

UCA

Wetlands Sanctuary News



**Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary
Support Group Inc**

DATES TO REMEMBER

**Next meeting: Thursday 11thth December at
7pm at the Mangrove Room.**

This meeting includes the AGM

Next Bird Observers' Group Outing.

21st DECEMBER at 7am.

Bli Bli area starting at Park Lakes.

President/Secretary: Derek Foster 5448 5025 / 0402 352 077

Vice President: John Tucker 54085432 / 0416 168 574

Treasurer: Lyn Ireland 0404 371 362

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Maroochy Wetlands facebook.

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('Uca' is the scientific name for the Fiddler Crab)

President's Column

*With
Derek Foster*



Folks,

Well here we are at the end of the year again and what an interesting year it has been. We have seen some incredible improvements to the Sanctuary thanks to the Sunshine Coast Council's commitment to our very special place. We opened the new sections of the boardwalk with a great day on 9th of August and the new boardwalk is start-of-the-art technology. Fully wheelchair accessible all the way to the river, the walk will soon have new interpretive signs for visitors to learn about the mysteries of the wetlands. In addition the self-guiding walk has now been completed and has been available from both the Info Centre and especially laminated versions are available for Cruise Maroochy clients when they pull up at the pontoon. Work continues to transfer the Self Guiding Walk to a phone app. As I write this, the Cane Cutters' Building is undergoing major refurbishments to fix the water issues in the NAB Theatre. These refurbishments will see a new floor in the theatre and a new roof on the building as well as a one meter gap, with retaining wall, established around the building to allow water to be diverted away. As the year progressed we also saw some new signage installed to help visitors find their way around. We can expect a few more changes next year as efforts are made to update the displays with the help of the Bli Bli on Maroochy Historical Society and the Kabi Kabi group and the Council. We will also see Sports Road sealed. We thank our local councilor, Steve Robinson, for his continued commitment to the Sanctuary and the council team led by Peter Nagel. We say goodbye this year to Eric Stewart who has moved jobs within the council and we thank him for his many years of support and personal commitment. We also need to thank the crew at Bilai Environmental Education Centre for their continued role in helping manage the Centre. In particular, Trent Webb and Karen Holmes who is our frontline in terms of contact with council works activities.

This year has seen the development of the Mangrove Room and we installed, at our expense, new lighting to highlight the displays. We have also put castors on the display boards to allow a flexible approach to the use of the room and established a thematic approach to the displays in the building. We purchased a new fridge this year which has made life very comfortable. We have also been donated a motion activated camera which we will be using next year to add to our display capacity. The education trailer has now been completed, having been totally refurbished underneath, painted and magnetic signs for the sides. The internal displays are finished but, as with all our displays, will continually change as needs arise.

Our activities this year have been as busy as ever. We have had new efforts in the works area with qualifications being achieved in spray management and a plan for weed control and planting being developed in collaboration with the council. Unfortunately our Cruise with Us event had to be cancelled this year due to bad weather. The Bird Observers' group has a very active and successful year with still one more outing to go before Christmas. We have had a very successful Environmental Education component to our activities with holiday programs being run in both winter and spring school holidays, a major involvement in the Kids in Action Conference as well as school visits that we have planned and run. Our community liaison work has been very fruitful with us sponsoring a snake awareness talk for the

community group at the beginning of the year, collaborating with Halcyon Landing to coordinate the Clean Up Australia Day event, assisting with the planting of Birdwing butterfly vines, presenting displays at World Environment Day and the Nambour Library and being involved in the Bli Bli Community Association throughout the year and helping out at the Christmas Carols event recently. A staunch group of members have kept the Centre open on Sundays throughout the year as well as on selected holidays and some Saturdays. We have installed a birdbath to celebrate the contribution that Wilf Harris has made and continues to make to the Sanctuary. This year sees Benny Alcorn's 90th birthday!

