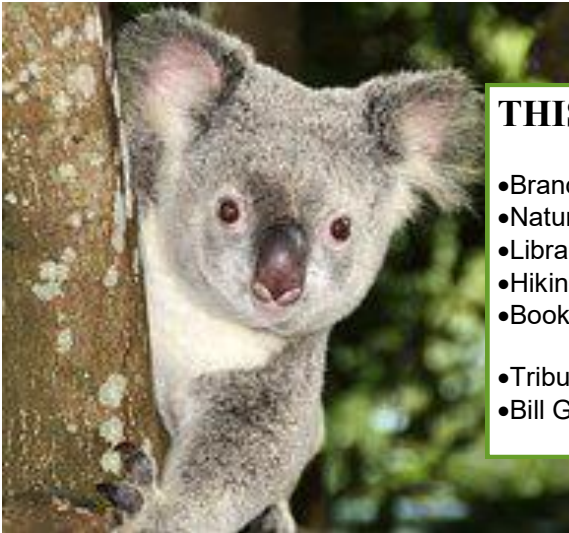


WAMBALIMAN

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



THIS ISSUE:

- Branch activity reports
- Nature Walks reports
- Library Talks reports
- Hiking on Hinchinbrook
- Book review

- Tribute to Alan Peebles
- Bill Gauld– A Birding Life

SUMMER 2021-2022

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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Bookings—FCRC website / Library

Backyard Bioblitz

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

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Newsletter Wambaliman

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USC Partnership

Vanessa Elwell-Gavins, Sara Gerdson, Rodney Jones, Bruce Dick, Cassy Ironside

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 22 April 2022**

Opinions expressed in Wambaliman are not necessarily those endorsed by the Wildlife Preservation Society 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

20 February

10 April (to avoid Easter)

19 June

21 August

18 September (AGM)

20 November

Executive Meeting

JANUARY, MAY, JULY, OCTOBER
DATES TO BE DECIDED

NATURE WALKS

TBA—TO START IN MARCH

WILDLIFE TALKS IN THE LIBRARY 1-2PM

Postponed due to Covid for the time being
Bookings essential—see FCRC website

FIND-A-FROG in FEBRUARY 2022

see page 10

FRASER COAST BACKYARD BIOBLITZ for 2022

Summer: 22-23 January

Autumn: 23-24 April

Winter: 9-10 July

Spring: 8-9 October

Don't forget to LIKE us on

[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/WPSQFraserCoast)

WPSQFraserCoast

Check out our page on

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

From the Executive

A hearty welcome to 2022. We may have been expecting that we might be heading to some degree of normality with the Covid constraints beginning to ease. But we remain in this uncertain hiatus brought about by the emergence of this latest viral Greek letter. And this time we're pretty well on our own as far as governing bodies are concerned.

How this plays out for us as a Branch, and for our varied activities, is still unclear. The best-case scenario is for the 'impending' peak to occur, followed by a steady waning of infections. But one thing we have learnt in the past two years is nothing is taken for granted.

Our Executive did meet on January 29 despite two members being unable to attend because of Covid issues. Our February Branch meeting is still planned to go ahead on February 20 with necessary conditions due to Covid. One matter which needs resolution at the meeting that members may like to give some consideration to is the Branch's agreement with the University of the Sunshine Coast to fund an Eastern Grey Kangaroo project by an Honours student in 2022. The University has failed to get an Honours student to take up this project and has presented an alternative of offering the \$5000 for a third-year project which will

produce a more abbreviated report. (See Vanessa's report in this Wambaliman.)

At our November general meeting we resolved to donate \$1000 to the UQ for koala tracking collars to assist with their monitoring of koalas relocated to Tandorra. It was also decided that we renew our membership to Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council (WBEC).

It has been a tough time for some members recently with the loss of loved ones. Hopefully our group of like-minded members with allied commitment to a cause offer purpose and solace to those grieving at this time.

Many members will be well acquainted with former Branch member Alan Peebles and be saddened by his recent death. Other members will be well acquainted with his actions to further the cause of wildlife preservation, if only by admiring the bird murals on our bus stops or enjoying a walk on the Pir'ri Reserve tracks.

Jackie Henrion, Diane, Jenni and myself have started getting plans in place for this year's Central Branches Get-Together (CBGT) hosted by our Branch. We are looking at late September or early October, so watch this space, and don't hesitate to feed us some ideas.

✿*Peter Duck*

WELCOME TO NEW BRANCH MEMBERS Lyn Cameron, Merike Johnson

WILDLIFE MATTERS-Budding wildlife writers needed!

Our Branch is a regular contributor to several local publications including the glossy magazine **The Fraser Coast Beacon, and The Maryborough Sun.**

Members are invited to submit articles for consideration by our editorial team. For a copy of the criteria or information contact Diane or Ruby (see page 2)

Branch Activity Report October 2021—January 2022

Our Christmas break-up was held at Arkarra Tea Gardens on 5 December. After breakfast we gathered at the seat that our Branch has had installed overlooking Arkarra Lagoon.



Meetings/ gatherings

- General Meeting 21 November 2021
- Executive Meeting 29 January 2022
- At the conclusion of the November meeting a special afternoon tea was held for speakers involved with our Library Talks,

editors of publications hosting Wildlife Matters, and Wildlife Matters contributors. (photo below)

- End of Year Break-up—a healthy number of members turned up on Sunday 5 December for our end of year Break-up at Arkarra Gardens. (photo below left)



Submissions

The Branch lodged three submissions

- Objection to a new EPBC referral for Turtle Cove.
- Objection to new Dolphin Waters (Burrum Heads) development
- Objection to a Material Change of Use and Reconfiguration of Lot development on Ibis Boulevard (Eli Waters)

Walks

- The November Nature Walk was at Wongi Waterholes. The Walks Team planned a slightly different walk to the previous Wongi walks, avoiding the long stretch on the Loop Road.
- The Nature Walks Team is meeting in February to plan our 2022 program.

