

CONSERVATION NEWS

June-July 2024

Third Wednesday of the month:

General meetings: **26 June (note: 4th Wednesday for June only)**; 17 July

1 pm, Caloundra Power Boat Club

Executive meetings: TBA

Executive:

President: Claire Brown

Vice-Presidents: Paul Smith & John Roberts

Secretary: Jude Crighton (Ph: 5491 4153)

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Our thanks to Caloundra MP Jason Hunt and staff for their kind support in the photocopying of Conservation News



Updates from the April Meeting & Events

Shelly Beach to Moffat Beach Study

Council's pilot dune reconstruction has benefited from quieter seas and sunnier skies, with Cotton Trees and their roots removed in a narrow band on the ocean side of the 40-metre study area. The dune has been re-profiled using cleaned sand and additional sand from the mouth of the southern creek entrance on Shelly, and planted with Spinifex and other dunal species. Supplementary watering is assured through surface pipe irrigation. Fencing will allow the pilot area to regenerate for 18 months before turtles are given access for egg laying. To augment the 'dark horizon' required for hatchlings to navigate to the sea, mid-dune and some hind dune planting in a limited area has been completed. Further work will buffer the existing ageing trees beside the coastal pathway (up to a mature tree height of 10 metres). Public education signage, with QR codes for further information, is in place.

For updates:

<https://haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/shelly-beach-moffat-beach-coastal-study>

Council Elections

Claire has invited new Sunshine Coast Division 1 Councillor Jenny Broderick to attend our July meeting. Invitations will be extended to TAPP and others to come along.

Quentin enlarged on the ongoing debate about dogs at **Point Cartwright**, with the dog lobby seeking to discount environmental reasons to ban dogs from certain areas as well as raising human access rights. Dog access has been continued on Buddina Beach as seasonal turtle nests are meshed, however there is ongoing conflict between walkers and dogs with Council bylaws flouted. Quentin reiterated that the Local Law amendment was approved after consultation and that it will be reviewed in 18 months. This is an opportunity to gain final approval for a permanent conservation area on the rocky shores.

We will lobby new Councillors about the importance of protecting shorebirds from dogs and request urgent consideration be given to incorporating expanded dog off-leash areas in non-natural areas in the new Planning Scheme. We will also further the idea of a community activity at Point Cartwright with Council's Turtle Coordinator and work with the Qld Wader Study Group, Friends of Shorebirds and Council

Advance Dates

15 June, 2 pm
K'gari (Fraser Island Defenders Organisation), John Sinclair Memorial Lecture by Dr Bob Brown: *Saving life on earth will take civil insurrection*, Auditorium, Mt Cootha Botanic Gardens; \$25. Contact FIDO; book on Evenbrite

19 June, 9 am - 2 pm
Sunshine Coast Council's Open Data Expo at Doonan Creek Environment Reserve, 219 Doonan Bridge Road, Verrierdale
At this free Citizen Science data-sharing get-together Rob Kernot will represent Faunawatch. Book on the Council's Events webpage for Keynote speakers: First Nations author Jason Yunkaporta & Earthwatch CEO Fiona Sutton, & workshops.

Faunawatchers, WPSQers and friends are welcome; visit us at our stall!

Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival: WPSQ walks

BEN BENNETT BUSHLAND PARK: Children's walk Saturday 17 August: 9 - 10 am

A short walk for young children and their parents hunting for Wildflower treasures in this patch of bushland close to the heart of Caloundra. Wear a hat and sturdy shoes. Toilets and picnic tables are onsite. [We anticipate others will follow up this walk with an art session for children in the Park].

to inform people about the importance of the shorebirds and a safe environment for them.

State Elections in October

The meeting pooled ideas on which to base questions for candidates to consider prior to the election:

- The declaration of the Inter-Urban Break on maps is necessary as state government plans for massive population increases. Linkages to connect existing conservation areas need to be mapped to provide effective fauna protection into the future.
- The platypus is listed as 'Special, of Least Concern' in Queensland, whereas in other eastern states it is a protected species. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has upgraded their status to Near Threatened. Better protected status is needed along with dog fencing to protect known populations.
- The cessation of recreational use of the Glasshouse Mountains is supported.
- The LNP policy on further expansions to the Conondale National Park is to be investigated.

