

WAMBALIMAN

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



THIS ISSUE:

- A look at the last 10 years
Fraser Coast Branch 2012-22
- M2B Rail Trail
- Nature Walks
Lake Lenthall
- Library Talk
Dingoes on K'gari
- Butterfly Workshop hosted
by Upper Dawson Branch
- Turtles at Gatakers

SUMMER 2022-23

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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Bruce Dick, Cassy Ironside

Newsletter WAMBALIMAN

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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 14 April 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
**19 February, 16 April,
18 June, 20 August,
17 September (AGM), 19 November**

Executive Meetings

22 JANUARY 2023
DATES TO BE DECIDED IN—
MARCH, MAY, JULY, OCTOBER

NATURE WALKS

program will resume in February—dates tba

WILDLIFE TALKS IN THE LIBRARY 1-2PM

tba

FIND A FROG IN FEBRUARY

Frog workshop and night survey program
contact the MRCCC, 07 5482 4766
Maryborough - Friday 17 February

FRASER COAST BACKYARD BIOBLITZ weekends in 2023

Summer: 14-15 January
Autumn: 8-9 April (Easter weekend)
Winter: 8-9 July
Spring: 14-15 October

CENTRAL BRANCHES GET-TOGETHER

tba 2023

Don't forget to LIKE us on

www.facebook.com/WPSQFraserCoast

Check out our page on

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

From the Editor.....

Happy New Year everyone. Our Branch starts 2023 with a very healthy membership and a good and cohesive Executive of six. There are also a number of very active and capable members working on submissions, the talks and walks programs, Wildlife Matters articles, maintaining Facebook, organising the Bioblitzes, acting as representatives on committees and producing and contributing to Wambaliman.

Our main source of fundraising (weekly raffle) has dried up due to a decision made by the management of the Beach House Hotel. We are thankful to them for their support over the last couple of years which has enabled John and his team to raise substantial funds for us and local wildlife rescue groups.

Vanessa's report (page 6) outlining the Branch's achievements over the last 10 years illustrates that while issues are still

much the same, operations have changed. One can look fondly back on the plastics campaign with floats and pantomimes but realise that in this current era, Facebook, submissions and representation are our voice for the environment.

It is sad to see the end of FBRSG (page 16). This local group has been very successful in fighting issues concerning the Burrum River system and more recently sharing their knowledge of the river system through community paddles which were well attended and provided a different type of nature experience.

Thank you to Jackie who has done the (snail) mailing of Wambaliman to about 40 of our members over the past few years. Welcome to Val who will take over. The rest of our members rely on the electronic version. E-deposits are also the go for the National and State Libraries. National edeposit publications (ie including back issues) are discoverable through [Trove](#). 🌟



Executive for 2023—from left, Cassy, Pat (Treasurer), Kris (Ass't Secretary), Bruce (Secretary), John (President) and absent Tina (Vice President).

**Congratulations Ann Hobson, Upper Dawson Branch
Winner 2022 WPSQ Margaret Thorsborne Award**

Branch Activity Report October 2022—January 2023

Meetings/ gatherings

- General meeting 20 November
- Executive Meeting 23 October
- BBQ Lake Lenthall 5 November
- End-of-year breakup at Beach House Hotel, Scarness 4 December
- Executive Meeting 22 January 2023

Submissions

- Gatakers Landing Hotel - Application for Commercial Hotel Liquor Licence -Objection to Application 12 October
- Hearing / Meeting 31 October
- Further Submission 3 November
- Great Sandy Marine Park Draft Zoning Plan review - joint submission with AMCS, 10 October
- Toondah Harbour EIS, 4 December

Advisory Groups

- Thursday 15 December Mary to Bay Rail Trail Advisory Group (see page 12)

Walks

- 5 November - Lake Lenthall

Library Talks

- 21 and 28 October - Dingoes of K'gari by Jenna Tapply
- 18 and 25 November—Birds of Arkarra DVD

Uni Partnerships

- 25 November, update via email— Greater Glider field work by honours student planned for late Jan/early Feb
- Branch to fund radio transmitters for UQ Koala research.

Spring Backyard Bioblitz

- 14 & 15 January. Have a look at some

of the photos on our Facebook page and see report page 11.

Communication

- Facebook page—see page 10
- Webpage
- Wambaliman Spring 2022 distributed 11 October
- Wildlife Matters
- To Head Office—precis of 60th Anniversary event + photos

Representation

- 14 November—with Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care Group turtle monitoring group - met with FCRC councillors and officers about protection of Loggerhead hatchlings on Main Beach
- 16 November—FCRC Community Grants Roadshow at Beach House Hotel.

Fundraising

- Please support our container deposit efforts (page 2 for code)
- Weekly Beach House raffles conducted by John and Pat have ceased (due to a decision by Hotel management)



The Walks Team are meeting on Wednesday 25 January at Arkarra Tea Gardens to discuss the 2023 program.

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)

Last year Head Office asked all WPSQ branches to submit an article on the last 10 years of activities of their Branch for a commemorative booklet, similar to what was produced for the 50th Anniversary. However, so few branches responded the idea was shelved. Here is the contribution that was submitted by our Branch.

Celebrating the last 10 YEARS Fraser Coast Branch¹

By Vanessa Elwell-Gavins

(Branch Secretary 2013 - 2018; Branch President 2018-2021)

Looking back over the last 10 years on the Fraser Coast and in the broader Wide Bay region that our Branch now encompasses, the reduced quantity and quality of native vegetation is a clear indicator that our environment more broadly is under increasing stress. Land clearing for urban, agricultural and other development and infrastructure come at a price that our natural environment pays.

