

WAMBALIMAN

The newsletter of the
Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland
Fraser Coast Branch



THIS ISSUE:

- Branch Activities
- Containers for Change
- Glider habitat mapping
- Forest Wind project
- SEQLD Forest Agreement - 25 years on

please support us



Wildlife Fraser Coast
Member Number: C11242652

SUMMER 2023-2024

WAMBALIMAN since 1967

In the language of the Butchulla people, who are custodians of land that includes the Fraser Coast, 'wambaliman' means 'to carry', and refers to the messages that the Newsletter is communicating.



**WILDLIFE PRESERVATION
SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND**

known informally as

WILDLIFE QUEENSLAND

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Branch Fundraiser

CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE

Code: C11242652

Nature Walks

The committee—John Williams, Frank Ekin,
Noel Gibson, Max Hunter, Cassy Ironside,
Marlene Luce

Contact John

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Library Talks

Organised by Diane Christensen

Bookings—FCRC website / Library

Backyard Bioblitz

The committee—Vanessa Elwell-Gavins,
Scott Gavins, Tony van Kampen

Contact Vanessa

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Wildlife Matters

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The committee—Diane Christensen,

Lesley Bradley, Jane Barnes, Cassy Ironside

Contact Diane (as above)

Fundraising

John Williams, Jane Barnes, Pat Currie

Contact John (as above)

Bundaberg CCAG (contact Rodney Jones)

Fraser Coast EAG rep Paul Murdoch

Rail Trail Advisory Group John W / Tina R

USC Partnership

Vanessa Elwell-Gavins, Rodney Jones,

Bruce Dick, Cassy Ironside

Newsletter WAMBALIMAN

Publisher: WPSQ Fraser Coast Branch

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The Fraser Coast Branch of Wildlife Queensland acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and water in our region; to the east the Butchulla (Badtjala) People, and to the west, the Kabi Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) People. We pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

WAMBALIMAN

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WAMBALIMAN

e-copy in colour
hardcopy in black and white
Let us know if you want the e-copy only.

Contributions for WAMBALIMAN

We welcome contributions from WPSQ members and supporters. Articles can take the form of reports, observations of nature, anecdotes, quotes, humour and so on. Send contributions to:

ggduckz@gmail.com

Submissions for the next issue are due by Friday 19 April 2024

The Editor reserves the right to withhold material from publication and to alter or correct any material which may include but not be limited to spelling, grammar or punctuation mistakes, or re-formatting to fit the space.

Opinions expressed in Wambaliman are not necessarily those endorsed by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, Fraser Coast Branch unless specifically attributed to them.

What's On

Branch General Meetings

Usually - 3rd Sunday bi-monthly 2:00pm
Halcro St Community Centre, Pialba
Next one 17 March

Executive Meetings

3 March

WILDLIFE NATURE WALKS

STARTING MARCH TBA

LIBRARY WILDLIFE TALKS

February—*To Bin or not to Bin*
by Smriti Pandey
(Smitri is the Education and Engagement
Officer Wide Bay Water & Waste Services)

February 16—Hervey Bay 1pm
February 23—Maryborough 1pm

March—*Adventures on K'gari in the 60s*
by John Erbacher

March 15—Hervey Bay 1pm
March 22—1pm

Tbc—check on FCRC website

February



see page 7

FRASER COAST BACKYARD

BioBlitz

Autumn April 13-14th

Winter July 13-14th

Spring October 12-13th

Don't forget to LIKE us on

www.facebook.com/WPSQFraserCoast

Check out our page on

<https://wildlife.org.au/fraser-coast/>

The **Nature Walks program for 2023** was a great success, culminating in the very popular geology presentation, walk, and BBQ in November. The Branch has been running walks for 10 years and yet has still come up with new walks and variations on past walks. Perhaps a 10th anniversary special is in order?

The Branch offered 7 walks over the weekend of the **Central Branches Get-Together (CBGT)** in October. There was a short report and some pics in the Spring **WAMBALIMAN**. Since then, we have had some lovely positive feedback mentioning the fantastic walks and speakers.

The **end-of-year Branch break-up** was at Arkarra Tea Gardens 10th December. The numbers were down on recent years, with only fourteen attending, but they enjoyed the ambience of the surroundings and the excellent food and had some great chats.

The Branch just had another successful **seasonal bioblitz**. Participation over the last three years just keeps increasing! I enjoy the different banners Scott does for each bioblitz.

Our secretary Paul has reorganised our **Container for Change** account. The account is now in the name of "Wildlife Fraser Coast" and we have a new code. There is also a barcode if you prefer. Please support this fundraiser – currently; the only fundraising we are doing with the Branch (see page 6).

There are calls from Jackie to provide patterns and information on making **nest boxes** (page 13) and from Ted who is trying to locate **fox dens** in the region (page 15). Two great projects undertaken by individuals that we can support.

Find-a Frog in February run by MRCCC is another activity worthy of support. MRCCC runs workshops (some local) so check the details through the contacts given on page 7. This is a fun and interesting citizen science project.

Our **Facebook page** now has 1263 followers. Most of these people are in the broader community (not Branch members). Nearly two thirds of our followers are age under 55 – so we are certainly reaching a different set to our Branch membership. Peter does a terrific job and averages about one post a week of good quality content. He reports on local issues, advertises and reports on Branch walks and other events, and posts petitions. For people not familiar with Facebook – think of it like pyramid selling - followers may read a post and then share it (with their followers) reaching even more people, who may in turn share it and so on..... a great way to get the message out.

