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Newsletter of the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.



Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary
Support Group Inc

2019, no 03

From our President:

Following the Guide Training mentioned in last month's newsletter, the Council will be conducting further talks related only to the wetlands. Even if you don't intend to be a guide, come along to get a much better understanding of our wetlands so you can appreciate the area. A new video on butterflies has also been added to our Guide training resources.

Council has replaced a splintering timber seat along the walkway with a new aluminium one. Thank you to Council.

Our speakers at the April meeting were from University of the Sunshine Coast. Dr. Javier Leon introduced Matt Brown, an honours student, who spoke on his research into "Remote Sensing and Indigenous Knowledge about Mangrove Changes". Since 1980, 35% of global mangroves have been lost, resulting in a compromised ecosystem. Historical satellite information only dates to the 70's, but local Kabi Kabi knowledge has passed down the generations. Matt hopes to speak again when his study is complete.

Look out for publicity associated with International Mangrove Day on 26th July. Great that the mangroves get a mention along with all the other international days.

Members will be interested in recent statistics supplied by SCC which show that visitor numbers to the wetlands have more than doubled between 2014 and 2018, from 5,250 to 10,790.



Our president, Robin, introducing the guest speaker



Portion of the audience



Kerry Jones giving a welcome to Kabi Kabi country



Those who researched the project on the mangroves



This is a photo of the fig that I saved from the carpark and relocated to a more appropriate setting.

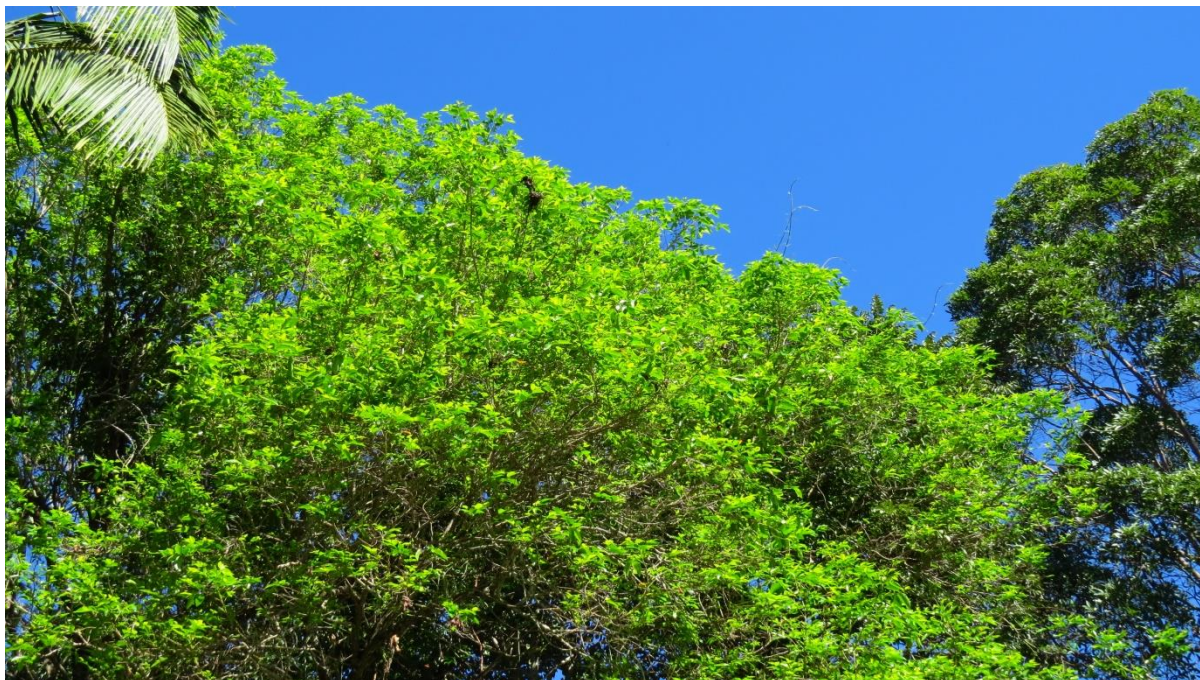
Ficus macrocarpa v. *macrocarpa*

At The Sanctuary – March 2019

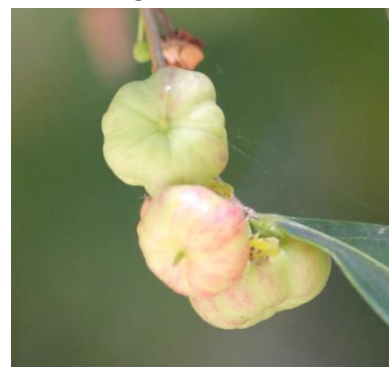
Robyn Howard

The long, hot, dry period finally took its toll on the trees, vines and shrubs at the sanctuary, and it was sad to see the results. Several Supplejack vines which reached well up into the canopy were completely dead although their roots were in soil which is usually permanently damp. The Climbing Maidenbairs were looking poorly and even the Barbed-wire Vines were obviously stressed. The Clerodendrums and Milky Mangroves had suffered leaf-yellowing and dropping as did the Melaleucas, so that the boardwalks were heavily covered in dead leaves. Death had occurred for some Milky Mangroves, Casuarinas and Acacias.

