



Marine Sanctuaries

Australia's oceans are some of the most diverse on earth yet only a small percentage are currently protected from threats such as over-fishing, oil and gas exploration and inappropriate development. The federal government is committed to establishing a National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas by 2012. This year it expects to finalise marine bioregional plans for 4 major regions of Australia: the South-west, North-west, North and East Marine Regions (including the Coral Sea). Each marine bioregional plan will include a proposed network of Commonwealth marine reserves (multi-use marine parks) including marine sanctuary zones (no-take zones).

A draft bioregional plan has been released for the South-west Marine Region and is open for public consultation until the 8th of August. The level of protection for marine life in this draft plan is totally inadequate and does not meet the benchmarks set by scientific evidence. There are too few marine sanctuaries and they are insufficient in size to deliver effective long-term protection for marine life and fish stocks. Wildlife Queensland is concerned that a similar minimalist approach to marine protection may be reflected in future marine bioregional plans. Of particular concern is the North Marine Region for which (at the time of writing) a draft plan is soon to be released.

The North Marine Region stretches from the Northern Territory-Western Australian border to Cape York in Queensland and includes all Commonwealth waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria, Arafura Sea and the Timor Sea. The North Marine Region contains a diverse range of habitats including coral reefs, tidal estuaries, mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, extensive wetlands and beautiful beaches. These habitats support an amazing array of marine wildlife including nationally and internationally significant populations of protected species such as dugongs, sea turtles, dolphins, migratory birds and humpback whales. A network of large marine sanctuaries will protect these species and their habitats from threats such as over-fishing, oil and gas exploration and inappropriate development. Protection from these threats will allow for a new and sustainable future for the region. Significant social and economic benefits would result from creating large marine sanctuaries and establishing the north as a mecca for ecotourism and sustainable fishing.

In spite of misunderstandings and competition between multiple users, the science is clear – marine sanctuaries are an essential pillar to securing healthy and productive oceans now and into the future. There is a vast body of scientific evidence demonstrating the

- benefits of establishing networks of large marine sanctuaries to:
- protect ocean life, including threatened species and critical habitats
 - recover the abundance of ocean life within and beyond sanctuary boundaries
 - increase the resilience of ocean life to climate change and
 - underpin the future of commercial and recreational fisheries and the sustainability of coastal economies.

While marine protected areas with networks of marine sanctuaries are an essential tool for marine conservation they must be complemented by effective management across the entire marine environment to address other threats such as unsustainable fishing practices, invasive species and habitat destruction.

In May 2011 Wildlife Queensland wrote to the Hon Tony Burke, Federal Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, strongly urging him to support the creation of an extensive and comprehensive network of large marine sanctuaries in the North Marine Bioregion of Australia. Wildlife Queensland insisted that the network be based on scientific best practice and ensure the protection of all biodiversity values of the region.

The Minister was encouraged to liaise and work with the Queensland Government and other state and territory governments of the region, to ensure that state and federal marine planning is complementary and provides the best protection for marine wildlife and their habitats across jurisdictional boundaries.



Manta Ray
Photo: Meg Green

Please take action and write your own letter to the Hon Tony Burke.

For more information visit www.wildlife.org.au



President's report



I had the pleasure recently of travelling to the Bunya Mountains, a beautiful landscape and a living museum supporting relic Araucaria dry rainforest. These forests have expanded and contracted between glacial cycles and when man arrived with fire this fire-sensitive ecosystem disappeared from entire regions.

However, these events occurred over thousands of years: a timeframe many species had potential to adapt to or contract and expand as the habitats they relied upon did likewise. This is a timeframe in which a human generation would hardly notice a difference. However, this is certainly no longer the case. In my short 50 years on the planet and even shorter time in South East Queensland (SEQ) I notice the landscape has rapidly changed. From my home in the Redlands to the Bunya Mountains entire forests, many of them old growth, have now been replaced by commercial or residential development. The SEQ landscape is being reduced to nothing more than a series of habitat patches with connections between them non-existent or severely compromised.

