years to grow and mature in order to provide the supposedly same effect as the current vegetation', **with a considerable time-lag for trees to become suitable for nest boxes.**

**WPSQ would fully support** 'an early suggestion by Arborcare Queensland...that this area could be made into a Bushland Conservation Area for the benefit and amenity of both neighbouring and future residents of Sunshine Cove...We maintain that after some initial attention the patch would require no more maintenance than an equivalent area of bushland reserve. There is already a *good native vegetation recruitment throughout the understory and particularly within the shrub layer.*'

**Ultimately, WPSQ disagrees** 'with the ecological experts' **statement that the vegetation possesses no ecological value.** 'It may have been wrongly mapped as a referable wetland but the actual vegetation, now identified as RE12.9-10.1, is classified as 'Of Concern' and provides valuable habitat and foraging areas for native wildlife, which is increasingly being displaced.'

'There is also some connectivity with Eudlo Creek Conservation Reserve within 2 km, and a riparian corridor running the length of Paynters Creek, so it is not entirely a stand-alone patch of vegetation.'

## Black-breasted Button-quail (*Turnix melanogaster*)

This rare ground dwelling species inhabits the edges of rainforests, dry vine scrub and coastal littoral bushlands of South-east Queensland and Northern New South Wales. The female is larger and more striking in appearance than the male. The males incubate the eggs and tend to the needs of the young without any assistance from the female. These Button-quail feed on seeds and insects at ground level and their foraging activities leave circular shallow depressions known as platelets. These are often the only indication of their presence in a particular area. Shy and quite difficult to observe, Black-breasted Button-quail are a much sought after tick for your list.

Photo taken at Inskip Point, South-east Queensland.

## Birds with Phil Bender



Branch founder Kathleen McArthur wrote in *The Bush in Bloom: a wildflower artist's year in paintings & words*, Kangaroo Press, 1982:

January '...introduces the season of the Bloodwoods, foaming across the landscape and scenting the air with their strong, rich nectar', and, 'Our Pink Bloodwood know not how to keep their secret. Before either sight or scent have passed the word, the jubilant calls of birds have let it out; the blossoming has begun. The bounty of nectar is prodigious and is shared widely between the animals. Lorikeets scoop up the honey with their brush tongues, scattering the blossoms carelessly in the process. Honeyeaters are better equipped with fine curved bills for probing into the flowers without damaging them. Bees, butterflies and beetles take their small share: possums and gliders take on the night shift to work it with the most dramatic of all the wildlife of the bloodwoods, the flying foxes, both the Grey-headed and the Little Reddish'. (pp 12 & 13)

Have you too seen and smelt the creamy blossom of this local *Corymbia intermedia*, spilling over into February?

Kathleen was inspired by Douglas Stewart's poem *Flowering Bloodwoods* (from *The Birdsville Track, and other poems*. Angus & Robertson, 1955)

'There is a wave you cannot see  
And it goes foaming over the ridge  
From Bloodwood-tree to Bloodwood-tree...'