



Next Meeting Friday 24th February 2023

Presents a chance to get close to native wildlife

Martin Fingland from Geckos Wildlife Presentations gives you the chance to see a fascinating display of live native animals combined with an informative talk on our unique and wonderful Australian wildlife. Hosted in Martins' own easy and educational style.

Both children and older folk will all be enchanted

When: Friday 24th February 2023 at 7.00 pm

Where: [Alexandra Hills Community Hall](#), 131-155 Finucane Road, near "Aldi". Entry & car parking just around corner off Windemere Road

General Public Welcome, Entry by gold coin donation, booking required for entry.

Click [LINK](#) for Eventbrite website. For more information, contact Steve on 0423 036 676 or bayside@wildlife.org.au

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President's Report

Bayside Branch | February 2023

Steve Homewood

Welcome back to our first Newsletter for 2023, I hope that every-one has had a decent break and had a chance to get out and appreciate our local environment which has much to offer despite all the threats to its well-being by ongoing growth challenges.

We've been visiting many reserves not only in the Redlands but some in Brisbane, [Colmslie Beach Park](#) and [Queensport Rocks Park](#) near the Gateway Bridge are worth a visit, hidden by the river in a very industrial area. The Mount Coot-tha Botanical Gardens still delight once you've navigated the dreadful Toowong roundabout and then there is picturesque drive up to the summit.

Coochiemudlo Island is a still great place to spend a few hours, we came across a rarely seen on the ground, Giant Wood Moth, which we moved off the footpath for safety. Repairs have closed the track down to Wellington Point from the Osprey nest pylon and Eddie Santagiuliana way is back open after the boardwalk was damaged by a fallen tree. The Branch will try and do a few walks this year as conditions for group activities improve.

Submissions to Toondah Harbour EIS closed on the 8th December and according to many reports over 24,000 submissions were received, some were quite detailed, each of those has to be evaluated by the proponent, before the final EIS is passed to the Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek for consideration. It would certainly appear that some critical issues have not been properly covered by the Draft EIS. Thank you all for participating in this ongoing saga which would never have happened if federally we respected the international "Ramsar Convention" on these wetlands, it may be many months before a decision is made.

The latest [Healthy Waterways report](#) card just published for 2022 shows that Redlands water quality has declined dramatically from C+ to D+ with Pollutant loads increased significantly from

moderate to very high, with sediment (mud) load increasing from **367 kg/ha** in 2021 to **1,133 kg/ha** in 2022 due to some heavy rains, but it does highlight its vulnerability, if Toondah goes ahead and they eventually dredge the quoted 530,000 cubic metres of sediment pollutant levels will likely explode and suffocate our seagrass, mangroves and coral reefs, with its long terms effects on our marine life.

The Branch will be continuing its monthly meetings still at the Alexandra Hills Community Hall, normally on the last Friday of the month. Our first meeting with Martin Finland is on the 24th February and the 31st March meeting will have a talk by local resident and palaeontologist Doug Miller on his expeditions to a renowned Mongolia dig site.

Sunday March 5th is Clean up Australia Day at our usual site at Redland Bay see attached poster.

2023 is likely to be challenging for community groups with Toondah Harbour and the Whitewater Rafting Olympics site proposed for the Birkdale Community Precinct, forefront of many issues.

Thanks for all your support during 2022, it does make a difference.

"We have a finite environment—the planet. Anyone who thinks that you can have infinite growth in a finite environment is either a madman or an economist."

— **David Attenborough**

Wildlife Diary

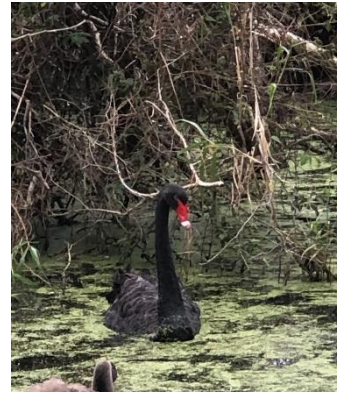
Out and About



*Giant Wood Moth- Coochiemudlo
Melaleuca Wetlands walk-Steve
Steve*



*Sandy Camp Road Wetlands Reserve
Wynnum West-Steve*



*Sandy Camp Road Wetlands Reserve
Wynnum West-Steve*



*Cockatoo feeding Mount Coo-tha
Botanical Gardens-Steve*



*Osprey Stradbroke Island
Gorge - Photo Donna Edwards*



Colmslie Beach Park-Steve



*Bush Stone Curlew and Chick
Capalaba – S Dewar*



*Male King Parrot
Capalaba – S Dewar*



*Snoozing Koala
Capalaba – S Dewar*

An Adventure with Science Under Sail

Bayside Member's adventure with "Science Under Sail" marine research. Stars above, stars below - Magical Moreton Bay