If it were not for Wildlife Queensland and its many on-ground actions, matters could have been much worse. For example, many of the substantial publicly protected koala habitats in the Koala Coast have only come into existence through the actions of Wildlife Queensland. This influence extends well beyond SEQ as many of our members know and it doesn't always relate to habitat. Wildlife Queensland has played an important part in helping mahogany gliders in the Cardwell region in North Queensland post Cyclone Yasi by installing supplementary feeding stations and den boxes to replace the gliders' battered homes.

Clearly, as climate change accelerates and our population grows unchecked, Wildlife Queensland will increasingly be required to provide a helping hand and a voice for wildlife. I would emphasize also that this extends to using the political process. While Wildlife Queensland is apolitical it would be naïve, if not grossly irresponsible, if individuals didn't use their vote to help deliver political results that guarantee better long-term outcomes for our wildlife.

Simon Baltais
State President

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 **Wildlife**
Preservation Society of **Qld**



Brahminy kite



Brahminy kite *Haliastur indus*

Lee K Curtis

This regal bird is a medium-sized raptor that measures up to 51cm in length, sports a white head, mantle and chest and a chestnut back with black primary feathers. The white-tipped tail is rounded when spread.

The brahminy kite is a common coastal inhabitant of Australia from Hastings, NSW all the way up the eastern coast, along the northern coast and down the western coast to Shark's Bay in WA. Also known as the Singapore bald eagle and the red-backed sea eagle, it is widespread in Southeast Asia and on the Indian subcontinent from where its name originated – the Brahmin caste which considers it a sacred bird.

In Australia, the brahminy kite is found in a wide variety of habitats such as estuaries, mangroves, mud flats, beaches, rocky shores, coral reefs, dunes, saltmarshes, on cliffs and near human settlements – harbours, villages, etc. Its population is secure. Occasionally it is found inland on rivers and estuaries.

Quite the opportunist, it feeds on a wide variety of food depending on its location. The Brahminy will happily feed on human-generated waste in tips, boat harbours and fishing vessel cast-offs. Carrion is another favourite but this kite will also hunt for live food as it circles above the ground then dives down to sweep up its prey – crustaceans, insects, fish, reptiles, frogs, birds and mammals. Because its feet and claws are not very powerful, the Brahminy sticks to foraging for small animals only, which it is very adept at grabbing in flight. It does not hesitate to pilfer – also in flight – what another bird has caught.

Brahminy calls include wheezy pee-aaah and kee-ee-yeh squeals and a meowing mmmmm-ah. The nest-protecting and excited calls are sharp wheezy whistles.

Breeding season occurs between April and October. Courtship between the elegant couple may start up to several months prior to breeding with the pair calling to each other perched high in trees above their chosen nesting site. Extravagant in-flight mating

rituals occur during which the couple grasps each other's feet while plummeting in a spin down towards earth for 100 metres or so before suddenly releasing their hold on each other and swooping back up into the sky.

The breeding Brahminy pair eventually builds a nest near water, usually in the fork of a live tree anywhere from 2 – 30 metres above the ground. It is a large somewhat messy nest made of a haphazard combination of large sticks, weeds, leaves, grasses, seaweed, lichens and even paper products.

One to two eggs are laid, usually two, white to pale blue, streaked and mottled with shades of brown. Both parents share incubation for approximately 35 days, as well as the feeding duties, although it appears the mother does the majority of the work (surprise!). Nestlings have downy creamy-coloured heads and light brownish bodies with feathers appearing after three weeks.

The young fledge anywhere between 50 – 60 days. More often than not only one youngster ultimately survives. Juveniles maintain brown and fawnish colours for several years before the white and chestnut colours of the adult plumage take over.

When not in breeding mode, Brahminy Kites are solitary birds keeping to their stretch of coastline, or nearby territory, where they monitor their surroundings from high perches in live and dead trees or while gliding and soaring at low altitudes above the ground.



