

# WAMBALIMAN

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



## THIS ISSUE:

- Branch Activities
- Nature Watch
- Gatakers Landing
- Toondah Harbour
- Chytridiomycosis

*please support us*



Wildlife Fraser Coast  
Member Number: C11242652

## AUTUMN 2024

**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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**Fraser Coast EAG rep** Paul Murdoch

**Rail Trail Advisory Group** John W / Tina R

**USC Partnership**

(until completion of the kangaroo and glider projects)

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

**Newsletter WAMBALIMAN**

Publisher: WPSQ Fraser Coast Branch

Editor & Production: Jenni Watts

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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  
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](mailto:ggduckz@gmail.com)

### Submissions for the next issue are due by Friday 19 July 2024

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 of 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  
**Next one 16 June**

### Executive Meetings

Next one 19 May

### WILDLIFE NATURE WALKS

5 May (Sunday) - Colliery Circuit  
1 June (Saturday) - Takura Trails  
Vernon State Forest  
7 July (Sunday) - Fairlies Knob

### LIBRARY WILDLIFE TALKS 1-2PM

17 May Hervey Bay Library:  
Birdwatching on the Fraser Coast  
by Ruby Rosenfield  
31 May Maryborough Library:  
Talk repeated  
21 June Hervey Bay Library:  
Wildlife Resources and Protecting  
Biodiversity by Rob Loveday  
28 June Maryborough Library:  
Talk repeated  
19 July Hervey Bay Library: TBA  
26 July Maryborough Library: TBA

**see FCRC website for bookings**

FCRC community tree plantings  
27 April, 8 June, 27 July  
See FCRC website

### FRASER COAST BACKYARD

## BioBlitz

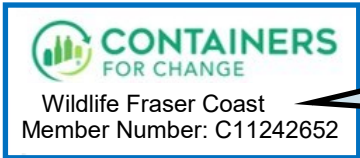
Winter July 13-14th  
Spring October 12-13th

Don't forget to LIKE us on

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

Check out our page on

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



*Thanks Riley,  
every bit helps.*



**From the Editor,**

*News of the passing of Val McIntosh came as a shock to us in early February. How wonderful that Val was still such a valuable and active member of the community.*

*This edition of Wambaliman marks my 70th as editor (and doing layout and design), although I have been associated with Wambaliman since the 90s. 20 years ago member Dr Tim Thorton used to call me “Wambaliman girl” and John Sinclair who founded Wambaliman in 1962 was amazed at my commitment even 10 years ago. I will celebrate if I make the 100.*

*Council elections were held in March. We congratulate all new Councillors and look forward to working with them. There are some wonderful new and younger faces and we are confident for our Council moving forward.*

*Paul Murdoch, our Branch Secretary elected in September last year resigned in March. He remains our EAG rep and working on the Gatakers Landing issue. We trust Paul can advise on some constitutional issues for us in the future and thank him for the six months as Secretary and in particular his recent reorganisation of our Containers for Change fundraiser. Relatively new member, Susan Cory, will be our Secretary until the next AGM. ❁Jenni*

## Vale Val McIntosh

*Today we lost a much loved and respected member of the Fraser Coast Arts Community, Val McIntosh. Val devoted much of her time in support of arts and culture on the Fraser Coast. She embraced life with passion and gusto.*

*-Gatakers Artspace, 6 February*

Val was one of our longest serving Branch members. Not long ago, when the Branch alternated meetings between Maryborough and Hervey Bay, we held meetings in Val’s art studio in Richmond Street, Maryborough. Earlier than that though she had been an active member attending plantings and other outdoor events.

Val was active in many fields including teaching, art (especially print making), train driving (Maryborough’s steam train “Mary Ann”), and environmental issues. Some of our members knew Val through French language classes and social situations sharing a bottle of red. Val is certainly fondly remembered by many.

Photo: Alive Magazine Wide Bay



## Branch Activity Report 21 January 2024—21 April 2024

### Meetings

- Executive meeting 21 January
- Executive meeting 3 March
- Executive Meeting 13 March
- Scheduled General meeting 17 March—postponed until April
- General meeting 21 April

### Gatherings

- 6 February Walks team plan year's program, meeting at Arkarra
- 20 April Branch stall / display at Earth Day celebration, Urangan

### Submissions / letters

- 30 January—submission regarding DA MCU23/0090 (21-storey high rise)
- 17 April—to the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP regarding her decision to reject the Toondah Harbour development proposal (see page 8).

### Advisory Groups

- 27 February EAG meeting (see p10)

### Walks

- March—Takura Environmental Reserve (see p13)
- April—Duckinwilla *postponed* (p14)

### Library Talks

- February—FCRC waste and recycling
- March—a trip to K'gari in the 1960s
- April—our drinking water

### Autumn Backyard Bioblitz

- Weekend of 13 & 14 April – see some of the photos on our Facebook page and a report pages 18 and 19

### Uni Partnerships

- Greater Glider project completed and shared with FCRC
- Eastern Grey Kangaroo project—due for completion end July 2024

### Communications

- Our Facebook page now has 1313 followers
- 21-22 January 2024—WAMBALIMAN Summer 2023-24 distributed (electronic and hardcopy)
- April 17—updated Branch brochure (grayscale, hardcopy)
- April 17—updated branch info sheet (colour, electronic)

### Wildlife Matters

Articles published in *The Toogoom Chatter & River Heads Review*

March: The Feathertail Glider by Diane Christensen

April: Takura Environmental Reserve by Frank Ekin

May: Duckinwilla by Frank Ekin

### Fundraising

We have a new code for the container deposit scheme - please help us.