On a sadder note we have lost one of our loved and respected members this year, Gladys Carmen. We valued her participation in our Bird Observers' Group, at working bees, as well as serving on committees and welcoming visitors at weekends. We remember her humour, and the strong and happy person she has been. We appreciate the contributions she has made to the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc. over many years. Our thoughts and sympathies are with Judith and the other members of Gladys' family.

Throughout this year our publicity has been continuous, high quality and extensive with continued improvements to the website and a dedicated column in the Maroochy Weekly. Our membership continues to grow and become more diverse which is great because new members bring new and vital skills to our group. Skills training within the group reached new heights this year as eight members undertook and successfully completed guide training which focused on people skills as well site specific knowledge of the flora, fauna and history of the Sanctuary. Our merchandise has provided a small trickle of income throughout the year as has donations. In some organisations there might be 140 members and only six who do all of the work but our group is very different. We have 47 members and there are 25 who actively and continuously contributed to the overall achievements of the group. Now that's what I call diversity and participation!!

It has been a varied and interesting year for the Sanctuary with great improvements and significant changes. It is my hope that 2015 will be a fabulous year that will see us using our new found improvements, skills and equipment. I would like to thank the executive team, John Tucker (Vice President), and Lyn Ireland (Treasurer), for their superb work this year both in undertaking the tasks they volunteered for and for supporting me when things got tough. The management team was made up of the executive team plus Terry O'Toole, Robyn Howard and Ailsa Watson. I would like to thank this team for their work this year and acknowledge that they had to deal with some tough issues and make some tough decisions through the year. I would also like to thank my wife, Jo, who always supports me and proof reads all my ramblings.

All that remains is the last 'Birdo' outing, last general meeting and the AGM. Please come along to the AGM (by now you will have received details and associated nomination and proxy forms) and enjoy some Christmas cheer to round off a great year.

I wish you and your families a very safe and happy Christmas break and wish you all the best for the New Year. I hope I am able to meet up with you sooner than later.

Warm regards
Derek Foster
President 2014

Through the Sanctuary

with
Robyn Howard

At the Sanctuary – 29th October, 2014

Another beautiful day at the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary. As I alighted from my vehicle, a pair of Eastern Yellow Robins and a Grey Shrike-Thrush were all on the ground chasing insects. I headed to the building to sign the volunteers' book, and a greeting party of three Bar-sided Skinks were at the front door. It seems to be a favourite haunt of theirs.

It was a special day for insects. Lycid Beetles must have had a successful breeding, as there were quite a few in a small area. Their colours of brick red or orange with black are a warning to predators that they do not taste good, or are toxic. They are so successful with the strategy that several other insects have evolved as "look-alikes", although they are quite different species. Mimics include wasps, flies, moths and other beetles. Some of these creatures are also toxic, but most of them are simply frauds, riding on the success of the Lycid Beetles. Yellow-shouldered Ladybirds have been resident recently and I also found butterflies such as Blue Tiger, Swamp Tiger, Lemon Migrant, Black Jezebel, and Caper White. Caper Whites have been migrating on the southern part of the Sunshine Coast, but there was no evidence of high numbers at the sanctuary. Outdoor toilets are a favourite hiding place for the Granny's Cloak Moth, but I disturbed one sheltering under the timbers of the boardwalk in the Orange Mangrove forest. There were also the tiny orange moths which often occur in large numbers and must be a great resource for small birds. I was amused to watch them fly short distances, land, and then run quickly before settling, very "unmothlike". The only cicadas heard were in the Melaleuca forest.