Caloundra Residents Association is holding a candidates' forum on 17 September at the Caloundra Power Boat Club.

Ben Bennett Bushland Park/Caloundra Transport Corridor Upgrade (CTCU)

Further to WPSQ action on the upcoming State election the meeting agreed that the need for the proposed but not fully funded 4-lane (or 2-lane) plan should be put to candidates, and also that Mayor Rosanna Natoli be contacted on this issue.

The next SIG meeting will be in July after the final design has been released. The EIS has not yet been supplied.

Keep in touch with wildlife in the park via the Friends of Ben Bennett Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofbenbennett>

Maleny Wood Expo

Held on the Labour Day weekend in May, wet weather and subsequent lower attendances impacted sales and conversations with visitors. Many thanks to all of the intrepid volunteers and special thanks to Yosuke who came for three days, travelling by public transport from Nambour. We will follow up with the Expo coordinator regarding our site, which was somewhat out of the way from the milling crowds.

Sunshine Coast Direct Rail

From the most recent SIG meeting, Quentin reports that although the elevated rail line ultimately offers better protection for flora and fauna, it is anticipated that will be a severe impact during the construction phase. The John Holland company is now in pre-construction mode with appropriate guidelines and monitoring; ground surveys are

**BEN BENNETT BUSHLAND
PARK: Adults' walk
Saturday 17 August: 1 - 3
pm**

A perfect introductory short walk into the diverse ecosystems of this patch of bushland in the heart of Caloundra with the Friends of Ben Bennett Bushland Park and the Wildlife Preservation Society. Bring water, insect repellent and binoculars for the birds. Toilets on-site.

**BLACKBUTT FOREST,
BARINGA
Thursday 29 August: 9:30 -
11 am**

Explore this remnant patch of tall Blackbutt forest and understory vegetation and adjacent wet heath with the Wildlife Preservation Society. Bring water, insect repellent and binoculars for the birds. Toilets on site.

**CURRIMUNDI LAKE
(KATHLEEN MCARTHUR)
CONSERVATION PARK
Saturday 31 August: 9 - 11
am**

Experience the wonders of the Wallum heath in Currimundi Lake (Kathleen McArthur) Conservation Park with members of Wildlife Queensland, Sunshine Coast and Hinterland. Bring a hat, water, sunscreen and insect repellent. The tracks are flat and mostly sandy.

**7 September
National Threatened
Species Day events by the
Aura Stewardship Group**

ongoing. Importantly, the data will be publicly available and will provide baseline data for ongoing monitoring.

Offsets provide an easy option to justify clearing remnant stands but should be a last resort, especially where there is koala habitat that will be impacted. Assessment of whether Controlled Actions apply under the Commonwealth EPBC Act are in process.

It is understood that Council has an ongoing interest in protecting lands in the Pumicestone Passage and has purchased land between Coochin Creek and Glasshouse Creek for conservation. Offsets in this area could have the potential to expand the protected area to around 500 ha.

The Caloundra rail station is planned to be located on the Caloundra Aerodrome precinct and it was noted that there are drainage issues associated with the site that would impact on wallum species. We may have an opportunity to raise this point at an upcoming meeting of the Caloundra Aerodrome Community Group.

The Direct Rail project corridor is available to view online:
<https://www.yoursay-projects.tmr.qld.gov.au/direct-sunshine-coast-rail/proposed-corridor-refinements>

Also discussed at our May meeting was the rail duplication to Nambour, and it was agreed that there is an opportunity through the SIG to advocate for a fauna bridge or bridges in Glider habitat on the route, in particular on the Mooloolah range near Dularcha and in the Ewen Maddock corridor. These bridges are not expensive and could be a first on Queensland railway lines.

Further to the Direct Rail discussions, Jude (in Quentin's place), attended the **Caloundra Walking Network Plan** workshop on Thursday 30 May re the station precinct planning (accessibility and walking networks are a focus).