As I flicked my hands in the dark water, tiny bright white sparks flashed. The quicker I moved; the more sparks radiated until I was surrounded by a mist of miniature stars. Up above, tiny flickering stars mirrored the bioluminescence in water. Bioluminescence is natural light produced by living organisms like bacteria. All it takes to see this light show is to go sampling aboard the *Verella* with James Udy, work hard all day, moor in a quiet inlet off Moreton Island, wait for the sun to set, climb up on the bow of *Verella*, and leap off wildly into the blackness.

James runs Science Under Sail, an organisation which collaborates with marine research organisations to collect field data from the *Verella* which is a comfortable 12 metre x 6 metre research sailboat. Currently James is surveying seagrass and benthic habitats whilst providing hands-on experience to students and volunteers. The surveying involves either dropping a camera from the rear of the *Verella*, or by snorkelling with a camera from a small inflatable tender. Participants experience all aspects of sampling, sailing, data entry and life aboard a research vessel. Although the surveying was sometimes challenging, the other students were incredibly enthusiastic, and we had plenty of play time and glorious sunsets on the foredeck. My favourite activity was snorkelling with a camera from the tender, taking a big breath and grabbing a handful of seagrass and sediment for identification.



Luidia maculata

Each survey records sediment and sea grass type, percentage cover of sea grasses, algae, and other organisms. The camera from *Verella* surprised quite a few fish, and even a reef shark, as well as less mobile soft corals, anemones, and feather stars. The sea grasses were dominated by three species, *Zostera muelleri*, *Halophila ovalis* and *Halophila spinulosa* (to a lesser extent), with more meadows in the clearer waters of the Eastern Bay. Whilst

some of the seagrasses were smothered with filamentous algae, and some seagrasses looked dead; other seagrasses were very healthy. The sandy bottom had lots of attractive gliding Spotted Seastars *Pentaceraster regulus*, and interesting 8-legged Speckled Seastars *Luidia maculata*.



Pentaceraster regulus

From *Verella*, we saw many dolphins and turtles close by and an elusive hammerhead shark. I would love to report that I saw a dugong, but sadly I did not. However, I did find the next best thing. In a seagrass meadow a small, dark sea cucumber turned out to be a single, perfectly formed dugong poo. Sadly, my excitement was not mirrored by my companions when I brought it up and placed it gently on the side of the tender.



Snorkelling Tangalooma Wrecks

Spending time in the Moreton Bay Marine Park reminded me of the beauty and complexity of this vulnerable ecosystem situated so close to a large and developing human population. I would like to thank the real stars: all the people who have given of their time to conserve the Marine Park, endlessly raising contentious issues, and writing submissions, and especially my fun-loving, inspiring travelling companions. I believe that continuing to engage with people and government is the key to preserving and improving Moreton Bay's diverse ecosystem. Heartfelt thanks also to James Udy and Science Under Sail for having me onboard *Verella*, and an incredible experience.

Volunteers' Shellfish Behaviour Helps Moreton Bay

The OzFish Shellfish Revolution is the largest community-driven shellfish reef restoration program in Australia.

It has a footprint across the country, with various projects in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia.

Nowhere showcases why this habitat is so important and what can be achieved more than our Moreton Bay Shellfish Reef Restoration project in Queensland.

Beginning in 2019, our Central Moreton Bay Chapter set out to restore 100 hectares of shellfish reef during the next 10 years.

Fast forward to today, and what our rec fisher volunteers are achieving year-on-year in Moreton Bay is incredible. During the last 12 months alone, they have deployed more than 3,200 Robust Oyster Buckets (ROBs) to the restoration site.

Many of those have been deployed in recent weeks as November and December are a particularly important time in the lives of oysters in Moreton Bay. Put simply, it's mating time.

In early summer, as water temperatures begin to rise, oysters begin the breeding process. When the water reaches 26c, they start to mate and release huge numbers of baby oysters (spat) into the water.

This is the moment our volunteers have been busily working towards.

The ROBs they have been building and filling with discarded oyster shells, that would otherwise have gone to landfill, are the perfect home for the spat. Oyster shell has a chemical signature that attracts the spat and they love the nooks and crannies that the ROBs offer.

The time of deployment of the completed ROBs is crucial though.

