

WAMBALIMAN

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



THIS ISSUE:

- Branch activities
- Annual Report 2021/22
- Great Sandy Marine Park - have your say
- Beach Nesting Birds
- A conversation with Cassy Ironside

SPRING 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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Library Talks

Organised by Diane Christensen
Bookings—FCRC website / Library

Backyard Bioblitz

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USC Partnership

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

Newsletter WAMBALIMAN

Publisher: WPSQ Fraser Coast Branch
Editor & Production: Jenni Watts
Printing: Peter Duck / Mailing: Jackie Henrion

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 and 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 20 JANUARY 2023**

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 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
Last meeting for year - 20 November

Executive Meetings

OCTOBER - DATE TBA

NATURE WALKS

Saturday, 5 November—LENTHALLS DAM

There is an interesting and easy walk through original rainforest and dry sclerophyll forest.

WILDLIFE TALKS IN THE LIBRARY 1-2PM

Hervey Bay—3rd Friday of the month
Maryborough—last Friday of the month
Bookings essential—FCRC website

October -

Jenna Tapley: *The Dingoes (wongari) on K'gari*

November -

An Alan Peebles DVD - Birds at Arkarra Lagoons

October 23

**Great Sandy Marine Park
Draft Zoning Plan—have your say**

Saturday, 12 November 10am-2pm
FCRC Environmental Showcase

CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP



Beach House Hotel for lunch
Sunday, 4 December (tbc)
Ring John 0428 980 019



FRASER COAST BACKYARD BIOBLITZ
Summer 2023: weekend 14-15 January

CENTRAL BRANCHES GET-TOGETHER
Postponed until 2023

Don't forget to LIKE us on

www.facebook.com/WPSQFraserCoast

Check out our page on

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

Wildlife Matters

The following articles appeared in this quarter

THE BEACON

August: Flying Foxes by *Diane Christensen*
September: In Praise of Magpies by *Diane Christensen*

TOOGOOM CHATTER & RIVER HEADS REVIEW

August: Foreshore Walk Pines to Gatakers by *Frank Ekin*
September: Hunter's Hut by *Frank Ekin*
October: Love your Neighbourhood Trees by *Carol Bussey*

THE MARYBOROUGH SUN

August: Hunter's Hut Walk by *Frank Ekin*
September: Colliery Walk by *Frank Ekin*
October: Ferguson State Forest by *Frank Ekin*

WILDLIFE MATTERS-Budding wildlife writers needed!

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)

CAN ANYBODY HELP ?

After assisting with Wambaliman distribution for the past 3 years, I am pleased to report that the process of packaging, addressing and posting has been streamlined and is a much easier task. Office National, who print our newsletter, now collate and staple each newsletter.

It is time for someone else to take on the easier task of packaging, labelling and stamping each newsletter and then posting out as I am resigning from the role. As the newsletter is quarterly, this task only happens 4 times a year. I am happy to ease a willing person into the role for next year's summer edition and can offer the

flexibility to wait a couple of seasons before a volunteer can take on the task.

Another admin issue is that of computer technology. Is there anybody among the membership who can offer a short tuition session on aspects of web site navigation and understanding and accessing Facebook. Many people have difficulties with Facebook. It is a useful resource for getting out information, including important petitions to bring more protection to Australia's flora and fauna.

Your help would be greatly appreciated and thank you in anticipation.

Jackie Henrion,
jikihen.7@gmail.com, 0407 172 874

We are saddened by the recent passing of one of our members, Diana Stevens.

While generally not actively involved in activities, Diana was a long-term, committed member. She was always supportive of our efforts, and her positive encouragement was appreciated by those working hard in the engine room of the Branch.

Diana was also a member and regular attendee of Birdwatchers of Hervey Bay (when her health allowed), the Ramblers walking group, and had recently joined in a couple of working bees of Friends of Parraweena Park CEP group.

Our Branch's condolences go to husband Alan and their family. Rest In Peace Di.

Branch Activity Report July—October 2022

Meetings/ gatherings

- General meeting 21 August
- General meeting 18 September
- AGM 18 September

Submissions

- 15 August - Submission supporting Federal Environment Minister's decision to refuse approval for Clive Palmer's proposed (open cut) mines in Central Queensland under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Prepared by Paul Murdoch.

Walks

- 7 August Nature Walk was The Colliery Circuit, Churchill Mines Road
- 3 September Nature Walk was Ferguson State Forest
- 2 October Nature Walk was Maryborough Showground Wetland & Equestrian Park

Library Talks

- 29 July Maryborough - Holly West on turtles in trouble
- 19 August Hervey Bay, 26 August Maryborough - Turtles' societal importance throughout history
- 16 September Hervey Bay - Marian Bennett Wildlife Photography
- 30 September Maryborough - Ruby Rosenfield Wildlife Photography

Uni Partnerships (page 13)

- 25 August—The Greater Glider project – Zoom meeting to discuss progress with our 'greater glider' grant – Involved collars Branch members, Jess Evans, her supervisors, Rod Buchanan (FCRC), and Teresa Eyres (Ecology Australia).

- Following negotiations the Branch will now be funding radio transmitters rather than tracking collars for UQ Koala research.

Spring Backyard Bioblitz

- 8 & 9 October. To date there were 23 observers making 340 observations of 234 species. Have a look at some of the photos on our Facebook page.

