

# UCA

## Newsletter of the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.



**Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary  
Support Group Inc**

February 2018, no 1

### Presidents Report.

The year has started with some very hot weather with visitors coming to the Sanctuary early and late in the day. We had a very relaxed general meeting last Wednesday, the highlight being viewing Robyn's Mistletoe Video, one of 5 she has made for information of our members. You are welcome to visit the Wetlands and take a copy for your home computer. Council has supplied new uniform shirts for frontline volunteers, they are very smart and comfortable.

The Landcare Group started work on the first Wednesday of this month and is looking forward to a successful year, with plenty to do after the recent rain.

I attend the Bli Bli Hall Committee meetings each month to report on our activities to keep our name before the local citizens.

Your Committee is making an application for a grant to purchase a microscope to be located in the information centre, it will be a great educational tool if we are successful.

Hope to see many of you at the Resin workshop on the 28<sup>th</sup>. February, and don't forget the next General meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup>. When our guest speaker will talk on Stingless Bees that we hope to encourage in our Sanctuary.

Robin.

## At the Sanctuary – Dec 2017 and Jan 2018

Robyn Howard

These summer months were as hot and steamy as we expect here on the Sunshine Coast, but in contrast to last year, we were receiving rainfall when it was needed.

A particular event really spoilt my enjoyment on one visit. A group of four jet-skiers raced down the river, damaging the banks with their wash, with the loser deciding to zig-zag recklessly making the wash far worse. The noise and wakes were dreadful for every other river user.

On a more pleasant note (no pun intended), birds and cicadas competed to top the sound charts. The usual feathered friends were active and singing, and some even were hoping to raise families. So many species of cicadas were calling that it was quite difficult to separate the calls for identification. Razor Grinders, which I'd only encountered in the garden in the past, were calling in the mangroves near the river, and Bottle Cicadas continued their short chorus near the buildings. They seem to sing for only ten to twenty minutes each evening.



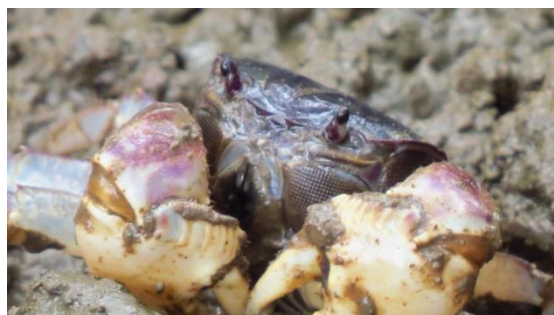
Razor Grinder

Butterflies appreciate the heat and besides ones we see regularly, a Leafwing and a Chequered Swallowtail made a welcome appearance. Some of the skippers (a different type of butterfly) perched on vines at the edge of the rainforest.



Orange Grass-dart – one of the skippers

The other heat-lovers are the crabs, so they have been plentiful, especially after the extremely high tides. The crab which we found for the first time last year again made some appearances. *Sarmatium germaini* is so handsome.



*Sarmatium germaini*

It has always been entertaining to watch Spotted Scat swim and splash in water which seemed too shallow for them, but this summer, only one of them was visible – most days, none. As those high tides receded, there were so many small fish. The mullet were pecking at the algae on the Grey Mangrove pneumatophores.

The Pink Euodias (*Melicope elleryana*) flowered in profusion beside the road and in the forests. The pinks of buds and flowers were exquisitely exhibited, and birds and insects alike were sipping at the nectar.



Pink Euodia

For the first time ever at the wetlands, I discovered flowers on the Mangrove Vine. This is the vine which the Swamp Tiger (butterfly) needs for breeding. Another flowering vine in the forest beside the road was the Climbing Guinea Flower, *Hibbertia scandens*. The Supplejack out beside the river had mature fruit.



Climbing Guinea Flower



Supplejack Fruit – high in the canopy

Birds are always wonderful to watch and hear. A couple of raptors provided magnificent sights. The White-bellied Sea-Eagle left its perch across the river, then flew overhead, silently gliding above the convergence of the mangroves and river edge. A young Eastern Osprey had taken a smallish fish for himself and chose the top of a dead casuarina to tear off small pieces of flesh to consume, gradually demolishing his

prize before cleaning his beak against the rough bark.