Brahminy kite cruising
Photo: www.afagrance.com.au

Sources:

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Wildlife Projects



Biodiversity Big Brother

Ewa Meyer, Projects Manager

On a recent trip to London, I was fortunate to be invited to lectures at the Zoological Society of London as part of the Institute's 'Communicating Science' series. The timing was particularly good, and relevant to the projects we run at Wildlife Queensland, as the theme of the May meeting was 'Biodiversity Big Brother' – presentations on the latest research using camera technology to monitor wildlife.



Cassowaries caught on a camera trap
Photo: © Far North Quoll Seekers Network

Patrick Jansen from the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute presented his research which was conducted in Central America on 'Agoutis as dispersers and predators of seeds in a neotropical forest: tracking seeds with telemetry and cameras.' Other presenters spoke about penguin research in Antarctica

using time lapse cameras – an important development in remote areas, generally poorly studied. In another remote place, the deep sea, researchers are using advanced underwater camera technology, of crucial significance in fisheries management.

For me, by far the most pertinent, and therefore interesting, was the presentation by Roland Kays, Curator of Mammals from the New York State Museum who works with 'citizen scientists', members of the community trained to assist in data collection. Collecting information on birds has been undertaken by amateur birdwatchers (twitchers) for decades, even centuries – but mammal monitoring has, up until now, been difficult due to their nocturnal habits and shy demeanour, making them difficult to spot, let alone approach. Only researchers under special permits can undertake trapping. But now, with the advent of digital camera trap technology, surveys are yielding extensive and often surprising discoveries for researchers, and allowing increased opportunities for involvement by volunteers.

The first camera trap photograph ever published was in National Geographic in the 1920's – it was the second ever photo-spread in this classic magazine (the first one was of the Grand Canyon). But it wasn't until camera technology moved from film to digital in the 1990's that observations of



Camera trap
Photo: © Wildlife Queensland

wildlife could be undertaken with relative ease.

In collaboration with the Smithsonian Institute, Roland Kays and his team are involving the community in wildlife monitoring – the 'citizen science' approach. Landholders adjacent to wildlife reserves are supplied with GPS coordinates by the researchers, they set up the automated cameras, download images, share information with neighbours – and a local project can grow just like that.

There are many advantages of cameras as a survey mechanism – they are less intrusive on the animal than other techniques and less labour intensive for the researcher. And as the 'citizen science' approach in the United States has shown, it has great potential for the community to be directly involved in monitoring, thereby taking ownership of and responsibility for their wildlife and wild places.



Kaitly Conroy and Jared White checking a glider feed station and camera
Photo: © Wildlife Queensland.

More information:

Quoll Seekers Network (QSN) has been using camera traps for years. Many of the images captured are in the reports on our website. If you'd like to join Quoll Seekers Network – do it online at www.wildlife.org.au/quollseekers

Queensland Glider Network (QGN) uses camera traps to monitor mahogany gliders at feeding stations and den boxes following the destruction of their habitat by Cyclone Yasi. Support QGN by joining online at www.wildlife.org.au/qgn

Visit the 'Smithsonian Wild' website where you will see over 200,000 camera trap images from all over the world: siwild.si.edu



Wildlife Projects



QGN in Action

Karen Brock, Queensland Glider Network Coordinator



Operation Nest Box

QGN is working in conjunction with the Flinders to Greenbank-Karawatha Conservation Partnership on glider population conservation within the Flinders to Greenbank-Karawatha corridor. QGN's role includes

monitoring existing nest boxes as well as linking fragmented glider populations through additional nest box installation.

Throughout April QGN coordinated four teams of 3-5 members to monitor existing nest boxes within the Oxley Creek Catchment. This catchment is a part of the Flinders to Greenbank-Karawatha wildlife corridor. Further monitoring was undertaken in June. A total of 46 nest boxes were monitored in Larapinta, Forest Lake and Algester, with nest box occupants including squirrel and sugar gliders, ants, bush cockroaches, common brushtail possums and bees.