Wildlife Fraser Coast  
Member Number: C11242652

use the code or scan the barcode



## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Hans Sipsma, Annette Gillingham, Janeen Fricke, Gary Bennett

## *Hervey Bay CoralWatch—guest speakers at 21 April meeting*

Preceding a general meeting 21 April, 14 people were audience to an enjoyable and enlightening presentation “Corals on your Doorstep” by Breannah, Sharon and Zarley from Hervey Bay CoralWatch, pictured left with Branch president John.

Despite our members crediting themselves with a reasonable knowledge of our local natural environment this CoralWatch presentation was a reminder about how much we don't know. The energy and enthusiasm of these young people was also heartening.

CoralWatch is a citizen science project based at the University of Queensland monitoring reef health and creating awareness in the community with education and outreach. The Hervey Bay group is one of a number in Qld.

In terms of coral reefs Hervey Bay has something very special by national standards that not even many locals are aware of. Our reefs are close to shore - in fact some as close as 50 metres! Lying just to the south of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park they are not as well studied or protected. Our Hervey Bay waters are protected by the Great Sandy Marine Park, but it is only in the last management plan review that a green zone (high protection) of a very small part of our reef near the mouth of Toon Toon Creek has been included.

It is known that about 75% of the GBR is affected by “coral bleaching” – effectively indicating stressed and dying coral, and this is also reflected in Hervey Bay reefs. Rising sea temperatures play a huge part, but so does light and



chemical pollution. Corals mistakenly eat microplastics blocking their digestive paths and starving them to death. Land clearing increases sediment pouring out of our waterways into the ocean smothering corals. Light pollution disrupts natural rhythms and affects the whole reef ecosystem and the corals are unable to spawn and therefore reproduce.

Due to Hervey Bay reefs being so close to the shore they are particularly vulnerable. Sediments and pollution are more concentrated close to shore. City lights could become an issue particularly if we allow tall buildings on the Esplanade. Hervey Bay is shallow and big low tides can expose already stressed corals.

There are horror stories from the past with corals being destroyed because they were in the way of mooring or fishing. Hopefully those days are gone but there are new threats. We also have a better understanding of the importance of the coral reefs which cover approximately 1% of our ocean floor but provide habitat for 25% of marine life.

Please support this group where you can. Check out their Facebook page “**Hervey Bay CoralWatch**”. ✨

## Gatakers Landing Hotel Licence Application—update

This is an update regarding the application to have the grant of a commercial hotel licence at Gatakers Landing rejected.

In a decision issued by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) on 9 April 2024, the Tribunal has now agreed to a number of applications to allow extensive ‘new’ evidence to be presented as part of the appeal seeking to have the grant of a provisional Commercial Hotel Licence to a developer on the site of the former small restaurant overturned.

This new evidence is documentation, including affidavits, emails and communications, including about exemptions from the Planning Act extended to the developer, and information obtained from Council through the lodgement of a Right to Information.

The only new evidence sought to be admitted but not allowed to be presented was a detailed sworn affidavit prepared for the Branch identifying the extensive errors and mistakes in the Community Impact Statement prepared by the developer and heavily relied upon by the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation in the decision to grant the disputed licence. This document, not sighted or able to be challenged in terms of accuracy or veracity until the appeal processes forced the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming Regulation to reveal its content in March 2023, is an error-riddled work.

The agreement to allow the presentation of the extensive additional material followed the holding of compulsory Directions Hearings by the Tribunal on 31

July 2023 and 26 February 2024. Neither the developer nor his legal representative bothered to attend either hearing, nor provide submissions by the dates required by the Tribunal.

The result is that the Tribunal’s decision to admit the new evidence means that in accordance with the Liquor Act the Tribunal has had to “adjourn the proceedings for a stated reasonable time to allow the commissioner to reconsider the decision together with the new evidence and to allow for further submissions by affected persons”. The Tribunal has adjourned the proceedings until after 24 May 2024.

The Branch’s next step is to prepare and lodge another submission - to the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation - urging them to reconsider the new material, together with all of the objections and material previously available to them, and reach the conclusion that the grant of a provisional Commercial Hotel Licence on this site cannot be justified in light of the matters required to be considered under the Act – and that the Council has never required or approved the material change of use that the change of licence from a small restaurant to a large commercial hotel requires. Such an approval must require the preparation of and consideration of an Environmental Impact Assessment in relation to the site and several endangered species, which we are now well aware has never been undertaken since the first commercial use of the site in the 1930s.

✱ **Paul Murdoch** 15 April 2024



## TOONDAH HARBOUR DECISION

**On 9 April Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek issued a media release saying she intended to reject the Toondah Harbour proposed development on environmental grounds.**

As the development would impact on critically endangered species it triggered the involvement of the Federal Government in considering the development under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act).

Over the last 10 years the project was opposed by a community campaign backed by scientists and conservationists. They cited the international importance of the wetland habitat for many resident and migratory waders including the critically endangered eastern curlew, which migrates 12,000 kilometres from Russia to Australia and relies on Moreton Bay as habitat for feeding and roosting.