When volunteering, Carole and Uwe noticed sudden severe leaf drop from a Cheese Tree beside the beginning of the concrete section of the walk. It was a long-established specimen which often drew the attention of visitors, especially when fruiting (the cheeses) or when moth larvae built numerous webs amongst its foliage. It was a great tree and well worth trying to save so a good drink of water was provided in an endeavor to sustain its life. Success! Good follow-up rains had the tree showing its appreciation with a burst of new leaves before the end of the month. Nature can be quite resilient if given half a chance.



The beautiful light green foliage of the Cheese Tree is the fresh growth after a good drink!



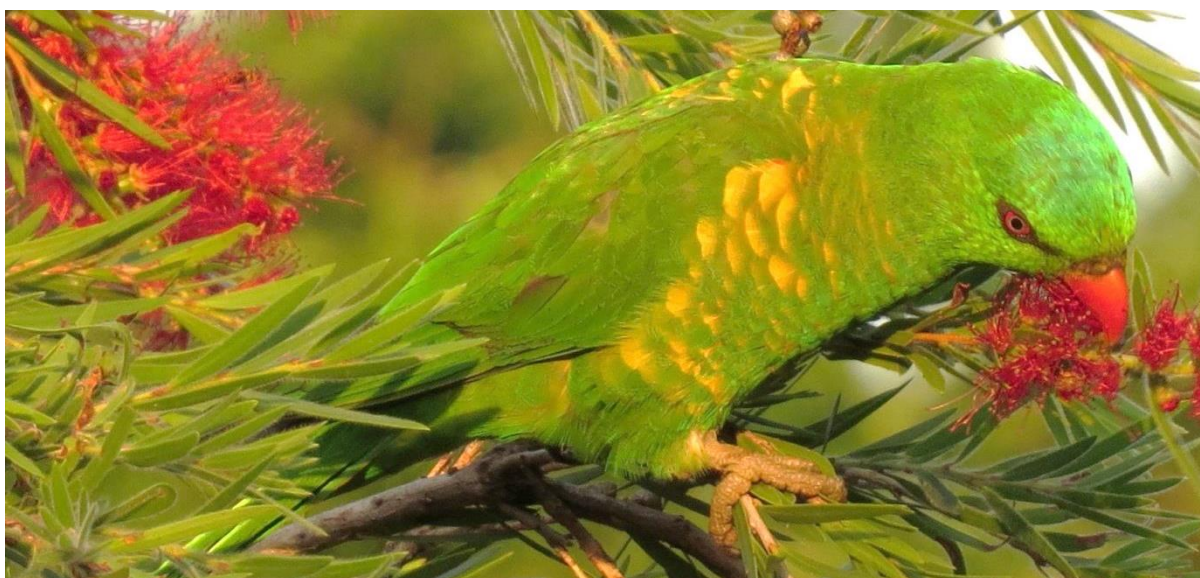
The “cheeses” were photographed in fruiting season – September.

Smaller birds were more prevalent than the larger species. At last, the Red-browed Finches had returned – nine in the seeding grasses along the roadside and four in the gardens. Silvereyes were again active in the carpark and Melaleuca Forest. As they sometimes do, the Melaleucas flowered over several weeks. Individual trees only blossomed for short periods, but then others began to flower and so it went on, resulting in small numbers of trees providing resources over about two months.



Red-browed Finch amongst the seeding grasses

Lewin's Honeyeaters, Eastern Yellow Robins, White-browed Scrubwrens, and Eastern Whipbirds always frequent the first half of the track, but in the late afternoon, many Rainbow Lorikeets, along with a smaller number of Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, visited or overflowed the sanctuary on their way back to their nighttime roosts.



Scaly-breasted Lorikeet in the garden

In the open area towards the end of the Casuarina Forest, where there are collapsing dead casuarinas, lots of Red-fingered Marsh Crabs scuttled amongst the dead and decaying roots. The majority were females, dark and well disguised against the mud. Purple and Cream Shore Crabs were also out feeding there.



Only her brightly-coloured chelae make the female Red-fingered Marsh Crab visible in the mud. In the mangrove forests, some trees were looking healthy, but others were not coping well. Some Milky Mangroves had lost a high percentage of leaves, but other female trees had produced fresh buds and flowers. Generally, the Sugarbag Bees, (the stingless native social bees,) absolutely congregate all over the blossoms, but not a single bee was to be found. Perhaps in dire circumstances, the flowers were not producing the nectar and pollen which should have been the attractants. The Grey Mangroves which had such a wonderful flowering earlier in the year were deficient in fruit. Maybe some will still develop, but none were evident at the time.



The flowers of the female Milky Mangrove are tiny, but the bees usually find them.

Not a single bee of any species was present.