The next phase of this project involves mapping existing populations and enhancing glider corridors through nest box installation.

Visit our [facebook](#) page for updates on our monitoring results, glider discussions or cute glider pics!

Looking out for Quolls in Logan



As part of Logan City Council's EnviroGrants program, Wildlife Queensland's Quoll Seekers Network has been fortunate to receive funding for a 3 year project, 'Looking out for Quolls in Logan'. Along with

David Keogh, WPSQ's Logan branch president, Ewa Meyer attended the presentation ceremony at the Leaf Festival to accept the funding cheque from Councillor Lisa Bradley. Members of Logan branch looked after the Quoll Seekers Network display — they sold t-shirts, magnets and responded to many interesting 'quolly' questions from the public.

'Looking out for Quolls in Logan' will build on the survey work undertaken in 2006 by Scott Burnett and Ivell Whyte in the northern section of Beaudesert Shire as well as surveying other potential areas. We will be relying on local community knowledge of quolls to install camera traps where quolls have been reported. Several Quoll Discovery Days will be held to assist people in identifying quolls, determine if they live nearby and manage their properties for quoll conservation.

Research Grants Program 2011

Our 2011 program attracted many excellent applications. Here are the 5 successful applicants who have each received \$1000 towards their research project:

Tim Holmes, University of Queensland, PhD candidate: The impact of the institutional framework on the management of Australia's threatened birds.

Julian O'Mara, University of Queensland, Honours project: Where will the fish live? How will sea level rise affect coastal wetlands and fish habitat.

Jennifer Silcock, University of Queensland, PhD candidate: Assessing rarity and threat in arid zone flora.

Amy Trenouth, Central Queensland University, PhD candidate: Natural versus anthropogenic risks: Using risk perception to develop a robust risk assessment for marine and coastal protected areas.

Gary Wilson, James Cook University, PhD candidate: The ecology, systematics and biogeography of the Austro-Papuan *Nepenthes* pitcher plants.



Margaret Thorsborne AO



An exceptional Australian **Margaret Thorsborne receives her AO from the Queensland Governor**

Liz Downes

It might have been a grey day in Brisbane but there was no stopping the warm and sunny smiles when WPSQ patron, Margaret Thorsborne, received her Officer of the Order of Australia honour from the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley, AC, on 23 May.

As we gathered on the lawns of Government House we felt honoured to be present on such a great occasion. Margaret's other guests were her niece Lynn Preece, friend and WPSQ stalwart Carol Muller, and friend Jane Thomson who was the instigator of the nomination and without whom this day might never have happened.

The investiture lived up to every expectation. Gracious and dignified, it perfectly reflected the classic elegance of Government House itself. From the Governor down, all staff and officials were, without exception, warm, friendly and welcoming. It wasn't just the recipients who were made to feel like VIPs!

As for Margaret, one of only two recipients of the high-ranking Officer category (AO), with her lovely smile and beautiful pink outfit, she simply shone. When she turned towards the assembled guests, with the Governor's arm around her shoulder and the handsome insignia around her neck, the four of us were beaming with pride and delight. What a very special, and moving, moment this was.

In her speech the Governor described the honours as "the highest in the land – the most prestigious that it is possible to give, or to

receive" and congratulated the recipients on being recognised as "exceptional Australians ... whose achievements put them above their peers".



*Margaret and Governor
Photo: Liz Downes*

The reception was held upstairs rather than in the gardens. Here we could mingle with other recipients and guests – and couldn't help noticing how many of them wanted to speak to Margaret! The Governor also circulated freely, making sure she spoke to everyone. Margaret was especially touched that she twice commented on how proud Arthur would have been.

An unexpected pleasure was meeting VIP guest Lt Col Andrew Freeman who seemed particularly delighted to meet and talk with Margaret – and no wonder, his uncle was none other than Senator Bob Brown! We excitedly told him that Bob Brown had been one of the referees for Margaret's nomination and he apparently couldn't wait to tell his uncle about meeting Margaret.