The **(Branch's Urban Development and Land Use Committee) BUDLUC subcommittee** is due to reconvene. Some of us think residential development in our region is out of control. Can the infrastructure cope? Why are buffer zones compromised? Where are the offsets? Where is the green space? In Eli Waters/ Point Vernon alone the runoff from earth moving and rubbish from building sites is pouring into waterways.

Diane seems to be back on track organising **Wildlife Talks in the Library** and **Wildlife Matters** articles for 2024. Late last year she had an accident and it has been a slow recovery. We wish her well and I am sure she would be delighted to have some new writers for Wildlife Matters . ***Jenni Watts**

Branch Activity Report October 2023—January 2024



President, John, installs new shelving at Carol's for the Branch's archives.

Meetings

- Executive meeting 29 October
- General meeting 19 November
- Executive meeting 26 November
- Executive Meeting 21 January

Gatherings

- Nature Walk program BBQ coinciding with last walk for 2023—ESA Park Point Vernon 4 November
- End of year Branch break-up—Arkarra Tea Gardens 10 December

Grant applications

- Expressions of Interest in being considered under the 2023-24 Volunteer Grants unsuccessful (out of time)
- Request to Information Commissioner for 'financial hardship' status under Right to Information Act (exemption from all fees and charges) unsuccessful

Advisory Groups

- Paul Murdoch attended the FCRC Environment Advisory Group meeting on 12 December

Walks

- 4 November—Point Vernon Geology

Library Talks

- No talks after September 2023. They will resume in February 2024

Summer Backyard Bioblitz

- Weekend of 13 & 14 January – see some of the photos on our Facebook page and a report page 14 & 15

Uni Partnerships

- Greater Glider project—Jess Evans gave a presentation 27 October 2023 which is reported page 8
- Greater Glider project completed and shared with FCRC —A more extensive Greater Glider project is being discussed with USC, subject to funding sources being identified
- Eastern Grey Kangaroo project—due for completion mid 2024

Communications

- Our Facebook page now has 1263 followers (59% are under 55, 805 are women) and posts over recent weeks have reached up to 1300 people
- Wambaliman Spring 2023 distributed (electronic and hardcopy) 26 October
- Spring Bioblitz and CBGT write-up in WPSQ (state) newsletter

Wildlife Matters

- See report page 7 of published articles

Fundraising

We have a new code for the container deposit scheme (refer to article page 6)

✱*Paul Murdoch*

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Sue Cory; Helen Goldsack



Wildlife Fraser Coast
Member Number: C11242652



**Please support the Branch's
CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE fundraising
using the code C11242652**

CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE is a great way for organisations like WPSQ to raise money – it's easy and convenient, and results in an improved environment!

We raised more than \$200 per year for several years, although that amount dropped to less than \$100 over 2022/23. The Branch Executive, when reviewing our finances, agreed that there was significant potential to increase earnings from the scheme through greater publicity. The Executive decided to set up a new organisational account, which allows members of the public to find us and donate their earnings when they are looking for [a charity or cause to support](#). With the scheme being widened to now include wine and spirit bottles, we hope that not only will members support us in this way, but will encourage family, friends and neighbours to do so as well.

The intention is to actively publicise the scheme and our account number through *Wambaliman* and our Facebook page.

There are a range of ways to support us - supporters can link their own account to transfer the payments to the Branch's account; or advise the depot of our account **C11242652; (give them this code or they can scan the barcode above)** when returning containers. To make it totally easy, we can organize for a volunteer to collect your containers from you.

Most aluminium, glass, plastic, steel and liquid paperboard beverage containers between 150ml and 3L are eligible for a 10-cent refund. Eligible containers will usually display the refund mark (e.g. "10c refund at collection depots/points in participating State/Territory of purchase"). But note that glass wine and pure spirit bottles are exempt from displaying the 10c mark until January 2027.

If you want to assist even more, you could:

- volunteer to collect containers from members and supporters to take to a depot or a central collection point;
- encourage a café, milk bar or supermarket to put up a poster encouraging members of the public to support our fundraising, or
- give similar leaflets to family, friends and neighbours.

To find out more, or if you have any questions, email frasercoast@wildlife.org.au or visit <https://www.containersforchange.com.au/qld/>

***Paul Murdoch**

Wildlife Matters compiled by Diane Christensen

There was no report in the last Wambaliman so here is a report August—to the present

August:

Toogoom Chatter

The Night Watch by Diane Christensen

River Heads Review

The Night Watch by Diane Christensen

Maryborough Sun

Mt Benarige Walk by Frank Ekin

September:

Toogoom Chatter

Poona Wildflower Walk by Frank Ekin

River Heads Review

The Night Watch - Flying Foxes by Diane Christensen

Maryborough Sun

Long and Winding Road – Reality Bites by David Arthur

October:

Toogoom Chatter

Pir'ri Reserve Walk by Frank Ekin

River Heads Review

Poona Wildflower Walk by Frank Ekin

Maryborough Sun

Murray Darling Meander by David Arthur

November:

Toogoom Chatter

The Night Watch - Flying Foxes by Diane Christensen

River Heads Review

Pir'ri Reserve by Frank Ekin

December:

Toogoom Chatter

ESA-Gatakers Bay Walk by Frank Ekin

River Heads Review

ESA-Gatakers Bay Walk by Frank Ekin

Members and supporters are invited to write articles for Wildlife Matters—please contact Diane (see page 2 for contact details)



Join in this Citizen Science Project organized by MRCCC—

Be part of future decision making that affects our environment; look out for frogs this summer, and particularly in February. Help increase our knowledge of frog activity to determine ‘normal’ trends and to monitor for and understand population changes.