The public were given 10 days to respond to the Minister's announcement (hence the letter reproduced on the next page from our Branch). The developer, Walker Corporation, had 10 days to consider its bid.

**On 18 April we heard Walkers have decided to withdraw their current application. This is great news, but....**

Walkers have only withdrawn from the current proposal with "an opportunity to review the Federal Government's proposed decision and consider if there are alternative options that would still allow vital infrastructure and housing to be delivered."

The project was backed by the State Government and the local Redland City Council supported the Queensland Government's declaration of Toondah Harbour as a Priority Development Area in 2013 as a means "of progressing vital upgrades to the ferry terminal, creating new jobs, and boosting the local economy through tourism, residential and retail opportunities." This still stands – so the fight is not over. We need to remain vigilant.

"Extinctions are neither accidental nor deliberate.  
They are a failure of policy and people." *Dr Ann Lawless*



**THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP  
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER**

**Dear Minister Plibersek**

The Fraser Coast Branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society welcomes your announcement that you propose to refuse Walker Corporation's development application for Toondah Harbour, in order to protect this wetland of international significance. Our members fully agree with your assessment that the development would have "an unacceptable impact on a range of threatened and migratory species including loggerhead and green turtles, the eastern curlew and the grey-tailed tattler. It will also have a significant impact on dugongs, dolphins and other shorebirds". To allow such a development in this vitally sensitive area would be set a disastrous precedent.

Our Branch has a strong membership of 80+ financial members (and two life members) and broad community support with over 1300 Facebook followers, with a large majority from the Fraser Coast region. We made a submission in response to the development's draft EIS (December 2022) concluding "The draft EIS fails to address the recovery of Eastern Curlew and other migratory shorebird populations".

Our Branch also objected to a previous development proposal which threatened an important shorebird site in the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Wetland of International Significance, in the Fraser Coast Region. This was a proposal to build the Turtle Cove Haven Retirement Village immediately next to a high tide roost site in a claypan frequented by 100-200 critically endangered Eastern Curlews. In September 2020 the then Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley rejected the proposal deeming it would have impacted one of Australia's most important sites for the critically endangered Eastern Curlew and other migratory shorebirds in Queensland's Hervey Bay region.

That decision heartened our membership and provided some assurance that the intent of the EPBC Act could be realised and protection offered to our most vulnerable wildlife. Your provisional decision to not approve the Toondah Harbour development further encourages us to feel confident that the EPBC Act provides the mechanism to help arrest a woeful record of environmental damage and tragic species extinctions since European settlement. While the Act itself provides the legal mechanism, the protection which ensures the conservation still requires a fair, apolitical process by the Government, and in particular, the Federal Environment Minister.

We thank you for the thorough and thoughtful consideration by you and your Department. Often environmental groups feel overwhelmed in the face of well-funded aggressive corporations and sympathetic media allies. We urge you to maintain your position to refuse this proposal.

Yours sincerely, (WPSQ FC)

## FCRC Environmental Advisory Group 27 February

This was attended by Frank as proxy for Paul who is our representative. Some of the topics discussed were:

- The acting Biosecurity Officer, Andrew Hatch, spoke about traps for foxes, wild dogs, pigs and Common Mynas.
- Myna bird bounty discussed
- Natural Environment manager, Amber Kelly gave an update on the 100,000 trees project (with 63,000 planted so far) and upcoming community plantings.
- Flying Fox Management Plan now circulated to community
- Broad-leafed pepper tree - contractors sought for control
- White Ibis management
- Council vegetation vandalism
- Bushfire Management Plan—in development stage
- Natural Environment Web pages are live
- Salvinia Weevil—breeding facility under development

The meeting acknowledged the retirement of Cr David Lewis and the resignation of community education officer Jennifer Waithman.

### Nesting Boxes—now available locally

While there was no response from membership following my article in the last Wambaliman asking for information/advice on nesting boxes for wildlife in urban and rural properties, I did find an excellent and comprehensive set of plans on Wildlife Queensland's website for a number of species.

If you are feeling like a construction challenge, visit the website for full details.

Older Men Unlimited (OMU) have a workshop in Maryborough and will make the boxes. Unfortunately, they would not provide dimensions and material detail, so this information will have to be chased up when ordering directly from them. I have forwarded the WPSQ plans to them but it is up to them to take it further for expanding their product range. OMU's contact details are below.

#### \**Jackie Henrion*



Constructed and sold by Older Men Unlimited (OMU)  
MARYBOROUGH Qld

Inspections available at OMU Workshop – Shed 4,  
Maryborough Airport.

Contact Frank: on 0490 478 193 to arrange inspection.

**Members and supporters are invited to write articles for  
Wildlife Matters—please contact Diane (see page 2 for contact details)**

## Chytridiomycosis In Frogs

*A few of our Branch members have identified the disease in Striped Marshfrogs (pictured) in their gardens.*



During the last 50 years, particularly from the 1990s, it has been noted there has been a major decline in frog numbers, locally, in Australia and worldwide. This decline is ongoing.

In Australia alone at least 20% of frog species have significantly declined: 43+ species are at risk, and 7 have become extinct. The causes are still being debated, but include habitat loss, pollution, and disease.