Eventually we were ushered downstairs where uniformed gentlemen with umbrellas escorted us to our cars – for a moment Margaret showed an inclination to go upstairs, which drew the amused comment from one of the staff, "No, you're not moving in ... yet!"

Later we all gathered for some celebratory champagne, a friendly meal and moments of reflection and memories. It had been more than two years since the work began on achieving this national recognition for Margaret's inspirational life of service to community and environment. Now, for all involved there really was a sense of "mission accomplished."

Our Patron – Office Visit

Staff and volunteers were pleased and excited to have our patron, Margaret Thorsborne, visit our office on 24 May.

Margaret had been in Brisbane to receive her Order of Australia in a ceremony held at Government House. She was clearly delighted by her visit south and allowed us all to closely examine the medal she had received 'for distinguished service to conservation and the environment through advocacy roles for the protection and preservation of wildlife and significant natural heritage sites in Australia, as a supporter of scientific research, and to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland.'

Margaret was making the most of her visit to catch up with friends and family, giving our staff and volunteers time to experience her own brand of enthusiasm about our precious environment.



*Beth, Karen, Doreen, Fiona and Des
congratulated Margaret
Photo: Wildlife Queensland*



The Big Clean-up

Our Community Conservation Officer, Fiona Maxwell, did a great job in contacting and coordinating members and volunteers from the Seagrass and Mangrove Watch programs to help on Clean Up Australia Day.

Working with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), flood-affected mangrove habitats were targeted for clean-up. Fiona was one of those who took part in the work at Luggage Point where a huge amount of debris had washed up from the Brisbane River floods. In all there were 23 bags of rubbish collected which included the usual plastic drink bottles, straws, bags, ropes and lots of styrofoam etc but larger items could not be bagged - such as car and truck wheels, garden furniture, a chicken coop, wooden staircase and much more.

The clean-up work did not stop on that day however. Fiona continued to work with QPWS and volunteers on other sites in the following weeks.



Volunteers and some of the debris collected
Photo: R. Standish-White

World Environment Day

To highlight this most important day, Wildlife Bayside held its annual World Environment Day dinner on Saturday 28th May 2011.

As this is the branch's 25th year, the dinner had a silver theme with both decorations and dress.

Attendees enjoyed pre-dinner snacks and beverages, and a two-course meal as well as a presentation by guest speaker Paul Hodda. Paul is president of the Australian Whale Conservation Society. He outlined the history of whaling both in Australia and around the world and the hunting that led to the rapid decline of whale populations. He also looked at whale conservation, education and research which he illustrated with his own images.

Don't forget

We have glider posters for purchase. These make a great display at events or for schools or a colourful gift. There are 4 posters available (greater glider, squirrel glider, sugar glider and mahogany glider). Purchase a set of 4 for \$25 including postage and packaging or individual posters cost \$5 each plus \$5 postage and packaging.

We also have a number of t-shirts available but sizes and stock are limited. Call for more information.



Greater glider poster

Around the State



Jill Chamberlain

Jill continues to be recognised. Congratulations.

President of the Sunshine Coast branch, Jill Chamberlain OAM, has received another well-deserved honour. Jill was recognised by the University of the Sunshine Coast which bestowed on her the status of Honorary Senior Fellow of the University in recognition of her work on the Sunshine Coast where she has laboured for many years to protect and preserve the wildlife and the environment. Jill was quoted in a recent interview as saying her basic interest is 'the care of the environment and trying to get more people interested in caring for the environment'.

Jill has been featured in a number of newspaper articles recently which described her work and honours.



Jill displays her University certificate
Photo: Tony Chamberlain

Springbrook AGM

Great place for a weekend.

The Gold Coast branch has organised a weekend packed full of great speakers, workshops and fascinating bush walks in this wonderful part of our world.

The Annual General Meeting and get together will be held on the weekend of 9th to 11th September 2011 at Koonjewarre, Springbrook in the Gold Coast hinterland.

Koonjewarre offers ready access to a large network of National Park walking tracks and an opportunity to experience the wonder, splendour and tranquility of a World Heritage area.