The online interactive maps are available to allow the community to provide input on the **Walking Network Plans. Consultation closes Sunday 16 June 2024:**

<https://www.yoursay-projects.tmr.qld.gov.au/direct-sunshine-coast-rail/station-precinct-planning>

Jude reports that the meeting was well run and positive, with representatives also from TAPP, Value Caloundra, Caloundra Residents Association, and cycling groups, although there was no representation from the Air Museum. Input about essential infrastructure included ways to slow road traffic and make it safer for pedestrians and small wheeled vehicles via raised crossings, 4-way signalling at intersections, and shade and amenity from trees. The group walked from the meeting venue at the RSL to Macdonald's on Caloundra Road, and from West Terrace to the intersection of Baldwin Street and Caloundra Road which has two crossings only. A connection to North Street was suggested as a walking route from the station to beaches and shopping.

17 September
Caloundra Residents Association is convening a **State Government election candidates forum** at the Caloundra Power Boat Club **Faunawatch Outings**

Second Wednesday of the Month Walks, 8 am:
at Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens
12 June, 10 July, 14 August

Fourth Monday of the Month Walks, 8 am:

24 June: Blackbutt Forest, Aura

In this interesting old forest on the southern coast, to date we have identified 130 species, including 90 birds.

Meeting Point: Meet in the car park next to the playground and dog park towards the end of Eden Drive, Aura.

22 July, 26 August: TBA

University of the Sunshine Coast has announced that the winner of the **2023 Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Branch Environmental Studies Prize** is **Mikaela Bratovic**.

Mikaela is a Bachelor of Animal Ecology student, now in third year, who received a grade 97 out of 100 for ENS222 in Semester 2, 2022.

We hope to welcome Mikaela and a presentation of her work at a future meeting.

Luke Hibbert has been selected as the 2024 recipient.

Jude stressed the importance of connecting green areas and ensuring minimum damage to existing green areas around the station. Wayfinding signage and slip roads on existing roundabouts in the station vicinity were other suggestions.

Pumicestone Passage

Members who attended the LNP Community Consultation on the Passage reported on the issues raised: siltation of the Bulcock Beach area and water quality; safety issues for the Coastguard; lack of access to the ocean from the new Pelican Waters marina. Possible solutions discussed at the meeting included removing the historical oyster leases to improve sand and water flows, as well as constructing foreshore rock walls and sea walls.

Pumicestone Passage management involves 18 different government departments and 80 different pieces of legislation. The Gold Coast has one statutory authority with an independent engineer. Our members spoke in favour of setting up a similar authority for Pumicestone Passage, properly set up with state and local governments, to take the politics out of issues and provide a holistic perspective. The issue of dredging spoil being contaminated and going to landfill was also raised.

WPSQ will request a meeting with Kendall Morton, State LNP candidate for Caloundra, as well as sitting Labor member Jason Hunt, and any other candidates to acquaint them with the environmental issues.

World Environment Day

We shared a marquee with TAPP on the Pumicestone Passage on Sunday 2 June, engaging with a trickle of walkers, some exercised about wanting a dog beach on the Passage where their dogs can exercise free of restraint, others sympathetic to the requirements of roosting shorebirds. Most were interested in TAPP's photographs of Bribie and the Passage over time, and we sold a few raffle tickets for our Kathleen print and Jo's fabric works.

Coochin Fields (in the Inter-Urban Break)

The application by the proponents for this music festival and other event venue has been withdrawn.

Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival

Jude has provided our dates and venues to Sunshine Coast Council with details available on their website closer to the time. However, a preview is in our Advance Dates in the left column.

Wallum expert Hilary Pearl will also be running walks for the Wallum Study Group.

Faunawatch

Judy advised that the Faunawatch funding has not been fully expended and that Council will need to be advised of this when continued funding is requested.

