

CONSERVATION NEWS
Dec 2022-Jan 2023

January meetings:

Executive: TBA

General: Wednesday 18
January, 1 pm at Caloundra
Power Boat Club, Golden
Beach

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photocopying of
Conservation News



From the October & November Meetings

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

Following submissions, the TMR Stakeholder Interest Group will include representatives from WPSQ, Value Caloundra, Caloundra Residents Association, Active Transport proponents, representatives of seniors' interests and others including local businesses. We have requested that proxies be allowed, although it is unclear if this will be permitted, and that documentation be available prior to meetings. Our discussions with Jason Hunt (Caloundra MP), indicate a shift towards consideration of a 2-lanes option.

Bribie Island breakthrough

The meeting on 21 October organised by Jason Hunt, with Marine Safety Qld, and the Caloundra Coastguard, Cr Landsberg, local property developers, tourism operators, boating users, Bulcock Beach lifesavers, along with Caloundra Residents Association, TAPP and WPSQ representatives, has placed any action on dredging in a waiting pattern. An independent report for the DES is due late November, however will be a review of existing reports rather than any new research.

MSQ considers that any dredging of the secondary channel to allow safer access for the Coastguard could be negated during the upcoming storm season, and that in any case 12-18 months are required for permits for such work in the Marine Park and RAMSAR site. 'Public good' could override such requirements.

The Branch and TAPP have prepared a response to reduce easy access by the public to North Bribie Island, making a case for selective dredging (when and if approved) in the present naturally evolving north-south channel towards the middle of the Passage. By excluding dredging activity from the sensitive, easily eroded beaches, foreshore and dune areas of Bribie Island National Park and Golden Beach, the outcome could be a reduction in the high numbers of residents, visitors and dogs accessing the National Park at low tide and subsequent protection of critical habitat for native wildlife, migratory shorebirds and marine turtles. Limited tidal flushing north of McLean Street and the lack of strong tidal flow at the northern entrance could lead to the northern end of the Passage becoming Anoxic (a dead zone) as decomposing algae from stormwater reduces oxygen in the water. This possible

Advance Dates

Currimundi Catchment Care Group is again running the **Lights on the Lake festival on Sunday 4 December at Crummunda Park** (north side of Currimundi Lake)

Saturday 10 December: Branch end of year Break-Up at Ben Bennett Bushland park: 8 am for a walk, then 10 am for morning tea. Bring a plate to share, as well as family and friends and especially children. **Meet at the Queen Street (northern) entrance.**

Monday 16 January TBA: Executive meeting at President Anne's place (please come along if you'd like to contribute).

Wednesday 18 January: 1 pm, General meeting, Caloundra Power Boat Club, Golden Beach; **venue TBC**

Faunawatch Outings

Second Wednesday Walks, **8 am at Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens** continue in 2023

Venues for Fourth Monday walks will be notified.

threat to human health and wildlife could also justify limited dredging in a short section of the naturally forming channel, at no more than a metre depth at low tide.

At Cr Terry Landsberg's Div 2 community meeting this month, Jude conveyed our thanks to Council for their Responsible Pet Ownership sessions for the public, in relation to shorebird protection.

Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve

We were pleased and relieved at the recommendation for removal of the Isabel Jordan Reserve as an aerodrome expansion area in the new Caloundra Aerodrome Master Plan 2042, as endorsed by the Sunshine Coast Council at their 17 November Ordinary Meeting, reversing the proposal in the previous 2013 Plan. The committee thanks Sue Aspland and Helen Kershaw for their contributions to the community consultation process.

Shelly Moffat update

There are no announcements yet despite repeated requests for updates from Council.

Inter-Urban Break

WPSQ, along with SCEC and TAPP, met planning staff from Moreton Bay Regional Council, who, like Sunshine Coast Council are keen to preserve the IUB as large an area as possible. Moreton agrees to the value of to the Break ending up as recreational space for the dramatically expanding population north of Brisbane advocated by the state government. The role of conservation groups will be to highlight core conservation areas, including of course the Pumicestone Passage, and raise public awareness, and a coalition is mooted. Stockland, owner of Halls Creek (to the south of Aura) is concerned about pushback affecting their development chances.