4 ways to send in your observations:

- FFF record sheet at <https://mrccc.org.au/frog-in-february/> – complete and send photos in for identification, verification & entry to the Queensland WildNet database.
- Email findafrog@mrccc.org.au with your photos and/or audio recordings for identification and lodgment.
- Join the ‘Find a Frog in February’ project in iNaturalist and submit your photos and recordings of calling frogs.
- Join the ‘Find a Frog in Feb – MRCCC’ group in the FrogID app to submit your call recordings.

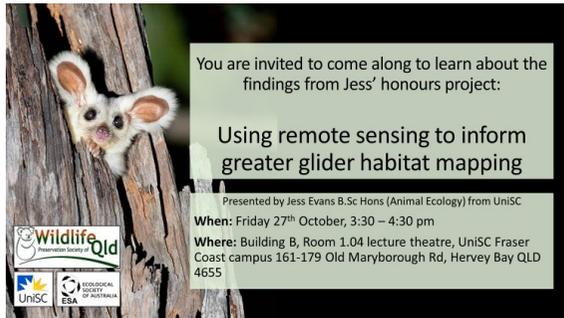
For more information contact: findafrog@mrccc.org.au or phone (07) 5482 4766

Using remote sensing to inform Greater Glider habitat mapping

The decline in our old growth forests everywhere due to land clearing, forestry practices and megafires is well documented. We are starting to see some habitat trees spared in logging and logging of native forests reduced, although wild hot fires are becoming more frequent. With climate change forests previously too moist to burn are burning and those with a lot of dead wood build-up succumb. These fires are so hot and fierce that they destroy our old growth trees.

About 300 of our native animals are hollow dependent. Some of our larger animals such as Greater Gliders require large hollows (preferably surrounded by live wood) which take over 200 years to form.

If we are going to survey Greater Glider (GG) populations we need to know where to look. Where are the trees on the Fraser Coast suitable for these animals? We know that our existing easily accessible data on regional ecosystems is too broad. So how do we locate these old growth trees?



This was the question posed by Jess Evans, B.Sc (Animal Ecology) Honours student at USC in undertaking her project ***Using remote sensing to inform greater glider habitat mapping***. Jess received a \$5000 grant from our Fraser Coast Branch to help her in her Honours year.

Jess presented her findings at a special presentation on Friday 27th October at the USC Fraser Coast Campus. Open to the public, the presentation was attended in person by about 40 people and 8 via Zoom. Attendees included Jess's supervisor Dr Beth Brunton, other USC staff, a FCRC Councillor, two Council staff and 20 Fraser Coast Branch members.

So, what was the methodology Jess tested to determine how we might find where the old growth trees suitable for Greater Gliders are?

Jess tested a method of mapping using a combination of GIS + LiDar. GIS, (Geographic Information Systems), gives geospatial data - identifying the geographic location of features. LiDar (Light Detection and Ranging) is a remote sensing method that will indicate height of trees. From the LiDar heights the DBH (Diameter at breast height which is the accepted standard for measuring trees) can be estimated. For this project trees with a DBH equal to or above 30cm were targeted as suitable trees for GG.

Jess conducted her on-ground truthing at four sites – at two private properties and two state forests which validated her method. Although no conclusions can be

drawn from such a small sample it was deemed the private properties were slightly more likely to achieve accuracy using the GIS + LiDar method and contain the GG habitat trees. These two well-cared for private plots, with less weeds, less dead wood, more trees with larger DBH and better fire regimes (than the State Forests) perhaps show up a defect in our public managed forests so in need of realistic funding and research to do the same.

Lively Q and A followed. Now Jess has validated the method, we need mapping across the whole of the Fraser Coast region and on-ground GG spotting. Mapping requires expertise and money. Spotting can be a Citizen Science project.

✿ **Jenni Watts** (Photo below—Jess’s talk at the USC)



Peter Duck’s photo of a Tawny Coster taken for the recent SUMMER BIO-BLITZ might not look as good as Horace Tan’s one snapped in Singapore (and taken off the internet), but it is significant for a couple of reasons.



Photo by Horace Tan



Photo by Peter Duck

Firstly, although the butterfly was blurred it was good enough to be identified initially by the iNat app then by identifiers (real people). It has therefore made “research grade.” By submitting this photo, the location and time and date of the find are also on record. This is especially important for reason 2, as Peter’s record seems to be the first for this species in the region.

The Tawny Coster is a non native butterfly—only the third exotic to arrive in Australia, after the Monarch (1871) and the Cabbage White (1929). It has possibly made its own way from its native India. It first appeared in northern Australia and has spread to the east and west coast. Close to home, it has been recorded near Cooroy and Cania Gorge (ALA).

Forest Wind – local wind farm proposal

In these days of accelerating climate change adversely impacting the climate, environment and wildlife, we are all aware that it's a race to reduce our carbon footprint and fossil fuel usage if we are to avoid irreversible impacts, aren't we? Even the Queensland Government, until relatively recently a laggard in the transition to renewable energy, announced last month the introduction of legislation to lock in "a new emissions reduction target of 75% below 2005 levels by 2035" which would "attract greater investment in renewables and generate lasting benefits, especially in the regions".