Workshops

- 18 September - Beach Nesting Birds presented by Simon Kennedy from *Bird-life Australia* (see report page 10)

Communication

- **Our Facebook page has reached 1000 followers!**



- Webpage
- Wambaliman Winter 2022 distributed July 21
- Wildlife Matters (page 4)

Advisory Groups (page 12)

- September 29 - Mary to Bay Rail Trail Advisory Group - Inaugural meeting

Stalls (page 8)

- 30 September - Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre's Sustainability Showcase.

Representation

- 13 August – Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council AGM – President attended

Fundraising

- Please support our container deposit efforts (page 2 for code)
- Weekly Beach House raffles conducted by John and Pat

✿ compiled by *Peter Duck*

WELCOME TO NEW BRANCH MEMBERS

Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council, Sonnie Flores, Leith Borchardt, Mike Borchardt, Beverly Kostka, Lesley Reid, Bianca Sands, Rae Lavey

Branch Annual Report 2021-2022

As presented at the State AGM 16 Sept 2022 & Branch AGM 17 Sept 2022

By **Peter Duck, President 2021/22**

Fraser Coast Branch continued to be a strong voice for wildlife preservation **education and advocacy** throughout this year. We have had a significant number of new members joining our Branch and have continued to effectively conduct our wide range of activities. Our Branch has made a number of representations to government agencies and were represented on two local government advisory committees, FCRC's Environment Advisory Group and BRC's Community Conservation Advisory Committee.

Branch memberships hover around 70, with about 10 family memberships. At the AGM in September 2021, we had five fresh faces on the Executive and two continuing Executive members.

Our monthly **Nature Walks** continue to raise awareness of the natural environment across the Fraser Coast. This year's Nature Walks program introduced several new walks. They continue to be well attended by members and the broader community, giving our Branch an opportunity to inform about some of the wonderful natural areas of the Fraser Coast, and some of the challenges in preserving the unique wildlife that abounds.

Other successful programs like our seasonal **Backyard Bioblitz** and monthly **Library Talks** in the Maryborough and Hervey Bay Libraries continued with a high degree of community participation. The Branch's **Wildlife Matters** columns, written primarily by members continued to feature in the local papers, the *Maryborough Sun*, *Hervey Bay Ad-*

vertiser, *Toogoom Chatter*, *River Heads Review* and the glossy *Fraser Coast Beacon* magazine. Our quarterly newsletter *Wambaliman*, in its 55th year, provides high quality dissemination of Branch news and views.

Other significant events occurring included the Branch end-of-year breakup at Arkarra Lagoons with 26 members present, a thankyou afternoon tea for writers and newspaper editors involved in *Wildlife Matters*, a farewell in May for Sara Gerdson (President 2013-2016) who is moving closer to Brisbane, and a walk and afternoon tea attended by 34 members and friends to view the walking track, bollards and signage funded by our Branch, through a local Council environment grant, in Parraweena Park Bushland Reserve.

The Branch has made numerous **submissions** throughout the year. Much of this was to do with local issues like Fraser Coast Regional Council's *Local Law Review*, *Domestic Animal Management Strategy Review*, and the *Matters of Local Environmental Significance Forum*. We made a submission to the Federal Government's *Draft Koala Recovery Plan*. Through our Branch Urban Development and Land Use Change subcommittee (BUDLUC) we have lodged objections to proposals in River Heads, Burrum Heads and Eli Waters.

The **Branch has representatives** on the FCRC's Environment Advisory Group, and Bundaberg Regional Council's Community Conservation Advisory

Committee. The Branch has also made application to be represented on the FCRC's newly convened (Maryborough to Bay) Rail Trail Advisory Group.

Our Branch funded the installation of a **memorial seat** at Arkarra Lagoons.

The plaque reads:

Over 50 years of Nature Conservation
WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY
OF QUEENSLAND

Maryborough Branch (1967-1996)
Hervey Bay Branch (1989 - 2004)
Fraser Coast Branch (2004 -)

The year also saw the unveiling of new **interpretative signage** at Arkarra Lagoons which was the culmination of a partnership between our Branch and FCRC's Natural Environment Dept.

Our Branch is involved in **partnerships with the University of the Sunshine Coast and the University of Queensland**. Our Branch entered into an agreement to support two USC Wildlife Ecology Honours projects through \$5000 bursaries. The first project on Eastern Grey Kangaroos in the urban environment has been postponed until 2023, the other looking at Greater Glider habitat will commence Semester 2 of 2022. Our Branch has partnered with UQ in providing funding to purchase tracking equipment for their koala monitoring program on local cattle property *Tandora* where Koalas have been relocated.

We continue **to raise funds** through our weekly raffle at the Beach House Hotel. Our healthy financial situation enabled the Branch to commit to making regular donations to two local wildlife rescue organisations.

During the year we have held five Executive **Meetings** and seven General Meetings, and our AGM in September 2021. We get considerable positive feedback and genuine enquiries to our **Facebook** page. We have 961 followers on the page. Our **webpage** is updated regularly by Head Office.

Since March 2022, much time has been given to planning for the **60th Anniversary celebrations**. Our Branch is showcasing our successful Nature Walks program. The event to be run on July 9, 2022, will feature three such walks, each with a different focus, and led by knowledgeable Branch members. One walk (6km) is from the Pines to Gatakers Bay; the second explores the Parraweena Bushland Reserve and adjacent foreshore; and the third is an Eli Creek mangrove walk. The walks culminate at Gatakers Bay for speakers and a BBQ lunch. Planning is for 120 participants, with at least 20 members helping in some way.