As a result, our wildlife is at greater risk than ever, although there have been some 'winners' among the 'losers'. Whales and K'gari (Fraser Island) are the main focus of our tourism industry and Council's efforts to promote the region. It is a pity that both are valued more for their 'entertainment' value (a great big marine zoo and 4-wheel driving tracks all over K'gari, particularly along its beaches), than for their intrinsic values and ecosystem function. Most people are unaware the Great Sandy Strait on our doorstep is an internationally valued, Ramsar-listed wetland, or that our region is part of the UNESCO-designated Great Sandy Biosphere Reserve.

Koalas have been the single biggest 'loser' as a species. In October 2014 Fraser Coast Branch in partnership with the community conducted a koala count and were shocked to find that only 18 koalas were spotted over the relevant weekend. Worse was to come, though. We conducted a second count, better advertised, in 2015 with a mere five koalas reported.

The catastrophic loss of Fraser Coast koalas has happened in part because our Council has seen fit to allow low density urban development in Tinana and Booral, which are (or were) prime koala habitat. We know that human habitation with all the roads, dogs, fences and so on that accompany humans simply do not mix well with koalas.² Of course they are simply the most iconic species to be rapidly vanishing. Their tragic loss is mirrored throughout most of our other native wildlife populations.

Threatened ecosystems are more threatened than ever, not least because of feral animal and plant incursions. Climate change is resulting largely in drier years and more intensive floods when the rains do come.

¹Several years ago Fraser Coast Branch absorbed the former Bundaberg Branch. While the bulk of our members live in the Fraser Coast region, our membership is spread from Gympie to Agnes Water.

²It is worth noting that one reason for the decline between 2014 and 2015 was the relocation of a few koalas from Tinana that had been successfully treated at Australia Zoo not back to Tinana, but instead to Tandora, a large, well-vegetated cattle station at the mouth of the Susan River whose owners are committed to conservation.

We now have a growing Indian Myna population in Hervey Bay where 10 years ago there were none, and foxes and feral pigs are regularly seen. Of the native birds, noisy miners, butcherbirds, magpies and ibises have proliferated, with 'small birds' rarely, if ever, seen now in our largely barren urban environments.

In the midst of this tragic and very visible decline, the Branch's activities over the last 10 years have largely focused on raising community awareness of our natural environment, as well as the challenges our wildlife is facing as a result of human activity.



plastics campaign 2014

Our flagship community education program has been our very successful 'nature walks' program, established in 2014. This continues to thrive and is probably still the single biggest source of new members. Walks were publicly advertised in the early years, but public advertising (other than via our Facebook page) was stopped about five years ago in order to ensure walks were 'manageable' for the organisers. The educational value of walks with very large groups is seriously diminished, while the health and safety issues had also become more daunting.

The anti-plastics campaign ten years ago encompassed school pantomimes, displays in shopping centres with Natrasha the Turtle and Polly Pelican, prizes in shopping centres for people using reusable bags, market stalls, two floats in the local Whale Festival and a meeting with the Queensland Environment Minister.

As a result of national pressure from many community groups working in tandem, single-use plastic bags and other plastics have largely disappeared from shopping centres - and our beaches.

Our community education program has also included monthly talks in the Hervey



walks program 2019

Bay and Maryborough Libraries, regular articles in free community newspapers, workshops on numerous issues including how to make our gardens more 'wildlife friendly' and how to manage the proliferating Indian Myna population, a 'schools' program, some brochures, our quarterly newsletter *Wambaliman* (which celebrated its 50th birthday in 2017), our quarterly Backyard Bioblitzes which use iNaturalist Australia to coordinate and report data, and our Facebook page. This list shows the Fraser Coast Branch has been extraordinarily busy, but of course it cannot do justice to the contribution each activity has made to community awareness and wildlife conservation.

The Branch has tried to take the view that successful 'community education' programs are designed to change behaviour, not just 'raise awareness'. Unless our community understands how our own behaviour and expectations may impact on our environment and know how to change, and there is a critical mass of people willing to foster behaviours that protect our natural environment, no amount of 'awareness' will stop the loss of habitat and on-going decline of so many species and ecosystems. If we are able to remember this in planning our program each year we will probably be more efficient and more effective in improving environmental outcomes.

The other, arguably more important, although also often more frustrating, prong to our program over the last ten years has been our work, principally with Council but also with State and Federal Governments, to try and improve environmental outcomes in the face of intensifying urban and other development now taking place at an industrial scale. We established a Land Use Change and Development Working Group in about 2017, which has reviewed a number of developments and development applications in Hervey Bay and the wider Fraser Coast region including the accompanying environmental impact assessment reports. We have lobbied Council (and other layers of government) via submissions and held several meetings with senior Council staff. We quickly unearthed what seems to be a culture of 'tick the boxes' and decision-making which appears oblivious to the economic, social and intrinsic environmental values of our natural environment. Truly, the developer is king in the Fraser Coast. Their vision of a successful development seems to revolve around areas where every stick of natural vegetation

has been removed (to reduce their costs), and as many houses as possible are jammed into as small a space as possible so they can maximise their 'yield' (ie their profit) from each development. This is not conducive to preservation of any wildlife, nor even the development of gardens. The sad reality for our wildlife is there is a serious clash between current economic imperatives imposed upon developers and home buyers, compared with best practice urban development.

