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Newsletter of the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.



**Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary
Support Group Inc**

2017, no.5

From our President.

Your committee has met with Sunshine Coast Council officers and held its own monthly meeting this month.

The Sunshine Coast Council will be conducting guide training for our volunteers during August and September. The dates are yet to be advised.

Fire alarms are to be installed in the Information Centre, the Office and the Mangrove Room.

The Alcorn Plaque has been made and will be installed shortly with due publicity.

The old TV screen has been mounted in the Information Centre to run wild life DVD's on open days.

A Questa Game Eco Treasure Hunt will be run at the Sanctuary during school holidays, it will be well advertised by Council, in the press and TV. We will be looking for people to man the Information Centre during the week as well as at the weekends. Please consider helping.

A new brochure is being prepared to replace the old one with up to date information and photographs.

Our Van will be promoting the Wetlands at World Environment Day on the 4th June at Rotary Park, Cotton Tree. Come along and support the day and our volunteers.

Come and visit the Wetlands if you haven't been there for a while, it looks great after all the rain.

Robin.

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At the Sanctuary – April, 2017

Robyn Howard

It is amazing how quickly nature recovers after adversity. It was often sad to see the suffering of plants in the drought and heat, but as soon as we had some decent rainfalls, it was noticeable that plants were looking different and producing new green finery.

I visited the sanctuary on 1st April, just a couple of days after ex-TC Debbie had done its worst, but in doing its worst with the winds, it also brought much-needed rain. Twigs and leaves still littered the boardwalk and roadway, but all seemed so refreshed. The small birds were having a wonderful time and seeming so excited. I went to investigate the bird noise behind the toilets and found a mixed flock of Brown Thornbills, Golden Whistlers, White-browed Scrubwrens, Lewin's Honeyeaters, Grey Fantails, and Silvereyes chattering and feeding. They must have found a patch with lots of insects and eventually just moved off in different directions. The same thing happened in the Melaleuca Forest and out in the Mangroves, obviously a surfeit of insects after regular rain over the previous two weeks. Life really is different as soon as the rain falls and nature celebrates. Some of the *Casuarina glauca* cones which had been torn off and landed on the boardwalk had shed their seeds, trying to take any opportunity to reproduce.

Late though they might be, the wet weather and warmth have produced plenty of fungi. There are so many types from tiny to quite large with varying colours. The lichens and mosses are many and varied and interesting to really observe. Fungi are so valuable in the environment.

With the continuing warmth, the reptiles are still active. The wall skinks love sunning on the boardwalk, and the Eastern Water Skinks choose small fallen branches in the casuarina forest to seek their warmth. They blend in so well, it is difficult to find them unless they move.

Nobody else was using the sanctuary when I arrived and I disturbed a Large-tailed Nightjar out on the boardwalk. It probably found that to be a cosy dry spot since the ground was wet and much of it flooded. I only caught a glimpse in flight as it was far more aware of me than I was of it, but its silent flight and white wing mark indicated which species it was. I stayed out near the river for some time, and disturbed the bird again near the same spot on the way back. I had heard them there before but not managed to see them at all. The area the White-throated Nightjars frequent has been changed by the death of many trees during the drought.

The Noisy Pittas have returned. A small number come down from the hills to spend winter with us. I found a large snail which had been eaten in the fashion common to our Pittas, and one bird was captured on the motion camera. For several weeks, Rainbow Bee-eaters have been flying over in groups heading north and were still migrating for the first part of April. The drought must have affected the production of rainforest fruits, especially the figs, as very few fruit-doves frequented the sanctuary this summer. In most years, Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves are present from October or November through to April. Rufous Fantails have been in residence continuously for several years, but this summer, they disappeared some time early in the year and have not yet returned. Grey Fantails have remained and on one visit, I saw at least fifteen birds including those along the roadway.

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This project has been assisted through the Sunshine Coast Council Grants Project



The crabs have been plentiful, and I even managed to find the *Sarmatium germaini* again on two occasions. I am quite fascinated by them, but there are roughly fifteen or more species I see regularly. The Two-toned Fiddler Crabs have been difficult to find since the “desert” area along the loop to the first crab hide has filled with regrowth, but for the last few weeks I have found up to twelve of them, so that is really great. They like open very damp areas, so when their habitat changed, they needed to relocate.

Insects breed quickly in favourable conditions and are providing food for birds and small mammals. Most of the cicadas are in their underground phases, but bugs, beetles, dragonflies and butterflies are common. The Small Green-banded Blue Butterflies must have had a good hatching recently.



