

**Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.**

P.O.Box 32 BLI BLI Q.4560

# UCA

Wetland Sanctuary News



Support Group Inc.

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**December meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm at  
the Mangrove Room.**

**In conjunction with 2013 AGM**

**Next Bird Observers' Group Outing.**

**15<sup>th</sup> December 7am**

Alex Forest Bushland Park, Mari Street Alexandra Headland.  
Park at the end of Mari Street next to the Ten Pin Bowling Alley

President: Derek Foster 5448 5025 mob: 0402 3520 77

Vice President: Vacant

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer: Lyn Ireland, 0404371362

**To receive your newsletter / meeting minutes by email please send contact details to**

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## ***President's Column***

Folks,

I went to an interesting meeting the other day where we talked about Environmental Education on the Sunshine Coast. The title of the workshop was 'Stewards of the Future' and we talked about education for the environment for school kids. It would appear that, whilst a very strong area for education in the eighties and nineties (think of the importance of Landcare and the fact that the Qld Education Department put in a huge investment at that time) it would appear that the new National Curriculum leaves very little room for kids to learn about the environment. It will be up to us (non school based organisations) to pick up the slack and fill in the gaps that the Qld Education Department Environmental Education Centers cannot do. I hope that we at the Wetlands Sanctuary can contribute to this area of work in 2014.

If you received the minutes from the last meeting you will see that there is a community development officer appointed to the Bli Bli area by the Sunshine Coast Council. As part of the work she will be doing will be helping us develop the displays in the Cane Cutters' Building. We are hopeful for some wide community support for this and the ability to work with other local groups to ensure that the display accurately represent the importance of the Wetlands area to the cultural background of our community. I always think it is good to use what we can learn from the past to help us create a better future.

As part of my working life I developed systems to create highly effective teams. As part of these systems I often espoused the concept of multiple leadership within teams. What this means is that in teams there are often people with high skills levels in different areas. There are some of us who are extremely experienced and knowledgeable about nature and the natural systems within the Sanctuary. Others know a great deal about the history of the area. Some members are very skilled in office work and legal issues. There are some of us who have skills that have been born in the bush, on the farm or in the workshop and who are great handymen and women. Some are great 'people people' and provide a friendly and engaging face to our group. I just wanted to acknowledge the fact that without all of you contributing your skills and being leaders in your fields of expertise we wouldn't be the group we are today – thanks heaps to all of the unsung heroes who work behind the scenes.

Become a member and do your own thing to retain our natural and cultural heritage.

Finally I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Fruitful 2014.

Warm regards  
Derek Foster

# ***Through the Sanctuary***

***with  
Robyn Howard***

## **Tree Hollows**

Tree hollows come in any shape or size, and may occur in both dead and live trees. Significant hollows are found in hardwood trees. Softwoods deteriorate very quickly when attacked by insects or disease and contain useful small hollows for only a comparatively short period. However, they are quite a valuable resource in other ways as they decompose on the ground.



**This large hollow is located high in a paperbark and is home to a Short-eared Brushtail Possum.**



**Short-eared Brush-tail Possum – sometimes called a Bobuck or Mountain Brushtail Possum.  
Photo – Queensland Museum Brushtail Possum.**

The typical age of hollow-bearing trees ranges from around 100 years up to 400 years, and they therefore cannot be considered a renewable resource. Large forest areas must have trees of all ages retained so that over time there will be replacements for those trees which reach the end of their standing time. A standing dead tree is still a habitat tree, and even when fallen,

it serves as habitat and resources for different species. Nest boxes are of assistance to some species, but could never be considered a replacement for natural hollows. It is impossible to build nest boxes with all the contours, profiles, sizes, angles, depths, wall thicknesses and positions which form naturally in trees, so most creatures are not served by man-made nesting provisions. This is not to say that nest boxes should not be utilised as they can assist some potential occupants and increase possible sites, but they should never be considered a replacement for tree hollows.

Creatures need hollows for roosting, security, breeding, shelter, protection, warmth, and socialization. Some species live in family groups.



**This small hole high in a paperbark was the nesting hollow for White-throated Treecreepers which I was fortunate enough to be able to watch fly back and forth entering the hole with food for their young nestled at the base of the hollow.**

Tree hollows are formed over a long period. Initially, some damage occurs. In the case of certain eucalypts, limbs may “self-prune”. For many species including eucalypts, limbs may be lost through wind or storm trauma (wind, lightning and torrential rain), through another nearby tree falling and crashing against

other trees, through chewing by birds or animals (e.g. Black-cockatoos accessing beetle larvae), or fire. Large hollows at the base of tree-trunks have almost certainly been commenced by fire. Once any portion of the tree is opened to attack, insects and fungi begin the process of hollow creation. Borers and termites are the obvious attackers and will create large holes over a long period, but beetles, beetle larvae and moth larvae contribute to their establishment. Fungi perform an important role in breaking down vegetable matter on the ground and in damaged standing trees. We will rarely see these fungi in trees. Many are micro-organisms beyond the capability of human sight, whilst others, for most of their lives, are networks of root-like filaments decomposing the dead timbers and only becoming visible when their fruiting bodies appear.