We have been fortunate to witness some improvement in Council culture with a new mayor and a new CEO some years ago, who are both committed to 'community consultation' beyond the minimum statutory requirements. As a result we participate in Council's Environment Advisory Group (yes, we are very grateful we have such a thing!), and were invited to participate in the (on-going) review of the planning scheme, development of 'matters of local environmental significance', and a 'coastal futures' strategy.

Our vision for the next ten years is the development of a more symbiotic relationship between humans and our natural environment, and a recognition within Council that what is good for our environment is also good socially and economically for our community. If we destroy our environment, we also destroy the viability and liveability of our communities and convert them into 'heat islands' and arid slums where no one wants to live.

Sadly, 10 years, let alone 60, years on from the establishment of WPSQ, and despite the extraordinary contribution by so many Branch members over the years, it sometimes feels as if satisfactory wildlife outcomes are further away than ever. The Branch's pioneering environmental advocates (John Sinclair and Joan Coutts

were stand-outs) are sadly no longer with us but they (and other stalwarts) have passed the baton on. Advocacy is arguably more vital than ever as the pressure on our diminishing natural areas intensifies. Some changes we need to see in Council in order to improve local environmental outcomes include: informed Council scrutiny of environmental impact assessments before development is approved, or even better, these reports conducted by consultants appointed by Council, independent of the developers; appointment of environmental planners within Council; informed engagement with environmental issues; a better understanding of the social and economic costs of on-going damage to and loss of our environmental values; and budgeting for purchase of land with high environmental values. Effective planning and environmental outcomes will never be achieved if there are no time limits on development applications, and while development applications only have to be assessed under the terms of the planning scheme in place when the development application was initially lodged, even if 20 years ago.

Much of the Branch's work may not be valued, or even known, by our community, many of whom would resist the changes that should be encouraged. There are many in our community who do not value our region's beautiful natural areas and seem to dislike or fear native vegetation and wildlife. We are at one end of a continuum of cultural extremes and 'shouting louder' does not deliver results. Councils tend to reflect the attitudes and politics of their communities. This brings us back to the importance of community education, effective teamwork, collaboration and strong partnerships with like-minded organisations. These have always been important, but never more so than now.

My crystal ball for 2032 suggests that Fraser Coast Branch will still be advocating for change with Council and with our community. The agenda may not have changed very much, but there will have been some wins, facilitated by two generous bequests that the Branch has received in the last five years, and on-going efforts by our passionate and committed members. Inevitably there will also have been further losses. Fraser Coast may well have an acceptable planning scheme, with access to good environmental data, but it is probable that the damage has already been done, well before the revised planning scheme is approved.

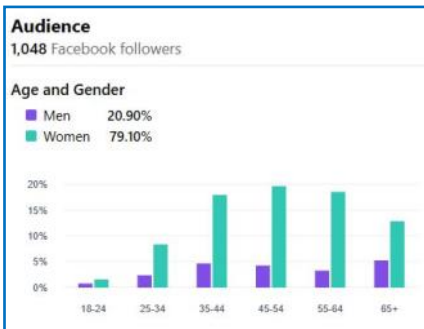
A Fraser Coast Branch partnership with the University of the Sunshine Coast in 2022-2023 will have given us a better insight into the impact cohabiting with humans in Hervey Bay will have had on a common species (Eastern Grey Kangaroos) and some better management tools for Council when animals have to be displaced. This partnership will also have helped us identify those regional areas which provide the best habitat for Greater Gliders. If these areas are valued by the landholders, and can be preserved, then it is just possible that the decline in our wildlife across the region can be arrested, or at least minimised. In an ideal world, our wildlife will be flourishing, our urban and rural landscapes will be well treed and well-populated by a diversity of wildlife. In that ideal world, our Councils will have a good understanding of the environmental, social and economic value of our wildlife and the environment more broadly, and our population will be proud to live in a region that has managed to retain a good proportion of our original vegetation and uses local native species widely in all its streetscapes and parks. 🌟

Vanessa, May 2022

Our Facebook Page delivers

While not all of our members are Facebook users, this social media platform continues to provide significant connection to our broader community through our Branch's Facebook page. The Branch started the Facebook page in 2017 with Rod Jones, Vicki Perrin and Roland Schuller as administrators. It has steadily expanded its following since then, realising the prediction of the original enthusiasts within the Branch that it was an opportunity to broaden our demographic influence as a regional conservation group.

Our FB page now has 1048 followers with 57% of those from the 25 to 54 age group – quite a different age profile to our meetings and walks. The majority of followers are from Hervey Bay and Maryborough, but there is over 5% from Brisbane and even eight followers from Perth. We are not restricted to Australia either, with a dozen of our followers from overseas, including one from Estonia and one from Mongolia!



The value of the FB page is in providing wildlife advocacy and education in line with the Branch's objectives. It also provides a tremendous opportunity to promote activities. A recent example of this is

our Facebook banner for 2022



our promotion for the Summer 2023 Bio-blitz. The first post had 756 views and a second reminder got 740 views. This profile raising comes at no cost to the Branch and serves a valuable Branch function.

An added dimension to the operation of our FB page is that members of the community contact us through the message facility of the page with questions and concerns. These can then be directed to the appropriate Branch members/committees to respond to. Most of these are alerts for wildlife in distress, and then enquirers are re-directed to suitable rescue agencies.

As our page has a restriction that posts can only be uploaded by the administrator/s, our site is free of the negativity and trolling that has dogged the websites and webpages of other community groups. Comments on posts can be freely made and, if necessary, can be removed by the administrator/s. Consequently, our page is informative and largely edifying.