There are a range of types of renewable energy. These include small and large scale solar power. More than one million roof top solar systems have now been installed in Queensland, as well as many large-scale solar systems with capacity exceeding 100kWh (often referred to as solar farms). On much larger scale, there is also wind power (generally large wind farms, with capacity of 10MW or greater) and hydro-electricity (often referred to as pumped hydro).

Wind power

Queensland has 6 operating wind farms, with another 14 proposed projects at various stages – from initial proposal (3), feasibility (5), planning approved (5) or commissioned (1). Forest Wind is a 1200 MW wind farm proposed to be built in an exotic pine plan-

tation in the Tuan State Forest between Maryborough and Gympie, with up to 226 wind turbines approximately 160 metres in height. The project is much larger than any existing or proposed Queensland wind farm (the largest currently operating Queensland facility,



Turbines at Coopers Gap Wind Farm, located mostly on grazing land between Kingaroy and Dalby (Photo: QLD Mining & Energy)

Coopers Gap, has a capacity of 453 MW and 123 turbines), and in 2019 was estimated by then then Minister for State Development to increase Queensland's entire power generation capacity by 9%!

Forest Wind

The project has been in hiatus for several years, after a flurry of activity between 2018-20. Forest Wind Holdings Pty Ltd is now a joint venture between Clean Sight and Tilt Renewables, Australia's largest owner of wind and solar generation in Australia. A Community Reference Group which had not met since February 2021 has been reactivated and new members recently

appointed. The Branch sought to be represented, but missed the deadline. However, Branch representatives will be attending a briefing this month for environmental groups; a delegation will also be holding a meeting with company representatives and we are attempting to organise a Forest Wind presentation for our next General Meeting.

In 2020, the proposal received approval from the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) (subject to a range of conditions). Later that year, the Queensland Parliament passed the *Forest Wind Farm Development Act 2020*. The federal department responsible for the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (the EPBC) (now the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water) has deemed the project a 'controlled action', and that it will require assessment and approval under the EPBC before it can proceed.

Relevant controlling provisions include listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 & 18A); listed migratory species (section 20 & 20A) and the ecological character of a declared RAMSAR wetland (section 16 & 17B). The Department has advised Forest Wind that further information is required, and Forest Wind have indicated that their response will be submitted for assessment in the first half of 2024. Prior to submission, the project team is sharing its findings and next steps with local environment groups. The project team will outline their approach to minimising the project's impact on the environment within the project area.

WPSQ's position on wind farm

WPSQ supports the construction of windfarms to facilitate the move to renewable energy, but only if the site chosen, and access to the site does not threaten our natural heritage, our wildlife and its habitat, as well as our cultural heritage. Wildlife Queensland has written submissions against windfarms in the past (Mt Emerald as an example, due to its threat to the northern quoll). It is not only the actual site but access to the site which can also impact wildlife and its habitat.

The proposed Forest Wind site being an exotic pine plantation appears to address a major concern being loss of remnant undisturbed native forest. However wildlife may still be at risk. Any impact on any wildlife that calls the proposed site home must be addressed including any migratory species. Seasonal variation also has to be taken into consideration.

WPSQ has been criticised for our stance by some members of conservation groups who advocate that wind farms should not be criticised as addressing climate change is paramount. The current WPSQ Council does not share that view and will continue to criticise the approval of construction of windfarms on inappropriate sites in line with the objects of our constitution

As observed recently by WBBEC, we look forward to Forest Wind as a showcase of Renewables Done Right and hope that this will be shown to be the case over coming months.

✿ **Paul Murdoch**

More information can be found at <https://www.forestwind.com.au/about>

2024 - A Very Significant Year for Biodiversity in Our Region



This semi mature tree, marked with an “H” has been left as a habitat tree.

Looking into its canopy (below), there are no hollows.

Photos by Scott Gavins



The South East Queensland Forest Agreement was announced on 16 September 1999. The agreement was between the State Government, conservation groups and the Queensland Timber Board.

The agreement guaranteed timber supply for 25 years allowing a transition to a more efficient plantation based model and secure a sustainable future for the industry.

Under the agreement all native forest logging on public land was to cease by the end of 2024. Native State Forests would be logged once more only and with a dispensation to allow harvesting of smaller diameter trees to obtain enough logs. Then the forests were to be allowed to recover and added to the protected area estate. These large tracts of forest are critical habitat for biodiversity including significant species found nowhere else.

Unfortunately the State Government and the timber industry have decided not to fully honour the original agreement. Logging will potentially continue in over 400,000 hectares of the eastern hardwoods area previously earmarked for protection.

No detailed information has been made available about the areas which have been logged over the last 24 years. Nothing is released about the areas planned for further logging. There has been no detailed monitoring of the impacts of logging on species and ecosystems. No data is available about how the structure of the forest areas changed due to removal of more and smaller trees. How are the hollow dependent fauna species such as gliders faring? Are there just as many trees with large hollows in the forest as there were in the past?

[Forest Watch](#) members conducted a bioblitz in St Mary State forest last October to help document the wildlife present. [One of the survey sites](#) had recently been logged. The good news is that we found [signs of yellow-bellied gliders](#). However we also found skinny young trees with no suitable hollows marked as [habitat trees](#) to be retained. Given the lack of long term scientific monitoring data no-one can be confident that the wildlife species will all survive and thrive into the future if timber extraction continues.