I thank the Executive for their support and resolve through the year. When President Vanessa and Secretary Kerry stood down from their positions last year for a well-deserved break, there were some bleak predictions about the Branch's future. As it turned out it was a fairly seamless transition, due largely to thorough hand over processes managed by Vanessa and Kerry, as well as Jenni, who passed on the overseeing of Branch finances after five years with all matters scrupulously attended to. The competence of the in-coming Executive members, and a membership with a fervent commitment to nature conservation, have helped to continue the highly regarded effectiveness of our Branch. 🌟

Sustainability Showcase 30 September

The members who set up the stall at the Hervey Neighbourhood Centre's Sustainability Forum on Friday, September 30, had one persistent query throughout the day: where were the people?



Only five organisations accepted the Neighbourhood Centre's invitation to participate in the Forum. These were: Parents for Climate Change Action, Council's Waste Management Division, The Veggie Patch, Terra Tribe Permaculture and ourselves.

With tables to spare, we availed ourselves of three which we realised would be needed to display the vast quantity of material we had brought to be displayed.

Bruce (pictured left) set out our comprehensive array of informative brochures including those on frogs, shorebirds, gliders, flying foxes, Platypus Watch and cat management, while Jackie contributed ANARRA leaflets, data on frogs and birds (Wide Bay region) and our native trees. Council brochures on the "Respecting our Natural Environment" series added to the information available.

There were also *Wildlife Australia* magazines to give away and our beautiful greeting cards that could be purchased with a donation made to Fraser Frog, or should that be K'gari Frog now?

The second table displayed information I collected from the Australian Nature Conservancy on ten endangered species in Australia, with details of their habitat, morphology and threats and how the Conservancy is ensuring their survival.

The third table centred on the anti-plastic campaign we have been running for nearly a decade. With the assistance of op shop decor, I displayed our produce bags with posters warning of the plastic danger to wildlife with the assistance of an endearing prop, Harry the Humpback (pictured at right). We had tulle produce bags for sale.

It was pleasing to see some visitors browsing the information on show with some eager to chat about the issues raised in the display.



Throughout the day, talks were held in an adjoining room with PowerPoint facilities. These were appreciated by the audiences who learnt new ways to act sustainably.

Branch member, Jackie Henrion, spoke on the value of small ecosystems in your neighbourhood. From global examples, she honed in on microcosms in the local area. Hand-outs on making your garden frog, butterfly and bird friendly were available, as well as ways to improve your garden soil focusing on nutrient composition and the carbon cycle.

Christel Schrank spoke on growing leafy greens, local food forests and

community gardens, Annie Newbery gave a talk on Council's waste management methods while Elizabeth Pohlmann and Eva Bekiesch illustrated ways to transform your garden into a productive food forest using permaculture practices.

A most delicious vegan lunch was supplied by the Centre; so good in fact, we enjoyed second helpings.

Our members and friends who attended (Bruce, Nicolette, Frank, Jackie, Carol H. and myself) felt our contribution was worth the effort and resolved to use opportunities to promote our Branch in this way again.

✳️ **Diane Christensen**

Wetland Musings

We continue to weed away in the Fay Smith Wetlands, Maryborough. We have gone back to the patch we originally started with in the early 2000s. We call it the Island. When we first started trees and vines were planted. (The *Melodinus australis* has gone rampant!) Over the years native trees and vines have germinated on the Island. Vines such as Wombat Berry (*Eustrephus latifolius*), Scrambling Lily (*Geitonoplesium cymosum*) are two of the vines which have emerged and established themselves in sections of the Island. The Scrambling Lily is currently in flower as we come into Spring.



White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike
Photo by Ruby Rosenfield

We take bags of weeds to the council refuse where we often see Willy Wagtails, Welcome Swallows, Cattle Egrets and Black Kites. Recently at the spot where we dump our green waste, we have also seen Pale-headed Rosellas and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, which we sometimes see in the wetlands, making themselves at home on the mountains of green waste, where there are a lot of tasty morsel insects to partake of. They really brighten up those green waste mountains! ✳️ **Ruby Rosenfield**

Beach Nesting Birds—workshop 17 September 2022

Visiting the beaches of the Fraser Coast we may be lucky enough to come across one of our resident shore-bird species that have adapted to build their nest right on the beach and rear their chicks there. If this happens, you should cherish the experience because these birds are being pushed to remoter locations as the human population, with its increasing ownership of dogs and 4WDs, and growing thirst for aquatic recreational activities, marches relentlessly to inhabit any land within four blocks of the beach. In NSW, the Beach Stone-curlew is being pushed towards extinction, with only 35 individuals remaining.

As a precursor to our Branch's AGM, we were treated to a highly informative workshop on beach nesting birds by Simon Kennedy of Birdlife Australia.

Simon detailed the features and habits of these species, and the threats they face. In Queensland these species are the Beach Stone-curlew, Pied Oystercatcher, Sooty Oystercatcher, and the Red-capped Plover. The extraordinary aspect of their breeding is the rudimentary nature of the nest. In the case of the Beach Stone-curlew and the Red-capped Plover, it is barely a scrape in the sand, possibly feebly disguised by a small amount of beach debris.