I feel the page could benefit from having a second administrator who could bring new ideas and approaches. It would also mean we would have continuity if one of the administration team needed a break or wanted to move on. Let me know if you are interested. ✨**Peter Duck**

Summer Bioblitz - 14 & 15 January 2023



Our Summer 2023 Backyard Bioblitz took place on the weekend of 14-15 January. The conditions were unusually cool, cloudy and damp with a lot of light showers for the whole weekend, so a lot of critters that had been out and about in the sunny days beforehand chose to go into hiding.

Birds and butterflies seemed to be particularly averse to being seen in these conditions. On the other hand, I found that dragonflies, while not 'prolific', were sleepy enough to want to rest and therefore much easier to photograph than they are when they are whizzing round in the sun. There also seemed to be a lot more variety in the number of dragonfly species than I have been aware of before.

Despite the gloomy conditions, I was able to keep busy in the extended breaks between the showers, although I confess that native plants come into their own for me on Bioblitz weekends when there is not much else to see.

In total there were 243 observations covering 178 species by 32 observers and 83 identifiers. Here is the link to the full report <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fraser-coast-backyard-bioblitz-summer-2023>

I know Bioblitz stalwart Scott Gavins spent the Bioblitz Saturday fixing his camera, which had inconveniently broken down the day before. He has now recorded over 1,450 species on his property via iNaturalist and is increasingly inventive in how he obtains his observations!!!

✿ *Vanessa Elwell-Gavins*



Clockwise from top left—
Black-headed Skimmer by Vanessa, Wide-brand Grass-Dart by Kris, Spikey Leafbeetle by Scott, Sacred Kingfisher by Andrea. Small Green Banded Blue by Christine, Crested Pigeon by Ruby

Mary to Bay Rail Trail Advisory Group

Prior to the November meeting of the Fraser Coast Mary to Bay Rail Trail Advisory Group members were requested to provide input into a 'vision statement' for the development of the trail. Our Branch provided bird lists by Frank Ekin, plant lists by Tony van Kampen and the following statement which details our Branch's reasons for our interest in the project.

Any vision statement needs to be developed with reference to the current FCRC Planning Scheme. In this document the Natural Environment and Landscapes Outcomes (3.8) state "The form of development and patterns of settlement of the Fraser Coast has regard to biodiversity values and minimises impacts on ecosystems, habitats, vegetation and corridor connectivity". It goes on to state "development supports and or contributes to a network of ecological corridors throughout the Fraser Coast where connection and wildlife movement internally within cities, towns, villages, and communities can be satisfactorily achieved and an ecological benefit can be demonstrated".

The area traversed by most of the rail corridor goes through significant remnant vegetation. The vegetation provides critical habitat and connectivity for wildlife. Some of the wildlife that would be impacted include Gliders, Koalas and Glossy Black Cockatoos. Along with these iconic species, a rich diversity of flora and fauna typically found in the natural areas of the Fraser Coast occurs.

The **Greater Glider** is classified as endangered. Atlas of Living Australia records occurrence of Greater Glider in the vicinity of the rail corridor between the Colton siding and Takura.

Squirrel Glider occurrence was mapped as part of the considerations for Matters of Local Environmental Significance (2021). This mapping clearly identifies the bushland around the rail corridor from the Colton Siding to Piggford Lane as strong Squirrel Glider habitat.

The **Yellow-bellied Glider** is listed as vulnerable in Queensland, and in March 2022 was listed as vulnerable nationally. Council's published MLES mapping also clearly indicates there are YBGs in the same stretch of the rail corridor as the Squirrel Glider.

These significant habitats for the gliders are also important for other arboreal mammals and hollow-reliant bird species.

Koalas are listed as endangered under the Federal Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act). The Australian Koala Foundation Koala Mapping (2021) for the Fraser Coast Regional Council area shows much of the bushland through which the rail corridor traverses is 'Primary Habitat' for the Koala. Primary habitat is the highest value category, and means the habitat is "capable of supporting high-density Koala populations". Specifically the Primary Habitat designation is along the creeks/rivers that intersect the rail corridor (Saltwater, Susan, Black Swamp, Stockyard). The rail corridor therefore would provide a connection between these primary habitat areas. It would also extend a link to the Vernon Conservation Park and then further to the Vernon State Forest where more Primary Habitat and large amounts of Secondary Habitat exists.

Koalas have been released at the Tandorra property to the southeast. As this population expands we would expect that they move into the 11 000 hectares of unallocated State Land called Churchill Mines.

Wildflowers are prolific along the trail especially in Spring—left to right: White Donkey Orchids, Prickly Pea, Purple Flag Lily and Yellow Guinea Flower.



This area has the potential to sustain a large population of koalas.

A recommendation is that when planting occurs in degraded areas the suitable food trees for local Koalas (Queensland Peppermint *Eucalyptus exserta*, Queensland Blue Gum *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, Gum-topped Box *Eucalyptus moluccana*) be used.

Glossy Black Cockatoos are listed as endangered in Queensland and just been listed as vulnerable nationally. Anecdotal evidence amongst members of the Fraser Coast Branch of Wildlife Queensland and the Birdwatchers of Hervey Bay indicated that the area the rail corridor passes through, particularly from Takura to Walligan, is frequented by feeding Glossy Black Cockatoos. The presence of Black She-oak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*) and to a lesser extent Forest Oak (*Allocasuarina torulosa*) means that this is crucial habitat for the GBC.

A recommendation for replanting would be to include these two food plant species.

