



## Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

March 2011



Join Pioneer Catchment and Landcare Group on Clean up Australia Day

**Sunday 6 March 2011 — Riverside Drive 8-10am**

Bring sun protection, closed-in sturdy footwear, and gloves. Contact PCL for more information.

### **Not sure what to plant? Wondering what that weed is? Trying to stop erosion?**

Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday Inc. and Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group are offering interested small landholders assistance to achieve their land management goals.

Landholders in this sector, the peri-urban sector, face many issues. Many of them work off-farm and have limited time to do work on their property. Some are new to rural land management. All have limited access to support services to help them learn about the opportunities and challenges that come with owning land in our tropical climate.



**Peri-urban landholder receiving a site visit.  
Photo: PCL.**

Through our Peri-Urban Program, interested landholders receive a site visit from an officer who will walk through the property and discuss the objectives and issues. We can offer help in weed identification, planning for revegetation, grazing management and other relevant land management topics. From the property visit, a land management plan is created to guide landholders in their activities. Participants also receive an information pack and can learn about local resources that are available. The service is free of charge.

The Peri-Urban Program, an initiative of the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group, began in 2009 with funding of \$64,000.00 for the Mackay Whitsunday Region over two years from the Queensland Government's Bringing Back the Bush. This established the importance of the services provided in this program and it is now funded by the Australian Government's Regional Landcare Facilitator program.

For more information contact the Pioneer Catchment Landcare Facilitator on 4944 1979 or [admin@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:admin@pioneercatchment.org.au)

### **World Water Day 22nd March 2011**

**"Water for Cities:  
Responding to the  
Urban Challenge"**



Water is a basic requirement for all life, yet water resources are facing increasing demands from, and competition among, users. World Water Day on March 22 has been internationally recognised since 1992.

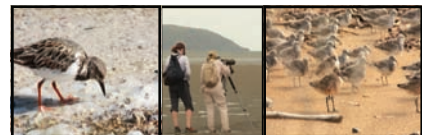
3.3 billion people, most of the world's population, live in cities. This figure continues to grow and has guided this year's theme to look at the sustainable use and management of water in urban areas. For more information, visit

[www.worldwaterday2011.org](http://www.worldwaterday2011.org)

This is also an important time to celebrate the work of our dedicated team of Healthy Waterways volunteers. This team continues to monitor our creeks and collect valuable water quality information. Sites regularly monitored include St. Helens Creek, Reliance Creek, Jane's Creek & Gooseponds, Fursden Creek, the Lagoons and Cattle Creek at Finch Hatton. For more information on how you can be involved, please contact the PCL office.



### **Still time to register for Queensland Wader Studies Group free shorebird workshop—12th March 2011**



- 10:00—10:30:** Local shorebird monitoring activities
- 10:30-11:00:** Migration and breeding ecology
- 11:00-11:30:** Threats and declines, morning tea.
- 11:45—12:30:** Shorebird ID, Lunch (provided)
- 1:15-1:45:** Drive to field site for ID session
- 2pm—4pm:** Shorebird identification

Places are limited, please register your attendance on 4944 1979 or [admin@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:admin@pioneercatchment.org.au) Please wear suitable protective clothing for outdoor identification session.

This project is supported by PCL through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country and Hail Creek Mine Community Development Fund.

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## Plant of the Month

### Monochoria/ *Monochoria cyanea*

Monochoria is a sprawling herbaceous tropical water plant. It is wide spread throughout most of Queensland where it is found on the margins of creeks, dams and other placid water features. It is commonly mistaken for *E. crassipes* (below). It is a perennial in bodies of permanent water, and an annual following rainfall in temporary water holes. The seed provides good food for a range of water birds.

**Leaves:** Leaves are heart shaped at 4 to 15cm long on fleshy petioles up to 30cm in length. The leaves are solitary on the stem with stems rooting where they come in contact with the soil.

**Flowers:** Flowers are blue and borne in an open raceme (stalked flowers along a single stem) of three to ten flower heads, arising from the junction of the petiole and stem. Each flower has six petals of equal size, unlike *E. crassipes* which has one single large petal at the top of the flower. Six yellow stamens arise from the centre of these flower heads. Flowers from December to April.

**Local Habitat:** Prefers nutrient rich stationary or slow moving water bodies. It colonises the margins of such water bodies where it is able to put down roots from the stems.

**Distribution:** Tropical and subtropical areas of Queensland, Western Australia, Northern Territory and isolated patches in New South Wales.