Talks

- The October Library Talks featured Boyd Blackman and Conway Burns on Traditional Burning Practices.
- The November talk was postponed to December. Dr Kathy Townsend spoke on Marine Pollution

Permit Applications

The Branch made an Application to DES for a permit to salvage the orchid, *Sarcochilus loganii* damaged in logging operations. Some members were involved in the work between Christmas and New Year.

Summer Backyard Bioblitz

The Summer Backyard Bioblitz conducted on the weekend of the 22-23 January was one of our most successful yet, both in terms of number of observations and number of observers.

Central Branches Get-together

The CBGT planning committee meet on 28 January to start organising the event that our Branch is hosting later in the year.



Above: walkers assemble for the Wongi Waterholes walk Below: high viz was required for the orchid salvage operation



Ben Gerdson's Memorial Service

A number of members including President Peter attended the memorial service for Ben on 14 January.

Communication

Our Facebook page, webpage, Wildlife Matters articles, and the quarterly release of Wambaliman continue to inform and educate about natural history and wildlife protection.

Fundraising

- Your contribution to our container deposit fundraiser is much appreciated
- The regular Beach House raffles conducted by John and Pat continue to boost our coffers, although the latest Covid wave has affected raffles in January. 🌟

University of the Sunshine Coast Projects

Members will recall the Branch has agreed to provide \$5,000 to each of two projects to be conducted by Honours students at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC): one on Greater Gliders and one on Eastern Grey Kangaroos in Hervey Bay. After initial optimism that one project might start in Semester 2 in 2021, this project was deferred, by agreement, to start with the other project in 2022.

Dr Beth Brunton (USC) provided us with an update in December 2021.

The **Greater Glider Project**, the main focus of which will be to identify key glider habitat trees using remote sensing, will be conducted by 'committed, keen and capable' Honours student, Jess Evans, starting in Semester 2 of 2022. There will be a three-month lead-in project conducted by Jess as a 'Special Research Project' for her final semester of her undergraduate studies, starting in February 2022. During the SRP Jess will develop the algorithms and techniques that she will use for her Honours project. The benefits of this approach will be:

1. It will provide a pilot study to make sure the analytical techniques to be used for the Honours project are 'optimal'.
2. It will allow more time for field work and ground-truthing in the Honours project.

The proposed **Eastern Grey Kangaroo** project is proving to be more difficult to get off the ground. This project is designed to look at habitat displacement in Hervey Bay, as an example of a rapidly urbanising environment, with a focus on how Eastern Grey Kangaroos are adapting, or not, to the urban environment. This project has important policy implications and we had hoped to be able to use it to influence Council planning and development decisions.

As of late January, no 2022 USC Honours student has expressed an interest in doing this project.

Dr Brunton has proposed an alternative route to getting an outcome. A 'very passionate and high-performing mature aged' undergraduate student would apparently be keen to undertake this project as a 'Special Research Project' in the last semester of her undergraduate studies, starting in July 2022, with preliminary community engagement to commence earlier (May or June). The product from this approach would be a brief report (10-12 pages), rather than a thesis, in November 2022. Our \$5,000 funding would be used for field work and 'staff costs to help' the student. Dr Brunton has advised that the student could possibly be interested in continuing with the project as an Honours project in 2023, where she would receive the USC's standard monetary contribution of \$1,800 to support her Honours work.

This option would require an (easy!) amendment to the current contract.

Alternatively, Dr Brunton suggests that the Branch might be interested in supporting an alternative, possibly marine-based, Honours project.

Following consultation with the Branch Executive and the USC grant working group, I have advised Dr Brunton that a decision on how/whether to proceed with the Eastern Grey Kangaroo project will need to be made by the Branch as a whole, presumably at the February 2022 meeting. The Branch originally approved the project as an Honours project (to maximise its clout with Council) so any departure from that will require Branch approval.

The choice for members will be between a shorter Student Research Project on

Eastern Grey Kangaroos in rapidly urbanising environments, to be completed in November 2022, and possibly followed in 2023 as an Honours project, **or** a new project, on a topic yet to be determined, which probably would not be completed before 2023 anyway. Alternatively, the Branch may choose to proceed simply with the Greater Glider project, pending further deliberation.

If you have any views on how to proceed with this project, please let Peter Duck (ggduckz@gmail.com) or me (vanessa.egavins@gmail.com) know as soon as possible.

✿ *Vanessa Elwell-Gavins*

Matters of Local Environmental Significance

I am representing our Branch on a large 'expert panel' established by Fraser Coast Regional Council to help their consultants (Redleaf Environmental) map and make recommendations on issues relevant for development of mapping and policy responses relating to the Matters of Local Environmental Significance (MLES) that have been identified for the Fraser Coast region. The output from this work is expected to feed into the revised Planning Scheme.

Identified MLES have been grouped as:

1. **'Corridors'** (including regional corridors, regional riparian corridors, 'established' corridors, 'enhancement' corridors and 'stepping stone' corridors)
2. **'Biodiversity areas'** (including core habitat areas, established nodes, areas of species richness and diversity, climate change adaptation and refugia areas)
3. **'Ecosystems'** (including least concern regional ecosystems, ecosystem representation and/or uniqueness, coastal habitats, urban bushland, locally significant species' habitat, rehabilitation areas, ecosystem buffers, and ecosystem processes)

The Expert Panel held its first meeting in October 2021 to discuss the mapping criteria and methods, and to provide large group and small group input into the mapping process and to identify specific examples for each category.

A MLES 'Values' table summarising the Expert Panel's recommendations in October, a mapping output (where relevant and developed) and 'implementation notes' (status report for Redleaf) was circulated in December 2021, with feedback expected by mid January 2022.

As examples, Saltwater Creek has been identified (and mapped) as an important riparian corridor, a climate change refugia and 'urban bushland', and its values have been detailed. Similarly, Beelbi Creek has been described as a significant waterway connecting large patches of habitat that border two state conservation areas and containing a variety of unique ecosystems that provide habitat for locally significant flora and fauna.

A second (and final) 'Expert Panel' meeting is expected to be held on 7 February 2022. From this it is anticipated there will be a refined 'Values' table with all values mapped. These will then be added to mapping layers in the revised Planning Scheme.

The result, hopefully, will eventually inform development applications and planning decisions.

