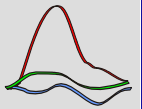




The Kedron Brook Babbler



The Newsletter of Kedron Brook Catchment Branch - Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland

Covering the environmental interests of the individuals, groups and organisations living in and near the Kedron Brook Catchment Area, Brisbane, Australia

October 2008

Inside This Issue:

WPSQ-Sthn Branches Annual Do	1
State of the Brook	2
Snippets	2
The Editors Bit	2
Brook Park Group Weed Bash	3
Off-Leash Dog Area Problem	3
Diary	4

"Progress would be wonderful — if only it would stop!"

(Robert Musil, 1880-1942)

Special interest points:

- 45% of 215 dogs encouraged to ignore swimming prohibition in Brook
- Alan Barton leaves us for the Apple Isle
- KBCB needs Secretary to continue its great work
- Progress has its price

WPSQ-Southern Branches Get-together

The gathering of the Southern Clans of WPSQ at Camp Warrawee near Caboolture this year was another chinese feast... a *what?* Well, news both sweet and sour, but pretty darn tasty all in! Ably hosted by the Caboolture branch, we had the annual worries from many branches, especially our hosts, of thinning and ageing membership.



Leanne Bowden & Greg Miller (Brisbane Branch) at WPSQ-Southern Branches Get-Together on 20 September. (RS-W)

This is to be a central challenge for Wildlife Queensland this year, as Head Office seeks to support and advise branches in this crucial aspect. There have been ongoing losses to development especially along the coast, but encouraging signs of attitudinal change from both the public and previously recalcitrant authorities. Many branches have a key annual activity, with supplementary outings and events, and experimentation in regular meeting formats is afoot. Short term volunteers and regular financial supporters both provide significant input.

The AGM day included three small

workshops to encourage members to respond to various aspects of public interaction more effectively. Official business was reported, with some emotion, by our outgoing President, Alan Barton.

We have some big issues to face up to, notably coal and gas extraction, so will need some widespread and focussed effort to help make such activity as positive as

possible. Our new president, Simon Baltais, has an impressive track record in this respect!

The day concluded with a fascinating talk on fungi, which we all learned are essential to the wellbeing of our other two main "F's", flora and fauna. 95% of our trees, for instance, rely on a relationship with fungi, often several species. They are a core component of the nutrient cycle, and at their origin more closely related to insects than plants.

As always, I was deeply impressed by the tenacity and dedication of such a few people over such a long time, and believe we should hold up

(Continued on page 4)

Why Bother with Ollie Brushtail Possum?

Ollie the brushtail possum and his mum used to live at Wooloowin. Every night at about 8 o'clock Ollie's mum would visit Lyn's house for a treat – a piece of banana was her favourite. One night Lyn noticed a nasty looking wound on Mum's back and borrowed my possum trap so we could catch her and have a closer look.

The news was not good. Ollie's mum had been attacked by a dog and there were some badly infected, ulcerated puncture wounds on her back.

One was larger than a fifty cent piece and went deep into the muscle.



Ollie Brushtail Possum in safe hands

The kindest thing to do for Mum was to put her to sleep. We went to the vet where Dr Tania humanely euthanased her.

We knew Mum had a baby in her pouch but had not looked to see if it was big enough to raise in care. Possums are marsupials and their babies are very tiny when they are born, about the size of a jelly bean, and very under-developed. They finish their development inside Mum's pouch. Ollie was 64 grams which is about four months old and JUST old enough to raise in care – maybe.

We did not pull Ollie from the

(Continued on page 4)



Talking as part of the recent Brisbane Book Festival, Tim Flannery was trying to offer some hope in contrast to the ever more dire environmental prognoses for our planet. He suggested that the 21st century has the potential to be the "sustainability century", and that humanity as an integral component of the "Gaia" concept could in fact be the "intelligence" that begins to respond to planetary pressures rather than purely relying on evolution to deal out another salutary and painful remedy.

It is a bold and challenging vision, but such are required if we are to face up to our overweening demands on our ecosystems.

We can easily see the changes down the Brook over a few years, let alone during a lifetime, or since white settlement. How many of them would we be proud of?

The time is well past when we grow out of being just a grabbing society and start to be a giving one. In that giving, we will receive far more as our environment heals and supports us again.

Having used our intelligence to understand the system, or even a little part of it, we must then have the courage and determination to do something about it. Bushcare groups do that directly; our branch as part of Wildlife Queensland hopes to also make some impact on decision-makers who are setting future goals.



Jim Pulsford guides attendees of WPSQ-Southern Branches Get-Together around the Caboulture Region Environmental Education Centre on 21 September

From the corridors of power to the corridors of green that we fondly hope link mountains to mangroves for our fauna; new buds and spring flowers remind us there is always hope in nature's resilience. Water still flows in much of the Brook despite the paucity of rain, so we must remain optimistic and draw energy from that to move forward.