Source: G.R Sainty & S.W.L. Jacobs, 4th Edition 2003, *Waterplants in Australia*. K.M Stephens & R.M Dowling, 2002, *Wetland Plants of Queensland*.



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## Weed of the Month

### Water Hyacinth/ *Eichhornia crassipes*

Water Hyacinth is an introduced species from South America, purposely brought in as an ornamental aquatic plant in the early 1900's. Valued for its floral presentation, it was subsequently released into ponds and lagoons in public areas throughout Queensland. However, it has one of the fastest known growth patterns of all plants and has spread throughout major water bodies, and become a major pest. Today, it is a declared **Class 2** pest under Queensland legislation.

**Description:** Water Hyacinth is a floating water weed with rounded leaves to a diameter of 5cm that sit erect in the water. The leaf stalks are fleshy and swollen in appearance, and lead down to a bulbous structure beneath the water line with fibrous roots. The pale lilac-blue flowers are borne in attractive spikes numbering between four and twenty flower heads. These spikes are projected above the plant and when seen from a distance give the appearance of a floating lilac carpet. Flowering occurs from October to July.

**The Problem:** This extremely invasive plant establishes itself in areas of still or slow flowing fresh water. The plant multiplies through stolons (runners). In water with a high organic content infestations can double in size every week. It will also readily produce seed that can remain viable for up to 15 years. With its fast growth and ability to form dense mats, the voracious weed will soon choke water bodies and in the process destroy native wetland habitat and limit food sources for waterfowl. It also provides ideal habitat for breeding mosquitos and other disease spreading organisms.

Alarmingly, Water Hyacinth has high rates of transpiration through the leaves in summer months, and can be responsible for up to four times the loss of water compared to normal evaporation rates of non infested areas.

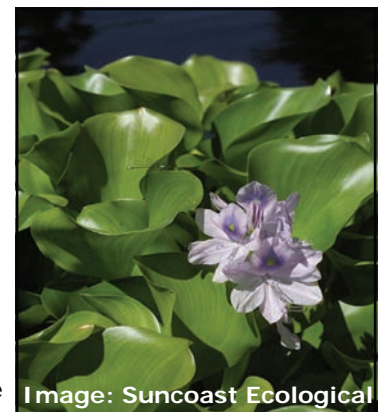
**Biological Control:** Two species of weevil and two species of moth have been introduced from South America since 1975, with the weevil seen to be the most effective. The weevil lay eggs in the stalks of the plants and the resulting larvae burrow through the fleshy tissues. The damaged tissues are then attacked by bacteria and fungi. Biological control has been very effective for large infestations, however it may take 10 years for results to be achieved.

**Mechanical Control:** This is a very effective method for controlling small infestations, the removed plants should be taken well clear of the waters edge and burnt when dry to destroy the seeds.

**Chemical Control:** The use of herbicide is not recommended where avoidable. The rotting plants will sink and create a heavy demand on dissolved oxygen in the water. This can have dangerous follow on effects for other species in the ecosystem.

Source: K.M Stephens & R.M Dowling, 2002. *Wetland Plants of Queensland*.

DEEDI fact sheet. [www.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au)



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## More than just a termite mound...

**Daryl Barnes (MacBOCA) & Hayley Glover**

Termite mounds are a distinctive feature of Northern Australia. There are over 100 species of termites found in northern Australia but, little is known about them (90 species remain undescribed). While some termite species are a pest in buildings, not all species eat wood and the role of termites and mounds (termite nests) is crucial to ecosystem processes in this part of the world.

There are 5 main termite nest types: Ground nests, tree nests, pole nests, subterranean nests (underground, in soils, stumps and tree bases) and, tree wood (inside the tree). Many termite species will build more than one type of nest. Depending on the species, termite nests can maintain temperatures between 25°C -36°C, which also makes for an ideal nest site for other animal species. Many kingfisher species (including Kookaburra's) use termite mounds as nesting sites.

The spectacular Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher (*Tanysiptera sylvia*, right, below) is a regular visitor to certain mainland areas of the North Queensland coast between November and March. It migrates from New Guinea to breed in ground mounds often less than half a meter above the ground. They excavate a tunnel into the heart of the mound where a nest chamber is constructed and where the female will lay her eggs. Both parents will care for the young as they grow.

Known termite mound/ Kingfisher nests locations around Mackay, where they have bred in past years, have been explored thoroughly since their arrival this season and results have been very disappointing. There has been concern amongst MACBOCA members about the downward trend in numbers over the past three years. This season, only one nest has been located whereas several would normally be the case. We are keen to find out what is going on. It is possible that birds have chosen suitable termite mounds in areas elsewhere in the district.