The theory is terrific. Let's just hope that Council will have the grit to be guided by this work, which has had so much 'expert' community input!

✿ *Vanessa Elwell-Gavins*

Backyard Bioblitz Summer 2022

The good, the bad and the ugly by *Vanessa Elwell-Gavins*

Spending a bit of time over a weekend every quarter to take photos of plants and critters in my garden and immediate area and then lodge them on the iNaturalist Australia website is always a treat for me. I get to find out more about my local wildlife, while learning how to use my camera better. With Covid now rampant in the Fraser Coast region, it's a lovely way to spend some time doing something interesting without worrying about the risk of catching Covid.

iNaturalist contributions

by andreamvee



by scottwgavins



by vanessaegavins



by scottwgavins



There is a catch, of course! Taking successful pictures depends on three things: (1) having something interesting to photograph; (2) your ability to take good pictures and (3) the conditions.

(1) has never been a problem for me, regardless of season. There are fewer things of interest around in the cooler months, but there has always been 'something', whether it's an interesting plant in flower or seed, or a butterfly or a spider!

(2) is something that we can choose to work on to improve, even if we are novice photographers with only a mobile phone. Mobile phones are not so good for taking pictures of birds, but they are great when you are out with no camera and something interesting pops into your field of view. Indeed, I have been amazed at the very high quality photographs that some of our members and friends manage to take, simply with their mobile. Things that sit still on the ground or on a leaf are much easier to photograph than things that dart, scuttle, flit, hang in the air on a web, or blow with the wind. I am in awe of people able to take great photographs of birds. They never sit still long enough for me to focus, and have usually looked away or jumped behind a leaf, or simply flown off, by the time I have set up the camera.

(3) is a variable that is always the luck of the draw. Gale force winds are never good. Everything goes into hiding and things that are theoretically stationary can still wave around frantically. Clouds similarly can be difficult - butterflies and dragonflies tend to disappear with the sun. In winter, everything is a bit sleepy so it is easier to get good photographs. In summer? Well, summer is a challenge because the heat makes everything extra lively!

continued over

So... the weekend of 22-23 January 2022, set for our Summer 2022 Backyard Bioblitz, was one of the more frustrating Bioblitzes for me. There were plenty of things of interest, particularly following our fairly wet last three months. But between gales on Saturday and the ambient summer heat, almost nothing sat still long enough to have its portrait taken. I lost count of the number of Orchard Swallowtail butterflies that I saw, but they were all moving erratically and never landed on anything for longer than a millisecond. I did manage to get a few good pictures of their very obliging offspring in their various instars, munching away on my citrus trees and busily defoliating a (threatened) *Clausena smyrelliana*. Lemon Migrant, Common Crows, Pale Triangles, Blue Triangles and Grass Yellow butterflies proved similarly impossible to photograph, even though there were lots of them. I did manage to get a few good shots of various dragonflies this time, as well as the ubiquitous spiders.

All in all, it was a successful Backyard Bioblitz, despite the weekend's challenges. We had 28 participants, who made 428 observations, recording 274 species.

Here is the link to the Fraser Coast Backyard Bioblitz Summer 2022 project report:

<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fraser-coast-backyard-bioblitz-summer-2022>

It is always fascinating to see the great diversity of species that get recorded!

Saving the orchid

Back in 2006 local orchid expert Alan Logan found a small epiphytic orchid in the western part of the Fraser Coast region. He recognised it as unusual and sent a sample to the Australian National Herbarium for identification.

In 2018 the small orchid was recognised as a new species and given the name [*Sarcochilus loganii*](#). The common name nominated in David Jones's book *A Complete Guide to the Native Orchids of Australia* is "Wongi Fairy Bells". The flowers are white with a hint of pink.



Although it is listed as Least Concern under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act the geographic distribution of these plants is very limited. It remains known only from the few locations discovered by Alan at Mt Walsh and Wongi National Parks.

The Branch is assisting with the survey, research and protection of these very uncommon orchids. Although Alan has moved out of the region he continues to provide valuable advice and encouragement to local naturalists interested in orchid species.

✿ *Tony van Kampen*

Alan was an active member of our Branch until he moved to Brisbane recently.



Go here for everything you need to know!

[Find a Frog in February | Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee \(mrccc.org.au\)](#)

Nature Walk—Pir'ri Reserve—October 2021



Photo by Helen Cory

The beautiful orchid, *Cymbidium suave* was flowering

The Nature Walkers profited from a splendid outing at Pir'ri Reserve. This walk was, in a way, a celebration of the success of the Environmental Levy which was used to buy blocks on Mathiesen Rd, Booral which make up Pir'ri Reserve.

Despite a fierce wind on the eve of the walk there were no signs of damage to the Pir'ri Reserve. Indeed the 25 mls freshened up the Reserve for the walk on 2 October. Despite the dryness of the previous few months the trees and vegetation in general looked quite luxuriant.

The 27 members of the walking group met at the River Heads Road entrance which is marked by one of Hervey Bay's former bus shelters. This shelter is one of the 100 or so decorated with bird paintings by local artist and environmental enthusiast Alan Peebles.

While signing in and being welcomed by John, six bird species above us seemed not to object to the intrusion on their territory, indeed the bird song seemed welcoming.

The walk itself follows tracks laid out by Alan Peebles some years ago. The tracks

have been maintained and marked out by Council. The tracks are well trodden testifying to the popularity of the Reserve with the general public. However, there are roots, stumps and some rocks threatening to trip the unwary walker.

32 species of bird were sighted and several more could have been added to the list had their bird song been identified. As for the botanists, prolonged discussion on the complexities of identification of some plant species dominated morning tea and even went on the following day by exchange of emails. Full lists of the plant life are available, and similarly a bird list by the Birdwatchers of Hervey Bay can be found on Council's website and on their Facebook page.

The chatter and giggle index of the walkers registered a high level of pleasure and reward from this outing. This is important as amongst the objectives of the Society is to educate, by all means possible, to understand the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment, Pir'ri Reserve being an excellent example.