TAPP has produced the following action guide for residents and visitors to the Coast:

'We do not want urban sprawl from Brisbane to Noosa (six million people by 2030)'

- *Support Sunshine Coast Council's Inter-Urban Break Plan*
- *Inform your Councillor you support this Plan*
- *Inform your State Member that you support this plan*
- *Discuss with your neighbour and friends: 'we do not want more urbanisation between Brisbane and Noosa'*
- *Discuss with your Councillor, State Member, your neighbour and friends the need to protect the Pumicestone Passage from any new greenfield development.*

The Inter-Urban Break and Pumicestone Passage need community support, and for politicians the loudest voice is you. We need your help now to protect the SCRC Inter-Urban Break.

Website: <https://takeactionpumicestonepassage.com.au>

Good Reads

If you didn't snap up a copy last year, Elaine Green's *Piece by piece: conservation and development on the Sunshine Coast 1969-2020* is an excellent choice for Christmas gifts. Catch up at our end-of-year break-up for a reduced price of \$30. We will take cash or netbank transfer.

Wildlife Qld is selling Elaine's book on their website and will post you or your family and friends a copy, and the Sunshine Coast Environment Council will shortly have the book for sale on their website if you are unable to visit local Coast bookshops and nurseries, including The Bookshop at Caloundra (Ph: 54 914836) and native plant nurseries at Mooloolah River Landcare, Florabunda, Coolum Native Plants, and the centre at Mary Cairncross Reserve.

Gum: the story of Eucalypts and their champions by Ashley Hay (science writer, novelist & editor of the *Griffith Review*), NewSouth Publishing, 2021

First published in 2002, this updated edition of *Gum* unfolds how the Eucalypt wormed its way into the Australian psyche, became a go-to tree for the FAO in countries across the world (then roundly rejected for its negative social and ecological impacts), and

Facebook: [takeactionforpumicestonepassage](#)
Email: contact@takeactionpumicestonepassage.com.au

Save Point Cartwright update

The Community Reference Group on Point Cartwright appears to be having a positive influence on Council's approach (Quentin was able to address Councillors separately). Council's Shorebird Conservation Action Plan appears not to include rocky shores (Pt Cartwright or other headland areas) and there is an opportunity to press for inclusion.

Amendments to the mouth of the Mooloolah River consultation continues, with an informal coalition advocating an alternative to a rock wall extension, and it now appears that the state government will proceed with a dredging trial in the mouth and to the west of the existing rock wall, with sand deposited on Mooloolaba Beach. A USC geomorphologist with expertise in sand movement is to attend the next consultative meeting.

Quentin also reported on the negative impact on birdlife of drones over Pt Cartwright, particularly on territorial birds. Discussion on licensing and regulation ensued, with concerns re size, unprotected blades, and illegal use in CASA (Civil Aviation Safety Authority)-designated air space. It was decided to prepare a discussion paper for the January meeting with Jenny offering her services, and alert Head Office to the need for research and lobbying and possibly their spearheading a campaign.

Jenny's subsequent research shows that CASA prescribes where drones can and can't be flown but only mentions wildlife. Dangerous drone flying reports can be submitted to the Authority (search for 'drone complaints' on the CASA website if the link leads to an error page):

<https://www.casa.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/drone-complaints>

Queensland's Department of Environment and Science has more information on their website and a link to states and their rules about drones in national parks. Victoria, NSW, Tasmania, SA and the ACT don't allow drones in national parks, while in Queensland a permit is required. WA requires users to contact the local parks office, while the NT has rules to be adhered to.

On their website, Birdlife Australia has a policy on 'disturbance to birds and their habitats due to recreational activities', however nothing specifically about drones, and Birds Queensland has not addressed the problem on their website.

Generally, there is much discussion on the internet about negative aspects of drone disturbance of birds.

USC Environmental Student Prize:

We will continue to fund our Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld, Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Inc. prize for an outstanding Animal Ecology student at the rate of \$500 per year for the next three years (2023-25), with the prize being presented in the first half of the year.

became the symbol of old growth forest conservation battles, particularly in Tasmania, following the diversion of the art and science of Forestry into its woodchipping frenzy in the 1970s and beyond.

Brought to life are the passion of Robert Brown and George Caley, significant collectors and illustrators of the Eucalypt (named in 1786 by Frenchman Charles Louis Herétier du Brutelle from a sample collected by Joseph Banks), and later Ferdinand Mueller, who worked 16 hours a day on black bread and coffee, travelled all over Australia in search of species, and as well ran the Botanical Gardens of Victoria only to be roundly dismissed by the Victorian Government when roses became more their cup of tea.