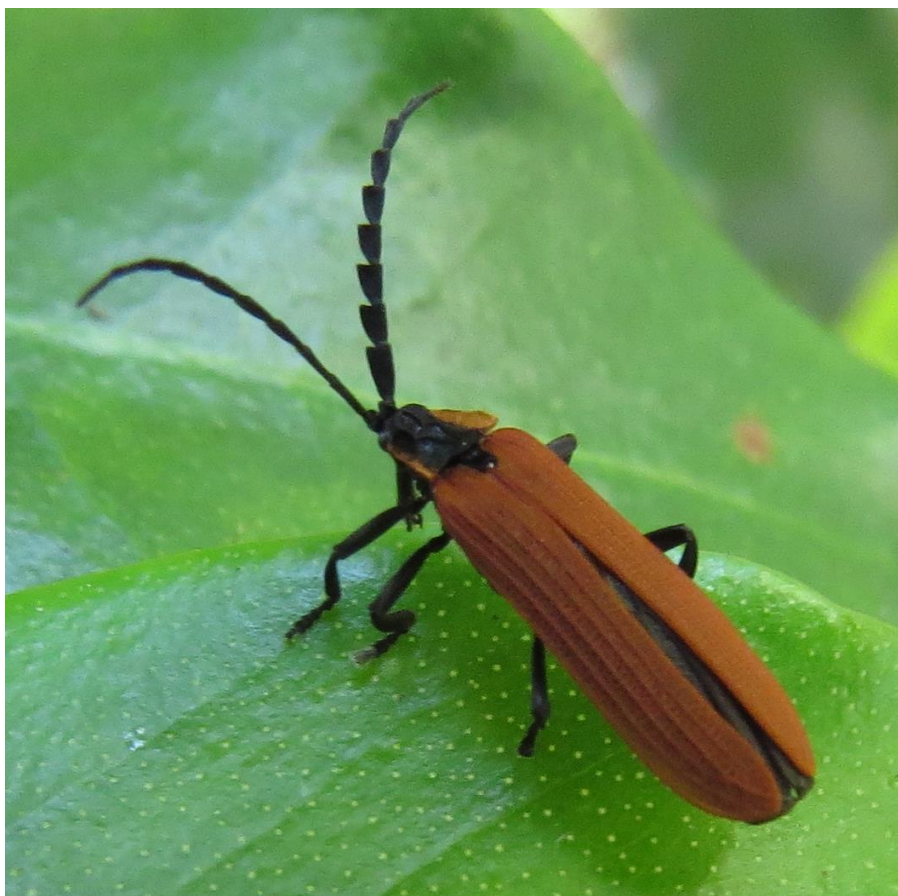
Bees were interesting. The River Mangroves were in good flower, but apparently, because of the dry weather, were not producing pollen and nectar to any extent. [In the heat and dry, several other plants have died or are wilting badly.] I saw over one hundred honey bees throughout, but with the exception of one bee, they were not carrying pollen, and obviously not finding nectar as they swiftly moved from flower to flower. There were no native Sugarbag Bees, and I found only one small native bee of a different unidentified species. I found a False Blister Beetle with spotted transparent wings also seeking food in the same flowers. False Blister Beetles are pollen feeders and are pollinators.

Other notable flowering plants included Swamp Lily (*Crinum pendunculatum*), Red-fruited Palm Lily (*Cordyline rubra*), Supplejack (*Flagellaria indica*) and the Macarangas. Brown, Lewin's and Dusky Honeyeaters were sharing its bounty.