✿ **Frank Ekin**

Nature Walk—Wongi Waterholes—November 2021

Wongi Waterholes seem so remote but are so close. 33 Nature Walkers made it through the Bruce Highway road works and found the Warrah Rd access to the Waterholes despite the various landmark notices having been removed in the 4 days since our pre walk reconnoiter. We gathered at the camp site and had plenty of time for a good natter as we waited for some late comers.

It was pleasing to learn that a number of walkers were revisiting Wongi Waterholes since last being there with their kids a long time ago. There is still evidence of kids enjoying the water holes with dodgy looking rope swings hanging over the pools. Being of a significant age, I can vouch for the wholesomeness of the lavatorial facilities at the camp site.

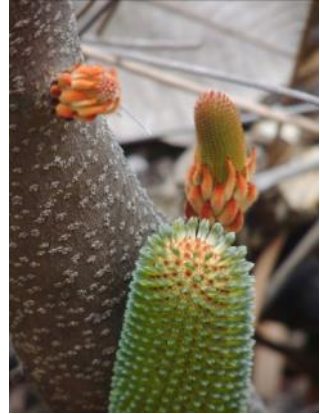
The warm up early stage of the walk was along a well trodden path to a gravel road and then we plunged right into the level littoral paperbark woodland bordering the waterholes. We followed the water holes watching out for fallen sticks and hidden roots. But still, the group noticed and pondered on the aquatic vegetation and even found one sedge frog. Another long stop was to view a Laughing Kookaburra and discuss its distinguishing features from less common Blue-winged Kookaburras. The walks team expected that it would take 30 minutes to morning tea at the former forest station, but in the event, such was the interest taken in the first part, the walk took over an hour.

Continuing along the littoral of the waterholes was intriguing. The walk was through dried up paper bark forest floor. Above was shade from the mature trees. This area was ideal for birding; Reed Warbler, White-throated Treecreeper, Eastern Yellow Robin, Rufous Whistler, White-throated and Brown Honeyeaters were seen, other birds were identified by song such as the Little Wattlebird and Cicadabird.

CJ gave us an impromptu talk on the possible geology of the waterholes, declaring in the most responsible scientific way, that his talk was conjecture rather than knowing the local geology. His talk illustrated one of the objectives of Wildlife Queensland, that is, “understanding of the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment” so one needs objective and authoritative evidence. On the same theme, the walks team encourages walkers to bring their various identification books and apps. Scott is an exemplar of this point, despite his expertise, he always brings his books and camera.

For the last quarter of the walk of the circuit we returned by a former forest track.

Free of fallen branches and exposed roots most walkers sped along. **✿Frank Ekin**



Photos by Helen Cory

Nature Walks—A look back at 2021

Reasonably enough the media besieged us with the difficulties of Covid during 2021. The impositions of lockdowns in Sydney and Melbourne, and the difficulties endured by those in New South Wales and Victoria, should invoke our sympathy and understanding. Our Nature Walkers defied the gloom and had a splendid year in 2021 with nine walks. The walkers were able to enjoy total freedom exploring, examining, and merely wandering the bush.

Two walks within the bounds of Hervey Bay, led by Sam Raveneau, introduced us to the successful restoration projects that Sam and the Council team were involved with. The first walk was on a very hot day along the Point Vernon foreshore. We saw replanting aimed at consolidating high tide sea inundations, and also plantings to widening shoreline shrub and tree cover to act as windbreaks protecting the Point Vernon Foreshore Reserve. Plantings to reduce erosion downstream of flood drains off Charlton Esplanade showed their effectiveness.

We all were informed, and indeed entertained, by Butch Titmarsh at Tandora. Butch led us through his Mangrove walk. Where most see mangrove trees and mud, Butch sees different species with different habits, different ages and histories amongst the mangrove trees. Some mangrove trees thrive with roots submerged in salt water for half the day, others need to be exposed to the air for longer. Butch pointed out how some trees expel salt and how other trees oxygenate themselves by their roots. Mangrove trees have different methods of propagating themselves and spreading their territory. Butch shared his interest in the microbiological life in the little puddles made by cattle hoof imprints.

There was one mountain walk at Mount Doongul. Part of this was through an area recovering from a recent fire but with vigorous regrowth. Some puddles indicated small areas of wetland which in fact harboured two uncommon frog species.

21 people went on the Glastonbury walk. The walk from the camp site was quite short. The earlier part of the walk was characterized by huge native trees, but sadly covered in Cats Claw creeper. The highlight of the trip was to visit the Australian Native Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Center. David and Paula Rowlands showed us their extensive facilities. Various areas were planted with suitable trees to provide koala preferred leaves while other areas were planned to gradually reintroduce animals back into the bush.

The Burrum National Park, Burrum River Section, is the correct title as there are four sections in the Burrum NP. The route taken this time differed from the long circuit of the 2016 walk with a “there and back” walk. The bird sighting of the day was made by our botanist, Scott, the Shining Flycatcher. Our newest birdo, Barbara, located the Brown Tree-creeper.

The Council’s Pir’ri Reserve, between River Heads and Mathieson Roads has a rich diversity of plants and huge mature trees. It was farming land some 40 to 50 years ago. It is always a rewarding site for the birdwatchers and for local walkers.

The final walk of the year was at Wongi Waterholes. The route taken was through the dried-out littoral of the ponds rather than keeping to forest roads. Again, the wealth of wetland plants was a thrill for the botanists, though a rubik’s cube puzzle for others. Nests of some insects and of birds were found and photographed.

✿ **Frank Ekin**

Nature Walks—The 2022 Program



New walks for the 2022 Nature Walks program are being explored over the Summer. Marlene was the first off the block and led two walks at Ferguson State forest. Undaunted by recent rain she set off at a cracking pace to do a 6km walk, then with energy to spare, she set off on a second short walk crossing a temporary wetland.

Christine led an exploration to Hunter's Hut Forest. At first, a temporary creek had to be forded and then a 2.5km easy drive to the old railway siding. Christine and Alice had very successful birding at the derelict railway siding while Max led the walkers at top speed. This was about a 7km walk on forest tracks and then a narrow roo track through magnificent forest with fresh foliage following the recent rain. Maps and navigation did not match, so a week later, a second more thorough walk was enjoyed despite the summer heat.