Simon related an intriguing story about ornithologists' understanding of the breeding habits of the Red-capped Plover. For a long time, observations of the nesting of the bird led them to the conclusion that it was the female that incubated the eggs. It was only after surveys were done at night that it was realised that the male did the incubating



left: Pied Oystercatcher on eggs. Possibly due to pressure on the beaches, a pair of Pied Oystercatchers took to nesting on a development site in Murphy Street in October 2020 (as pictured). Simon, our workshop presenter, said this is an unusual occurrence. Alas, on a moonlit night a mob of Torresian Crows, acting in a way their collective known describes, hungrily demolished the eggs. *Photo by Paul Woods*

right: Beach Stone-curlew at Point Vernon. *Photo supplied by Lesley Bradley*

at night, and then the female was able to forage for food. Presumably the male, with a far more prominent red cap, would be much more obvious to predators if he was to sit on the nest in daylight.

The second part of the workshop Simon explained the processes that Birdlife Australia have put in place to help with the successful breeding of these birds (the Beach Stone-curlew is listed as vulnerable in Queensland, and critically endangered in NSW). The protection afforded to these birds includes signage and fencing, education programs in schools and on beaches, volunteers patrolling and even the construction of low timber shelters. (Often wood coming ashore as flotsam is used as protection from detection by the birds, but it is also targeted by humans for firewood or driftwood decorations.)

Most of Simon's presentation was about the secretive and elusive Beach Stone-curlew. Birdlife Australia planned two organised counts for the bird in 2022, one in March and the other later in the year in November. The Spring count is looking for evidence of these birds pairing up and breeding, so Birdlife Australia can identify which sites are active breeding sites (the most meaningful areas to protect). If you would like to be involved in this count, contact Simon Kennedy via bnb-count@birdlife.org.au or phone 0447 265 726 and let him know you are interested and where you are located.

Thanks to Cecile for organising Simon to present the workshop.

✿*Peter Duck*



The workshop and AGM were held in the Pialba Memorial Hall. Hervey Bay has this beautiful space after renovations and refurbishments last year. The Hall was built in 1906, when it was the Pialba Shire Hall. In 1941 it was shifted across the road to its present location. It is used regularly by a number of community groups. Thanks to Peter who hunted around town for a suitable and affordable location for our workshop and 2022 AGM and liaised with Simon to make it all happen.

Mary to Bay Rail Trail Advisory Group

The new Rail Trail Advisory Group had its first meeting last week. This is the team that FCRC set up after inviting interested groups to get involved.

Our Branch is very supportive of the concept of a Cycle Track connecting Maryborough and Hervey Bay and was keen to have representation on the advisory committee. Rail Trails are experiencing a boom in popularity and have been very good for the economies of the towns that support them. Rail Trails utilise old disused railway lines that are ideal for cycle tracks because trains never had to deal with any steep inclines; probably a bit too flat for some serious cyclists.

A lot of the well-known Rail Trails traverse farmland, but the reason we love this one is because so much of it travels through natural bushland. These trails can only be used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders, so perfect for getting more people out into nature using low impact healthy means of travel. It also provides critical wildlife habitat and acts as a corridor between bushland patches.

FCRC has seven people sitting on this Advisory Group, and there are six community groups represented. They include The Bicycle Users Group (BUG), FC Cycling Club, Hervey Bay Triathlon Club, Wide Bay Trail Riders Equestrian Group, A Disability Equestrian Advocate Group and us, Wildlife Qld FC. This is a link to the FCRC website when they announced the new Advisory Group.

[Fraser Coast Rail Trail Advisory Committee appointed – Fraser Coast Regional Council](#)

As with most meetings involving Council, things were bogged down over a few procedural matters and there was a lot of discussion over the BUG wanting to add new clauses to the Terms of Reference. The Chair of the meeting was Cr David Lewis, someone most of us know and respect, so we're hoping we get some good outcomes from this project. The progress of building this trail is powering ahead with FCRC giving the BUG a licence to carry out work on a lot of the trail, using volunteers to bring the old line back up to a standard suitable for bicycle riding. Watch the progress. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/979547312549490>

For people wanting to get out and explore where this is going, there is a warning. There's a missing link between Nikenbah and Pigford Lane where cyclists have to travel on the edge of the treacherous Maryborough Hervey Bay Road and then turn right into Pigford Lane, but everywhere else you're free from traffic except from crossing Dunderowran and Torbanlea Roads.

This is a very big project with Council keen to use volunteers to carry out much of the work while they persevere with trying to access funding through various State and Federal grants.

Here are two links to help understand the scope of it all.

<https://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/2261/mary-to-bay-rail-trail-feasibility-study>

and the Trail development Plan at [Mary to Bay RT final TDP report \(frasercoast.qld.gov.au\)](#)

✿ *John Williams*

USC partnership

The Branch's \$5,000 grant to the University of the Sunshine Coast to assist an Honours student undertake a research project on Greater Gliders in the region is up and running. The Branch's USC Grants Advisory Group (Vanessa Elwell-Gavins, Cassy Ironside, Rod Jones, Bruce Dick and Peter Duck) held a Zoom meeting in August with Honours student, Jess Evans, and her four supervisors, Dr Beth Brunton, Dr Romane Cristescu, Dr Javier Leon and Dr Teresa Eyre, as well as Rod Buchanan from Fraser Coast Regional Council.

An important task for all our members and friends is to tell us as soon as possible if you have (or know of) a property

where greater gliders have been seen or that may have suitable greater glider habitat (contact: Vanessa Elwell-Gavins on 0428 624 366 or via email: harpsi2cello@gmail.com).

Jess plans to test the predictions derived from geospatial analysis on 20 sites where there are either high density or low density habitat trees.

Members may also wish to join Jess as volunteers to assist with this final component of her research.

Jess is applying for other grant funding for glider detection dog surveys and other project expenses.

