

# Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.

P.O.Box 32 BLI BLI Q.4560

# UCA

## August 2012 Wetland Sanctuary News



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Support Group Inc.

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

September meeting: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at 4pm.

October meeting: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 4pm

### **Next Bird Observers' Group Outing. 0800am start.**

On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October we will be visiting a private property at 1 Spillers Road Moy Pocket, in the Kenilworth area.  
Details will be included in the October Newsletter and a reminder notice will also be sent closer to the day.

### **Meeting Agenda September 2012**

Reports

Display Trailer

Water mouse

Small Grant

Boat Cruise 2

Promotion/ Marketing

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Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group facebook.

## From your President.

Hi folks!

Well we did it! Yes the two cruise trips have been completed with great success. The weather was great and the Sanctuary was looking splendid in the winter sun. I have to congratulate all of the guides and volunteers who worked on the program. We had 74 guests on the first trip and 77 on the second.

Congratulations also to Shorty and Sandy from Cruise Maroochy and Lillian McMartin from McMartin's farm for producing high quality eco/agro tourism experiences for our guests.

Coming up is the conclusion of the photo competition and we wait in anticipation to see the entries. As I mentioned in my last column there have been a lot of very big lenses wandering up and down the boardwalk over the past few months.

The celebration night is all organized and I am hoping this night will be our way of saying thank you to each other and all of our local community supporters. When you see the ad that is attached to this newsletter you will see that we have introduced what we call our 'reciprocal' membership tickets. These tickets are \$5 dollars cheaper than the general ticket and are for anybody who identifies that they are a member of any of our local clubs and organisations. These could include the Progress Association, Little Athletics, Soccer Club, Historical Society, Neighbourhood Watch. I know I have not mentioned everyone so when you ring 54484848 to book your tickets you only have to mention your organisation and we will give you the discount.

I am hoping that everyone will support this new event as we have two great fun bands that have donated their time for us. This event will be a success if we all get friends to join us and we make an effort to tell others that it is on.

Well that all for now so I hope to see you at the September meeting, about which I will send more info shortly.

Derek Foster.

President



mwssgi photo comp.  
entry Form.docx



photo comp  
Important Information



small ad.docx

### Boat Cruise Two.



Cruise two afloat



Cruise two arrival

**Boat Cruise two**

*Photos: D Foster*



Jo-anne Foster and happy cruisers



John Tealby explains.

**Boat Cruise one.**

*Photos: L Morrell, J Hewett*



Arriving at the Wetlands



Ken Perren explaining Maroochy River history



Derek Foster and mangroves



Lunch at McMartins.



Derek and Jo-anne Foster.



Setting up the merchandise sales centre.

## Maroochy Wetlands Bird Observers Group Outing 19th August 2012.

What a great day, with 20 people attending, some being visitors. I would like to thank those who put the word out, hopefully this will increase our regular numbers.

Our first walk, was our wetlands boardwalk with 45 bird species seen, 7 heard. Then to Wilf and Peter Harris's property on Lefoes Road, thanks to Wilf and Peter for their hospitality, and Peter for guiding us around their property, with 41 bird species seen and 5 heard.

**Our next outing is Sunday 21st October, 8am start, at the property of Ian and Margaret Bunce, 1 Spillers Road. Imbil.**

### **Birds seen and heard at Maroochy Wetlands**

White-necked Heron, Striated Heron, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis (25), Grey Goshawk, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Rainbow-Lorikeet, Little Bronze-Cuckoo(H), Fantailed-Cuckoo(H), Azure Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Noisy Pitta, White-throated Treecreeper, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone, Mangrove Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Striated Pardalote, Lewin's Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Dusky Honeyeater, Scarlet Honey-eater, Brown Honey-eater, Noisy Friarbird, Eastern Whipbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Varied Triller(H), Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Grey Shrike-thrush, Olive-backed Oriole(H), Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird (H), Australian Magpie, Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail, Australasian Grebe, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Emerald Dove(H), Crested Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Superb Fruit-Dove(H), Rose-Crowned Fruit-Dove(H), Little Black Cormorant, Willie Wagtail, Torresian Crow, Shining Flycatcher, Eastern Yellow Robin, Welcome Swallow, Mistletoebird, Red-browed Finch,

### **The Harris's property.**

White-faced Heron, Australian White Ibis, Black-shouldered Kite, Brahminy Kite, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Rainbow Bee-eater, White-throated Treecreeper (H), Variegated Fairy-wren (H), White-browed Scrubwren, Fairy Gerygone, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Lewin's Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Scarlet Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird (H), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Varied Triller, Golden Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Australasian Figbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Spangled Drongo, Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail, Australian Brush-turkey, Spotted Dove, Brown Cuckoo-Dove (H), Emerald Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Willie Wagtail, Torresian Crow, Restless Flycatcher, Spectacled Monarch, Eastern Yellow Robin, Welcome Swallow, Red-browed Finch.

**Wetlands---** 45 seen, 7 heard.    **Harris's----** 41 seen, 5 heard.

*Geoff and Elizabeth Laidlaw*



*Photos: Judith Hewett*

## ***August in the Sanctuary***

*Robyn Howard*

The last few weeks have been simply superb at the Wetlands Sanctuary. The weather has been perfect, the birds have been singing at their loudest and best, the boardwalks have been a joy to walk, and the people I've been meeting have been thoroughly enjoying themselves, and commenting favourably on their experiences.