Vernon State Forest was last visited by the Nature Walkers in 2017. Since then, Christine had explored the many tracks within the forest. She encouraged us to do an exploration. Cass strode off to circumnavigate the forest following the four-by-four track. This walk revealed lots of other potential walks and so, in company with Noel in the lead, one of these walks was checked out and seemed suitable. A week later we did it again with Cass and Alice and confirmed it was a very attractive and interesting walk.

Some time ago Tina mentioned the extensive Council land bordered by Old Rifle Range Road off Booral Road. Noel, being an enthusiastic walker and interested in all that nature has on show, encouraged an exploration of this walk. It is level, shaded and is familiar to the Birdwatchers of Hervey Bay. It has many interesting forest features.

There are some principles being followed in planning for the 2022 walks. The major principle being to accommodate the three main interest groups. So, we seek walks

interesting for the botanists with their preference for very short walks, indeed, even a small area rather than a long distance. Then there are the birdwatchers who cover quite a distance depending on sightings and the need for frequent stops. The third principle is to accommodate the marchers, who relish the exercise and company, simply enjoy a vigorous walk in the bush with the chance of joining in with the botanists or bird watchers.

Another principle in planning for 2022, is to have several walks close to Hervey Bay to familiarize our group with the many local opportunities to enjoy the bush. Amongst our most successful local walks in 2021 were the two walks led by Sam at Pulgul Creek and along Point Vernon foreshore. There will be a couple of walks in the outer reaches of the Fraser Coast Region and perhaps one mountain climb.

Decisions are yet to be made, but thus far the walks team have had great fun in their explorations. The final plan will be decided in February and the first walk will be in March 2022. **✿Frank Ekin**

Photo: Alice, Frank and Noel in Vernon State Forest

New Life at Fay Smith Wetlands, Maryborough

We know that the recent massive flood which devastated much of Maryborough and surrounding areas sadly brought a lot of damage and death.

It was however a resurrection for the Fay Smith Wetlands which was still trying to recuperate from the previously dry conditions and the very hot fire that raged through a portion of it last year.

The Striped Marsh frogs are croaking, and I discovered a large insect I had not seen before, resting atop one the posts that line the sides of some of the paths. Approaching slowly, I was able to observe it and take photos. I thought it was most likely in the Antlion, Lacewing and Owl Fly group (order: *Neuroptera*). And it is indeed a Black Giant Lacewing, *Stilbopteryx walkeri*.

We also noticed for a few days that there were no mosquitos and wondered if the relentless heavy rain had bombarded and killed them.



Black Giant Lacewing

Amongst the many butterflies I have been coming across, I have seen more Evening Brown Butterflies than ever before in the wetlands. I was watching one that I had flushed and much to my surprise, it opened and spread its wings for a minute as it settled before eventually closing them. Evening Brown butterflies normally settle with their wings closed and one wouldn't normally get to see the brilliant flash of colour on the topside of their wings. That day was my lucky day!



Here (left) is an Evening Brown with its wings closed.



And here (right) is the same butterfly revealing the topside of its wings before eventually closing them.

As we continue to dig out the most persistent weeds we are on a continuous journey of discovery! **◆Ruby Rosenfield** (Photos also by Ruby)

Ruby Rosenfield and Coryn Dennett run the Fay Smith Wetlands Bush Care Group, part of council's CEP.

For 60,000 (or more) years First Nations People of Australia practised the technique of cool burning to mitigate the occurrence of severe bush fire in the Australian landscape.

Boyd Blackman, a Butchulla Elder and Senior Ranger for Qld Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) together with his Butchulla colleague Conway Burns, are teaching and implementing their traditional lore and culture to enable a working systems model for bush fire crisis prevention with the Queensland Government.

QPWS collaborate with the Southern Indigenous Rangers Network and have been involved in an advisory and active capacity for the past 20 years to organise and maintain effective bush fire management strategy in Queensland.

Cool burns are the favoured technique in fire management in order to prevent flora and fauna loss and degradation of ecosystems. In some cases, hot burns are selective methods of choice for specific low risk areas and where the trees are best regenerated by the heat of the burn, when seed casings are popped in the resultant heat.

Boyd and Conway advise that all burns should be done at critical times - early in the day (while there is still dampness and low temperatures) and during the months of April to September and during low wind speeds. **Traditional practice included both spot burns and mosaic burns**, the former being good practice when the fuel load is lower and the second, when the fuel load is high.

Spot burns incorporate a 'centre of block' approach, allowing the fire to spread in all directions from the starting point. Technique also depends on wind strength, and



if strong, counterpoint fires are also started. Examples given include the Bora Ring conservation zone at Pipeclay National Park. Spot burns are usually cool burns, allowing wildlife to escape towards the periphery of the block.

A mosaic burn is the best technique for high fuel load zones, where the zone is divided into smaller blocks. This technique includes a method where small, confined fires are managed over a period of time and seasons.

Traditionally, fuel build up was prevented as often as possible. The ideal management load is less than 17 tons of undergrowth per hectare.

Ideally, an ultimate aim is to establish healthy tree succession, providing protection for old growth trees in areas of dense undergrowth.

Examples of trees requiring a cool burn are Blue Gum and *Melaleuca quinquenervia*. Blue smoke from cool burns will trigger a release of seed pods from some trees.

QPWS work collaboratively with First Nations People for sustainable park management, including formal joint management for more than 20% of protected areas in Qld. QPWS are learning from Traditional Owners improved fire management practice for sustainable environment futures. ***Jackie Henrion**

Library Talk, November 2021—OUR PLASTIC OCEAN

Dr Kathy Townsend reminds us all of the critical pollution problem plastics are causing for our marine life. Sooner or later most of life on Earth will be adversely affected by plastic waste/residue in our environment. Microplastics have even been detected in the human placenta.