✿ **Vanessa Elwell-Gavins**

Research Plan: Can geospatial analysis help refine glider habitat mapping?

By Jess Evans, USC Honours student

Abstract (in part) - Mapping and identifying species distribution is crucial to inform conservation outcomes and without it, habitat cannot be effectively protected. Geospatial analysis tools can significantly increase cost-effectivity, timeliness, and spatial extent of species distribution surveys, compared to traditional field surveys. Geospatial analysis has been used to classify habitat structure and suitability, particularly, to identify hollow-bearing trees. Habitat trees are essential landscape features for many Australian natives including greater gliders (*Petauroides spp.*); however, they are rapidly declining. Limited studies have predicted the distribution of habitat trees using geospatial analysis. This study will investigate whether geospatial analysis can help to refine high quality habitat suitability for greater gliders. Our study will be on the Fraser Coast. Habitat suitability modelling published by the Queensland Herbarium shows predicted glider habitat within the Fraser Coast Regional Council (FCRC), where the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland have expressed concerns about the survival, after recent fires, of historical populations of gliders. This current mapping is very broad (most of the Council is mapped glider habitat), so refinement is needed to guide survey efforts, and in turn inform management decisions on a regional scale such as where to increase connectivity, decrease fragmentation and prioritize nest box installation. Here we investigate whether integrating vertical forest structure could be one such refinement.Spotlighting and/or detection dogs would be utilised to survey presence of greater gliders at each of the 20 sites. Presence of gliders would be compared between high and low habitat tree densities.

News and Views from the WBEC President

As I write I think how Butchulla people have been caring for this country for millennia, maintaining it as green and pleasant land – and then outsiders moved onto country and started making changes. In part we and this country now suffer the unintended consequences of those changes.

I'd like to alert Fraser Coast Branch members to a move by the timber industry to get native forest logging subsidised by letting the burning forestry waste for power generation earn Renewable Energy Certificates. The Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science & Resources, which wants to hear what “stakeholders” think about “Native forest biomass in the Renewable Energy Target: consultation paper” (due date 21 October 2022; <https://consult.industry.gov.au/native-forest-biomass-in-the-ret>); as Australian citizens, we are all stakeholders, since State Forests are held in trust on our behalf.

To my mind this is just a rehash of the woodchip industry of the 1980's, when the idea was that an export wood chip industry could be based on by making wood chips from wood waste that can't be milled into timber, and exporting this “left-over” material to overseas paper mills.

The result back then was large areas of forest being clear-felled. The felled trees didn't go anywhere near timber mills to be turned into useful timber, instead magnificent old-growth forest just went straight into the jaws of wood-chipping machines for overseas paper manufacturers, who couldn't believe their luck in not having to log their nations' own forests.

So many Australian old-growth forests was lost as a direct result, and the present-day extinction crisis, particularly that of koalas, is in large part a consequence of those long-ago actions; the timber industry now wants to do it all again, so I'll ask Fraser Coast Branch members to have a look at the above web reference.

Speaking of koalas, WBEC's submission to the EPBC amendment (Save the Koala) Inquiry is submission 8 at https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/SavetheKoala47th/Submissions. It's also posted to WBEC's Wordpress page.)

Closer to home, the draft Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan is available for consultation (<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/coasts-waterways/marine-parks/zoning/gsmgp>); feedback is sought up until midnight on 23 October 2000, either by responding to the online survey at

https://intheoop.des.qld.gov.au/great-sandy-marine-park-zoning-plan/survey_tools/zoning-plan, or by written submission [email: gsmgp.review@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:gsmgp.review@des.qld.gov.au), or post to Great Sandy Marine Park Zoning Plan Review, Dept of Environment and Science, PO Box 15187, City East QLD 4002.

My understanding is that the overarching threat to Great Sandy is upstream in the Mary Basin, where post-colonisation land clearing has already cost Maryborough its one-time thriving shipbuilding industry when the Mary River silted up when the 1974 floods stripped so much sediment from upstream denuded slopes and banks and dumped it in the tidal reaches of the River. The soil lost from cleared landscapes in the 2022 floods smothered the seagrass meadows of the Straits and the corals of Hervey Bay. This means that until and unless stream banks throughout the Mary Basin are restabilised with restored riparian vegetation, there can be no relaxation of conservation measures in the Great Sandy marine Park, Landcare groups and the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee in particular are working towards this goal, and we look forward to fishery groups advocating in support of their work. * **David Arthur, President WBPEC**

Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council (WBPEC) is our regional umbrella conservation organization. Our Branch is a member.

Great Sandy Marine Park Draft Zoning Plan—have your say

We have received a communication from James Sherwood, the Marine Parks Campaigner of the Australian Marine Conservation Society, urging us to be involved in making a submission to the Draft Zoning Plan before the consultation period closes on October 23. While a number of changes are welcome, there are some aspects of the Draft Plan which cause concern.

The new draft zoning plan for the Great Sandy Marine Park is a good step in the right direction for the region. The proposed increase in Marine National Park from 3.9% to 12.8% will provide increased protection to the park's threatened species and will benefit biodiversity and biomass inside these green zones.

The government's proposal to remove the designated Great Sandy Area is a big win for the turtles and dugongs in the region. Following back-to-back flooding events earlier this year, seagrasses in the region have been decimated.

Threatened species have received additional protections. The MNP at Wolf Rock is proposed to be expanded, additional go-slow zones and expansions to existing zones have been proposed and protections to migratory shorebirds will be expanded across the park.