In summary the State Government regulator and timber companies have been over-cutting state forests for 24 years. They have still not taken the opportunity to transition to a sustainable mode of operation. Continuing to plunder the forest is not a viable long term option.

✿ **Tony van Kampen**

Evidence of the presence of Yellow-bellied Gliders in St Mary Forest. Photo by Hayley Troupe (as found on iNaturalist)



Many glider species leave distinctive “feeding marks” on the trunks of trees where they have used their teeth to incise the tree bark to get the sap to flow from which they feed. Yellow-bellied Gliders tend to make the largest and most distinctive markings. Feed marks can therefore indicate the presence of an animal. However, the marks do persist for a long time—if fresh they may be furred around the edges whereas old disused ones may have some scar tissue.

NEST BOXES FOR WILDLIFE.

A group of Maryborough / Hervey Bay men have a workshop in Maryborough making various household items and toys from timber. They have also had experience in building microbat boxes.

They would be interested in building nest boxes for other wildlife such as different bird species, gliders, and possums. These products would expand their market niche in a valuable backyard/large property commodity and improve habitat quality for wildlife.

We are calling on the membership to offer assistance with the design and /or specifications of such boxes. Members might know of others who could help.

If you can help, please send contact details to jikihen.7@gmail.com and the information will be collated and passed on to the manager of the workshop.

✿ **Jackie Henrion**

FRASER COAST BACKYARD BIOBLITZ: SUMMER 2024

The Summer 2024 Fraser Coast Backyard Bioblitz took place successfully over the weekend of 13-14 January, in a pot-pourri of weather, but mainly 'hot and sticky'. By 8pm on Thursday, 18 January, the following statistics were available:

605 observations, 42 observers, 413 species

For more information and to view the observations, you may like to check this link: <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fraser-coast-backyard-bioblitz-summer-2024>



The most observed species were Common Crow Butterflies (6 observations), followed by Australian Brush Turkeys, Tessellated Stick Insects and Love Flowers (5), White Drummer Cicadas and several other small plants in flower, along with Green Tree Frogs and Cane Toads (on 4)

While some of 'our' observers may not have known they were participating in our project, every observation is valuable. This was a record number of observers and there were several (knowing) welcome new participants.

Your pictures do not have to be works of art. Ideally, there is sufficient information through your pictures and notes that can help someone identify the subject. If you have questions about how

to take 'adequate' pictures, or how to lodge them on the iNaturalist Australia website, please feel free to ring me (0428 624 366). Your observations do not need to be of something 'rare' or unusual.

Half the fun of participating in Bioblitzes is seeing whether you can capture observations of 'everything' that you see. Plants tend not to change from season to season, except through their leaves, flowers and fruit. Summer is usually a great time to observe butterflies and other insects, reptiles, spiders.... However, the down-side is that they can be particularly 'frisky' in summer.

I found it almost impossible to photograph butterflies during this Bioblitz, despite the prevalence in my garden of

Great Egglies, Lemon Migrants and Grass Yellows. None of them were settling, they were flitting comparatively fast and had an uncanny knack of disappearing behind a bush as soon as they felt my presence. If they did settle, it was invariably too far away or they had moved again by the time I had set my camera up for the shot. I was also frustrated to find that my usual range of

birds (crested pigeons, wonga pigeons, rainbow lorikeets, spangled drongos, kookaburras..) were all invisible, even when I could hear them.

Our Fraser Coast Backyard Bioblitzes are a fun way of learning about our diverse local environment, over the seasons.

✿ *Vanessa Elwell-Gavins*

here are just three of those 605 observations.....



Double-barred Finch
by johnhamp



Comana albibasis (cup moth)
by donnamareetomkinson



Dainty Treefrog
by poacaea

How much of a threat are foxes on the Fraser Coast?

It is estimated that foxes alone kill over 300 million native animals a year. Almost any animal under 6kg is at risk of predation. This is having a huge impact on our biodiversity and putting many native species at risk. But how big is the problem in our region?

Foxes are regularly seen along the Hervey Bay foreshore, in suburban streets and parks and state forests. It is often difficult to locate their dens.



Local volunteer, **Ted Johansen** (from Friends of Vernon Conservation Park) is trying to establish, scientifically, the likely numbers of foxes living within the region.

If you know of, or, come across any fox dens within the Fraser Coast region he would like to know.

Please contact him direct via email on wildliferesearch40@yahoo.com or by phone on 0409 803 568

Photo left– a fox den

Point Vernon Geology - Nature Walk 4th November 2023

The oft quoted mantra is that “*from little things big things grow*”. Our November Point Vernon walk suggests that “*from geology all things grow.*”

Under the shade of the splendid trees at ESA Park, 42 people listened to a presentation on geology with relevance to Point Vernon and the greater Hervey Bay-Maryborough region by Cj Baker, Branch member and retired geologist.

Much of Cj’s professional calling was to search and assess sources of gold and other minerals for major mining companies. The economies of Canada, Africa and Australia benefited from the endeavours of geologists like Cj.

However much the walkers would have welcomed finding gold along the Pt Vernon shoreline, what they did learn about the geology on the shoreline was worth its weight in gold.

When Cj walks the Pt Vernon shoreline, he sees in the rocks a detailed history encompassing billions of years of shifting and deformation of tectonic plates, and persistent erosive periods lasting hundreds of millions of years.