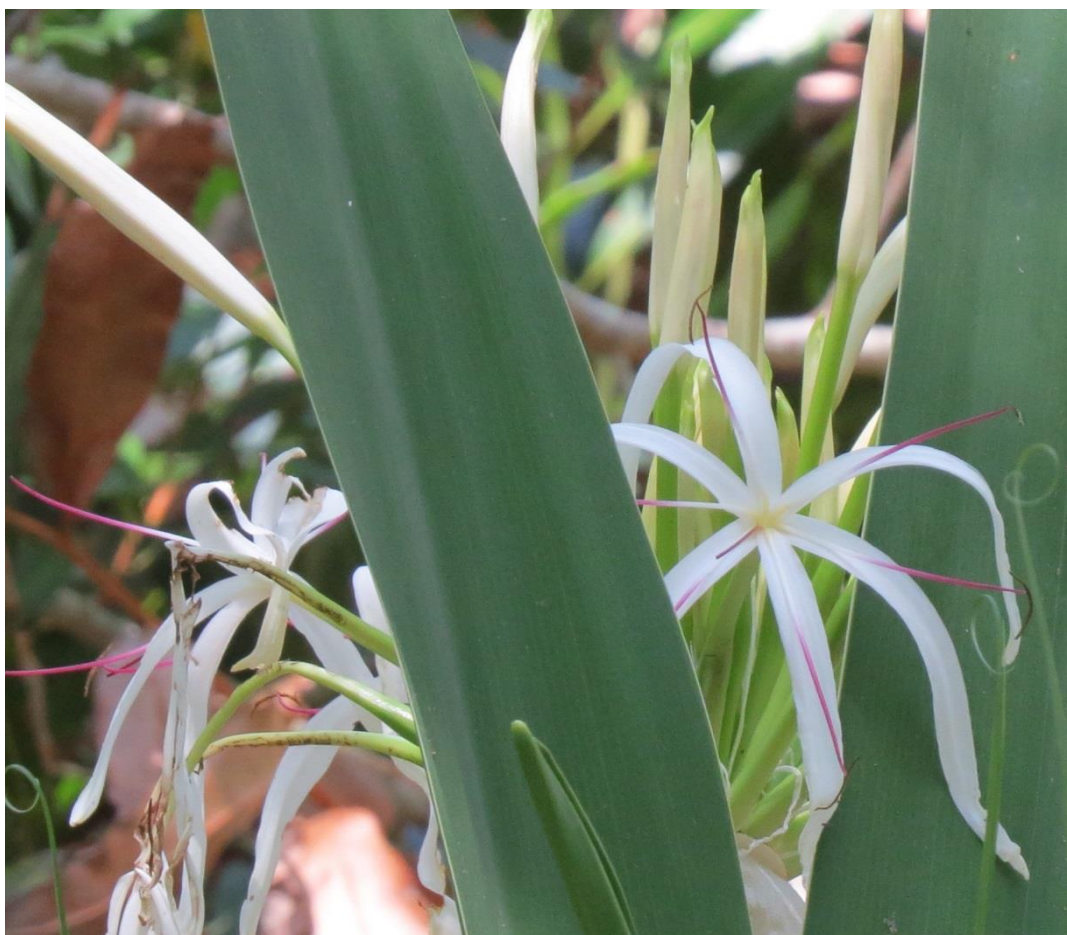
Other birds found included White-throated Treecreeper, about 20 Eastern Whipbirds, White-browed Scrubwrens, Brahminy Kite (calling mournfully), Scarlet Honeyeaters, Brown Gerygones, lots of Rufous Fantails, and eight Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves. On the river bank opposite the pontoon were 2 Eastern Great Egrets, a White-faced Heron, a Royal Spoonbill, and a Striated Heron well-hidden under trees. Thousands of tiny bait fish surrounded the pontoon. Mudskippers were on the river's edge, as well as at the second crab hide and the little drain near the first crab hide, the most I'd seen on one visit. Plenty of crabs were enjoying the heat with some 50 Two-toned Fiddlers, always difficult to find now, in their usual colony. Three male Pink-clawed Fiddlers were with them.

As I was walking back towards the turn to the Fig-tree Walk, a large bird glided silently over my head. It was a Collared Sparrowhawk, and it must have found a good concealed spot in the canopy as only one bird continued to give alarm calls.

The week prior to my visit, another local bird observer had been in the car-park at dark, and heard a strange call. He and a visiting friend tried to find where the call came from, but prior to their reaching the spot, a large bird flew in silence above their heads and into the sanctuary. They tried to find it again, but as they came closer, it flew deeper into the forest. They identified it as a Large-tailed Nightjar, one which normally is not south of Cooloola. Its call is very distinctive, so there was no mistake in the identification. Because I needed to return for a meeting in the late afternoon, I decided to stay on until round 7.00 p.m. in the hope of also hearing or seeing the bird, but without result. The sighting was certainly not the White-throated Nightjar which I have been seeing there for the last few years. It will be interesting to see if it remains in the vicinity.