*However a worrying trend is emerging across the east coast of Australia that will have implications to other marine parks and that is the downsizing, delisting and downgrading of protected areas. **AMCS strongly opposes the removal of existing protections that are proposed in the new draft zoning plan.***

The AMCS has a [draft joint submission](#) that they have been working on which you can get by contacting James 07 3846 6777, marineconservation.org.au to help with your submission. (see also David's article page 14)

There is also a [survey](#) on the government's website you can fill out.

Colliery Circuit—walk on 7 August

The Fraser Coast Bicycle Users Group is instrumental in opening up the former Maryborough to Hervey Bay railway route for cyclists, walkers and horse riders.

44 enthusiastic walkers gathered at the Churchill Mine Road end of the Rail Trail to explore nature and the remnants of railway, railway sidings and coal mines on our Branch's August walk.

The railway played an important role in the industrial and development history of Maryborough, Aldershot and Hervey Bay. FCBUG and WPSQFC members joined forces and marked out a trail joining up these old industrial remnants. This formed "The Colliery Circuit" for walkers.

While the primary objective of opening up the Rail Trail is to encourage walking and cycling our Branch recognizes the importance of the old railway route because it contains remnant native vegetation providing strategic wildlife corridors and biodiversity for our area.

On the walk there were examples of several types of woodland and forest regeneration with good understory re-



growth. Old, gnarled habitat trees and younger straight ironbark and Queensland Blue Gum trees were scattered through the area. Healthy vegetation on mullock heaps was an unexpected but pleasing finding adding to the open woodland aspect.

The walkers photographed King Parrots and young Bearded Dragons. While there is some weed infestations on disturbed areas, most of the area supports a good diversity of native vegetation.

✿ *Frank Ekin*



Top photo by John Hampson—Max addresses the walkers.

Photo left by John Hampson—walkers on the old mullock heap.

Ferguson State Forest—walk 3 & 11 September

Another fascinating lesson was learnt on the Ferguson State Forest walk Saturday 3 September 22. Despite 35ml rain falling on the eve of the walk, the runoff and drainage off the Six Mile Creek catchment was so efficient that the track was perfectly manageable. Smaller plants and grasses bowed over, flattened on the ground by the runoff, but undamaged.

At one stage light rain fell barely wetting the brave seven walkers who turned up even though the walk was formerly postponed until the following weekend. Even our boots did not get wet. The forest itself was looking its best following the fresh rain.

The following weekend on Sunday 11 September, the walk repeated. Fifteen people took part. Marlene led in her inimitable way. She had planned out a series of points of interest which prompted questioning and interest, these being amongst the purposes of these walks. One of Marlene's "points of interest" was that the water level in two ponds was unchanged despite the heavy rainfall and that the overflow was

not eroded by the recent heavy rain. However, we could see that erosion had occurred on Six Mile Creek, though this did not appear to be recent.

Three serious bird spotters identified 26 species, mostly by bird song. Birding and 6km walks are not compatible! Ferguson State Forest has a diversity of habitats for birds, but one needs to stand still in a spot and observe. One of Marlene's unintended points of interest was a Scarlet Honeyeater low to the ground on a fallen branch. This male bird was in his most splendid scarlet livery.

Marlene pointed out the ground features of the ironstone ridge upon which some of the forest sits. Ironbarks and Spotted Gums are characteristic of such an ecosystem. In all, the botanists identified 52 plant species.

The pleasure and success of the walk was evidenced by a very high giggle and chatter index and by the fact the walk took 4 hours 20 minutes and not the 1 hour 30 minutes allowed for!

✿ **Frank Ekin**



*Walkers move through an avenue of beautiful yellow / orange flowering Hairy Pea Bushes (*Pultenaea villosa*), one of the botanical highlights for the day.*

Photo by John Hampson

Maryborough Showground Wetland & Equestrian Park- walk 2 Oct

Encouragement of rational land use is one of the four objectives of the WPSQ. With this in mind, our walk explored the Maryborough Showground and Equestrian Park, which encloses a significant wetland as an example of the integration of a major Fraser Coast recreational asset with the preservation of the natural environment.

The first impression on entering the Equestrian Park was of well-tended lawns and well spaced mature native trees. There are plenty of good public facilities too. As the walk proceeded, we followed much of the equestrian course before entering an extensive area of forest which, at one point, concealed a significant wetland bordering the Showground's main car park.

This first stage had points of interest for the walkers. Firstly, that it was pleasant and easy to walk along an equestrian cross-country course with nature asserting itself on both sides. Attracted by a stand of tall yellow flowers (a *Crotalaria* sp.—there are 21 *Crotalaria* of which 9 are native) walkers realized that attractive as the Park is, non-native vegetation was all too apparent.

There were some curious structures along the way, these being remnants from a Scout Jamboree a decade ago. Again, these remnants confirm the idea that popular events and the environment can be compatible as advocated by WPSQ.

Finishing the first circuit at the point where we started, the walkers used the sheltered tables and benches for morn-

ing tea. John Abbott, who is a Grand Master of the Australian Photographic Society, had dozens of his superb insect and plant photographs on display. He gave us a history of his photographic experience.

After the break, the walkers did the second circuit which took us round the large lake. Again, the luxuriant vegetation was very attractive, though invasive plants were much in evidence. This was largely rough pedestrian paths, though intended for mountain biking.