Running through Hay's narrative is the deep relationship between First Nations people and the Eucalypt. That their culture of fire, for food production, persists into present approaches to bushfire management is a testament to First Nations' resilience, akin to that of the Eucalypt itself.

There are threats, however, to the Eucalypt from climate change. Hay quotes the 1996 work of Macquarie University's Lesley Hughes: '...within the next few decades many eucalypt species will have their entire present day populations exposed to temperatures and rainfalls under which no individuals currently exist', and summarises Hughes'

The 2021 recipient, Matt Mooney, presented a talk on his PhD, *Rainforest Resilience and the Frontiers of Fire*. Matt is now in the first year of his PhD, establishing the resilience of rainforest in increasing fire events. Although his plots are not located in Native Title areas, Matt will work with First Nations people.

Matt's talk and accompanying slides will be available on the Wildlife Qld website. In the meantime, here is his summary: 'Australia's 2019-2020 "Black Summer" wildfires caused unprecedented damage to rainforest ecosystems, but also present a crucial opportunity for investigating rainforest fire resilience. Fires at rainforest edges are not uncommon but typically extinguish quickly under dense, closed canopies. Fire incursions further into rainforests typically require prolonged drought and severe fire weather, which are likely to occur more frequently under climate change. Fires in rainforest can dramatically alter forest structure and species composition, impacting ecosystem functioning and recovery. Given the increasing threat of fire, the resilience of fire-impacted rainforest is likely to be determined by the ability to quickly regain fire-suppressing properties. Where this is impeded by weeds or the influence of flammable species from dryer vegetation types, there is potential for the restricted distribution of rainforest to undergo further contraction. This study will investigate the resilience of fire-affected rainforests by evaluating how the severity and scale of wildfire influences post-fire recruitment, especially at rainforest margins. Over the next year, we will conduct surveys in a number of National Parks including Lamington, Main Range and Mt Barney. Ecological succession theory will be used to assess the likely implications of early responses on the longer-term trajectory of rainforest vegetation communities. We hope to improve understanding of the factors which can promote or suppress rainforest post-fire recovery.'

Outlets for fund-raising & information sharing

We welcome the return of the Maleny Wood Expo in 2023 as one of our major outlets for book and card sales and getting the word out on our campaigns. Other opportunities suggested include:

- **It's a Wrap**, the Caloundra Regional Gallery's annual pre-Christmas art and craft fair next November (interested members will be asked to gather their artwork);
- **The Shelly Beach Wildlife event**, with members engaging with the public as they take their morning walk along the coastal pathway;
- Sharing a stall at the **Caloundra Sunday Markets** with Take Action for Pumicestone Passage.

There is a place still for the printed word and images to reach out to people, and the design and printing of a brochure and bookmark, with membership details, are underway.

2023 State AGM and Southern Branches Get-together

work further ‘...68 per cent of eucalypt species had ranges that covered less than 1 per cent of the continent, and only 3 percent of eucalypt species grew in ranges spanning more than 10 per cent of Australia’s available land’. Here are implications for the viability of animal and other non-plant species that use eucalypts as habitat.

Claire has been researching venues, and the State Recreation Centre at Currimundi seems a good option – available, affordable, and catering included. Head Office will provide booking and other administrative assistance. The meeting resolved that our branch host the 2023 WQ state AGM and Southern Branches get-together at the Centre as a one-day event on Saturday 9 September, followed by a wildflower walk at Currimundi (Kathleen McArthur) Conservation Park.

Faunawatch

Sunshine Coast Council’s Environment Levy funds have come through to cover completed and future Land for Wildlife property surveys. To date there are only seven of Rob’s 4-hr surveys to be completed on these properties. The final Blackbutt Forest survey (near Aura) under the Stockland grant was completed on 17 October, with the acquittal due late November. November’s Faunawatch walk in this Forest turned up 35 bird species including the musical White-throated tree-creeper and a pair of Sacred Kingfishers, 12 butterflies, 1 cicada and 3 dragonflies. The tall trees are in bark-shedding mode, revealing creamy new trunks. The ‘dog-on-leash’ signs on the gates may have been reinstated by Stockland however only two were found, ripped from zip-ties and found in the bush.

In further discussion about the control of dogs in Natural Areas, Robyn spoke about unleashed dogs chasing shorebirds on the new sandbanks at Golden Beach, and Quentin confirmed that Council could enforce regulations on sandbanks at low tide, in areas such as Half Moon Bay at Point Cartwright.