Lycid Beetle [Notice the segmented antennae]



Swamp Lily



Supplejack Flowers [Notice the spider webs between the tiny blossoms – opportunists!]



Cordyline rubra at the edge of the Melaleuca Forest



Individual flower of *Cordyline rubra*



Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove [apologies that the photo does not do it credit]



False Blister Beetle – it has very long antennae not visible here

Bird Observers

*With
Judy Hewett*

**Bird Observers outing October 19th 2014.
Mountain Creek Conservation Area**



Along the track. Photo: Judith Hewett

Within the Mountain Creek Conservation Area there is a network of walking trails alongside Mountain Creek with links through the bushland to the adjacent residential streets. The morning started overcast but soon changed to a sunny day. Many of the bushes were past their peak flowering, nevertheless the Hibiscus, *Hibiscus heterophyllus*; was in full bloom. We saw many Swamp Grasstrees just coming into flower, Milkmaids, *Burchardia umbellate*; Grass Trigger Plants, *Stylidium gramifolium*; and White Heath, especially in the previously burnt area adjacent to Coho Court. Twelve people were able to enjoy the morning.

Birds:

Pacific Black Duck, Spotted Dove, Crested Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, White-throated Needletail, Australasian Darter, White-faced Heron, Australian White Ibis,

Royal Spoonbill, Pacific Baza, Whistling Kite, Purple Swampphen, Dusky Moorhen, Masked Lapwing,[H], Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Australian King Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, Little Bronze Cuckoo, Azure Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Dollarbird, White-throated Treecreeper, Variegated Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Striated Pardalote, Lewin's Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Little Wattlebird, Scarlet Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Eastern Whipbird, Black-faced Cockoo-shrike, Cicadabird, Varied Triller, [H], Golden Whistler, Australasian Figbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Spangled Drongo, Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail, Torresian Crow, Magpie-lark, Eastern Yellow Robin, Silvereye, Welcome Swallow, Red-browed Finch.

Butterflies:

Blue Tiger, Common Grass-blue, Glasswing, Meadow Argus, Large Grass-yellow, Varied Sword-grass Brown, Common Crow, Black Jezebel.

Spiders:

Leaf curl, Silver Orb, Golden Orb.

Other:

Blue-banded Bee. Yellow-faced Whip snake.



Yellow-faced Whip Snake along Mountain Creek bank. Photo: Robyn Howard.



Australasian Darter at Coho Court ponds. Photo: Robyn Howard



Hibiscus, Photo: Judith Hewett.

Judith Hewett

20-10-2014

Remaining Bird Observers Outing for 2014

**21st DECEMBER at 7am.
Bli Bli area starting at Park Lakes.**

Park along Parklakes Drive, Bli Bli.
UBD Sunshine Coast Map 57 Grid N8

MWSSGI Education

With

Katie-Anne Beale



It has been a great year and thanks to those members who, like me, believe in building a love of the environment in the young and the young at heart. We have run sensory programs for the very young (Music Mayhem) and school curriculum programs for teenagers (see my last report). Our involvement in the Kids in Action Conference has been widely praised. And isn't the new Education Trailer a fabulous asset and we owe much thanks to Deb Wedmaier, John Tealby and Ken Perren for their work in getting this facility to such a high quality. We have also been developing 'kids' corner' in the Mangrove Room and I hope that we will be able to expand and improve this facility next year.

News from Bli Bli State School – Since 1996 Derek and Jo have sponsored a shield on which the names of the Environment Award winner/s for each are engraved. This year the awards were won by Georgia Frost in year 6 and Indy Williams in year 7. Congratulations girls!

As you might know my philosophy is founded on a belief that we need to build a strong connection between youth and the environment because if we are successful in this then those values will stay with them throughout their lives. In this way we will be building a stewardship ethic for future generations.

Have a great Christmas and New Year break and lets get more kids connected in 2015!

Katie

Katie Beale (MWSSGI Education Officer)