Eastern Osprey – satisfied after a meal

Something must have disturbed a White-throated Nightjar from its daytime roost, and its temporary perch in the mangroves near the boardwalk proved not to be a wise choice as I disturbed it again as I returned from the river. Channel-billed Cuckoos have visited more often this summer, and it was great to find a Little Bronze-Cuckoo. The boxes which Bruce made for the Australian Owlet-nightjars have now been placed, so we can just hope the birds know what they are for!



Graeme took a splendid photo of one of the Owlet-nightjars.



Australian Owlet-nightjar - evening  
Photo: Graeme Toft



For several months, the female Shining Flycatcher could occasionally be seen flitting around mangrove roots chasing insects, but at last in January, the male drew attention to himself by flying across the boardwalk and joining his mate above the mangrove mud.

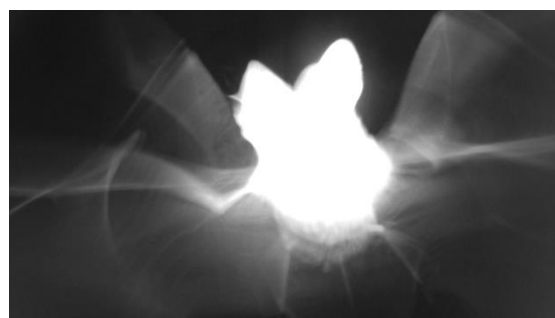
Seeding grasses beside the road, along with the thicker growth after the warm rains, have meant the area is again active with Red-browed Finches, Fairy-wrens, and other small birds. The most thrilling sighting was a Tawny Grassbird. Once seen irregularly, this was the first I'd seen in years at the sanctuary. On the dam across the road, 23 Plumed Whistling-ducks dropped by to visit the other waterbirds – an Australasian Grebe with a stripey youngster, Dusky Moorhens with three tiny chicks, and another pair collecting and placing twigs on their developing nest. On another day, a Black-necked Stork, often called a Jabiru, seemed to follow the road as its flight-path.

Because the Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves arrive about the same time each year, it tweaked my curiosity about the fruit which was attracting them. Figs seemed most likely, so a search began. First choice, the White Fig, had already finished fruiting. BUT! In looking for the White Fig, I found another fig which was not on our flora list. Very difficult to get good photos so high in the canopy, so Uwe joined me on the next visit, and we managed to find a better place to get some clear photos. Our botanist who did our original flora list, Ann Moran, was able to confidently identify it from photos and descriptions. The Small-fruited Fig, *Ficus microcarpa* var. *microcarpa*. A magnificent tree emerging through the canopy formed by other trees, and beautiful small ripe orange fruit.



Both Lewin's Honeyeater and Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove were enjoying the fruit. Too late fruiting to be the tree which brought the fruit-doves, but a great discovery. There must be earlier fruits which bring the fruit-doves in.

It is quite amazing to see the variety of wildlife which appears when George puts out the motion-activated camera. There are the regulars such as the Swamp Wallabies, Possums, Brown Hares, Fawn-footed Melomys, Yellow-footed Antechinus, Lace Monitor, Eastern Whipbirds and other avifauna, but the latest additions are a micro bat, and some shots of the Water Mouse, one showing a very pregnant female. The Water Mouse was thought to have vanished from this region many years ago, but scientific investigations have proved that it is here and will do well if safeguarded. Another great reason for the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary to be preserved.



Microbat Photo: George Cowie

The head and body length is about 45 mm, it weighs less than 10 grams, the bones of its wings are equivalent to hand bones, and it gorges on insects – hopefully mosquitoes!

### **18<sup>th</sup> February 2018 Buderim Steam Train Tramway Walk.**

Telco Road, off Mons Road, Buderim.

This walk was along a restored section of the original train track that went from Palmwoods to Buderim. The area is open forest. We walked approximately two kilometres then returned to the carpark for a late morning tea.



Although the morning was hot it was pleasant walking in the forest shade. As I expected, the bird numbers were diminished but we did record thirty-one species.