On the edges of the river, a Little Egret and a couple of White-faced Herons stood almost knee-deep in water waiting for movement of aquatic creatures. Their patience was eventually rewarded and their darting movements indicated that something was within reach.

The Tuckeroos were wilting. They would be considered amongst the hardiest local tree species, but the constant heat and lack of rain was affecting them badly. Even some mistletoes were dying. When trees are stressed, they have a capacity to deny resources to branches where mistletoes are hemi-parasitic. Mistletoes photosynthesize, but depend on their host for moisture and other nutrients. Obviously, some host trees had reached their limits and implemented this strategy to ensure their own survival. The tree may lose a branch, but it lives to fight on.

The journey back to the car-park in the late afternoon was under overcast skies, dark clouds and a build-up of storm-like clouds. Unfortunately, at that time, any rain bypassed Bli Bli.

Back in the Melaleuca Forest, the Four-coloured Milk-vine Bugs had appeared on the Mangrove Vines. From time to time, they may be noticed in that area, but rarely anywhere else in the sanctuary. With colouring such as theirs, it is likely that it is an indication to birds, reptiles and any other potential predators, that they are toxic or at best distasteful.



The Four-coloured Milk-Vine Bug (*Oncopeltus sordidus*) seen in our Melaleuca Forest

As dusk settled, a loud electronic type of noise pierced the air around the garden and carpark. Late in the season, but no mistaking those shrill ear-splitting sounds of the Bottle Cicadas. They only generate sound for about twenty minutes at dusk, so it was fortunate to be there at the right time.



The Bottle Cicada was located by his loud call

Later, the Southern Boobook quietly called his “mo-poke” rhythmically from an unseen perch. Just softly announcing his presence in his territory before going to hunt. Although it was so dry, hundreds of Cane Toads spread themselves along the bitumen road, and a few tiny frogs performed gigantic high leaps to achieve their road crossing.

Most interestingly, a small number of Little Red Flying-foxes flew over. The Melaleucas were not flowering in a manner sufficient to entice them in their tens of thousands as they arrive in their migrations. Some Little Reds were seen in other places on the coast, but the dry weather probably disturbed the production of their normal food resources thus discouraging normal migratory movements. They are a nomadic species and depend on following seasonal flowering both inland and on our coasts.



During the day, Little Red Flying-Foxes pack closely together in camps. It is the smallest of our three local Flying-Foxes, and as with the others, is essential to the pollination of some of our native trees.

Cahill's Scrub Harold Place, Peachester.

Sunday 21st April at 0730 am.

This outing is on Easter Sunday so if you are doing other things over this holiday period I wish you happy holidays, if not please join us at Peachester.

For an interesting drive I suggest taking the Roys Road exit from the Bruce Highway, [This is the next exit south after the Caloundra interchange.] There are great views of the Glasshouse Mountains in the early morning along this road. At Beerwah its straight through the intersection towards Peachester.

At Peachester there are several access areas to this reserve. We will be using two at the end of Harold Place. Ample parking is roadside in this area.

From Beerwah travel to Peachester, then...

Travelling through Peachester turn RIGHT into Storrs Road, then LEFT into Fortune Avenue and RIGHT into Harold Place. Travel to the end of road.

Alternatively,...

Travel through Peachester, after the Fruit Barn turn sharp RIGHT onto Bald Knob Road, then first RIGHT into Fortune Avenue, then first LEFT [just over the creek bridge] into Harold Place. Travel to the end of road.

The tracks are level to slightly undulating with mostly slashed grass.

Toilets are in Peachester. Bring morning tea and lunch. Chairs are needed. Suitable walking shoes, sun protective clothing, a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent. Binoculars



Contact: Robyn: 0458 568 199

Pam: 0428 986 601

Calendar for 2019:

	MEETINGS	ACTIVITIES
MAY	Thursday 9 th May 0900h Management Group meeting Thursday 30 th May 0830h Advisory Committee meeting	
JUNE	Thursday 13 th June 1900h General Meeting	Speaker TBA 0800 Sunday 16 th MWSSGI Bird Observers outing, Landershute
JULY	Thursday 11 th July 0800h Management Committee meeting	Friday 26th World Mangrove Conservation Day
AUGUST	Thursday 8 th August 0830h Management Committee meeting Thursday 29 th August 0800h Advisory Committee meeting	0800 Sunday 18 th MWSSGI Bird Observers outing, venue TBA
SEPTEMBER	Thursday 12 th September 1900h ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	Bird Observers September 16 th to 20 th Extended outing Yarraman
OCTOBER	Thursday 19 th October 0800h Management Committee meeting	0730 Sunday 20 th MWSSGI Bird Observers outing, venue TBA
NOVEMBER	Thursday 14 th November 1900h General meeting TBA: date/time. Planning for 2020.	
DECEMBER	TBA: date/time. Christmas Social.	0730 Sunday 15 th MWSSGI Bird observers outing, venue TBA

For any further information regarding calendar events please contact us at the Wetlands,
Further information will be added as it becomes available.