Susan River Catchment

“The catchment provides habitat for a range of threatened, uncommon and locally significant (and unique) flora and fauna species. This system is important for connectivity of freshwater systems to estuarine systems for fish habitat. There are currently no barriers to fish passage and their protection is required to ensure

this remains. Some locally significant flora species are *Diuris chrysantha* double yellow tails, *Eucalyptus tindaliae* white stringybark, *Leptospermum whitei* White’s tea-tree, *Melaleuca dealbata* blue leaved paperbark, *Melaleuca viridiflora* var. *viridiflora* broad leaved paperbark, *Myrsine subsessilis* subsp. *subsessilis* red muttonwood, and *Prasophyllum breviflabre* short-lip leek orchid.” (Source FCRC MLES)

The impact of the rail trail is likely to affect this catchment ecosystem, due to the necessity to traverse the creeks using constructed causeways. Consideration should be given to the materials used and the impact on the natural flow. During such construction the utmost care should be taken if removing vegetation to enable access to these cross-over points.

Old trees and hollows/fallen timber

A critical component of providing a healthy ecosystem and quality habitat is the retention (and sometimes provision) of trees with nesting and refuge hollows, and fallen timber. This could provide a challenge for the provision of safe riding and walking experiences, but one that careful consideration could resolve.

Our Branch commits to providing flora and fauna identification, along with management advice and impact assessment. We remain enthusiastic about the potential of this project to the region and the opportunity to work constructively with Council and stake-holder groups. 🌟



Turtles in trouble and our decision makers don't care.



The recent decision of the Liquor and Gaming Commission to grant an application for a Commercial Hotel Licence on the site of the former Gatakers Restaurant in Point Vernon has shocked many Branch members and local residents.

This licence, which opens the flood gates to totally inappropriate development in an area clearly designated as environmentally sensitive, threatens the nesting beach of critically endangered Loggerhead Turtles.

The applicant has indicated his development intentions which include operating daily from 10am-midnight.

Photo 1 (above) shows how exposed the building is to the beach. Photo 2, looking along the beach in the other direction, shows where turtles nest from November to January, and hatchlings emerge from January to March. It is well documented that artificial lights disorientate the turtles and the hatchlings. There is now a raft of Federal and State Government regulations and policies aimed at protecting threatened and endangered turtles from anthropogenic impacts, including the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017-2027, the Queensland Marine Turtle Conservation Strategy 2021-2031, and the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife 2020.

What was concerning in the response

from the applicant at a hearing that was attended by many objectors including representatives of our Branch, was his admission that he was not aware of the serious impact artificial light would have on the survival of this breeding population, and no knowledge of the federal legislation protection for this endangered species in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act which states that it is an offence under Part 3 of the EPBC Act to take an action that will have a significant impact on listed species anywhere in Australia.

What was disturbing was that the applicant admitted at this hearing that in planning discussions with the Council's Planning Department there had been no briefing from the Council officers that the operation of the licence on the Gatakers Landing site could impact the turtles.

In their summary of reasons for the granting of the Licence, the Commission stated that they was no objection lodged by the local authority. Apparently State and Federal Government regulations and policies can be conveniently ignored by the FCRC's Planning Department. Surely a proposal like this which has such a catastrophic environmental impact should go to the full Council, and not simply be deliberated on by the town planners.

✿ *Peter Duck*

Frogs are easy to find during the warm months, especially when there's rain about. The Mary River catchment and surrounds supports over 40 frog species. About ¼ are vulnerable, endangered or have disappeared in recent decades, mostly due to loss of habitat extent and quality as a result of swamp draining, vegetation clearing and weed invasion. There are other pressures also from feral animal predation and disease such as the Chytrid fungus that affects the skin function. Changes to our climate are adding further pressure, particularly prolonged dry periods that can drastically reduce the breeding window for frogs and increase the possibility of devastating wildfires.

Frogs rely on both aquatic and terrestrial habitats to complete their lifecycle, and their sensitivity to substances passing through their permeable skin makes them key indicators of changes in the surrounding environment. Changes in distribution and population dynamics may be a result of obvious conditions such as droughts, but can also reflect less detectable changes such as declining invertebrate populations, or increased predator presence (e.g. cats eat around 44 frogs each per year (CSIRO, 2020).

The Find a Frog in February citizen science program delivered by the **Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee** invites the community to contribute to our collective knowledge of frogs and their local requirements. Collecting information on the location of frogs, the habitats they use and their abundance over time helps us to determine 'normal' trends and to monitor for and understand changes. The information also helps us to manage

media release:



wetlands and waterways in particular, but also all components of our environment.

People of the Sunshine Coast, Noosa, Gympie and Fraser Coast council areas are encouraged to get out and about to find frogs and submit their observations

during February. Over the past six years FFF frog finders have contributed to our knowledge of 33 species from 1370 locations (over 18,000 records!). Every record counts – even common species like the Green Tree Frog can be affected by changing environmental conditions too.

Make your frog observations count. Ways to send in your observations:

→ You'll find the old-fashioned but comprehensive FFF record sheet on our website <https://mrccc.org.au/frog-in-february/> – complete and send in for identification, verification and entry to the Queensland WildNet database. You'll find links to all things 'froggy' there too. Watch our website for workshops in your area to help you increase your frog-finding skills.

→ Use the iNaturalist phone app to submit records - join the app, then the 'Find a Frog in February' Project and submit your photos and recordings of calling frogs.

→ Use the FrogID app and join the Find a Frog in February group to submit your call recordings.

✿ ***Mackenzi Finger, MRCCC***

There are a number of Frog workshop and night survey programs. Locally— Maryborough, Friday 17 February.