One major factor is a disease caused by the Chytrid (pronounced 'kit-rid') fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. Mortality of individuals and frog populations can be total, but pathogenicity not only depends on the species but also on the population and location.

Considerable research still needs to be done to understand the dynamics of this disease. How widespread and prevalent Chytridiomycosis is and in which frog species in the Wide Bay area is unknown, although certainly present in Hervey Bay killing common species and Cane Toads.

Discovered only in 1998, this Chytrid fungus has a biphasic lifecycle. The reproductive and infected frog sessile stage is zoosporangium. These occur in the keratinised skin of frogs (and some crayfish) and keratinised lips of tadpoles. Optimum temperature for fungal growth is 17-25°C, but it will survive 4-28°C. The zoosporangium release free living and motile (usually only swimming 1-2 cm) zoospores into water, or

possibly wet soil, which are active only for a short period of time. These zoospores then infect new tadpoles or frogs. Thus, Chytridiomycosis can be spread by infected frogs or tadpoles, infected water and water plants, or possibly soil.

Severely sick or dead frogs with Chytridiomycosis will normally show many of these symptoms:

- Abnormal posture and behaviour. This includes being hunched up, extended hind legs, swollen body, wobble or show difficulty moving on fleeing, located in abnormal habitat, or having a seizure.
- Skin changes. The skin may be discoloured, peeling, or ulcerated.
- Sudden or unexplained death.

If you find a frog that is dead or obviously dying and you suspect has Chytridiomycosis, do not handle directly. Rather, to remove or examine, invert a (preferably biodegradable) plastic bag over your hand, hold the frog, invert the bag over the frog, and take from the environment.

With dead frogs, pour enough methylated spirits into the bag to soak into the frog with a small residue so as to kill the zoosporangiums and zoospores. Seal the plastic bag, and dispose.

✿ **Bruce Dick**

## *Walks team and friends plan the 2024 program—4 February*

From left: Noel, Frank, John, Pat, Carol, Val, John, Marlene and Max.



The photograph above of the Walks Team suggests that levity and fun was had by all. Indeed, this is not so very far from the truth. Part of the truth is that the Branch's walks entered their eleventh year on Sunday 3 March 2024 with their first walk for the year.

Carol Bussey, with her commitment to natural environment and wildlife, stirred up an appreciation and enthusiasm for the preservation of the wildlife and natural environment. Carol organised early walks. Tony Van Kampen, with his extensive local geographic and botanical knowledge, discovered and explored many of the original walks and encouraged serious interest in the local flora.

The number of different walks has increased to 41, and the total number of walkers has mounted enormously.

Following on from Carol, Jenni, Peter and Vanessa developed the walks further. They laid emphasis on botany from which a very competent and committed botany group has continued. Birding does not lend itself to longish walks but more to idiosyncratic wandering. So, with the third iteration of the Walks Team under John Williams, walking in the natural environment has predominated, simply to introduce walkers to the many and varied areas in the Fraser Coast Region and to enjoy the peace and beauty that surrounds us.

Jenni and Peter pioneered targeted and purposeful walks such as their Point Vernon mangrove walks and Poona Spring Wildflower walks.

Following on this idea of targeted and purposeful walks Max has introduced

short history presentations. As a measure of commitment he delivered one of his most interesting on the summit of Mount Benarige. In the same vein, Marlene has encouraged the Colliery Circuit walks and Cassy the Maryborough Show Ground walk to illustrate the interconnect of natural environment with industrial history and the present day economy.

There are many current walkers from those original years still participating, indeed, Nolan and Carol H have been consistent walkers from 2014.

10 new walks have been introduced in the past couple of years with some 13 enthusiasts having done the various reconnoiters. Two new walks are planned for the 2024 series. However, the first walk of the 2024 series was at the Takura Environmental Reserve on Sunday 3rd March which has well marked tracks and plenty of shade from late summer sun. A further reason for

this choice is to familiarise walkers with this Council initiative.

Later in the year we plan for a Takura Trail walk in Vernon State Forest, so, this year we will be doing two of the three Takura hills walks. Each is distinctive in topography and ecology, yet all are part of the Takura hills and readily accessible from Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Burrum Heads.

Over and above the two new walks for this 2024 series there are four new walks already reconnoitered for the 2025 series of walks. Marlene is eager to add a couple of local peaks to add to Mount Benarige, Mount Doongul and the recently explored Mount Woocoo by Nolan, Marlene, Frank and Max guided by Richard Joll.

The Branch's Nature Walks team is particularly indebted to Carol, Tony V K, Jenni, Vanessa and Peter as it enters its eleventh year.

✿ *Frank Ekin*

### *Takura Environmental Reserve—Nature Walk 6 March*

17 walkers signed on for the Takura Environmental Reserve walk. Spectacular views to the south greeted the early arrivals. The meeting area had been recently slashed, and the substantial shed cleaned out. The check-in point took possession of one of the two new picnic shelters offering shade from the morning sun.

The Takura Environmental Reserve was chosen for the first walk of 2024 because, being a significant hill, was unlikely to be flooded by Summer rain. (Previous March walks have been too

wet.) Another advantage was that walkers could choose the -rainforest circuits and be sheltered from direct sunshine by the tall trees.

Council bought the land for the Takura Environmental Reserve about four years ago with the residual funds from the environmental levy. (The levy no longer exists.) It is a splendid asset and helps promote the natural environment. This is in distinction to other sections of the Takura hills that have had Council support and development for the benefit of mountain cyclists and motor bike riders.