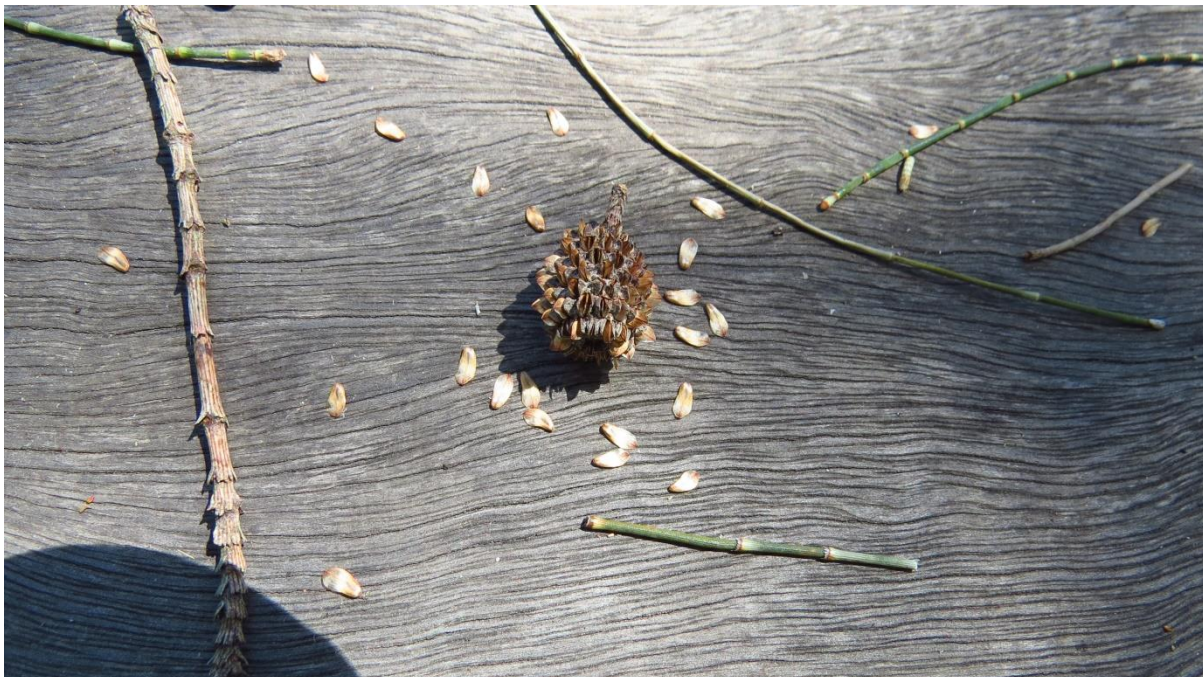
Mangrove Fern suffering in the drought



Mangrove Fern in recovery after some good rains – lots of fresh fronds

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Swamp Oak (*Casuarina glauca*) cone brought down by ex-TC Debbie has cast its seed trying to provide new plants.



Small Green-banded Blue Butterfly

Splendid Ochre

Robyn Howard

Butterfly larvae can only survive and thrive if the female adult has chosen the correct food plant on which to lay her eggs. At the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary, the *Lomandra longifolia* (Spiny-headed Mat-rush) is the host for the Splendid Ochre, once known as the Symmopus Skipper. After hatching, the larva feeds on the leaves at night, constructing a shelter in which it rests during the day by joining leaves together using its own silk.

Caterpillars are voracious eaters and continue to feed until they attain a length of about 4 cm, when they pupate. The larva forms a silk-lined tubular chamber in either dead leaves or the leaf-litter in which to spend this non-feeding transformative stage.

The wingspan of the fat-bodied adult ranges from 42 to 46 mm. Flight is erratic, generally close to the ground. Males are driven by the mating urge and set up small territories which they defend. The territory will be based on the availability of *Lomandra* and the males conduct patrol flights back and forth or settle on tree leaves where they can watch. Females visit the territory to mate.

Splendid Ochres use open areas of almost any forest type or gardens (including urban parks and home gardens) where there is a profusion of Spiny-headed Mat-rush in the understory. At the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary, this includes the garden and beside the pathways into the Melaleuca forest.





MAROOCHY WETLANDS SANCTUARY BIRD OBSERVERS OUTINGS 2017
18th June 2017 at 0800, 187 Lower Landershute Road, LANDERS SHOOT

Richard and Trish have an acreage property that they have extensively revegetated over several years. This has resulted in an increase in the resident and visiting bird species that are seen here. Meet at the property entrance at **8am**.

From Palmwoods take the Palmwoods Montville - Road.

After passing the school on your left, enter the roundabout and take the first exit, left into Landershute Road.

Travel 2.4k then turn right into Lower Landershute Road.

Travel 2k to 187 on left. I will meet you there.

Bring morning tea, lunch and a chair. Sturdy footwear, a hat and sunscreen, water.

There are some steep areas on the property which makes it unsuitable for wheelchairs and wheelie walkers. The area around the house is ideal for bird observing from a comfortable chair.

Coordinated by Judith.

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Fungi that are fruiting in the Sanctuary now.



Tremella fimbriata have a very gelatinous texture. They occur on dead wood in moist, shaded forests. This one was first located by George several years ago. Its reappears each fruiting season.



Cyptotrama aspratum also found on dead and decaying wood commence with a cap of pointed fibrillose scales that fall off as the cap expands.

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MWSSGI, Calendar – 2017

	MEETINGS	ACTIVITIES
June	8th . GENERAL. 1900h. Guest Speaker: Jodie Salmon from Reef Check.	4th World Environment Day, Rotary Park, Cotton Tree, 10am – 5pm. 4th . MWS monthly walk at 10am. 16th-18th . Sunshine Coast Agricultural Show 18th . MWS Bird Observers outing, 8am start. 24th School holidays 24 th June – 9 th July.
July	13th . EXECUTIVE 1900h.	School holidays continue until 9 th July 2nd . MWS monthly walk at 10am. Children's holiday programme continues. Eco Treasure hunt TBA . Night Walk 16th . NPA Bird Observers outing.
August	10th . AGM. 1900h. followed by GENERAL	6th . MWS monthly walk at 10am. TBA Eco discovery day 20th . MWS Bird Observers outing, 8am start
September	14th . EXECUTIVE 1900h	3rd . MWS monthly walk at 10am. TBA . Kids in Action 10th . NPA Bird Observers outing Date change due to the NPA extended outing 14 th to 21 st September
October	12th . GENERAL 1900h. Guest Speaker:	MWS Bird Observers extended outing, INGLEWOOD
November	9th . EXECUTIVE 1900h.	19th NPA Bird Observers outing.
December		TBA Christmas function. 17th . MWS Bird Observers outing 730am start.

For any further information regarding calendar events please contact us at the Wetlands.

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