Contact for more information:

findafrog@mrccc.org.au

phone (07) 5482 4766 or website

<https://mrccc.org.au/frog-in-february/>

end for a local community group

Friends of the Burrum River System Group Inc have been the watchdog for the Burrum River System since 1999. The group first came together to fight a proposed prawn farm development. Along with this activism was water quality and mangrove health monitoring. Some years ago they broadened their scope to include public events including kayaking / canoeing and bbqs to spread the environmental message. Due to ageing of members, sadly, the group has decided to wind up.



President's Report FBRSG (Inc.) 2022

I begin on a sad note; three of our members died (Alan Peebles, Bill Kneebone and Chris Ballantyne), as did a memorable former member, Ernie McAlister, in 2022. Alan videoed many of our paddle events, Bill lead our Clean up Australia activities at Wall's Camp, and Chris was a conservationist extraordinaire, he and Glenice prepared lunch at our AGMs for many years.

2022 was a year of highs and lows; about 30 of us **paddled the Cherwell** on February 1st; it was a very high spring tide (3.55m) and the rapids on the rock bar were covered with debris from recent minor flood events. Fallen trees were another hazard we had to negotiate.

Clean up Australia Day did not occur officially, or in reality; a no-show from locals.

After several meetings with senior staff from the FCRC **large rocks** were placed at Wall's Camp on July 20th to stop people driving right to the edge of the river bank and destroying it. The outcry on Facebook was most informative!! Rocks will be placed along the banks adjacent to the boat ramp, hopefully in 2023.

The long awaited (6 years) **Draft report on the Great Sandy Marine Park** came out in September; the Burrum River System will be free of all commercial netting once it is implemented (March / April 2023). Downstream of the junction of the Cherwell and Burrum is zoned Yellow (Conservation Zone) and upstream on both rivers is zoned Dark Blue (Habitat Protection Zone) with rules to prohibit commercial netting. **This is a great result.** Recreational fishing is allowed on all four rivers. We lost our Green Zones on the upper Burrum, Cherwell and Gregory Rivers, but it is still in on the Isis, and I have asked that those on the upper Burrum and Cherwell be reinstated and the one on the Gregory be extended to below the Falls.

This is my last Presidential Report and I am thankful to the many people who have supported me over the 20+ years of my Presidency, none more than Perry, Di and Geoff. The FBRSG (Inc.) will be wound up today and its considerable assets distributed in early 2023. My personal efforts to conserve and preserve the BRS will go on while ever I am able.

✿ **Tim Thornton**, November 2022

Lake Lenthall—walk and BBQ 5 November 2022

Lake Lenthall was the site of the last nature walk for the year. The well-tended and attractive picnic and camping ground overlooking the lake, and the gazebo on a small peninsula, was the ideal site for our post walk BBQ.



Lenthalls Dam, supplying Hervey Bay's water, is at the upper reaches of the Burrum River, surrounded by State Forest and National Parks. It is connected to Wongi Waterholes.

John welcomed the 34 walkers then Max gave a brief history of the Lenthall family and a second talk, following the walk, at the dam, defining its construction and its inner workings.

The walk in the Wongi State Forest and around Lake Lenthall had examples of five ecosystems. First, the lake itself is frequented by at least 8 duck species. Then a second ecosystem round the lake and to Wongi Waterholes are wetlands providing habitat for birds such as Jacanas and Reed Warblers.

There is a graded path from the boat launching ramp up through rainforest. This third ecosystem attracts various doves, the colourful Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, and the Noisy Pitta. The walk then entered dry sclerophyll forest, bring a fourth ecosys-

tem characterized by Eastern Yellow Robin, White-throated Treecreepers and Grey Shrike-thrush.



The often overlooked fifth ecosystem is the sky itself. White-throated Needletail arrive in great numbers from Siberia, Himalayas and Japan. They forage in the sky catching flying termites, ants, flies and beetles. They are largely aerial in Australia though some may land on taller trees. These birds sleep on the wing, apparently, and somewhat incredulously, some parts of the brain sleep while other parts remain alert.

Ecosystems at Lake Lenthall exhibit rich botanical diversity and a huge diversity of insects, lichens and fungi. In the rainforest the ground was littered with fleshy drupes (fruit) of the *Vitex lignum-vitae*—good pickings for the fruit-doves.

The walk was short, allowing time to notice these ecosystems and so provided points for discussion and chat at the BBQ. Max's two talks bookended the walk.

We are grateful to Marlene for her enthusiasm and energy for barbecuing. Pat and John ensured that funding was up to the occasion and that all the planning worked out so well. Clearly the walkers enjoyed their day, resting in comfortable camp chairs, savouring properly cooked steak and sausages. **✿Frank Ekin**



*Photos at Lake Lenthall
by John Hampson*

BBQ at Lake Lenthall

A reflection on the 2022 Walks Program

On the foundations laid by Carol Bussey and the initiatives of Jenni, Peter and Vanessa, the current Walks Team inherited a strong base for further ideas for the 2022 walks. At an earlier planning meeting a few principles for the walks were drawn up such as keeping within the Fraser Coast Region, promoting local Reserves and National Parks, seeking interesting botanical sites and environments likely to encourage diverse bird species. Amongst other principles is to have a mountain walk and one distant site.

A signal of satisfaction from walkers was our final season's outing at Lake Lenthall suggested by Marlene, where a large group in high spirits enjoyed a walk and BBQ. The Lake Lenthall area exhibits several environments; the lake itself, surrounding wetland, littoral rainforest, and sclerophyll forest. As there were several flocks of Spine-tailed Swifts which spend the largest part of their lives in the air, the sky can be defined as an environment.