The Reserve contains a significant pocket of remnant rainforest with some majestic old trees. There are a variety of figs, quandongs, lillypillies, acacias, native pines and ash – to name a few. This rainforest habitat is home to a great many birds including the endangered Black-breasted Button-quail and the elusive Noisy Pitta as well as possums, gliders and reptiles.

The Council has formed two walking tracks through the rainforest. These tracks are suitable for most walkers though care must be taken for loose stones, small fallen branches and rapidly growing vines extending across the tracks. There is an excellent series of information notices concerning the general principles of rainforest ecology.

The Environmental Reserve provokes several conversation points. First, how original is the rainforest and how old is

it? What would its appearance have been like in the millennia before European settlement? Were firestick techniques used in this area? Are firestick land management and rainforest compatible?

The second conversation point concerned what maintenance and restoration should there be of the meadow area? Currently there is abundant introduced vegetation as a consequence of it being a former farm and horse stud. Native acacias are already asserting themselves and in so doing suppressing the introduced species. Perhaps simply leave the meadow alone for the native plants to reestablish themselves.

What is not controversial is that the Takura Environment Reserve is a valuable Council-acquired asset, becoming ever more important as Hervey Bay's development continues. \***Frank Ekin**

### ***Duckinwilla—April Nature Walk postponed!***

Never say no to rain but be prepared should it come at an awkward time or in inconvenient amounts. This is the problem now for the WPSQ Walkers Team. The rain just keeps coming, but a little and a little, again and again. Rainfall this March 2024 has been 161.6 mls, the average March rainfall since 1999 is 134.3 mls. The wettest March in this period was in 2012 when 349.2 mls were recorded in 2012.

But rejoice, all the vegetation has been renewed. There is now a glorious canopy of greens and olives of new leaf cover stretching far and wide.

This cooler weather encouraged some

Walks Team members to go on a speedy reconnoiter on 31 March of the planned April walk at Duckinwilla.

Duckinwilla Road, leading off Howard Heights Road, is an excellent gravel road. Then shortly after where it veers off to the right onto School Road it becomes more challenging.

It is this section that we had advised using four-wheel drive vehicles. But the worrying inclining section of 100m of severe erosion several months ago had become perfectly navigable even with an ordinary car. But at the foot of the incline is a new rushing creek. Clearly not for the ill-experienced to ford.

However, for the two long-legged of the reconnoiter group, who, despite their venerable years, had sufficient spring in their joints to jump from grassy island to grassy island to reach the other side of the flowing creek. So, leaving the cars, the rest of us followed suit, crossing the creek, and setting off on the 3 km walk to the school, where, in the original plan we had intended parking the vehicles and making a choice between a long circuit walk and a shorter circuit walk for the birdwatchers and botanists.



Noel, Marlene, Max and John check conditions on the reconnoitre.

From the school site, the reconnoiter set off on the planned short circuit . 4km later we completed the circuit back to the school site and then retraced the three kilometers back to the flowing creek and the parked cars, in all covering 11km.

We are enthusiastic about this walk; it is in an unfamiliar area. It is part of the Lenthall Dam catchment and there are areas of quite different environments. Max has some historical gems to share about the former school.

The school site is quite unprepossessing. It reflects the value for education held by the earlier settlers. A

thought, somewhat quirky, provoked by the Duckinwilla school site, is that it is being swallowed up by the vigorous tree growth, while in Maryborough the newer schools seem intent on cutting down trees and laying asphalt to park motor cars.

Reluctantly, the reconnoiter team decided that the walk should be postponed as the access road is blocked by a flooding creek. This walk will be re-scheduled for later this year.

✿ *The Walks Team*, 31 March

## Nature Walks Calendar 2024

- 3 March (Sunday) - Takura Environment Reserve
- 6 April (Saturday) - Duckinwilla—Old school site and forest
- 5 May (Sunday) - Colliery Circuit woodland
- 1 June (Saturday) - Takura Trails— Vernon State Forest
- 7 July (Sunday) - Fairlies Knob
- 3 August (Saturday) - Tandora—Koalas and lake walk
- 1 September (Sunday) - Poona Spring flowers
- 5 October (Saturday) - Wongi Forest Reserve, Boundary Rd, Oakhurst
- 3 November (Sunday) - Lenthalls Dam—Walk & break-up

## To Bin or Not to Bin - February Library Talk



Smitri from FCRC, Belinda from the Hervey Bay Library & Branch member Diane, who organises the speakers.

The first library talk for the year kicked off with a bang on the 16 February in the Hervey Bay Library. Smitri Pandey from FCRC's Waste Management team was an absolute dynamo delivering an excellent one-hour presentation to close to 20 people. While she may have been "preaching to the converted" we all learnt something and certainly have a far better appreciation of what authorities do and need to do, to cope with all the rubbish in this throw-away era. We have the easy part – reducing our waste and separating it properly so recycling items are not contaminated.

The FCRC has only **one landfill** located, in Maryborough. Much more than "a hole in the ground" the area is well lined to stop leakage and pipes underground remove the leachate (used on the specially set up plantations) and methane gas (from rotting vegetable material). The methane gas is collected and harnessed by a power plant to generate electricity and fed into the Maryborough grid.

