



Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News December 2010

PCL would like to wish all our members and their families a very safe and joyous festive season and a happy New Year! PCL is looking forward to an exciting 2011 working with the numerous dedicated landcarers around the region.

Please note, the PCL office will be closed between December 25th until 4th Jan.



Visitors surveying our visitors

by Hayley Glover

The Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG) were recently in Mackay to conduct their annual Mackay survey. 18 members flew up from Brisbane to join the local Mackay counters to conduct the survey over the first weekend in November.

The annual count sees locals and QWSG members visit as many shorebird sites as possible to identify and count shorebirds and other water birds. This count marks the 10th year in a row that Mackay has been surveyed and QWSG is gathering some valuable information on the numbers and species visiting our region. This information is invaluable in determining if populations are declining.

The dedicated team travelled from sites across the region from Repulse Bay (Shute Harbour) to Cape Palmerston and saw a large

diversity of shorebird species. I was fortunate to join a group to access Habana Wharf and we were lucky enough to see 3 juvenile Black-necked Storks (formerly called Jabiru Storks) along with flocks of Pied Oystercatcher, Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper to name just a few.



QWSG Mackay survey: Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (bottom image); Grey-tailed Tattlers (middle) and QWSG members counting shorebirds (top). Images: H Glover.

QWSG will be visiting our region in early 2011 to run a workshop on shorebird ecology and identification organised by PCL from a recent grant from the Hail Creek Mine Community Development Fund. Details to follow....

Wetland Walkabout is now open FREE to the public



The iconic Wetland Walkabout is now open free to the public.

Visitors to the Reserve can enjoy 4 km's of self-guided walking trails, or guided walks for a small fee. In addition, there are lots of great opportunities to view birds and other wildlife.

Wetland Walkabout is open Saturday and Sunday and on weekdays by prior notification. For further information, contact Mark Gallate on 0438 269 942.

New regulations at Sandfly Creek Environment Reserve

From October 1 to April 30, dogs are prohibited in the reserve with Mackay Regional Council recommending an alternative route along East Gordon and River Street to protect the reserve's important biodiversity.

Come along to Sandfly Creek on Saturday 4th Dec 9-11am, to learn about the new regulations, identify shorebirds and learn about their ecology from local experts.

Weed ID Day Success

The recent poor weather didn't hinder people from turning up with a quantity of backyard and agricultural weeds, in what turned out to be successful events at Marian and Habana.

Highlighting the increasing benefits for the community from such events.

Biosecurity Queensland and Mackay Regional Council were on hand to help identify and give advice. PCL was on hand to offer free native plant replacements.

Wet weather is very effective in spreading seed, so with recent rains now is an important time to keep an eye



Weed identification. Image: H Glover.

Plant of the Month

Northern Native Olive *Chionanthus ramiflora*

The Native Olive is in flower once again. This fast growing member of the Oleaceae family provides food for a range of marsupials and birds, including the Golden Bowerbird and Topknot Pigeon. See it today at the Monsoon Garden at Botanic Gardens or in Slade Point Reserve.

LEAVES: Opposite, to about 25 x 8cm. Elliptic to broadly oblong, dark green above and paler underneath. Has a prominently raised, lemon coloured mid-vein.

FLOWER/FRUIT: Small, lightly perfumed, 4 petalled cream flowers are borne in axillary sprays about 8cm long. Heavy flowerings have been observed in summer and further light flowerings in winter.

Mature fruits are purple in colour, contain one hard seed and resemble olives in shape and size.

PROPAGATION: Grow from fresh seed. A hardy plant, but prefers well drained soils in full sun or partial shade.

LOCAL HABITAT: Common species in this area, occurring from sand dunes and littoral forests to riverine forests and local rainforests.

DISTRIBUTION: North Eastern Qld and overseas.

Source: Champion, I. and Alcock, H. (1989) *One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay*, The Mackay Branch of Society for Growing Australian Plants; Melzer & Plumb (2007), *Plants of Capricornia*.