The sediment layers being laid down in barely comprehensible time scales give a record of climate in geological history.

The walkers learnt that it is from an understanding of the chemistry of rocks and sediments that clues to the origin of life on earth are being revealed.



Stony structures built by colonies of photosynthesising bacteria built up our oxygen levels to 20%. Cj emphasized that these photosynthesising bacteria are integral to the formation of atmospheric oxygen and life forms of today. The 3.4-billion-year-old stromatolites in Shark Bay, Western Australia are the oldest living lifeforms on planet Earth.

Cj’s presentation triggered a curiosity leading the walkers to explore the Pt Vernon foreshore with fascination, so as anticipated, the walk from ESA Park to Gatakers took more two hours rather than 15 minutes at usual walking pace.

Clearly the walkers were very intent and taking care studying the rock formations so that there was only one fall and that was the writer, who sought to conceal an abraded bleeding elbow.

Pat, John, Paul and Mick rounded off the morning at the BBQs bringing the Branch’s Nature Walks season to an end, with an appreciation that “*from geology all things grow.*”

✿ **Frank Ekin**

photos and captions
by Helen Cory and Peter Duck

After the presentation under the fig tree in ESA Park, walkers led by Cj headed off on a guided walk towards Gatakers Bay, along a fairly isolated stretch of the beach that yielded fossils, faults, folds, igneous dykes and the high tide roosts of endangered migratory shorebirds.



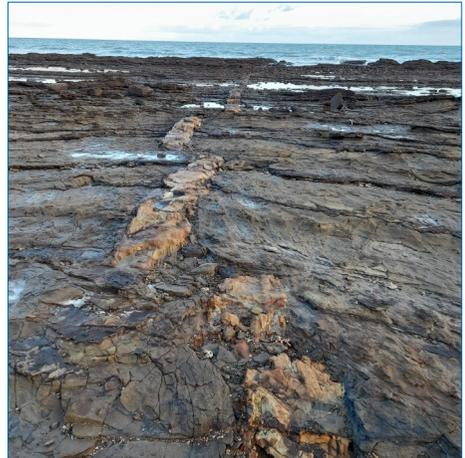
Cj giving his presentation



A Ruddy Turnstone, Lesser Sand Plovers, a Wandering Tattler and tiny Red-necked Stints roosting at high tide.



Above: Two substantive geological features, the Burrum Coal Measures (left) and the Maryborough Basin (right) meet at right angles just east of the Gatakers boat ramp.



Above: Olivine dyke (volcanic intrusion), possibly sourced from the Dundowran volcanics.

Nature Walks —a wrap up of the 2023 year



Frank and Marlene out and about on the lookout for new walks in 2024

One of the most successful walks was the Poona Spring Wildflower Walk. The ever patient Jenni, Tony and Peter fielded questions from a very interested number of people. Max and Marlene led the more enthusiastic walkers further afield.

The Walks Team encourages the use of Council (owned) Reserves, and, in 2023 the Rifle Range, Takura Conservation Reserve and Pir'ri Reserves were on the schedule. All three are readily accessible and are rich in fauna and flora.

The Walks Team is really an ad hoc group of people keen to enjoy a walk in the natural environment. This small group of people do some exploring for the fun of it and to satisfy their curiosity about local forests and landmarks. What matters is to have a number of people to offer their views on the scope of the year's walks at the single planning meeting per year. There is a little bit of secretarial work, but the actual planning and location of walks is simply the spontaneous idea or enthusiasm of anyone in the present group. The reconnoiters are fun and a reasonable and responsible assessment is made on the level of difficulty and of the hazards likely to be encountered. The chief judgement of course is the environmental value and pleasure offered by the walk. The planning meeting for the 2024 walks will be in early February.

✿ **Frank Ekin**

The Point Vernon Geology was the final walk of the year. It tapped into a great local interest in the Geology of Point Vernon foreshore, though the geology extends a long way inland. The walk was oversubscribed which is a measure of the interest and of the value of the Nature Walks program. It was a short distance but because of interest and questions timewise it was lengthy.

The year's walks followed the Walks Team's informal principles: to stay within the Fraser Coast region, to have a mix of local and more distant walks from Hervey Bay and to include different habitats. There is an enthusiasm to include Fraser Coast Council Reserves too. Generally, the walks aimed to be easy and usually about 6km.

A local walk which excited much interest was the Colliery Circuit just off the Churchill Mine Road starting at the Susan River Rail Bridge. A more distant walk was the Clifton Creek Right Road with rainforest, eucalypt forest and recently logged pine forest. The latter provided good habitat for small colourful birds and the established forest encouraged a wide range of doves.



Climbing Mt Woocoo, St Mary State Forest

The walks team enjoy going out and finding, then taking walkers on scheduled monthly outings. At times we find some unexpected treasure spots, then quickly realise the location definitely will not be suitable to take a large group.

Our guest walker Richard Joll, with Frank, Max, Noel and myself went to a place none had seen before, but I had mentioned many times. Richard pulled out his map and drove us to the depths of St Mary Forest. We could see the ridge on our left and headed off. We didn't see the car again for 3 hrs and had only trekked 3.3km. St Mary has three mounts. Many have been up Mt Benarige. Mt Bererum is on the wish list. Mt Woocoo was the place to be.

We needed to take many breaks. Some to catch our breath, others to take photos. The further we headed up the more blood I saw. Everyone except me were suffering injuries. Glimpses of distant views and mountains changed as we wound our way hoping to be heading to the top.