Airport Link will soon be putting up their large work areas on the Brook, reminding us that change is part of life – we just need to strive to be on the positive side of that, encouraging a "whole picture" attitude.

Robert Standish-White
President

Snippets

WPSQ Past-President Alan Barton is Departing for Tasmania

Yes. It's true! Our WPSQ Past-President, Alan Barton, will be leaving Brisbane City Council and taking up a position in Catchment Management with the Tasmanian Government in November.

Alan has been a most valuable member of Kedron Brook Catchment Branch but more importantly as the President of WPSQ over recent years. His bright breezy manner, backed by his great skills and experience in catchment management have been inspirational, especially when another's opposition or lack of support has dampened our spirits.



Alan Barton sets up his presentation on Regional Ecosystems, 1 October

He gave a most illustrative presentation at Downfall Creek Bushcare Centre last Wednesday (1 October). He explained the recent methods of

Hullo again!

Spring is sprung and the bird is on the wing! New flowers seem to suddenly appear along each street and also along the Brook. When you see a new coloured flower such as say from the first Jacaranda of the season, do you notice how wide spread it suddenly appears to be?

We saw a lovely yellow-flowered tree at our daughter's family property at Nerangba. We immediately tried to think of its name. We ran through all the trees that reminded us of, but later, none of them seemed to be identical to those we could find in our own reference books.

Most exasperating! Fortunately, we took photographs and discussed it with one of our old friends who also was keen on identification of trees and the problem was solved through the network of friendship.

You'll see this tree as this issue's Learn That Weed. Now we'll have to disappoint our daughter by telling her that her lovely tree (with all those little off-springs flourishing beneath) is not so nice a thing!

The more perceptive amongst you may have noticed that something has changed in the style of this newsletter. Mainly because it is sometimes difficult to put all we want into it yet still keep only four pages. Yes, we've followed the style you'll notice in many newspapers. We no longer give that blank line between paragraphs but use the indent to make it clear!

The price of progress! Cheers!

Charles Ivin

defining Regional Ecosystems developed for Queensland with a particular focus on the Land Zones and Vegetation Communities relevant to Brisbane and how this relates to conservation.

Best wishes, Alan, from all of us!

(CI)

New Weeds Identification Tool

Brisbane City Council has developed a weed identification system on their website to help people to identify weeds on their property. Link to www.brisbane.qld.gov.au, then follow the links, *business>environment >weeds* to their database. Once you try it, you'll wonder how you did without it.

Try it with our Learn that Weed species!

(CI)

Brook Park Bushcare Group Doing Well

Brook Park is a vital link in the Mountains to Mangroves Corridor particularly because of the large forest remnant there. As such, it provides both a significant pathway and habitat for a wide range of wildlife.

This remnant is currently in good condition with a well established canopy of primarily native species.

However, Chinese elm, camphor laurel and other bird dispersed weed species have invaded the area. Bamboo appeared some years ago and has spread rampantly into the forest.

In early 2007, Brook Park Bushcare Group received a \$5000 Community Assistance Scheme grant to support its bid to enhance the Kedron Brook Waterway. Personally supported by Councillor Brian Battersby, (Moreton Bay Regional Council), the grant money was allocated under the environmental category of Pine Rivers Shire Council's Community Assistance



Forest floor lit by morning sunshine

Scheme in 2007.

This timely support enabled us to clear a large section of weeds along the banks of the Kedron Brook and to re-establish a buffer of native vegetation.

In 2008, a \$2500 grant from Brisbane City Council was matched by Moreton Bay Regional Council - Pine Rivers District and another massive effort was carried out through the winter and spring seasons for this year.

The bamboo infestation has been particularly difficult to remove. But with steady work by our local volunteers, especially from Henry and Mary Cichowski, this patch will soon be covered with native plants. Even so, heavy suckering from the bamboo residues is still expected for some time.

The group expects the need to follow-up at periodic intervals with chemical treatment until they can finally claim to have beaten this weed.

(Sonya Schmidtchen /CI)



Bamboo suckering needs periodic chemical treatment

Learn that Weed!



Yellow Bells (*Tecoma stans*)

Also called Yellow Trumpet Flower, it's sometimes confused with the cassias or *tipuana tipu* in the Brisbane area.

Semi-deciduous, densely branched, fast growing shrub or small tree to 5 metres high (occasionally 10 metres), with a rounded top.

The leaves have up to thirteen oblong lance-shaped glossy, bright green leaflets with serrated margins.

The yellow flowers are funnel-shaped and grow in terminal racemes or panicles.

The fruits (above) are long flattened bean-like pods up to 20 cm long, filled with many small, winged seeds, present most of the year.

Ranked number 100 in the Qld Herbarium *Invasive Naturalised Plants in South-east Qld. Ranked List* and are listed in BCC's list of environmental weeds.