Dr Townsend estimates from research findings that each year more than 200 turtles in the Fraser Coast region are found in a sick and dying condition. Turtles tend to sample widely in their marine environment, snapping, biting and ingesting bits of plastic that look similar to jellyfish or red squid. These ingested pollutants cause blockages and toxic build up of gas in turtles, preventing them from diving to search for food. Gut impaction and perforation is another fatal consequence. Dr Townsend's research incorporates investigation into the widespread feeding habits of ocean life.

Microplastic debris contains particles the same size as plankton, another source of food for turtles and other species such as whales. Krill, a major source of food in the marine food chain, also eat microplastics indiscriminately.

Larger plastic pieces (bags etc.), fishing lines, ropes, netting all cause huge entanglement problems for turtles, manta rays, whales and sharks.

Despite recent legislation banning single use plastics, there is no significant change in the quantities of marine pollution. While there might be some reduction of debris on land, Dr. Townsend maintains the percentage of turtle life affected by plastics has not significantly changed.

Australia has a global responsibility to protect turtles and other species that range widely but spend significant amounts of time along the east coast of Australia, where plastic rubbish continues to drift approx. 250km from the mainland.

The results of plastic accumulation is devastating. Every ocean on Earth has a plastic patch called a gyre and the North Pacific Gyre is the worst of all. A Pacific Ocean clean up was initiated by Boyan Slat using technology to vacuum, sift and recycle the plastic immediately offshore to transport to land to recycle into various building materials. Unfortunately, the method sacrifices some marine animals and it does not capture microplastics which settle on the ocean floor. Refinement of this technology continues in the hope that a more satisfactory offshore recycling facility can be established.

What can we do ?

Local domestic recycling is limited but now some supermarkets provide bins at their store fronts for all soft plastics and cellophane packaging to be collected for recycling instead of tossing such waste into landfill bins. Some areas on the Fraser Coast foreshore that attract party goers must be monitored to prevent any rubbish, especially plastic confetti and balloons from being littered over the ground.

In some countries, they are taking the situation more seriously and every household is expected to sort all refuse into appropriate recycling channels.

✿ **Jackie Henrion.**

Can we count on you to join us in this fight?
<https://www.queenslandconservation.org.au/end_deforestation_petition>Sign

My Recollections of Alan Peebles



Where does one start when writing about Alan: writer, photographer, artist, filmmaker, activist, conservationist, and public identity? In addition to these roles, he had these associated traits: articulate, assertive, intrepid, enthusiastic, generous, optimistic and passionate about wildlife welfare. I think that sums up the man, someone I didn't expect to pass so suddenly although he was not in good health. I just thought he would enjoy more years watching birds on his Pacific Haven property. Alan did not just observe wildlife; he lived with wildlife. More about that later.

I must admit I'm now more cognisant of the range of his conservation activities, his writing, filming and activism. As a retired tourist officer, Alan knew how to lobby important people to bring about change. I wish I had told Alan that he was the catalyst behind my becoming a conservationist. He introduced me to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland when I sought support to defeat a proposed housing development near my residence in 2006.

To be an effective communicator, one needs to have a comprehensive grasp of one's subject, a confident persona establishing a rapport with an audience and a genuine desire to convince others of one's point of view. Alan had all of these qualities. They were evident in his wildlife columns in the Chronicle and the Observer beginning in February 2004 and continuing past 2015. His skill as a filmmaker resulted in the making of numerous DVDs featuring close-up shots of birdlife, reptiles and mammals. With his "trusty" camera, never too far away, he was able to capture the most amazing footage, like fairy-wrens feeding their babies, ospreys clutching fish in their talons and pythons swinging from rafters.

The most entertaining narratives revolved around encounters with snakes. He often found himself in precarious situations, created by the desire to bring the best

accounts to his audience. For example, once in filming a python in a tree, he "expected it to flop all over me" but "it was able to get a grip with its tail which was enough to cause it to swing like a pendulum right past my head, less than a metre away". A photo of a Tawny Frogmouth with a cane toad in its mouth that surprisingly lived after the event, as well as the photo of the frog that survived being half swallowed by a tree snake, provided his readers with astounding natural experiences. My favourite is of a male Koel with a strawberry in his mouth, feeding his mate.

As an organiser of the Library Wildlife Talks, I'm in the fortunate position of being able to keep his legacy alive by presenting his DVDs to the community. Alan was our inaugural presenter in 2015 and we ensured he headed each yearly list of presenters.

Photo previous page: Alan at the Branch's first Library Talk, 2015. Right: Alan paints bird number 101, a Nankeen Kestrel, in 2009.



Image: ABC

Alan's talks were very popular. Once, due to demand, one of his talks was moved to a university lecture theatre and well over 100 people attended. Alan was always most cooperative when asked for photos to advertise a talk, sending me quality shots of the appropriate wildlife to be featured. There are 21 of Alan's DVDs in the Hervey Bay Library.

As an activist, he had no hesitation in fronting Council with ideas to "right a wrong". He was most eager to have Hervey Bay known as "The City of Birds", even designing a sign. This desire led him to the bus shelter project in 2003, involving painting the sides of shelters with our local birds. He was devastated to learn after completing the 103rd, that Council was considering selling the shelters to private enterprise which would expose them to advertising. Luckily this did not eventuate. He successfully organised two "Art in the Park" exhibitions where local artists displayed their work. Behind each endeavour, was the aim of bringing the beauty of birds to the public.

Alan was most passionate about the plight of the dingoes on Fraser Island and promoted his idea of feeding them so they would not be "punished" by rangers for getting too close to tourists. He also decried the destruction of habitat for development, especially koala habitat. He was part of the contingent who lobbied extensively to save the Arkarra Wetlands complex from subdivision and urged Council to buy the Tea Gardens to provide a second community centre.

One of his most rewarding ventures was the transformation of Pir'ri, a Council bush reserve, into a people-friendly natural area which is a birdwatcher's heaven. He laboured with his cousin Sandra, to cut through the tangled undergrowth creating two kilometres of walking track. One of the bus shelters Alan painted is situated at the western start of the track. A seating area in the centre of the Reserve is called Peebles Rest. Both are a tribute to his time and labour in bringing such a delightful experience to the public. He affectionally related in one of his columns, of the fright he suffered after a Crested Pigeon made him "jump a mile taking off" when he was clearing trails. Foxes and cats were his nemeses, blaming them for the disappearance of the Noisy Pitta and the Black-breasted Button Quail in bushland like Pir'ri.