As usual, the Brown Honeyeaters have been singing throughout all the habitats, while the Grey Shrike-thrushes have been joining in with their melodious calls. The songs of the Mangrove Gerygones, while not as loud, are nevertheless very attractive. The Eastern Yellow Robins have been along the first part of the walk, flying back and forth from the trees to the grass, picking off unwary insects. The White-throated Tree-creepers spend quite a bit of time in the area to the left just before the farm dam, and have recently started to call. It is coming up to nesting season for many of the birds, so calling and displaying will soon be at the peak.

The activity of the Northern Brown Bandicoots (and occasionally the Long-nosed Bandicoot) has been obvious, but not the animals of course since they are nocturnal. There must be plenty of food near the surface as the disturbances are not deep. Bandicoots are omnivorous, eating insects and arthropods, tubers, and fallen fruits and seeds. The Water Rat has been leaving so many footprints in the mud close to the river, and there are again juveniles. I do wish I had the opportunity to actually watch them at night. If only I could spend time quietly sitting and waiting in various areas, just to see what activity occurs and which birds and animals may be present.

I've been so lucky with daytime bird sightings. Although there are so many Red-browed Finches resident at the moment, we rarely have Double-barred Finches. A week or so ago, I heard their call down at the far crab hide, and there were a few birds on the opposite bank. At the same time, the Little Bronze-Cuckoo was calling, and there were two of them in the same location. I later found another one up towards the beginning of the casuarina forest. They have magnificent bronze-green plumage on their backs and lovely stripes across their breasts and stomachs. The male has a distinctive red eye-ring.

The next time I went to the sanctuary, I firstly found one of the Noisy Pittas out near the beginning of the "crab area". It does not seem suitable habitat, yet a few of us have seen them there on several occasions. As I was departing, I also found one quite near the beginning of the new section of boardwalk. The Shining Flycatchers are very special birds and not easily found, but both the male and female were there that day. The male being completely jet black, appearing blue-black, looks unrelated to the female with her rich chestnut back, black head and white underparts – a stunning bird. But perhaps my most exciting sighting was a pair of White-throated Nightjars. They are nocturnal birds and more usually live on ridges. They are not rare, but not found very often. I had seen a juvenile in this same area in March when the boardwalk was closed, but tended to think it was a bit

lost and that I would never see it again. However, the sighting of two adult birds together now makes me think they may be permanent residents and may even breed there. They fly very like a hawk when disturbed, but utterly silently. They appeared quite a dark grey tone in flight with no outstanding markings, but the thing which surprised me most was that one of the birds landed on a small fairly upright branch of a Grey Mangrove. I had only seen them in flight or at rest on the ground previously. The second bird landed on the boardwalk, and when the one flew from the Grey Mangrove, the branch on which it had perched really bounced around for a few seconds.

Each time I've been at the sanctuary, I really have been going out to "work", but it has been so easy to be distracted.....



Little Bronze-Cuckoo  
*Internet Photo*



Grey Shrike-thrush  
*Photo Tobias Hayashi*



Shining Flycatcher Male  
*Internet Photo*



Shining Flycatcher Female  
*Internet Photo*

## ***Red-browed Finch***

*Robyn Howard*

It seems that every time I go to the sanctuary lately, there are Red-browed Finches in several habitats. They are along the roadsides as I drive up Sports Road, in the gardens around the Information Centre, in the Mangrove Ferns, amongst the casuarinas, occasionally in the Mangrove Forest, and then along the river. Even when they are not visible, they announce their presence with their soft “tseee, tseee” calls.

The Red-browed Finch is found along the whole of the east coast of Australia around to Adelaide in the south. They prefer wetter areas, and especially select a habitat where they have open ground or seeding grasses to feed on, but have protective vegetation very close by. Foraging is mostly on grass seeds along with some insects, but in some parts of the sanctuary, they are feeding on the fallen seeds from ripe cones of the casuarina (*Allocasuarina glauca*). They are also able to utilise fruits of the lantana. At about 11 cm long, these olive-brown little birds with red rumps and red beaks and strong red eyebrow marks are so light that they can alight on grass stems which simply bend while they feed.

They are basically sedentary, but with a large territory over which they range as food sources vary. They have been able to adapt to human habitation, and can live in urban situations if food and protection are available. Cats are a threat in the wild and in suburbia.

Nesting generally occurs from September to December, but can occur at any time when conditions are favourable. Red-browed Finches are able to nest as a colony, with a bulky globular grass nest being constructed in prickly foliage. At the sanctuary, they seem to prefer bunched mistletoe. Commonly, 4 to 5 eggs are laid, but sometimes as many as 8, with both male and female incubating for 13 days. After a further 2 weeks during which the nestlings are fed mainly on insects, they fledge but remain dependent on the parents for 2 more weeks. The juveniles lack the red bill and eyebrows.



*Photo: Robyn Howard*



*Photo: Internet (Wikipedia)*