Time it just right and it's a match made in heaven: millions of baby oysters looking for a home and a whole heap of tailor-made ROBS waiting to welcome them.

This year, we will be able to deploy more ROBs than ever before in time for the mating season thanks to support from the Queensland National Parks Service's boat, 'Spoonbill'.

Our Shellfish Revolution activities across Australia truly are a community effort, with the spearhead being rec fishers driving every element of restoration.

Thanks to everyone who's been involved so far. If you'd like to find out more about our activity to return this vitally important habitat to Australia's waterways.

<https://ozfish.org.au/2022/10/volunteers-shellfish-behaviour-helps-moreton-bay/>



Volunteers Image Credit: OzFish



Blue Carbon

“Coastal blue carbon ecosystems are environments that support mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses. They are prevalent along most coastlines in the world. The term ‘blue carbon’ recognises the ability of these ecosystems to capture and store large amounts of carbon in their soils, roots and plants making them a significant ‘carbon sink’.

Coastal blue carbon ecosystems provide essential breeding grounds for commercial fish, habitat for threatened marine species such as turtles and dugongs, feeding and staging grounds for migratory birds, and filter water flowing into our ocean and reef systems. They play a vital role in food security and sustaining coastal livelihoods, including by supporting fishing and tourism.

Coastal blue carbon ecosystems also provide a natural barrier that can reduce the impact of storm surges reducing coastal inundation, infrastructure damage and protecting coastal communities.

Australia is considered a global ‘blue carbon hotspot’. Australia harbors about 12 per cent of the World’s blue carbon ecosystems, which hold about 7-12 per cent of global carbon stock. The seagrass meadows surrounding the coral reefs in the Great Barrier Reef alone host an estimated 11 per cent of the world’s seagrass blue carbon.

In Australia, we have lost half of our coastal ecosystems since European colonisation began. Meaning ~25,000km² of marsh and mangroves and 32,000km² of seagrasses are destroyed.

Coastal developments cause further losses each year. Between 2009-13, Queensland lost 82ha of blue carbon ecosystems annually.

Restoring blue carbon ecosystems is one of the most effective and natural solutions for carbon capture. These ecosystems capture CO² for a long period of time and so they play a major role in climate change mitigation.”

The federal government is spending millions on Blue Carbon Projects to restore wetlands including mangrove and seagrass beds, the nearest project is near the mouth of the Maroochydore River just under a 100km from Toondah Harbour.

Why then is The Toondah Harbour project even under consideration, where we will potentially destroy nearly 47 hectares of wetlands by dredging 530,000 cubic metres of saturated land which will include areas of seagrass and mangroves to bury them under concrete, one of the worst carbon polluters accounting for 8% of the world’s carbon emissions.

The phrase “Give with one hand take with the other” comes to mind.

The community can only hope that our elected representatives will realise the folly of this project, which ignores all the latest warnings about climate change and its causes

Information found on: -

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/policy/ocean-sustainability/coastal-blue-carbon-ecosystems>



FACT

01

Scientists have shown blue carbon ecosystems can store, or ‘sequester’, between 10 and 100 times more carbon than forests, which is why halting their destruction and restoring and protecting them has become an international priority.



FACT

02

Urgent conservation action is needed because it is estimated that 25-50% of coastal ecosystems have been lost over the last century.



FACT

03

Mangrove forest exploitation, coastal development, pollution and pressures from agriculture and aquaculture are some of the common causes for coastal ecosystem damage and destruction.

Clean Up Australia Day



**Register for our clean up at Sel Outridge Park
end of Peel Street, Redland Bay.**

<https://www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/fundraisers/st evehomewoodhomewood/1668381925>

See you there!

Contacts and Important Links

Committee & Contacts

President	Steve Homewood	0423036676
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Treasurer	Maureen Tottenham	0418 197 160
Executive	Tracey Mann Janelle Devery	
Bayside Newsletter Editor	Alix Baltais/Simon Baltais	
Wildlife Diary Editor	Simon Baltais	
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Cicada Film Festival

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Website [LINK](#)

Membership Application Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland

Memberships Types

- \$30.00 Single
- \$20.00 Concession (Pensioner/Full Student)
- \$45.00 Family or Non Profit Group
- \$12.50 Junior

Optional Wildlife Magazine Subscription

- \$47.00 per year inc GST (Four Issues)
- \$90 for 2 years inc GST (Eight Issues)
- \$70.00 per year (International Post)
- \$135 for 2 years (International Post)

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Complete the form by checking boxes or typing.

Once complete, save to your computer, then return to us via email bayside@wildlife.org.au