

## Upper Dawson WPSQ January Newsletter

Compiled by Ann Hobson

Upper Dawson's first outing for the year is to be on Friday 18 February at the property of Myles & Julie Ballentine, 47 km north of Theodore on the Leichhardt Highway. Myles is the President of the Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association which has recently emerged from hibernation to resume its Dawson-specific support for best-practice land management in the Valley.

The wonderfully cooler December with some patchy falls to follow up November's good rain has given way to a hotter and drier January. Cyclone Seth kept us very hot while dumping unexpected floods on the Fraser Coast and sadly taking some human as well as animal lives with it.

Grabbing the opportunity to resume a delayed recce of the Upper Dawson for the Toowoomba Field Naturalists, Melanie Simmons, fellow naturalist, Trish, and I set out on 3 January to make a circuit out to Lake Murphy and along the Broadmere & Injune Roads, but were dissuaded from returning via the Roma Road when we found it was still under water at Sandy creek.

Past the fan palms and intersection that had been flooded metres deep in the '10-'11 flood, we were met by concrete evidence that the 'perched' lakes, like Lake Murphy, are steadily filling up with sediment and spreading further when full. The edge of the lake was barely a hundred metres from the camp ground, and we hadn't brought our wading gear to get us to the clearing where we expected to see the water birds that we had seen in 2011-12. We are hopeful, however, that they may be there when the Field Naturalists visit later in the year and the water has retreated.

Driving further out on the Glenhaughton road took us to excellent views of the Valley running east, through some ooline and softwood scrub and into narrower valleys where flood debris was strewn on the road. Returning, we took the Robinson Creek road across the flats and the creek to the Broadmere road where we were rewarded with a magnificent display of water fowl on the Milky Swamp. From pelicans resting stolidly on a muddy bank to whiskered terns appearing like wraiths emerging towards us out of the subdued light; from a perched darter, wings askew, to hardhead and pacific black ducks, busily trolling through the water; from a wading black-winged stilt to a line of fluffy yellow ducklings speeding along after a parent, the swamp was a great showcase of our amazing wetlands.



Next day, we set out for the boggomosses, which were in fine fettle, with damsel-, dragon- and butterfly-flies enjoying the lush vegetation and its insects. Secreted among the tangle of sedges, phragmites and grasses was an occasional yellow 'woolly frogmouth' (*Philydrum lanuginosum*), and a water tolerant golden daisy.

At the Glebe Weir there were lots of migrant humans, and very few water birds, which we guessed were spread through the many shallower, but more productive, waterholes across the Palmtree and Robinson Wetlands. In the trees along the bank and the entrance road were many woodland species, fairy wrens, parrots, and honeyeaters.

Our outings are open to all people interested in land and wildlife management. As we bring our own food, mask, and chair, your RSVP is to make sure we don't leave you behind when we set out from Junction Park Theodore where we'll assemble at 9am, Friday 18 February. Please phone Loraine on 0429 931 264 or email [upperdawson@wildlife.org.au](mailto:upperdawson@wildlife.org.au) if you'd like to join us.



*Philydrum lanuginosum*