There are **five transfer stations in the region and a waste facility (Nikenbah)** – where we can take our waste. Lots of things from furniture, batteries, electrical goods, paint, chemicals and toothbrushes are set aside and can be salvaged whole or in part and are free to dump. Also accepted for free is clean polystyrene. A polystyrene melter reduces this product by 90%. Since 2020 when the melter was bought this machine has saved 50 tons from going into landfill.

**There is a desperate need for a kerbside green waste bin and Council is looking into this for the future. Although it costs nothing to dump green waste we still have to get it to one of the facilities which usually requires a trailer.**

Our yellow-lid bin contents are taken to the Council's Materials Recovery Facility. This facility can process cardboard/paper, hard plastics, aluminium, steel and glass. These are sent away for recycling. It is hard to believe that there is 48% contamination of stuff coming into the facility. While there may be the odd soft plastic, broken window, drinking glass or crockery (all no-go products for yellow bins) put in in ignorance, it is the sheer volume of general waste, large batteries and nappies etc, obviously put in intentionally, that leaves one gobsmacked that people can be so thoughtless and disgusting. ❁



## K'gari Adventure - March Library Talk

Nostalgia will draw crowds of a certain age. So, when it was advertised that local identities John and Sue Erbacher were to speak at the March talks in the Library there was a great response from us oldies.

Perhaps more history than wildlife preservation, it was nevertheless an informative and entertaining presentation by John of one of his many K'gari adventures - this one in 1964 when he was 18 and K'gari was called Fraser Island by the general populace.

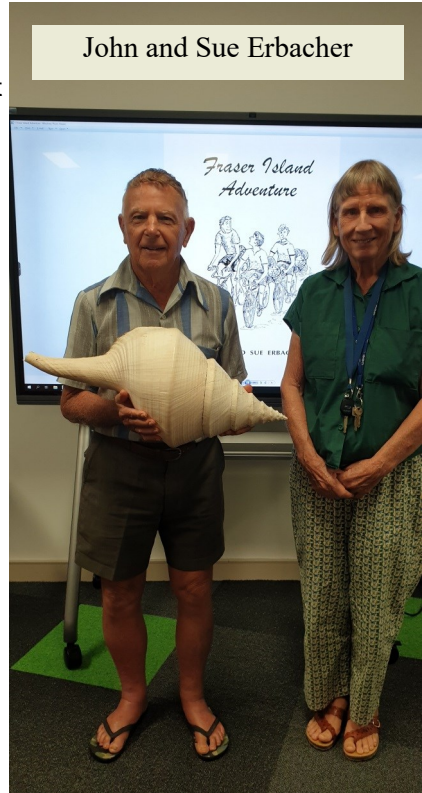
John had a series of slides showing a gorgeous unspoilt coastline with copious fish and lobsters to catch and finds on the beach of huge shells of long dead shellfish and beautifully crafted glass buoys (that John said were made on board by the Japanese fishers off K'gari). It fascinated me to hear you could run your hand along the roof of a sea cave and feel the highly polished shells of the live cowries clinging on tight.

John recounted a one-week adventure. Arriving on the northwest shores in an 11m fishing vessel, crossing the island in an old "Blitz Truck" (a jerry can tied precariously on the front replaced the lost petrol tank) and the arrival at Waddy Point.

Accommodation was a driftwood hut – the beds a couple of poles with corn sacks strung between. From here John and his two mates rode their bicycles along the beach to Sandy Cape and then on to the lighthouse where they enjoyed a night's hospitality with the keeper and his family.

One of the reasons John and his mates loved the island so much was its isolation. They didn't expect to see a soul except at the light house. Flocks of shore-birds, turtles, brumbies and dingoes yes – but no people. No 4WDs on the beach! It must have been truly amazing.

John is a character. Luckily, he had his wife Sue in the front row to keep him on track. One couldn't tell if he genuinely forgot things, or he has so much to tell he tries to do it all at once. He never rushed or forgot a joke though. The pair are well known locals who have written many books, made many short films, and given many presentations. The audience loved them. ✨



## FRASER COAST BACKYARD BIOBLITZ: AUTUMN 2024



The Backyard Bioblitz weekend of 13-14 April 2024 was warm, sunny and windy on Saturday but reasonably still on Sunday.

In my backyard the dragonflies were prolific but rarely sat still for long enough to get them in focus. We have more Tiger Spiders this year than we have probably ever seen, but they are notoriously tricky to focus on, reliably.

Butterflies were constantly flitting, almost never settling. Birds were mostly noisily invisible. Our resident mammals (we used to get Swamp Wallabies and lots of Brushtailed possums and the odd glider) have largely disappeared or kept themselves to themselves. As for skinks, there were plenty of them around, but they are still very frisky!

Cane Toads were sadly prolific but it is perhaps years since we have seen the green tree frogs and other smaller frog species in our garden that used to be regular visitors, despite recent good rains.

Plants are blessedly 'static', except when the wind moves them, but I do like to try and show flowers, fruits, seeds, new and old leaves, samples of

new seedlings in my remnant rainforest (aka garden) and other seasonal changes. So they are an 'easy' choice of subject when all else eludes you.

Despite the challenges, the results of our Wildlife Fraser Coast Backyard Bioblitz Autumn 2024 were still pretty interesting, and I want to thank everyone who participated and has already uploaded your observations. (Please do so if you have forgotten!)