Weeds don't sleep in 2024

Join a BushCare group near you, including Roving groups to cover (in the Caloundra area) Sharyn Bonney, Ben Bennett, Jill Chamberlain reserves and more. **Check out the Council's BushCare website.**

Here are some monthly sessions closest to **southern-based residents**, from 7.30 am or 8 am, with weeding and planting for a couple of hours followed by a welcome morning tea and chat:

Currimundi (Kathleen McArthur) Conservation Reserve: 1st Wednesday (run by National Parks & Wildlife)

Watson Environment Park (Moffat Headland/Shelly Beach): 1st Friday (Thursday if Friday is a public holiday)

Golden Beach (sites vary): 2nd Thursday

Tooway Lake/Hardie Buzacott Reserve: 2nd Friday

Shelly Beach Foreshore: third Saturday

And in the Nambour area:

Petrie Creek Bushcare: 7 am start in summer, 8 am in cooler months: **Contact Co-ordinator Norm Morwood:** 0409 63 99 44

Florabunda Pocket (Woombye): 1st Saturday

Namba Creek (Nambour): 3rd Saturday

Gulung Gung (Nambour): 4th Wednesday

Enquiries also to sunshine@wildlife.org.au

Judy's report on the May Faunawatch outing at Maroochy Gardens:

'There were five Faunawatchers yesterday at the gardens, plus Rob, who promised us a Rose robin and delivered! It was a female up from the cold south for the winter. We walked the ridge track across to Wilson's Road, enjoying blue sky and sunshine most of the way. Within the 38 bird species in total were lots of Silver eyes, also wintering here, and good views of a Fan-tailed cuckoo calling, and three Brown cuckoo-doves busy in the top of a fruiting Celerywood. We also saw Pelicans overhead. Only three butterflies were spotted, and an Eastern grey kangaroo hopped off down the side of the ridge. *Cassinia (subtropica?)* was flowering and the *Xanthorrhoea* had lots of very tall flower spikes almost ready to bloom. The Acacias with their Mistletoes at the Wilson's Road end of the track were almost all dead; in their prime they hosted lots of Honeyeaters and Mistletoe birds. The pond in the same area was overflowing, however we didn't hear any frogs.'

On 27 May 22 Monday walkers welcomed sunshine and masses of Brown and Scarlet honeyeaters and Silver-eyes at **Lamerough Creekside Walk at Pelican Waters**. This artificial waterway, established at the time of the golf course estate, has benefited from mass plantings and natural regeneration over time, offering various habitats including *Melaleuca* wetlands. There was an Eastern whipbird calling for a mate, wrens and cuckoos, pardalotes and golden whistlers, finches and fantails, in total 54 bird species. Perhaps it was too late in the day for macropods on the kangaroo fields (mown patches left bare of trees, doubling as picnic areas), and just four butterfly species were recorded, and four leaf-curling spiders and some bag moth nests (hairy caterpillars). **Wednesday walks will continue on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (12 June, 10 July, 14 August) at MRBBG, and the 4th Monday (24 June, 22 July, 26 August) at various venues (see side column).**

Sunshine Coast Regional Council Have Your Say: At our May meeting Robyn reported that the Sunshine Coast Community Strategy is currently under review, however there is no mention of the environment in the strategy or survey questions. Members are encouraged to respond to the **online survey by 10 June:**

<https://haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/sunshine-coast-community-strategy-refresh>

Our thanks to Wild/flower Woman Sue Davis who has written the extensively researched entry for our founder Kathleen McArthur in the esteemed *Australian Dictionary of Biography:*

<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcarthur-kathleen-rennie-33448>

Birds with Phil Bender

Bush stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*)

This wonderful species is often found in built-up areas, even in city centres where it has adapted well. I see them in Glenview Road not far from the busy Bruce Highway on a regular basis, always in the same front yard. The eerie call once heard is not forgotten. Insects, crustaceans, lizards and small mammals are eaten by this endemic species. Mostly nocturnal in habits, it shelters during the day and can be very hard to spot due to the very cryptic plumage coloration.

Good Reads

Off the library display shelves is the entertaining and informative *The nation of plants: a radical manifesto for humans* by plant neurobiologist Stefano Mancuso, setting out a Bill of Rights for plants to serve as a guidebook for the survival of our own species.

Translated from the Italian by Gregory Conti; published London, Profile Books, 2021.