An earlier walk in the season was to Hunter's Hut, famous for its local history, and really in the context of the region's recent history it has an importance. Max investigated this history and regaled us by recounting some choice tidbits.

For decades there have been enthusiasts for the reopening of the Maryborough to Hervey Bay rail corridor for bicycles, walkers and horse riding. Building on this enthusiasm 44 walkers attended the inaugural Colliery Circuit walk. Starting at the Churchill Mines Road railway bridge then tracking to the former coal mines and sidings. The walkers passed through former industrial sites where nature had successfully reasserted itself. Again, Max delivered a homily on this history which is important to the recent 180 year development of this region. For the bird enthusiasts, Painted Quail were flushed from the undergrowth.

Vernon State Forest provided one of the season's great surprises. Despite being on a ridge it is riven by deep gullies. On a preliminary reconnoitre Noel and Max had to swing from fallen logs to ford some flooded gullies and were eventually thwarted by the depth and flow in one gully. Following rescheduling, we had a highly successful walk which richly rewarded the botanists and fossil hunters.

Regarding flooding, one of Marlene's walks was through Ferguson State Forest. On the eve of the walk 35mm of rain was recorded on a neighboring property.

Our treasurer Pat, enjoys the monthly nature walks. This photo taken by Ruby Rosenfield is at the Maryborough Showgrounds walk.

Yet some undaunted walkers turned up and walked the circuit with ease, being unhindered by streams or mud. The walk was repeated the following weekend at which Marlene showed off her massive rubbish clearing effort.

Almost true to the axiom “hidden in plain sight” was the Maryborough Showground Equestrian Centre walk. This unexpected site has a marked path round a large lake which is adjoined to a significant native sclerophyll forest. Many finches and wrens were spotted. 28 species of birds being recorded. Guest, John Abbott, captured everyone’s attention and interest explaining the equestrian jumps and displaying his extensive natural history photographs. Not only a horse expert, but John has also won distinction in photography.

The Walks Team participated in the Wildlife Preservation Society 60th Anniversary with a walk from The Pines to Gatakers Bay. Cassey’s irreplaceable interest in



plants attracted an intense interest, and the megaphone was put to good use at various sites to explain how urban planning exacerbated coastal erosion.

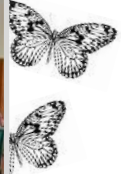
The year was hugely interesting and did fulfil most of its planning principles. It introduced Max’s historical perspectives. It developed a sprinkling of brief talks on the natural habitat and the walks were enlivened by Marlene leading some walks. Plans for 2023 are well advanced with more innovations building upon past initiatives and successes of our predecessors. Above all, the walks are aimed at promoting the objectives of Wildlife Queensland.

✿ **Frank Ekin**



The Walks Team need to be commended for their thorough organisation and preparation for each walk. This photo was taken at the Colliery Circuit walk.

Butterfly Workshop 15/16 October 2022



Upper Dawson Branch hosted a weekend of butterfly workshops as their contribution to WPSQs 60th Anniversary celebrations. Having participated in the Central Branches Get-together hosted by them and held in Theodore and surrounds in 2019, Peter and I were keen to return to the area and of course the butterfly workshops sounded wonderful.

Upper Dawson hosted two workshops, on the Saturday at Taroom and on the Sunday at Theodore. The same wonderful hospitality we had experienced at the CBGT was there again. The atmosphere was relaxed, the information provided was excellent, the Branch had involved local school children to make lots of butterfly decorations, and there were butterfly cakes and biscuits all round.

Cliff Meyer came from Brisbane to give the workshops. Although specifically targeted for the Upper Dawson region, most of the butterflies found there are also on the Fraser Coast. Cliff has been butterfly-crazy since his childhood and his career in the Navy was seen as an excuse to travel all over and look for butterflies. He has an extensive collection and mixes with the experts but still calls himself an amateur.

Cliff talked generally about the features of the 5 main families of butterflies: the swal-

lowtails, the white and yellows, the browns, the blues and the skippers. The swallowtails (although not many in Australia have tails), include the well-known, big, and brightly coloured Orchard Swallowtail. The white and yellows include the Lemon Migrants, Caper Whites, and various species of Grass Yellows. The Browns include the Common Crow and the Monarch. The Blues are generally quite small, and their identification is really only possible by studying the markings of the underwing. As we know these small insects never seem to stop so you have to really catch them for id. The skippers have stouter bodies and smaller wings than the other families and hold their wings differently to warm themselves in the sun.

Cliff concentrated mostly on identification of butterflies, but it was clear by his many anecdotes along the way he was deeply knowledgeable about host plants and butterfly behaviour. It is interesting that several species of butterfly have adapted to introduced plants. An example is the Blue Triangle which uses native laurels as a host plant but has adapted to breed on Camphor Laurel. On the other hand, some butterflies have only one native host plant and will never adapt to a changing environment, so for these species, habitat loss will mean their extinction. The well-

known Monarch butterfly arrived in Australia in about 1871. Its host plant had been introduced to Australia and the butterfly followed, making its own way.

The workshop included a field survey. Despite ours being late afternoon, in overcast weather and in a small stretch along a riverside path in town we quickly located 14 species. We talk about which animals are good environmental indicators and butterflies are certainly one of them. Near the bottom of the food chain, a butterfly in one of its forms – egg, cater-

pillar, butterfly, or chrysalis provides food for birds, other insects like parasitic wasps, and reptiles. Even some Blue butterfly caterpillars provide food for ant larvae.