**We had 378 observations lodged (as of 19 April), of 246 species, lodged by 28 observers, many of whom are members and friends of our Branch.**

As is mostly the case, Scott Gavins recorded the most observations and species (120 and 47 respectively). It was great to see Jen Stroh come in at #2, with 50 observations and 32 species. Others with significant numbers of observations included John Hampson, Peter Duck, Andrea van Kampen and Ruby Rosenfield. However, the numbers of observations you make really does not matter at all. The important thing is learning about our wonderful natural world, and in my case, learning how to use my technology a bit better.

Photos do not have to be 'good' quality. My picture of one Wandering Percher has the subject badly out of focus, but was still identifiable.



Of the 246 different species recorded, the most common one was the Wandering Percher (*Diplacodes bipunctata*) with 10 observations, Tiger Spider (*Trichonephila plumipes*) with 7, 5 observations of Australian White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*), and 4 of each of Australian Magpies (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), Scarlet Perchers (*Diplacodes haematodes*), Rainbow Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*). There were some very interesting observations, too many to name individually, but including a number of beetles, butterflies and ants, lots of different spiders including Jewel Spiders, fungi, and even a Velvet Mite. (It helps to have a good camera which can take excellent photos of tiny things you can barely see with the naked eye! But you can still get lots of great pics on your phone!)

And thanks too to the 90 Identifiers, led by my two fellow Project Administrators, Tony van Kampen and Scott Gavins (72 species identified between them).

Please do take a look at the Project Summary webpage: <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fraser-coast-backyard-bioblitz-autumn-2024>

It's fun exploring the links in that page to find out more about our observations.

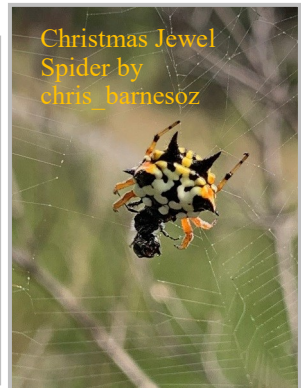
★ **Vanessa Elwell-Gavins**

Two-spined Spider by aavankampen



Jezebel Nymph by andreamvee

Christmas Jewel Spider by chris\_barnesoz



Green Tree Frog by tinaraveneau



## Nature Watch - FLYING ENERGY WARS

A male Clearwing Swallowtail butterfly (*Cressida cressida*) is currently building up its energy levels by sipping nectar from a blossoming shrub. It's being severely harassed, first by one male Common Egfly (*Hypolimnys bolina*), then by two more. The Clearwing was feeding long before the Egflies, and seems to have enough energy already to persist with his sipping while ignoring the onslaught. It seems weird that the Egflies should prioritise wingcuffs over feeding. If it's to demonstrate their fitness as mates, there doesn't seem to be any females in sight to be impressed.

There's no sign either, of the smaller, less colourful, Clearwing females, but there must be at least one out in the wild, as she's left a few bright yellow eggs on their speciality native food plant, Cressida Pipeflower<sup>1</sup> (*Aristolochia meridionalis subspecies centralis*). It had sprouted out of an underground tuber after being eaten to shreds by the butterfly's caterpillars a month before. It seems the larvae survive because their similarity to bird droppings makes them unappealing to birds. They quickly stripped the plant before hiding under a rock to pupate, then hatching into the very striking Clearwing and his more demure mate. I managed to enclose the seed pods in a mesh drawstring produce bag in the hope of collecting some seeds for the Taroom Butterfly Garden and left the site for three weeks.



Photo by Ann Hobson

The vine with the tiny yellow eggs laid singularly on Aristolochia leaves



Photo by Susan Savage

Since they don't eat the leaves of any other plants, it's a pity they can't be left in peace to fuel up for their 24-38 day lives and produce another generation without danger to any garden plants, but I guess butterflies are more interesting to humans in interactive mode.

Let's hope the 15 seeds I found in the bag are viable, so they can be grown to attract even more of these persistent males and quiet females – and sparring partners for territorially challenged Egflies.

✱ **Ann Hobson, Upper Dawson Branch**

Ref. <sup>1</sup> Frank Jordan & Helen Schwencke "Create more Butterflies" Earthling Enterprises 2005

## Nature Watch

Last Thursday morning, Market Day, the Maryborough School of Arts Building was visited by an impressive swarm of native bees (*Tetragonula*), the swarm with an approximate diameter of 1.5 metre, extending from the column at the base of the stairs out onto the footpath.

One of the Historical Society volunteers, Roy, who is also in our botany group, had most thoughtfully plastered either side of the columns with a sign which said "Stingless Native Bees" to hopefully pacify the market goers. \***Ruby Rosefield**



native bees are small, pictured here x1.5

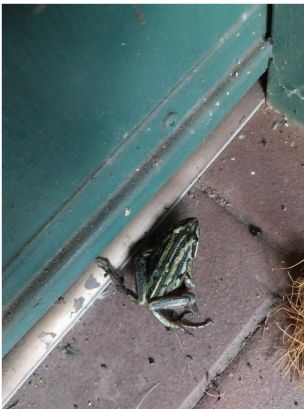


I was surprised to discover, partially hidden under a Macaranga leaf, a massively engorged little garden spider feasting on a Tiger Crane Fly.