Not a bird, but we were especially thrilled to see the female Richmond Birdwing Butterfly. The Pale Brown Hawkmoth larvae were busy chomping their way through the slender grape vine at the beginning of the walk. The small shrub *Sauropus albiflorus*, often overlooked, was flowering and fruiting all along the track. Its described as a small bushy shrub with showy flowers.





*Sauropus albiflorus*.

Image from Internet.

**Birds:**

Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, [H], Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, [H], Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, [H], Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Pale-headed Rosella, White-throated Treecreeper, Variegated Fairywren, Scarlet Myzomela, [H], Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, [H], White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Eastern Whipbird, [H], Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Common Cicadabird, Australian Golden Whistler, Little Shrikethrush, Australasian Figbird, [H], Spangled Drongo, Grey Fantail, Rufous Fantail, Torresian Crow,

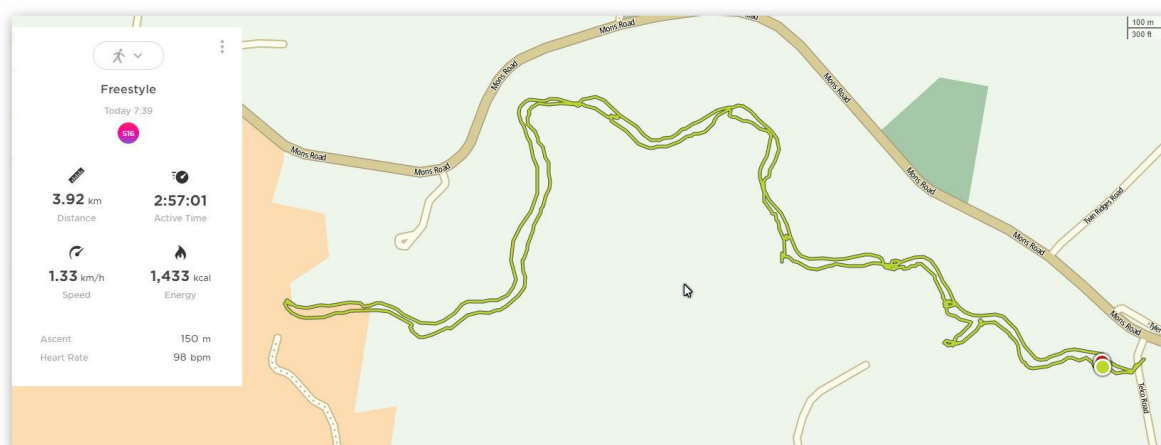
**Butterflies.**

Richmond Birdwing, [female], Evening Brown, Blue Triangle, Lemon Migrant.



Pale Brown Hawkmoth larva, *Theretra latreilliid*, on Slender grape, *Cayratia clematidea*.

Photo: Robyn Howard



Street map information, Sunday's walk, from Allan's watch

**Calendar for 2018:**

	MEETINGS	ACTIVITIES
FEBRUARY	Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> February	Resin Mould workshop 9am.
MARCH	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> March 0830 am, Executive meeting.	Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> March Clean up Australia Day. Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 8am, Noosa Parks Bird Outing.
APRIL	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> April 7pm, General meeting	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> April 0730 am Maroochy Wetlands Bird Observers outing, private property, Kureelpa Falls Road, Kureelpa.
MAY	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> May 0830 am, Executive meeting	Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> May 8am, Noosa Parks Bird Outing
JUNE	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> June, 7pm, General meeting	Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> June Maroochy Wetlands Bird Observers outing, Private property Lower Landershute Road
JULY	Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> July 0830am, Executive meeting	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 8am Noosa Parks Bird Outing
AUGUST	Thursday August 7pm, AGM	Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> August 8am Maroochy wetlands Bird Observers outing Maroochy Wetlands
SEPTEMBER	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> September, 0830am Executive meeting	Maroochy Wetlands Extended Outing Hervey Bay Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> September 8am Noosa Parks Bird Outing
OCTOBER	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October, 7pm General meeting	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> October Maroochy Wetlands Bird Observers Outing
NOVEMBER	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> November 0830am, Executive meeting	Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> November 8am Noosa Parks Bird Observers Outing
DECEMBER		Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> December 730am Maroochy Wetlands Bird Observers outing

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