Most butterflies are short lived. Some like the Blue Tigers and Common Crows will estivate – resting for periods of time – lengthening their life. Little is known about butterfly migration in Australia although it is restricted to a few species such as Caper Whites, Blue Tigers, Lemon Migrants and Grass Yellows. It seems to be just something they are programmed to do rather than have a purpose. (I guess it's really something we don't understand.)

Finally, if we want butterflies in our garden we need to understand a few things. Butterflies are born with all the food reserves they will ever need and having a drink of nectar is purely an energy drink boost for them. So, while it's nice to provide some flowers for nectar and have them visit for a while, the really important thing is to have host plants so the butterflies can breed and be resident.

✿ *Jenni Watts*



THE DINGOES (WONGARI) ON K’GARI—library Talk

Jenna Tapply from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has been working on K’gari for ten and half years. She shared some of her interesting experiences with a small audience at the Hervey Bay library on 21/10/22.

Wongari have successfully thrived on the island for many hundreds of years up until European settlers invaded their space, mostly through unchecked tourism. The Wongari had achieved a fairly balanced population, preying on land and ocean wildlife for survival. The balance of this

existence has been somewhat disrupted by vehicular access, and disturbing the population via inappropriate feeding, curious attention and general pollution and bush destruction. As would be expected with any wild carnivore, there have been repercussions on humans who have experienced attacks and injury.

Wongari are now protected, and tourists / visiting humans are regulated and warned with heavy penalties in a step towards Wongari protection and recovery. This also helps with human protection.

The Butchulla people, First Nations inhabitants and owners of K'gari have a long relationship with Wongari and refer to 2 groupings of Dingoes specified as Wat'dha or Camp Dingoes, and Wongari or wild Dingoes.

The Wongari are typically mostly ginger in colour. (Nationwide, they are typically a mix of ginger, brown and white.) Wongari typically mature at 2 years of age and generally produce only one pup each year during their oestrus stage of life.

In an average March, 2-8 pups in total are born. The pups become independent at 3-4 months.

During their lifecycle, socially integrated small packs gather every few days. Males are dominant except during the breeding and pup season when females defend their young. Male dominance can cause claim on all local food supply. Their hunting packs vary in size and strategy according to food source and environment.

Jenna maintains that the current approximate population size of Wongari is 200. She and her ranger colleagues observe, record, capture and tag the Wongari for research purposes. A few graphs were presented charting diet of the Wongari, mostly gleaned from scats (excreta).

During capture, the animals are checked for injury, health levels and parasites. They are then dosed with parasite suppression and tagged using a collar. The collars drop off after a predetermined time and are retrieved by rangers, a huge task, but aided by radio signal if still working. The recordings from the collars give indications of travel and rest habits of the Wongari. From observation, Jenna maintains that the collars do not affect their socialisation, breeding, hunting or feeding behaviour.

If any of the animals are injured or sick, vet advice and treatment is commenced.

One wonders if the same might be said about the new technique of attaching a camera to the front of the collar, a more invasive method of gathering data. It is a new technique, yet to be determined as safe for the animals, but provides some amazing photos and videos. I questioned this technique as something implemented just because it could be done rather than any benefit to the animal. The good old fashioned static observation cameras would be the best all-rounders in my opinion, and these are still used on K'gari.

Some additional research and separate from Jenna's talk, is presented in volume 58/2021 of Wildlife Australia, titled Dingo (*Canis familiaris*). Dingos are considered native to Australia and there is a trend towards their protection nationwide, as with all native species. They are a form of Grey Wolf and can breed with domestic dogs. Some interbreeding has occurred, but the genetic blueprint is predominantly Dingo.

In the past and in some areas, Dingoes were targeted and suppressed, but it has been realised that they play an important role in the ecosystem. One important role is kangaroo predation. Explosion in kangaroo populations causes overgrazing and soil erosion.

✿ **Jackie Henrion.**

Image: fraserisland.net





A Nature Observation

It's funny how a casual observation can lead to question, and then in the pursuit of an answer, leads you to more and more questions and observations of apparently unrelated things.

So for me the other day it was "Why is the Wonga Pigeon on the beach?" Another more considered look around and I see four Peaceful Doves (three pictured above) and a Bar-shouldered Dove.

These birds are commonly seen in the Park and along the foreshore. The Wonga Pigeon, being exclusively a ground feeder of fallen fruits is regularly seen scurrying along the tracks in the Park, but here I see the birds are feeding on the tide line. A look at the brown mass on the tide line reveals the tiny seeds of the Milky Mangrove.

I examine the small 3-lobed fruits of the Milky Mangrove and observe how easily they break up into individual seeds. Each 2mm seed apparently has an air pocket making it buoyant which is why they end up washed up on the high tide line. Easy pickings if they form part of your diet, which they must for the three species of ground feeding birds I see foraging.

Seeing the seeds jogs my memory that another mangrove close by was forming seeds the last time I ventured to look. How different can two mangrove species be?

I pass the Milky Mangrove laden with thousands of fruits, kick through masses of tiny brown seeds on the tide line, and head of into the foreshore thicket to a Cannonball Mangrove.

Yes! The fruit have matured. All two of them on one plant. But what this plant lacks in numbers it makes up for in size. The fruit is the size of a grapefruit! Each ball will have 8-16 segments - each segment being a seed. We see these on the high tide line occasionally too – all odd shapes – a piece of the puzzle that was a fruit (pictured below).



Very impressive. Too big for a bird to eat though!

✿*Jenni Watts*



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