From the point of view of objectives of WPSQ the Equestrian Park introduced walkers to an example where “development” and the natural environment can co-exist and complement each other. Indeed, 30 bird species were identified by one observer indicating a diverse habitat, but because it was a disturbed area in the past, and weeds are a problem, it will need enlightened environmental management to be restored as a natural area.

✿ *Frank Ekin*

Wildlife Photography— September library talk

Attendees to the September talk in the Hervey Bay Library were in awe of Marian's photography. Many of her photos were taken in Canada and other places overseas but the techniques Marian uses are applicable to wildlife everywhere. Here she shares some of her tips.

The photos shown for the library presentation were taken using a 100 – 400mm lens on a Canon 70D camera. The camera was set to Scene – Sports Mode with high-speed burst shutter speed and the exposure was set to one stop under middle. This setting slightly underexposes the photos reducing the chance of overexposing your subject, particularly when photographing on the water.

Photographing wildlife requires patience and you need to allow time to observe the habits of your subject before taking photos.

If you can **anticipate the behaviour** of what you are photographing, for example, a bird circling back to its mate or a whale repeatedly breaching, then this provides an increased opportunity to anticipate the timing to obtain the photograph you want.

Lighting is important for photos, but wildlife isn't always available during the best lighting and sometimes you take photos when you can and accept that the lighting will not be ideal.

Take time to **learn about the animal's behaviour** to obtain the best photos. Take care to approach carefully to reduce disturbance and try to capture the natural behaviour.

Marian Bennett with her camera



I photograph wildlife with the **aim of not disturbing** them which requires observing the behaviour of your subject carefully and backing away if their behaviour changes, indicating my presence is impacting them.

Birds can be difficult to photograph on the wing as getting focus while they are moving can be difficult - but keep practicing.

For large marine animals such as dolphins, Orcas and Humpback Whales, you need to learn about the behaviours of the animal you are observing to understand the photo opportunities that may occur. There are some species that repeat behaviours making photography easier, such as when Dusky Dolphins repeat their acrobatics multiple times. Behaviour of other species such as Orcas are more difficult to anticipate as their particular behaviours are infrequent and less often repeated.

Challenge yourself with your photography – use different angles and lighting, and photograph different behaviours and different animals. Enjoy your photography and challenge yourself each time to improve a little.

✿ *Marian Bennett*

Turtle Rescue—July library talk



AUSTRALIAN SEABIRD & TURTLE RESCUE

In July, Holly West from Australian Seabird and Turtle Rescue spoke about turtle identification and rescue services.

A major problem causing sickness and death to turtles is the reoccurring impact of human plastic waste in all oceans on the planet. Turtles have a foraging habit where they bite first on anything that looks remotely like food, including colourful and clear plastics (resembling jelly fish, one of their favourite foods). Unable to spit out and / or regurgitate stuff in their mouths, plastics and other non nutritious inorganic matter is swallowed.

In addition, global warming is making previous successful nursery and hatching zones for breeding inhospitable. Unlike some other species of wildlife, there is no indication that turtles are moving southwards to compensate for temperature control of their hatcheries. Some of the largest rookeries for the Green Sea Turtle are found on the islands off Cape York Peninsula.

Temperature of the surrounding sand during egg maturation at these rookeries is critical not only for the gender balance of the species but also the survival rate of all hatchlings. Turtle Rescue includes attempts at assisting the nursery environments by cooling the sand areas utilising shading and irrigation; monitoring and a measure of protection from predation and unnatural light sources.

Yet a third evolving problem is the inability of the State government to ban the use of shark nets off the Queensland coast. These nets not only trap and kill sharks but many other marine species such as turtles.

Endangered species include Leatherbacks, Loggerheads and Hawksbills with Green Sea Turtles classified as vulnerable.

Holly gave some detail of the various identifying features and internal anatomy of these different species, all available to the reader on appropriate web sites. Photos of their mouth parts were shown to indicate the manner of food ingestion, and the associated inability to regurgitate plastics and other rubbish.

To report sick an injured turtles - Apart from the **Australian Seabird and Turtle Rescue** service, there is the **NSW Turtle Watch**, *Turtles in Trouble* (Fraser Coast) 0493 242 903 and the government's marine stranding **Hotline** 1300 130 372

✳️ *Jackie Henrion*



[\(852\) 'Game changing' study of turtles and plastics on Great Barrier Reef | ABC News - YouTube](#)

Turtles and Humans—August library talk

In August, Debbie Brischke from Tiaro Landcare gave an interesting presentation on the role of turtles in mythology and the plight of freshwater turtles in Australia.

Mythological examples include early graphic representations of turtles along with elephants supporting planet Earth in space, and, more recently with the mock-turtle in Alice in Wonderland adventures. Turtle scales were once used to represent the calendar months of time in ancient civilisations.

Traditionally, and long before there was any sense of saving turtle species due

to threatened extinctions, they were an essential part of the diet of Indigenous peoples globally, providing fat, eggs and oil.

Today, about 60% of all turtle species are officially listed as threatened species, a sobering thought considering turtles have seen dinosaurs evolve and eventually become extinct.

Apart from Australia, turtle conservation is active in Malaysia and Brazil.

A central link in Australia is TurtleSAT established via the Citizen Science network, monitoring turtle activity.

Debbie also spoke about the “Punk Turtle”

The Mary River Turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) – recently referred to as the “Punk Turtle” (given the green algal growth on its head), is of great local interest, a species unique to the Mary River.

Tiaro Landcare has been researching and monitoring the Mary River Turtle since 2001. Since the 1970s the population of nesting females has dropped by 95%. The estimated average life span of this turtle is 40-50 years.