There were many rocks. The terrain and trees changed as we ascended—from the mainly *Angophora costata* - Smooth-barked Apple near the car.

We saw brush turkey nests. We wondered where they found the soil, where principally we can see rocks. We passed a low *Cymbidium suave* (an orchid) and a shiny *Glochidion* tree. Around the bend was a big surprise. Massive boulders with overhangs. Perhaps there were caves under us? More big plates of rock the higher we climbed. The top made an excellent spot to eat. Moths fluttered in front of us. We could see open farmland and wondered which way is north? What are the names of those mountains?

Going down the makeshift circuit was easier than going up. We paused at an *Acronychia* tree as Richard explained that state forests are multi use—for pleasure, conservation and producing income with forestry harvesting. He told us of the ecological assessments undertaken before species fitting a particular profile are taken from the forest. Habitat trees and all non commercial species are left.

It is a pleasure being on the walks team. I'm looking forward to showing you some great spots on the Fraser Coast in 2024. Just not Mt Woocoo!

✿ ***Marlene Luce***

A conversation with

Branch member, Jackie Henrion

Jackie is a keen gardener. Her garden on a regular-sized residential block in town is full of Australian natives, especially ones native to the local area. She tends healthy and diverse layers of small trees, shrubs, climbers, and ground covers. She has bird bowls and frog ponds. Her garden is as much for her pleasure as for the wildlife, which she so deeply cares about.

Recognising two major issues our wildlife face – loss of habitat (particularly suitable nesting sites) and disease, Jackie has recently embarked on a couple of personal campaigns. Firstly, she is investigating whether a variety of bird, glider and possum nest boxes could be made locally. She has approached a local group hoping they can channel their woodworking expertise into doing this (see page 9). The other thing that is currently occupying Jackie is finding out why the Striped Marsh Frogs she has had breeding in her garden pond for years have suddenly succumbed to disease – possibly chytrid fungus.

As an avid and lifelong reader and researcher, Jackie attributes Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (published in 1962) as the start of her environmental journey. She is interested in the connection our First Nations People have with Country and their deep cultural and spiritual bond. She is interested in the Buddhist philosophy. Jackie believes we have much to learn from these practices, built upon holistic and complex interrelationships, which are passed on through the generations.



Jackie came to Hervey Bay in 2017 and joined our Branch soon after. She is a regular at meetings and events. She helped Vanessa and Peter with admin tasks when they held the President's position 2018-2022, she did the Wambaliman mailout for 16 issues, and has done the write up (published in Wambaliman) for the library Wildlife Talks for the past two and half years.

Jackie is currently an active member of the local Parents for Climate Action, is a volunteer at the Community Nursery, and volunteers with the Gympie-based ANARRA – a native animal rescue group. Her care for fellow beings is reflected in her volunteer work with Red Cross Emergency Services. She receives information and petitions from QCC, ACF and Australian Marine Conservation Society; some of which she forwards for our Facebook page.

Jackie originally trained as a medical radiographer but soon shifted to work in nuclear medicine. She has two sons and three grandchildren. As parenting duties decreased Jackie returned to studies. In 1990 she gained a B.Social Science (Social and Environment Assessment and Policy) and in 2000 a Masters in Health Science. She then worked in research until her retirement.

With Jackie's family living afar, dogs have been her companions mostly. Jackie's dog Buddy, a lovable boisterous Border Collie x Kelpie x was known to many of us. Sadly, Buddy passed away unexpectedly recently. He had been Jackie's companion for 11 years. ***Jenni Watts**

Wetland Summer

Australian Emerald Dragonflies photographed by Ruby

Recent summer storms, while devastating in other parts of the country, have been patchy on the Fraser Coast. Thankfully they have replenished the Fay Smith Wetlands after a very long dry spell and the birds, insects and frogs have rejoiced.



My fascination with dragonflies, which first arrived on earth in the Permian Period (280-225 million years ago), endures.

I recently photographed a pair of Australian Emerald Dragonflies in the “wheel position”; a stunning sight. This species is one of 20 different species of dragonfly that I have identified in the wetlands over time.

I was informed two years ago after a presentation I did in Hervey Bay on insects, that local fishermen favor dragonfly larvae as fish bait. I am yet to find out how widespread this practice is among fisher people.

The most recent fire in the wetlands last October destroyed 15% of the wetlands which included a naturally occurring grove of *Jagera pseudorhus*. Sadly, there is no sign of regrowth of the aforementioned. Interestingly, among the first plants to return have been the delicate *Dianella rara*, or Rare Flax Lily, and vigorous new growth emerging from the burnt trunks of the Cabbage Tree Palms.

Over the Summer Bioblitz weekend as I took a walk through the wetlands I saw more Spade Flowers (*Pigea stellarioides*) in flower than I have ever seen before.

***Ruby Rosenfield**

Kindy visit from our educational team

Here are Diane Christensen and Lesley Bradley's accounts of their visit to educate some very young ones about our wildlife.

I was feeling a little fearful when Kris Page asked us to visit the East Street Community Kindy for two wildlife education days, September 13 and 15 (2023). A totally new experience for the education team. Lesley and I would talk on turtles and koalas respectively.

We needed costumes for games so I started sewing vests to represent Eucalypt, Paperbark and Brush Box trees. We also needed koalas and birds so I enjoyed experiments in craft, making feather headdresses and koala ears that would be furry but not floppy.