Images: S & A Pearson

Weed of the Month

Parthenium *Parthenium hysterophorus*

Origin: North and South America

Spread by: Water, vehicles, machinery, stock, feral and native animals, and in feed and seed.

Description: Branching annual herb from the Daisy family to 1.5m, with a deep tap root. Pale green and deeply lobed leaves, covered with fine soft hairs. Flower heads are creamy white, about 4mm across, and will develop about 4-5 wedge-shaped black seeds, 2mm long with 2 thin white scales.

Parthenium—a weed of national significance (WONS):

Parthenium is recognised as a weed of national significance (WONS) and declared noxious in all states of Australia. It is an aggressive annual herb, colonising roadsides, river flats, fallow land and over grazed pastures where grass cover is poor.

All parts of the plant at any stage of growth are toxic to humans and animals. Individuals in contact with Parthenium can develop sensitivity to the plant which may then manifest as an allergy type response, such as hay fever or dermatitis.

Management: Isolated areas can be fenced off to prevent seed spread and to encourage the health of the pasture. Selective herbicides can also be successfully applied. For further information, refer to the QPI&F fact sheet.

Parthenium in the Pioneer Catchment: Parthenium is reportedly popping up around the region and new outbreaks have recently been detected along the Pioneer River near the Mirani Weir. Mackay Regional Council and DERM are working to isolate and control these outbreaks.

Source: Dept. NRME (2004), *Parthenium Weed Management*

Class 2 Declared Weed

Class 2 pests are established in Qld and have, or could have, an adverse economic, environmental or social impact. Landowners must take reasonable steps to keep land free of class 2 pests. It is a serious offence to introduce, keep or supply a class 2 pest without a permit, penalties of up to \$40,000 apply.



Image: S & A Pearson



Image: Biosecurity Queensland

Management Committee profile — Bruce Milles

PCL would like to welcome a new member to the management committee, Bruce Milles.

A few words from Bruce: I retired in 2008 to become the principal carer of my family, including my wife Jen, who is a Primary School Music teacher, and my two boys, Kristopher, 10, and Jordan, 13, who has an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Prior to this, I lectured in Property and Tourism at Central Queensland University. My main research and public engagement interest was eco/nature based tourism which was also the focus of a Masters Degree, which I studied at James Cook University in Townsville. I have tertiary qualifications in Property and am a Registered Valuer. I am also a Member of the Australian Property Institute and have held several management committee positions including Chair. I have been a member of Mackay Regional (City) Council's Natural Environment Advisory Committee since its inception in 2002.

My early career involved over 20 years working for the state government in a variety of Land Use, Planning and Valuation roles within various versions of the Natural Resource Management Agencies. I have lived and worked throughout much of the state, from the western deserts to the hard line of the reef and from the southern border regions to the wet tropics. I have also travelled widely both nationally and internationally. While I have diverse personal interests, environmental sustainability incorporating the triple bottom line concept is at the top of my personal beliefs and I look forward to contributing this through the PCL management committee.



Image: B Milles

In SEARCH of the EUNGELLA HONEYEATER

by Daryl Barnes, MacBOCA

The MACBOCA group's November monthly outing was conducted on Sunday the 7th November in the Eungella district. Four enthusiastic newcomers were welcomed along, with each having a high anticipation of sighting the target bird for this trip - the Eungella Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus hindwoodi*). Whilst this special little bird may not be the most colourful that is found locally it is certainly one of the most sought after. The reason being is that it is found nowhere else in the world but here at Eungella.

After arriving at the designated location, everyone was soon rewarded with both good calls and good views of the Eungella Honeyeater, as it was seen feeding on the flower nectar of the Climbing Pandanus (*Freycinetia scandens*). Many other rainforest dwelling birds were seen on this particular morning by the group and attendees all returned home satisfied from their trip.