Paul presented an overview of Faunawatch, its work since the 1990s in bringing together observations of ‘citizen scientists’ gathered during walks led by experts, and the difficulty of preserving data and enabling access as technology changes and a plethora of online databases evolve.

Faunawatch walks: Dates for 2023 will be sent out to members.

The excellent Butterfly workshops organised by the Upper Dawson Branch of WPSQ have been followed by an informative report with useful ID content, accessible on the **Wildlife Qld website:**

<https://wildlife.org.au/dawson-valley-butterfly-weekend-a-flying-success/>

WildHeART Student Art Prize 2022

Marilyn Holdness, the capable coordinator for the 2022 Prize, has thanked WPSQ and other contributors for their support, financial and otherwise. Here is the success of the project in statistics:

- Number of Student Entries: 489

A few more 2022 sessions to get your weeding gloves on!

While not all sessions will be happening in December, there are opportunities to join a BushCare group near you. Check out the Council websites. Here are some monthly sessions closest to southern-based residents, most commencing at 8 am, with weeding and planting for a couple of hours followed by a welcome morning tea and chat:

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

Watson Environment Park (Shelly Beach): 1st Friday

Golden Beach Foreshore: 2nd Thursday

Tooway Lake: 2nd Friday

Shelly Beach Foreshore: last Saturday.

Enquiries to
sunshine@wildlife.org.au

- Regions of Entries North to Cairns, West of Longreach, South to Logan and many Sunshine Coast students and schools
- Number of Finalists: 40
- Winners of Art Supplies Vouchers 10 x \$200 for Students; 10 x \$100 for Schools
- Opening Day Attendance: 210
- Exhibition Attendance: 925

Marilyn further notes: 'The Committee received many positive comments about the high standard of artworks and an appreciation of providing an activity and venue where artistic students can display their skills to a wide audience. It was clear that many students researched their chosen category of Flora & Fungi, Fauna, or Threatened Species, which is rewarding from our perspective. It was also a joy to see many people watching the images of all 489 entries displayed on the large screen as part of the exhibition.'

Kathleen McArthur Lunch Hour Theatre Podcast

Access:

New podcasts are being launched each week by the Sunshine Coast Heritage Library, with some of the latest including *Wildflowering Adventures* at:

<https://shows.acast.com/kathleen-mcarthurs-lunch-hour-theatre-scripts-podcast>

or wherever you get your podcasts.

Save Toondah Harbour: RAMSAR wetlands in Moreton Bay are under huge threat from this Walker Corporation residential project. We on the Sunshine Coast are witnessing the effect of largely natural events on our own RAMSAR wetlands in the Pumicestone Passage, with the health of migratory birds and other wildlife at risk from people, dogs and jet skis since the breakthrough. **BirdLife Australia** is responding to the Walker Corporation's Environmental Impact Statement <https://www.actforbirds.org/savetoondah> and their online tool and guide allows members of the public easy feedback. **The closing date is 6 December.**

Here's a wonderful end-of-year treat from the school children of the Bega Valley, including a particularly impressive rendition of the call of the Mopoke/BooBook (not to be confused with that of the Barking Owl – see below):

Reviving the lost art of competitive bird calling:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-19/reviving-the-lost-art-of-competitive-bird-calling/101549330>

Birds with Phil Bender

Barking Owl (*Ninox connivens*)

Barking Owls inhabit open forests where they hunt for mammals, including possums, rats and rabbits, and birds up to the size of Magpies and Tawny Frogmouths. Nesting occurs from about July to November, with two to three eggs laid in a tree hollow. Incubation is about 35 days and young fledge in seven weeks. The distinctive two-note call has a musical quality, sounding like wook-wook, and is one of the delightful sounds of the Australian bush.

(Birdlife Australia comments on another aspect of the Barking Owl's call:

'... early settlers ... were occasionally awoken by the terrified screams of a woman being brutally murdered in the bush – at least that's what it sounded like.

However, instead of mayhem, it was simply the alarm call of the Barking Owl, which may be repeated at intervals of several seconds or several minutes.')



Visit **Wildlife Queensland's** excellent updated website, with our events included amongst many other workshops (some online) within reach of our Sunshine Coast members: www.wildlife.org.au. To join our Branch, look for the **Membership link**.

Subscribe for free to Wildlife Queensland's monthly enews: <https://wildlife.org.au/news-events/subscribe/>