

## WPSQ Upper Dawson July Newsletter

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Today's weather bureau's announcement: **“Expect smoke in southeast Queensland as hazard reduction burns are being carried out.”** It should be the middle of ‘winter’, and already, in some places, after a few days of frosty weather, some intermittent showers of rain, and ten days of sunshine, the opportunities for carrying out the “cool season” hazard-reduction burns that keep property and feed-stocks safe are reducing. With heavy and late grass growth, it's time to ensure that fire prevention plans, equipment, and breaks are in place.



Welcome Swallows on nest.

Photo [Bird Control Australia](#)

*A neighbour has phoned, asking for identification of some birds that have decided to nest in a machinery and equipment shed, leaving unsightly droppings that quickly harden and damage tools and machines alike. A clear photograph of the perched culprits and their cup-shaped mud nest, revealed the most unwelcome Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) who've come north in cooler months for a warm, safe place to nest, snatching insects as they fly. Their natural nesting places in large open tree hollows, caves, or rock overhangs are becoming more scarce, and they've adapted to our provision of warmer and more secure spots in open buildings and under eaves or awnings where eagles and hawks can't raid their nest, and hibernating snakes are unlikely to intrude.*

Information on how to deter these birds is available from <https://birdcontrolaustralia.com.au/blog/swallows-interesting-facts-and-how-to-deter-them>. They are a protected native species, and it is recommended you contact your local government agency to ask about the removal of nests during nesting/egg laying season.

### To avoid buying invasive plants

Many pest plants have come into our landscape by escaping from gardens. To protect native biodiversity, to check what's growing in your garden, and to check before you buy, the database “Grow Me Instead” has an invasive-plant risk assessment tool to “reduce the risk of plants being planted in the wrong place”. Nurseries are supposed to be guided by this database, but it pays to find out for ourselves.



**The Theodore Centenary** was a wonderful event involving many people and activities. It was a great tribute to the planning and management of the event, particularly Anne Chater and Jess Weimar, and the tireless years of work by Museum staff, led by Monica Atfield and Loraine Hellyer.

### Early Walkers see the Birds



While a lot of Centenary visitors were still in bed on the foggy Sunday morning and others were preparing for a 100km run, Allan Briggs led a group of nature enthusiasts from the Castle Creek bridge to Junction Park. We heard Blue-winged Kookaburras, saw a flock of Little Friar birds eating lerps, and watched Pacific Black Ducks ‘dabbling’ for water plants. Spiders’ webs were highly visible while wet in the fog, and Royce found some tiny spiders in crevices along the track.



In keeping with the spirit of the centenary event, four adult red-backed fairy wrens were putting on a display with their group at the Junction (*Photo Allan Briggs*). Congratulations should go to the organisers of the Centenary for arranging this remarkable spectacle for those fortunate enough to see it.

Upper Dawson Branch of WPSQ thanks all who visited the “Wild” stall, bought “Birds of the

Dawson” books; tickets in the rock wallaby raffle; and squirrel gliders, echidnas, or platypus to support our Branch. Thanks also go to Allan Briggs of Birdlife Capricornia, who signed books and led walks; Bethlea Bell of Fitzroy Basin Association, who arranged access to our site and answered many enquires; Branch members Helen and Cowan Keys; and my grandchildren Zoe and Ebony Gerschwitz, all of whom looked after the stall while I kept meeting former classmates, students, and other acquaintances. Son Clive, and daughter, Lenore worked tirelessly on preparation, set up, and clearing up.

Congratulations to Marlene Bergman, who won the Rock Wallaby raffle. Its image was painted on the stall sign by Ebony. Perhaps it was seeing their fellow bird on the sign that brought the fairy wrens out to celebrate next morning?

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