The Eungella Honeyeater was first identified as a separate bird species as recently as 1983. Prior to this it was considered a southern population of the Bridled Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus frenatus*). The Eungella Honeyeater inhabits the Clarke Range, Crediton and Cathu State Forests and can also be found in the Finch Hatton area. Two of its main food sources at this time of the year are the nectar of mistletoe flowers growing in the rainforest canopy and the Climbing Pandanus flower that is found clinging to tree trunks.

Since the mid 80's local bird enthusiasts began to spend many long hours tracking and documenting the movements and habits of the bird. Concentrated efforts were carried out monitoring the birds specifically when they were nesting in the Eungella area.

Not known is the existing population numbers of the Eungella Honeyeater although recent evidence would suggest that numbers appear to be relatively stable, - pre-cyclone Ului. What is known however is that they rely solely on the current restricted habitat in which they live today.

Bird enthusiasts from all over Australia and from overseas are always keen to add this bird to their "must see" lists. Finding it on a brief visit may not always be successful however, but obtaining a little local knowledge from someone like the experienced Marj Andrews will help no end.

Anyone wishing to find out more about the Eungella Honeyeater or the activities of the bird club in general can contact Marj on 49522964.



The endemic Eungella Honeyeater.
Image: John Young, courtesy of MacBOCA.

Who's who in Pioneer Catchment & Landcare?

Management Committee

Chair Margaret Lane

Deputy Chair Dave Hunter

Treasurer Wendy Eiteneuer

Secretary (Non voting) Hayley Glover

Committee Members

Cr. Wendy Cameron

Irene Champion

Joan Fitzsimmons

Cr. Karen May

Bruce Milles

Dianne Williams

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Newsletter Hayley Glover, Dallas Milburn

Supported by:



Upcoming Events

December

Thursday 2, from 8pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting— *2010 in Review*. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors welcome.

Saturday 4, 9-11am—Welcome to Waders at Sandfly Creek. Come to Sandfly Creek to learn about shorebirds and hear about the new regulations, see front page. River St entrance, Sandfly Creek.

Sunday 5, 1pm—Rare Fruits Club meeting, South West Mackay Neighbourhood Centre, corner Clements and Pompey St, South Mackay. BBQ starts at 11:30am. Visitors welcome. Contact Paul Andrew on 4959 8671 for details.

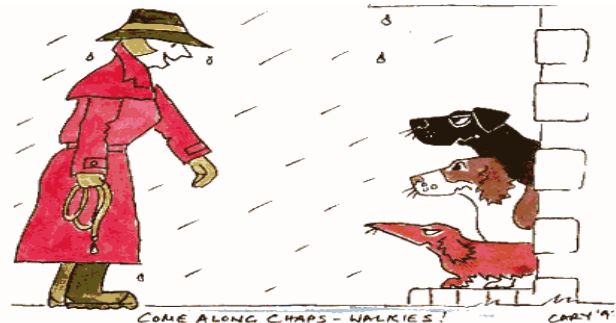
Wednesday 15, 6.30pm—MRC Giant Rats Tail information evening, Mirani Community Hall. Guest speakers will discuss identification techniques, treatments, hygiene practices and general information. Contact Shelley Molloy at Mackay Regional Council for further details on 4961 9202.

Mackay Coastal Community Activities

Shoal Point—Saturday 11, 8:30—10:30am. Dune planting and hand weeding activities. Meet at beach access on upper O'Brien Esplanade, near Denman Ave. Contact Reef Catchments for further information, 4968 4207.

Bucasia—Saturday 11, 3—5pm. Dune planting activities. Meet at the beach access north of swimming enclosure. Accessed via track from northern end of Waverley St, Bucasia. Contact Mackay Regional Council for further information 4961 9864.

Please bring a hat and wear suitable shoes and protective clothing.



Remember to stay dry this Christmas!



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