(CI)



Cr Brian Battersby with Group Coordinator, Sonya Schmidtchen, view recent successful planting

Students Study Creek Contamination from Off-Leash Dog Areas

Yazmin and Bella are students in Grade 7 at Wilston State School. They investigated a local environmental issue for their school science competition.

They observed and recorded the behaviours of dog handlers at the dog off-leash area along Kedron Brook between the Bradshaw St. and Gilbert Rd in Lutwyche. They collected data every Saturday and Sunday over August 2008.

Did you know that 45% of the 215 dogs they observed were being encouraged by their owners to enter the waterway? This was despite clear official signage that indicated "To protect our local waterway, please discourage your dog from entering the waterway."

Yazmin and Bella also noted that a large



Owner exercises his dog at Lutwyche

amount of dog faeces was being left on the ground by the dog-handlers.

Contributing factors may have been that the dog waste bins were often found to be full and there was a shortage of

environmentally friendly biodegradable bags available for this purpose.

Yazmin and Bella suspect that the presence of dogs in that section of the brook has contributed to the disappearance of turtles, ducks and fish. The contamination of the creek caused by the inefficient control of dog waste disposal would be a significant factor.

They sent a letter to the Lord Mayor, Brisbane City Council, that expressed the hope that action can be taken to prevent further ecological damage of the Kedron Brook.

Let's hope they get a suitable response!

(CI)

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*" A man's nature runs either
to herbs, or to weeds;
therefore let him
seasonably water the one,
and destroy the other"*

(Francis Bacon , 1561-1626)

(Ollie Brush-Tail Possum continued from page 1)

pouch straight away as he was firmly attached to the teat and if we tried to pull him out we could have easily damaged his mouth or jaw. After Mum was euthanased, we cut the teat and safety-pinned it to the inside of a small cloth pouch with Ollie still attached.

A few hours later, when Ollie realised there was no milk to drink, he let go of the teat and started to cry out for food. That was all two weeks before this photo (see page 1) was taken. Here, he weighs 85 grams and has just opened his eyes for the first time.

Ollie is still doing well. He was on three hourly feeds around the clock for nearly a month and kept in a temperature controlled 'hot box' at a constant 32 degrees, about the temperature inside Mum's pouch. These tiny babies are hard work!

He has had his ups and downs but is now strong and thriving and likely to one of the lucky ones who make it. He will be released early next year when he weighs a little over one kilogram.

Some people ask why we bother going to all this trouble for a common brush-tail possum. Sure, there are plenty living in the suburbs, but they are not so common in their original range which has been cleared of almost all vegetation. Also, many people have learnt from Ollie. Certainly his carer, Joyce, has learned how to raise a

Kedron Brook Catchment Branch must have a SECRETARY to continue its great work. Consider joining our friendly team as Secretary. We'd enjoy your company. Why not discuss the matter with Robert on 3862 1186.



Not the usual way we see our flying foxes but this one was at our Bushcare Habitat Celebration Day to make its point

tiny marsupial baby. Who knows, one day she may need to apply these skills to raise a mahogany glider.

Joyce's grandson, Caleb, is helping out now that Ollie is a little older. What a wonderful lesson for a young child to learn.

Ollie has touched the hearts of many people who are following his progress, including Lyn who saved his Mum from a very slow and painful death. He might be 'common' to some, but to those who have met Ollie, he is very special.

(Debbie Turnbull)

(WPSQ-Southern Branches continued from page 1)

their victories, however modest they might seem, in the face of a resigned or cynical attitude to the future. Many branches are involved, or hoping to be, in including young people in their activities, and often find them more informed and interested than their elders

The weekend was nicely wound up on Sunday with a bus tour to the Caboolture Region Environmental Education Centre at Burpengary and the beautiful John Oxley Reserve near Murrumba Downs. (R S-W)

Dates for your Diary:

Tuesday 21 October	Kedron Brook Catchment Branch Meeting Tuesday, 21 October, 7:30 pm—9:30 pm, at Downfall Creek Bushland Centre, 815 Rode Rd, McDowall. Presentation by Harry Hines, from the EPA, to talk about frog identification, frogs of SEQ and some of the rarer frogs we may find in Kedron Brook. Social supper afterwards.
Sunday 9 November	Kedron Brook Catchment Weed Control Field Meeting 8:00 am—10:30 am Dr Ian Johnson (DPI&Fisheries) will lead a practical hands-on approach to surveying the control of weeds using biological means (Lantana and Cats Claw vine). Start with the birds, finish with brunch, and beat the heat! Details and location on website soon.
Tuesday 25 November	Morning Bird Walk with Birds Queensland This starts at Lomandra Picnic area just off Samford Road, (UBD map 117 ref C17) at 7am, Tuesday 25 November. Includes Ironbark Gully picnic area. Bring morning tea, a chair, sunscreen and insect repellent. Contact experienced leader, Dawn Muir, by phone on 3870 8076 for further details.



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