There was a bonus gained by the costuming – bird recognition. On the day, most children already knew the common species surprisingly well.

Our actual lessons revealed some pretty smart little kids! One actually knew that gum trees were called eucalypts. The funniest expression came from someone who told me not to be embarrassed after stating we are mammals as we feed our babies milk.

After some excellent video clips to support the lesson, I gave out toy koalas. The class was told to name their koalas and make up a story. There were lots of broken arms caused by falls from trees. So glad this mishap does not occur in real life.

Trying to imitate the koala grunt was more challenging, and much harder to reproduce than the female's call.

The games segment went well but at times, was chaotic. If you can imagine a forester wielding a roaring chainsaw with birds and koalas panicking with some looking lost, you've got it. They learnt - *without trees, animals are homeless.*

Finding Your Mum was a lot easier with a joey trying to locate its mother hidden behind someone's back. A nature hunt rounded off this session with the whole class eager to find the hidden animals, which unfortunately was not as difficult as I expected.

✿ ***Diane Christensen***

Lesley points out the differences in a Loggerhead and Green Turtle carapace.



My introduction to the day was a nice, well-mannered, very young Kindy gentleman who complimented me on my hair. A lovely start.

A little finger very quickly pointed at the real carapace I had, and said "It's a green" repeatedly. I have no idea if my explanation of the two different turtles landed on his ears; we tried.

Pretending to be a turtle was good fun. Most of them had a turn as the fake Loggerhead carapace was held over their backs.

During discussion of the difference in the two hatchlings in the photos, once again, “It’s a green, it’s a green,” echoed. The rest of us managed to sort out the difference in hatchlings; whether Loggerhead or Green. Does Mother Turtle stay with her “approximately” 100 eggs and look after them? Could your mummy look after 100 children? They agreed “No.” So they were happy for Mother Turtle to go back to sea and make more eggs.

We pretended to be Mother Turtle and dig an egg chamber in the sandpit. One hole looked like a molehole with tunnels to “hide the egg from the fox”. Otherwise chamber making was very successful.



Lesley with the juvenile Green Turtle that drowned in a crab pot

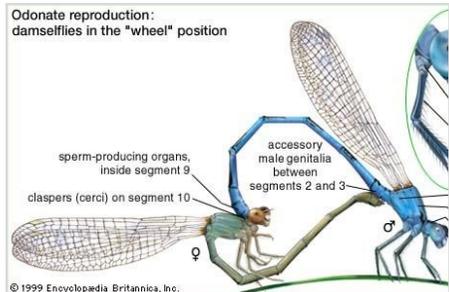
What did we use as eggs? Ping pong balls. Each of the ten children was given an “egg” to carefully put in the chamber, then cover and keep warm. Of the ten ping pong balls, we retrieved six. Hidden treasure still in sandpit?

A juvenile Green Turtle has been perfectly preserved so I could show them its very small tail. There was concern when I mentioned that Park Rangers found it in a crab pot. While it was tempted by the crab pot bait, the turtle became trapped and drowned when the tide came in. One child was going to warn Dad.

✿ *Lesley Bradley*

From the editor—I was intrigued when I saw Ruby’s article (previous page) as she had photographed two dragonflies “in the wheel position”. Also called the “heart posture” this is an amazing adaptation for a flying insect which many of us have witnessed—fleetingly. George Ellison writing in the Nature Journal 2 August 2017 in an article “The beauty of the dragonfly’s mating dance” explains:

When a male has attracted a receptive female, he grasps her behind the neck with a pair of pincers. The female then curves her abdomen under the male’s so that the sperm can be deposited. In this locked position, they often take flight in an aerial “mating circle” that’s said to be unique among animals.





The objectives of Wildlife Queensland are to:

- (1) preserve the fauna and flora of Australia by all lawful means;
- (2) educate by all means possible all sections of the community, particularly the young, in understanding the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment;
- (3) discourage by all legal means possible the destruction, exploitation or unnecessary development of any part of the natural environment;
- (4) encourage rational land use and proper planning of development and use of the natural environment and management thereof.

Want to join Wildlife Queensland?

<https://wildlife.org.au/shop/membership/membership-3/>

\$30 Individual

\$45 Family / non-profit group

\$20 Concession

\$12.50 Youth

Once you have joined Wildlife Queensland you may elect to be assigned a Branch such as Fraser Coast.

Wildlife Queensland and its branches are not wildlife rescue or care organizations.

However, we thank you for caring for our wildlife and

if you wish to report sick, injured or orphaned wildlife contact:

RSPCA Qld on 1300 ANIMAL or preferably contact a local rescue service.

Our local services have the expertise and will eliminate delays in taking action.

WILDLIFE RESCUE FRASER COAST contact through Facebook page

ANARRA Phone 5484 9111

WILDCARE (operates from Pomona) Phone 5527 2444

For snakes **HERVEY BAY SNAKE CATCHERS** Phone 0476 226 747

TURTLES IN TROUBLE FRASER COAST Phone 0493 242 903

For marine strandings ring the QLD Government Wildlife Hotline 1300 130 372

Branch logo and shirt options

- *The original colour and design chosen was a “Bizcool” – all acrylic – Wasabi coloured polo (from Morgans)*
- *get the logo on any shirt at Morgans Sewing & Embroidery in Pialba.*

Branch shirt for sale: brand new, size 14 \$20 Ph. 0418 884 917