

Upper Dawson WPSQ May Newsletter

Compiled by Ann Hobson

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

Best wishes to our newly elected Federal member, Colin Boyce. It's an opportunity to share our vision for a healthy environment with a member who has the advantage of local knowledge.

Our next outing is to Lake Cootharaba, 3-5 June. We'll explore the Lake and link up with other WPSQ members to broaden our horizons. Please contact Tim for details - templewatts@gmail.com

The rain has been kinder this month, falling gently over several hours, allowing the earth more time to absorb it than the torrential downpours that had struck earlier in the year. With forecasters thinking that La Nina might last into September, there could be benefits and challenges to managing pastures not seen in the drought years.

This is a great time to visit the wetlands to see birds and plants not seen for some time. To distinguish the grass-like plants, I'm indebted to Neil Hoy for the rhyme "Sedges have edges; reeds are round; and grasses have nodes from their leaves to the ground". Lilies are something else again.



Ottelia ovalifolia – Swamp Lily

Unveiling walkway signs.

By contrast, it was a fine day on 4 May for the unveiling of the nature signs, art work, and plants along Castle Creek in Theodore that had kept the Upper Dawson WPSQ team busy for the last two years.

Thirty local, Shire, and regional guests and visitors enjoyed the presentation by Allan Briggs of Birdlife Capricornia, in which we learned that the red-backed fairy wren woos his partner with a flower petal, Allan talked about the finches – zebra, double-bar, and mannikin; red-winged parrot, bar-shouldered dove, kingfisher, and darter, all known in the Dawson Valley. He also mentioned

local bird watchers who contribute to Birdlife's annual survey of birds in the region, and Margery, who provided fallen broilga feathers to be DNA tested to determine if broilgas have adequate genetic diversity or are in danger from in-breeding. If broilgas visit your land, scientists will be glad to have samples. Contact Allan - Tel: 07 49354645; Email: abriggs@irock.com.au

Project manager of the Nature Signs project, Melanie Simmons, introduced guests and thanked the Fitzroy Basin Association - funders of the project; volunteers- Anne Chater, instigator of the application, Loraine Hellyer, revegetation manager, Rose Connolly, watering support; providers - Ryan Macdonald-Smith, graphic designer, Wayne Martin, Dani Beezley & Jarlin Bayles, First Nations art, Bon Bock, post & plate construction, and Banana Shire staff for gluing and installing nature signs.

In thanking the guest speaker, Ann Hobson, Secretary of Upper Dawson WPSQ, encouraged those present to join Birdlife Australia to increase knowledge of the numbers and health of bird populations of Central Qld.

Native nursery plants were given to out-of town guests, and vouchers to purchase locally native tube stock from Home & Garden Cafe, which also provided sandwiches, scones and sweets to go with tea & coffee. It is hoped that locally native plants will attract more wildlife.

The Lucky number winner of a bag of native plant potting mix was local resident, Deirdre Innes.

Bethlea Bell of Fitzroy Basin Association spoke about the native seed bank that she is responsible for keeping in a very large fridge, and Hayley Young told of her work as indigenous liaison person for FBA.

Allan and Melanie officially unveiled the interpretive nature signs, and attendees browsed the signs to learn how a terrapin is a special sort of turtle, and how an echidna chooses her mate by leading a number of males until all but one drop out, giving the longest stayer mating rights to fertilise the single egg. (a little different from the jenny wren!)



Photo by Helen Keys - Allan Briggs and Melanie Simmons unveiling walkway signs, Theodore.