The Fraser Coast has lost an irreplaceable asset with the passing of Alan and many of us have lost a true friend.

✿ *Diane Christensen*

Alan Peebles was a member of WPSQ, although in recent times his membership had lapsed. He was a member of Friends of the Burrum River System.

Bill Gauld - A Birding Life



Bill loved Kingfishers and seeing the Yellow-billed was extra special for him.

One of the distinguishing features of the late Bill Gauld was his smiling, obliging face. Being a tall fella, most people got a glimpse of it at any outing that he attended, and there were many of those. From birth at Biggenden to farm life at Broowena, Bill ended up working in banking of all things. His initial post was to Maryborough, but with good academic results his next post was Mackay in 1956.

It was in Mackay that Bill crossed paths with Avis who was from a farm just outside of Mackay. From their late-teens, that was the start of a lifetime partnership of birding for Bill and Avis. So, for the clarity of this article, any reference to Bill will include Avis.

Through successive promotions with the banks, Bill did some time at Springsure, Bundaberg (5 years), Longreach, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, and finally Winton where he called it quits. From Winton, Bill returned to Rockhampton. Now free of employment restrictions, the birding could start in earnest, especially once their three girls could fend for themselves. The daily, trip, and annual bird lists commenced.

Geographic separation from other places with birding groups such as Townsville, Mackay, Gladstone and Bundaberg was no deterrent to Bill's birding trips. Connection with these groups resulted in many trips/camps to places like Yeppoon, Winton, Lady Elliott Is (with Bill Moorhead), Stanthorpe (survey), Gayndah, Bulburin NP, and many more. Group connection wasn't a pre-requisite for a trip, so Cape York, Christmas Is, Lord Howe Is, Norfolk Is, and a cruise to the Subantarctic Is-lands were also on the birding list.

As part of all that movement, Bill ended up at Hervey Bay about 18 years ago. His main activities there were with the Bird-watchers of Hervey Bay where he was involved in the Wader Counts at Toogoom and Burrum Heads with John Knight and people like Frank and Alice Ekin. The purchase of Akarra Lagoons by Hervey Bay Council, with a connection to the Wildlife Fraser Coast group, saw a few birders become members of WPSQ at the time. It seems that Bill was one of those, and he still retains a badge indicating that he was the Official Bird Advisor for the group at the time.

Other activities/incidents include coming across a dead Pelican, spotted from the car, near Clermont. The bird had a leg band on that indicated it had been banded as a nestling in Coorong, then travelled more than 2,000 km to get to Clermont in four months. While living in Rocky, but being members of Birdlife Mackay, Bill was part of an environmental survey at the Blair Athol and Gordonstone Mine sites. Mine management donated money to the group in recognition of the work; as thanks, the group then passed on money to Bill who used it to purchase bird books that were donated to the local library. Bill was also involved with the Wader Study Group, so lots of wader bird stories including a trip to Broome to see the migratory birds arrive. Got involved in setting up the nets and retrieving, sorting and recording netted birds, all before these exhausted birds died, then releasing them.

Numerous unsuccessful trips were made from Rockhampton across to Broome looking for a particular honeyeater. Years later Bill was digitising some of his earlier photos, and there it was in the background of one of the images from those trips.

Some unique trips include one with John Knight and Nerida to confirm a sighting of a white (leucistic) Magpie. Another to Victoria to take part in the Regent Honeyeater Captive Release Program; birds were bred at Taronga Park Zoo.

Bill's formal contribution to birding groups (BOCA at the time) and other groups (like Field Naturalists and SGAP) was usually as Treasurer, but roles often included a rotation of President and Treasurer.

Evidence of Bill's love of nature and photographic commitment is in computer folders of birds (various), butterflies, beetles, dragonflies, fungi, lizards, and 'other mammals'. Donations were made to make

up the \$500,000 needed to erect the Bilby fence at Currawinya. Bill and Avis, with daughter Diana, climbed Mt Etna to view the Little Bent-wing Bats come out of the caves, with a T-shirt to record the event; one of many T-shirts that give a record of Bill's conservation involvement.

Diana received a phone call the day before her recent birthday to say "We won't ring you on your actual birthday because we're going looking for grass parrots."

And Bill's favourite bird ... Kingfishers. On a trip to Seaforth near Mackay looking for a different bird, while going up a rocky creek, a man appeared and asked Bill what he was looking for. "Oh, come to my place tonight."; a common conversational outcome for Bill. This man had purchased his block near Mackay based on a conversation with somebody while he was on a trip near Darwin. The somebody told him that the Yellow-billed Kingfisher was back in Mackay. He went back to Mackay, found a Yellow-billed Kingfisher, then bought that block of land! While Bill and Avis were out looking for the Kingfisher on that block, Avis became fatigued and took a break while Bill went on. As would happen, the Kingfisher appeared where Avis was. Bill eventually got his first sighting of a Yellow-billed Kingfisher while on a trip to Cape York. Word has it that he stood with his mouth open for a while.

From reliable sources, words that describe Bill include thoughtful, caring, reliable, obliging, and generous. A gentle man and a gentleman who loved sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm at good sightings of any bird species. Bill would get excited about all native birds, including common ones ... he just loved birds!

✿ *Rodney Jones* with thanks to Avis Gauld, daughter Diana Innes, Nerida Wardrope, and Bill Moorhead for providing anecdotes.

Hiking on Hinchinbrook

Out of our region but nevertheless a holiday to remember. Opted for a soft bed in a bungalow at Lucinda before heading to the jetty with soft rain falling for the boat ride to the top of Hinchinbrook Island.

The rain got heavier, but our spirits did not dampen. Then sudden sunshine and we snuck up on a pair of green sea turtles mating. The male can hang on for up to 8 hours. Speedy ride hooking around the corners through the mangroves until we were let off on a boardwalk and a short walk through mangroves to Ramsay Beach.