\***Ruby Rosenfield**

## Catastrophe at 6 Moreton St

Having spent a few weeks outside listening to the night orchestra - the crickets chirping, the geckoes clucking and the Striped Marshfrog tocking - I was becoming accustomed to a soundscape not usually heard so acutely when one is watching T.V.



So you can imagine my distress when I discovered one day, the dead body of the main soloist on my doorstep.

Immediately, I felt pangs of guilt when I realised that I could have been the cause of his demise. To control the mosquitoes, I would spray around my chair. It did not enter my head that my frog with such a resounding bass voice, was going to leave his lush garden and explore the carport. Frogs have such a hard time surviving, and need as much help as possible to withstand what development and essentially we humans throw at them.

The moral of this story is not to spray insecticide in your garden and not to assume you know where your garden visitors will visit. I still feel responsible for my careless action and am trying to adjust to the silence left by my Striped Marshfrog. \***Diane Christensen**

Bruce has been a Branch Executive member since September 2016 not long after he joined the Branch. He has been on the Executive through Presidents Audrey, Vanessa, Peter (twice) and now John. It is intriguing to note that he has had his name against every Executive role except President!

*Know Your Executive*

### *Executive member, Bruce Dick*



The truth is Bruce hasn't always done the exact role of his Executive title; like when Vanessa was President, Bruce assumed the secretary title although Vanessa did the bulk of the secretary role or when he was treasurer and Jenni did the actual bookkeeping!

**But** another truth is he has always put up his hand to fill the Executive and take on a title role when we have been short. This has meant that constitutionally our Executive has always met requirements and been able to function continuously, so in this way he has made a valuable contribution.

Bruce is a person who has always willingly lent his support to others in their roles where needed. For the last few years he has written meeting minutes (except for a short time when Paul was secretary). Bruce regularly attends events including displays and stalls where his patience is evident – manning a stall for hours. He is one of those who can be relied on to bring a home-baked cake to a function, and it's always delicious.

Talking about things delicious, I recently sampled some of Bruce's homemade preserves: a choko pickle, a ripe mango

chutney and a guava and elderberry jam. His banana and chocolate gluten-free cake which he has baked for some Branch functions is fantastic. Suffice to say Bruce enjoys cooking and when he says he is a "respectable cook all round" you have to believe him.

Those who know Bruce detect his Kiwi accent even after 35 years or so in Australia. It was in NZ as a young person he became interested in wildlife and was a member of a herpetologist group for hobbyists. Bruce has also lived in Tassie for 10 years. Bruce's academic background is in biological science and later on in early childhood education. His work experience is as varied as his Branch Executive roles. He has worked for the (once) Department of Primary Industries in animal diseases, at UQ in medical research and for a pharmaceutical company. After retraining in education he worked as a kindy teacher in Wondai and in the Cherbourg community.

Retired these days, Bruce has plenty of family around him. He has stepchildren and grandkids with his partner of 25 years Nicolette and his daughter and two grandsons who live not so far away. \***Jenni**

## Branch President, John Williams

John is our current Branch President; a reluctant President he would say. Following the 2022 AGM when Peter stepped aside as President there were no nominations to fill the position. After a while John, who had held the Vice President position on the Branch's Executive since the 2018 AGM stepped up to fill the position. Having been Vice to Presidents Vanessa and Peter for four years, one could say John would have been adequately prepared.



Before this leadership role John was well involved in Branch activities. The Branch's first regular monthly nature walk was in fact hosted by John at his Gundiah Mary River property "The Wild" in March 2014. John is part of our Branch's current walks team and has been praised for his efforts raising awareness in the local community about Indian Mynas through workshops and interviews.

Some members may also remember "Polly the Pelican" a monument to our Branch's plastics campaign. I believe Polly, her handlers exhausted after rounds of displays in public places, came to rest (unwelcomingly) at John's. For those not in the know Polly was made entirely from discarded plastic; she was large and awkward but conveyed her message effectively.

We owe much of our Branch fundraising of the last 7-8 years to John. John initiated the Branch's Container for Change opportunity, he ran raffles at the Beach House Hotel every week for over two years (helped by Pat) and before that co-organised sausage sizzles at Bunnings. All effectively raising hundreds of dollars for our Branch.

John is busy in other community groups. He has been a mainstay at Halcro Street Community Garden in Pialba for about 10 years and an active member of the Greater Mary Association (GMA) where he has served on their Executive as Vice President for 4 or 5 years. He sits on the FCRC's Fraser Coast Rail Trail Advisory Group (as a WPSQFC rep) and on the FCRC Environment Advisory Group as the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) rep.

John grew up in Mundubbera, a small country town three hours west of Hervey Bay, where he still has associations with relatives and property. He worked in telecommunications with Telecom/Telstra – a lifetime job – like you did decades ago. He is extremely proud of his daughter Aimee who now lives overseas practising as a Lawyer in Los Angeles in the field of crisis housing.

People who know John will know of his quiet demeanour and his ability to sit comfortably in a variety of situations, whether on a committee, bush walk or in the local pub. Wherever he is – one thing is for sure – John likes to spin an entertaining yarn! ✨ **Jenni**



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 07 5343 4859

**WILDCARE** (operates from Pomona) Phone 5527 2444

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 (from Morgans)*
- *get the logo on any shirt at Morgans Sewing & Embroidery in Pialba.*

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