

Upper Dawson WPSQ April Newsletter

Compiled by Ann Hobson

Please email upperdawson@wildlife.org.au if you'd like to join us or share a discovery or observation.

The highly erratic weather continues in the Dawson Valley, bringing both irrigation pumps and birds out one day and closing them down the next. Butterflies are reducing in numbers as some cooler days suggest an Autumn struggling to emerge from Summer, and wasps are sheltering in corners rather than building and defending nests in their usual numbers. The rufous whistler has been tuning his vocal chords to serenade his partner, and the grey fantail has joined us for the cooler weather, while a spangled drongo has been brashly harassing the scrub in harsh tones, and rainbow bee-eaters provide a more friendly tinkling as they swarm above the canopy.

Enough rain to grow grass is good for grazing, and will require preventative fire management before it becomes a hazard.

A fairly heavy fog on the morning of 20 April set the gutters dripping and early birds fluffing their white breasts towards the invisible rising sun. Off "somewhere", over in the western foggy sky, beneath the ghost of an almost full moon, arched the white ghost of a rainbow.

Enquiries at the Museum's Discovery Centre advise me (unsurprisingly) that this is "a Fogbow. These are quite rare and so it's wonderful to see such amazing photograph of one..."

Fogbows are formed in a similar way to rainbows, with the water droplets of the fog refracting the sunlight. However, as the water droplets in fog are significantly smaller than raindrops, they are not able to refract and separate the



colours within the light as much, causing white or very pale coloured rainbows to form."

Later in the day, I was surprised to find what looked like a rather firm, elongated blob of bird poo on the 65mm boards of a landing.



Advising my helper to avoid stepping in it may have averted a case of double insecticide, as on later inspection, it turned out to be a couple of intricately patterned dark moths with starkly contrasting white bits, one on the head, the other on the tail. If you know what these creatures are, or might make a good guess,

please let me know. I don't think I'll have the answer from the Museum before this goes to print.
(See close-up below.)



Another puzzle – doesn't the big one know that masks are no longer required?

Biodiversity Hotspots

I'm reliably informed that Lake Murphy is still out among the trees, requiring water-friendly footwear to get an expansive view of the water birds who will presumably build up in numbers as wetlands shrink over the (presumably) drier cooler months. The Milky Swamp was well-populated in late March, and may still be worth a stop along the Broadmere Road to enjoy the ever-moving panoply of bird-life.

Branch Happenings The Theodore Castle Creek nature signs are now installed, and Upper Dawson Branch plans to celebrate on site, 10am 4 May, thanks to Fitzroy Basin Association, Banana Shire Council, local artists, and engineers. Please advise Melanie if you plan to attend (0428 278 416).

A Butterfly Workshop is planned for 15 October in Taroom and 16 October in Theodore. Your photos, art work and questions will be welcome and on display there, and will be followed by surveys of butterflies and moths to be found in nearby locations.

The outing to Lake Cootharaba 3-5 June is now open to Branch Members and friends. Choice of accommodation includes camping or glamping. Details from Tim on 0415 239 216, or email templewatts@gmail.com .

Best wishes for the Taroom Show – it will be good to see the photos in the next Tidings.