So, next time you are walking around your property and discover a termite mound, take a moment to appreciate the service it provides to the other wildlife on your property. If you have located a termite mound on your property, we are asking for feedback from you. Have you seen this attractive little bird? Please contact Daryl on 0438 134 738 or the PCL office.

Source: *Australian Museum*.



**Termite mound and kingfisher nest at Cape Hillsborough.**

**Image: R Atkinson**



**The spectacular Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher at nest. Image: H Glover**

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## Pond Apple—All Flushed Out!

Pond Apple was the focus of a recent resource sharing day which saw representatives from the Mackay - Whitsunday region get together to remove the class 2 pest from the headwaters of Reliance Creek.



**The team from across the Mackay Whitsunday who took part in the resource sharing day. Image: H. Glover**

The teams worked successfully to remove the pest from the heavily infested region along Gardiners Road, Habana. Trees and saplings were cut down then pulled from the creek line, with the stumps treated to prevent further growth. A number of rubbish bags of 'apples' were removed from the trees and the creek to prevent further seed set. Shelley Molloy, Pest Officer for the Mackay Regional Council said she was pleased with the achievements of the group despite the humid conditions, and that a significant portion of the seed bank had been displaced before the full onset of fruit maturity.

The event was funded by the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country in partnership with Mackay Regional Council, the Department of Employment and Economic Development Innovations, Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday, and the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group.

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## Who's who in Pioneer Catchment & Landcare?

### Management Committee

**Chair** Margaret Lane (Society for Growing Australian Plants—Mackay Branch)

**Deputy Chair** Dave Hunter

**Treasurer** Wendy Eiteneuer

**Secretary (Non voting)** Hayley Glover

### Committee Members

Cr. Wendy Cameron (Mackay Regional Council)

Irene Champion

Joan Fitzsimmons (Mackay Conservation Group)

Cr. Karen May (Mackay Regional Council)

Bruce Milles

Dianne Williams (Australian Forest Growers)

Cr. Ross Walker (Mackay Regional Council)

### Pioneer Catchment Office

4944 1979

[admin@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:admin@pioneercatchment.org.au)

[www.pioneercatchment.org.au](http://www.pioneercatchment.org.au)

### Pioneer Catchment Regional Landcare

**Facilitator** Hayley Glover

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**Newsletter** Hayley Glover, Dallas Milburn

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## Upcoming Events

### March

**Saturday 5, 8am**— Working Bee at Morag McNichol Reserve. Contact Jim McNichol on 4942 8802 for details.

**Sunday 6, 05.45am**—MACBOCA trip to Cape Hillsborough, Howells Rd, Seaforth, meeting at the Mobile Service Station, Coningsby. Contact 4952 2964 or 0403 172 455 for details.

**Sunday 6, 8-10am**—Clean Up Australia Day. See front page.

**Saturday 12th, 10-4pm**—Shorebird Workshop with Queensland Wader Study Group. Contact PCL to register.

**Saturday 19th, 8-11am**— Weed control activities at Finlayson's Point, Seaforth and learn about shorebirds that use this region.

Meeting at turn-around circle, contact PCL for details. [Lots more Coastal Community Activities around the region during March & April, contact PCL for more information.](#)

**Saturday 19th, 8:30am-2pm**—Sandfly Creek. Weed control and planting with Conservation Volunteers Australia (4951 0933).

### April

**Saturday 2, 8am**— Working Bee at Morag McNichol Reserve. Contact Jim McNichol on 4942 8802 for details.

**Sunday 3, 05.45am**—MACBOCA trip to Kane's Property, Owens Creek Rd. Meeting at the Tourist Information Centre, Nebo Rd. Contact 4952 2964 or 0403 172 455 for details.

**Thursday 7, from 8pm**—SGAP Monthly Meeting. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors welcome.

## Earth Hour 2011

Saturday 26th March,

8:30 – 9:30pm



Earth Hour began in 2007 to make a bold symbolic statement about the issue of climate change and to engage Australians to take action. The momentum has gone global: 4616 cities, towns and municipalities, across 128 countries, took part in earth hour 2010.

The theme this year is "*This Earth Hour, Go Beyond The Hour*" and is a great time to look at our own energy use and consumer habits. For information on registering for Earth Hour and other information on implementing sustainable solutions, including a footprint calculator, visit [www.earthhour.org.au](http://www.earthhour.org.au)



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