While Tiaro Landcare have successfully hatched and raised the Punk Turtle in the past, limited resource does not permit continuation of this strategy. A major problem is predation by catfish when these hatchlings are released back into the Mary River. The Queensland State government is not supportive through either funding or resource support unfortunately.

Generally, assistance for sea turtle survival has received much more support, attention and funding compared with

aid for fresh water turtles in Australia.

For freshwater turtle species, Tiaro Landcare emphasise the importance of looking after the river and especially the river banks. What is needed is

- increased cooperation from land owners along the river to reduce pollution.
- increased cooperation among land owners running cattle to provide electric fencing along important sections of the river bank to reduce bank destruction.
- awareness and protection of turtle nesting sites. The turtles prefer sandy banks for nesting, laying 17-20 eggs at a time.

Sightings of freshwater turtles can be recorded at TurtleSAT and any injured turtles should be captured and appropriate wildlife rescue services such as ANARRA, servicing the Mary River region, should be immediately contacted.

✿ **Jackie Henrion**



A Conversation with Cassy Ironside

Many of you would have met the energetic and enthusiastic Branch member, Cassy, who is currently an integral member of our walks team and attends Branch meetings organising the afternoon tea.

Cassy's interest and activism for the environment and wildlife has accelerated rapidly since joining our Branch early last year. So enthused was Cassy after seeing how much one can learn from our nature walks, as a learning tool for herself and a way to educate others, that she joined John, Frank, Max, Marlene, Noel, and Sam on the organising committee.

Cassy is a Fraser Coast local – Hervey Bay raised. There's mum, dad and two sisters. As a family they enjoyed outdoor activities including sport, bush-walking, and camping. Mum and Dad were into archery – honing skills on feral animals. They taught the children to be observant in the bush and to be respectful and enquiring of the natural environment.

Cassy's working life started accidentally when she was employed by McDonalds when she really intended to gain sponsorship for her running. For the next couple of decades, she moved through a variety of jobs in retail and administration. She worked in sales at Supercheap Auto and for a long time as a pharmacist technician. Other jobs involved her talents in sport and the outdoors including futsal and hockey Development Officer, and more recently working as the Recipient Liaison Officer for Rally for a Cause where money is raised by Hervey Bay's Dunga Derby. (And with all that enthusiasm and energy she has, participating in car rallies on six occasions.)



But Cassy was restless and longed for other things. A nature walk was a turning point. In February 2021, Jenni and Peter, with Vanessa as the then Branch President, ran a mangrove walk on behalf of the Branch at Eli Creek as part of the Council's month-long program centred around World Wetlands Day. The program was organised by Tina in her (then) Council role. Nearly 60 people turned up and Cassy was suddenly with a lot of people who shared her passion and knew a lot about the natural environment. She had found a niche!

Cassy joined the Branch and attended the Branch's monthly Nature Walks. She completed a Certificate in Wildlife Management (online). She attended Axiom College in Hervey Bay and gained a Certificate 111 in Land and Conservation Management. This year she enrolled in the Diploma of Animal Ecology at Hervey Bay's USC campus. She became active in volunteer roles with *Turtles in Trouble* (rescue) and ANARRA (rescue).

Cassy (right) and Angela from *Turtles in Trouble*.

Source: interview found at [bridging the gap between rescue and research](#)

Cassy is not a wildlife carer. She is involved in rescue of sick and injured animals. After assessment, she and her colleagues place animals with carers, wildlife hospitals, or vets. Working with *Turtles in Trouble*, a Fraser Coast based volunteer group, she is aware of hundreds of stranded sick turtles in our region, representing unprecedented numbers of local turtles in trouble.

There are the diminishing sea grass beds, the mystery ulcerative skin disease, boat strikes, floating syndrome, effects of plastic ingestion and so on. Cassy is buoyed that the authorities, universities, and volunteer groups are all working together toward the best outcomes for the turtles in our local region.

As Semester 2 at Uni loomed Cassy made another momentous decision. She has given up her course to pursue a slightly different direction. Through her studies and volunteer work she feels the picture is clearer and she be-



lieves that what is important is retention and restoration of habitat for the wildlife. She believes we need to educate people on this fact – that we can't save a species without protecting its habitat and that we can't hope to have diversity without diverse and intact ecosystems.

There is no inkling that Cassy wants to be an academic and write scientific papers or spend hours analysing data in a lab. She wants to be outdoors and active and getting her hands dirty doing the grassroots stuff - restoration and revegetation of habitats. She has an insatiable desire to learn about the natural environment, to know the flora and fauna, to understand the problems and to follow the research and to share this new-found knowledge with others.

✿ **Jenni Watts**

[read about our turtles and dugongs in trouble](#)

The following references contain local content and are well worth reading.

[Floods, new mystery disease impact starving marine turtles | UniSC | University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia \(usc.edu.au\)](#) (3 May 2022)

[Turtles, dugongs in danger from seagrass loss - May 2022 - JCU Australia](#)

<https://theconversation.com/dugongs-and-turtles-are-starving-to-death-in-queensland-seas-and-la-ninas-floods-are-to-blame-190663> (19 September 2022)



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 54272444

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 \$24 and an extra \$6 if you want a pocket. (from Morgans)*

Other options include:

• *“Claremont” 95% cotton shirt in apple green is available from BullAnt Designs in Pialba - \$30 with the logo.*

• *get the logo on any shirt for \$9.50 at Morgans Sewing & Embroidery in Pialba.*

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