**The hollow for this Bar-sided Skink was created by Termites over a period of years. This little fellow moved in and indulged greedily on them until the termite colony is no longer there.**

It is estimated that over three hundred Australian species utilize tree hollows. These include mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and amphibians. Many are dependent on these hollows and cannot

survive without them, whilst others use them by preference. Many of these creatures use six or more sites, moving between food sources or relocating nightly so that they do not become an obvious target for their predators. Ensuring sites are not permanently



occupied reduces the build-up of parasites such as lice and ticks. Different sites may be required between winter and summer because of protection from cold or heat. Some hollows may become waterlogged in rainy times but be ideal in the dry.



**This slit hollow is an ideal spot for insectivorous microbats. Goulds Long-eared Bat is a common species in our area. [Bat photo – Queensland Museum]**



**This Yellow-footed Antechinus is arboreal and depends on small hollows, often entering at the end of branches. Photo – Queensland Museum**

Cavities are not chosen randomly. For many creatures, an ideal entry is only just large enough to allow them access, and will thus deter larger predators. Most holes need to contain a larger area where there is room for movement or several animals may fit in together, or nesting material may be added to provide comfort. Some potential occupants prefer a horizontal or angled hollow, whilst others prefer vertical chambers. Each species has very definite requirements, and a large range of available hollows will encourage a diversity of

wildlife.

The paucity of hollows is exacerbated by non-natives which commandeer available resources. Some of the worst include non-native honeybees, starlings and Common Mynas. Common Mynas are aggressive and will even plug surrounding hollows with foreign matter to exclude our native species. These introduced BROWN Common

Mynas should not be confused with our native Noisy Miner which is grey and constructs its nest amongst the foliage of live tree branches.

Some of our native residents in this area which need tree hollows include Gliders,



**The Owlet-nightjar is nocturnal and depends on a place like this. It is unusual to see the Owlet-nightjar during the day, but this one had popped up to the top of its hollow in an old paperbark at the sanctuary. It depends on hollows for roosting and nesting.**

Possums, Antechinus, Phascogales, Geckoes, Lizards, Skinks, Monitors, several duck species, many of our Parrots and Lorikeets, Galahs and Cockatoos, all Owls excepting the Grass Owl, Kookaburras, Owlet-nightjars, Treecreepers, Kestrels and Brown Falcons, stingless bees and small insectivorous bats. Most use the hollows as they are found, but Cockatoos, Galahs, Parrots, Rosellas, Lorikeets and some mammals are capable of modifying their surrounds by using claws, beaks or teeth to reshape and enlarge, or create lining for the base of the hollow. This is by no means a complete list of hollow-dependent groups. Many of the smaller residents (e.g

geckoes, skinks, bats, and frogs) may use less developed hollows such as raised bark, split timbers and so forth.

Even fallen trees are important and utilised by many animals, reptiles, and invertebrates. A hollow tree which falls into water will be quickly inhabited by fish, crabs, molluscs, marine worms, etc.

At the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary, our most important hollow-bearing trees include Grey Mangroves, Melaleucas (Paperbarks), and Eucalypts. The photographs show just a few of the hollows at the sanctuary.



**This hollow in an old Grey Mangrove is a great home for a Common Brushtail Possum, but one has made itself at home in our cleaning/storage room. It is a regular occupant in either the sink or a large cleaning bucket on its side, so the room is now known as the "Possum Room". The photo below was taken while she was in the bucket. She is not disturbed when we enter and often has a baby with her.**

## **Need for rental property**

Anyone know of a rental property for one of our members, a mum with two young children?

Contact Derek Foster 0402352077.

## **Advisory group**

Through the year a group meets every three months to consider the overall wellbeing of the Sanctuary. This is the Advisory Group. This group consists of the Sunshine Coast Council (Peter Nagel, Eric Stewart), the Bilai Environmental Education Centre (Trent Webb, Karen Holm) and the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group (Derek Foster, Robyn Howard, John Tealby, Judy Hewett). This group works towards coordinating the activities of the three partners that go up to make the Sanctuary. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other two partners for their support throughout the 2013 year and we look forward to continuing our friendship and collegiality in 2014.



**Advisory Group Members (L to R)**  
**Eric Stewart – Sunshine Coast Council**  
**Trent Webb - Bilai Environmental Education Centre**  
**Derek Foster – Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc. (Photo: Robyn Howard)**



## OPENING DAYS OVER HOLIDAY

Ailsa is trying to keep the center open over the School Holiday period and has supplied the following roster table that identifies the targeted days. Most of the Sundays are ok so if you are able to contribute a few hours on the other days please call Ailsa.  
*(Don't worry if you haven't done this before, you will be given a whole lot of help!!!)*

Month	Sunday	Tuesday	Thursday	Holidays
<b>December</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>			
	15 <sup>th</sup>			
		17 <sup>th</sup>		
			19 <sup>th</sup>	
	22 <sup>nd</sup>			
			24 <sup>th</sup>	
				<b>26<sup>th</sup> <u>Boxing Day</u></b>
	29 <sup>th</sup>			
<b>January</b>	5 <sup>th</sup>			
		7 <sup>th</sup>		
			9 <sup>th</sup>	
	12 <sup>th</sup>			
		14 <sup>th</sup>		
			16 <sup>th</sup>	
	19 <sup>th</sup>			
		21 <sup>st</sup>		
			23 <sup>rd</sup>	
				<b>26<sup>th</sup> <u>Australia Day</u></b>
				<b>27<sup>th</sup> <u>Australia Day Holiday</u></b>