First night was at Little Ramsay Bay. I hung my washing over the “croc inhabit the area” sign. Next morning we set off and confusion set in. Tammy and Tracey followed a set of arrows and I another. I saw a huge Golden Orchid in flower. Tracey was using her whistle and I couldn't hear it over the crash of the waves. What a relief when we were eventually reunited.

We detoured from the track together to see Banksia Bay. The midges were biting so we got out of there fast. Never saw any banksia in flower. Banksia Creek was delightful for a quick explore.

We made it to Zoe Bay that has lots of mangroves. Decided to sleep far away from those as we could. It was a 500metres round trip to the toilet. The mosquito coils I took came in very handy.

Next day was pure magic. Climbed up to Zoe Falls. The others plunged in. We could have stayed all day. Walking along the trail there was evidence of a massive landslide. Onto a high point and mobile reception. Quick message to family and on our way. We knew another waterfall was waiting so wanted to get to camp early.

Ed note: This article was held over from last Wambaliman. Marlene, who attends almost all our monthly walks visited Hinchinbrook in August 2021 with two friends.

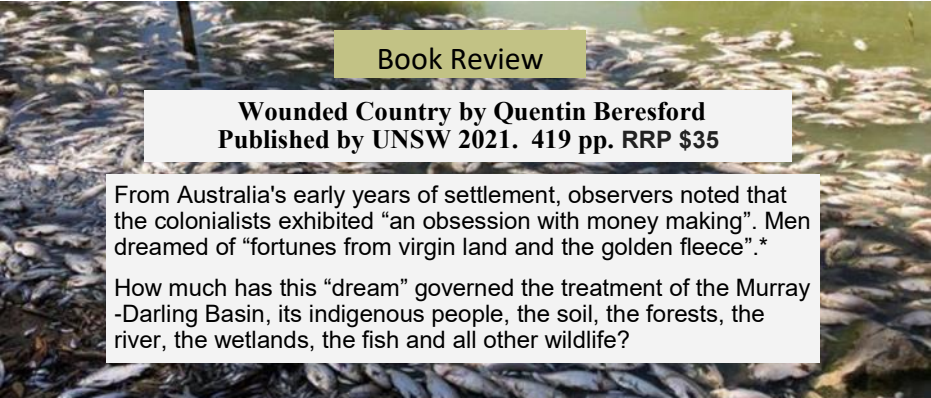


Mulligan Falls was a forest camp with plenty of rats to keep us company or scare us. Each campsite has rat racks. Everyone's pack was hung up. No food in the tent or your friendly rat would visit. I managed to ease myself into the cold water. Mosquito coils were a favourite accessory. At last it was comfortable to slip into my evening wear. I must have lost a couple of kilos.

Late start the final day. What a letdown. So much degradation by feral pigs. Even the beach could not be a refuge from them. Final creek crossing near the sign - “croc been sighted here in the last seven days”. I stripped off my pants and shoes. The ladies took off just their shoes. The boatman was watching as we were up to our hips in brackish water without a hope of seeing a croc. Final kilometre barefoot. We were ready to head home. Just 10 minutes and under the 5.76km long Lucinda jetty for a beach landing.

4 days to walk 32km. Doesn't seem far, but looking back we would have enjoyed it even more if we were there 5 or 6 days. Hinchinbrook Island is rated one of the top 10 walks in the world.

✿ **Marlene Luce**



Book Review

Wounded Country by Quentin Beresford Published by UNSW 2021. 419 pp. RRP \$35

From Australia's early years of settlement, observers noted that the colonialists exhibited "an obsession with money making". Men dreamed of "fortunes from virgin land and the golden fleece".*

How much has this "dream" governed the treatment of the Murray-Darling Basin, its indigenous people, the soil, the forests, the river, the wetlands, the fish and all other wildlife?

Quentin Beresford in "Wounded Country" describes a sad history of mistakes and missed opportunities in the Murray-Darling Basin. Beresford has thoroughly researched the history and there are 47 pages of bibliography and notes!

The tale begins with the fish kill near Menindee that shocked the nation – an estimated **one million fish died**. It is hard reading as Beresford relentlessly details in page after page the treatment of the river that led to this tragedy and more importantly, the huge obstacles to rectifying it.

A map of the Murray-Darling Basin shows a huge fertile area stretching from QLD to the Coorong in South Australia.

We coastal dwellers are so concerned with reefs, turtles, plastic, and coastal erosion. We take only sporadic interest and occasional alarm (when Four Corners wakes us up) to events inland.

And in fact, it seems that Australians are accepting the degraded landscape as normal eg dust storms, mud laden rivers, bare red soil.

The exploits of the early explorers, Mitchell, Sturt and Oxley are heroic but they looked at the grassy plains with views for agricultural potential – original inhabitants not taken into account of course...

The pattern set for land occupation led to establishment of "the squattocracy". The Melbourne *Argus* lamented that the British government has "handed over to a few

hundred men some fifty millions of acres of the finest land of this fair province".** This process "established the model of vested interests capturing the political system to control the resources."

That was in the 1850s. Has much changed?

Of concern to wildlife conservationists is Chapter 5, The War on Nature. Although we are aware that native animals were considered "vermin", the scale and brutality of the destruction can still shock.

A bright ray of hope came with the Water Act 2007 and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority whose decisions were to be based on science. This ray of hope was soon undermined once again by a coalition of vested interests and politicians.

Is there a path forward? Over the centuries the voices of the concerned have been repeatedly ignored and sidelined. As Beresford concludes, the only favourable future is if politicians listen and heed the scientists, the indigenous people, and regenerative farmers.

The book is very well researched with a good index and valuable source of factual information. It is an enlightening, readable chronicle of what happens when the government defines our national aspiration as making lots of money.

✿ **Carol Bussey**

* WEH Stanner, "The Dreaming and Other Essays" 2009

** Wounded Country, p 93



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.

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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 our local rescue service.

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

For all wildlife

WILDLIFE RESCUE FRASER COAST contact through Facebook page

ANARRA (Gympie region) Phone 5484 9111

WILDCARE (operates from Pomona) Phone 54272444

For snakes CJM WILDLIFE SERVICES 0409474440

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

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