For further information and registration details see the insert in this newsletter.

Please return your registration forms as soon as possible.





Thank you Wildlife Queensland...

Dear Members,

I am writing to thank you all very much for the wonderful donation of \$200 towards the care and rehabilitation of our precious wildlife. This money will go a long way in the purchase of food, medication and other supplies needed for my work with these animals.



*Glider in care
Photo: Judy Anderson*

During the flood my children and I managed to rescue five echidnas and a large lizard from out of the water flowing over the Dawson River bridge. Also, inadvertently, saving numerous spiders, ants, centipedes and other bugs that were hitching a ride on these 'living life rafts'!!! We also received a number of birds and a sugar glider (this little girl proved a challenge to release back into the wild... even involving two encounters with the police!!) The number of wildlife that would not have survived the flood would have been staggering...

Again, thank you for your very generous donation,

Warmest regards,
Judy Anderson



*Echidna rehabilitated
Photo: Judy Anderson*

Introduce a member

With the March newsletter we included a letter/form which invited members to help us to reinvigorate the society by introducing new members.

There are many who are interested in our environment and our wildlife who have yet to make that first step to become a member of Wildlife Queensland. We need you to seek out these potential members, brief them on the work and benefits of our organisation and arrange for them to sign a very important document, the membership form.

When they join you will be rewarded with either a DVD from the ABC/BBC collection or a book on the wet tropics.

Use the form we provided to you or just add a note to the membership form that the person is being introduced by you.

Vale Fred Short (Gold Coast Branch)

Frederick George Short celebrated his 100th birthday with members of the Gold Coast branch of WPSQ on Tuesday 14 December 2010 at the Gold Coast Botanic Gardens. Sadly, Fred passed away on 27 May 2011.

Fred came to Australia in 1980 and settled in South-East Queensland. Here he took up bush rambling and explored eastern Australia in his camper from north to south, and, in the process, acquired an amazing store of knowledge and experience as a botanist and biologist.

What was remarkable about Fred was that, not only was he an environmentalist, but he was also a philosopher, a poet and a writer with four books published.

Elizabeth Sharp said she met him when she came to the Gold Coast 20 years ago and joined the Wildlife Preservation Society. To her he has always been the icon of what we stand for as a Society. He was an extraordinary conservationist with a remarkable knowledge of our flora and fauna.

Fred was on the Gold Coast branch committee in the nineties, holding first the position of president and later the position of vice president.

He was 'hands on' in his approach to the environment as he demonstrated only a few years ago when he and the late Barry Johnson took on the creation and maintenance of Schuster Park. This was an area of council-owned land on the banks of Tallebudgera Creek which was overgrown with weeds and completely neglected. Barry and Fred cleared the weeds and planted innumerable suitable trees which they cared for over a number of years with minimal assistance from the Society.

We wish to express our deepest admiration for a life filled with accomplishment and a deep love for his fellow man and his fellow creatures.



Capricorn World Environment Day

Snakes, lizards, a cake, pumpkin soup and a wombat.

These were the star attractions as an enthusiastic group of 35 celebrated World Environment Day with the Wildlife Preservation Society Capricorn branch in Yeppoon on Monday evening 6th of June.

Capricorn branch President Jeff Simmons welcomed visitors and Andrew Dinwoodie from WPSQ State Council explained the significance of World Environment Day and why the environment should be celebrated. Andrew also gave a brief overview of the objectives and history of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. Meanwhile rustling and scratching could be heard from a number of covered boxes and crates at the front of the hall.

Younger members of the audience were encouraged to answer questions posed about the environment and in particular about platypus. This provided a segue for Andrew to talk about the Society's PlatypusWatch and invite interested people to join in a local project to search for platypus in the Capricorn region.

An enthusiastic youngster was invited to cut the cake to celebrate World Environment Day and to mark the launch of the Capricorn PlatypusWatch project.

It was then time to introduce the evening's special guests Tina Janssen and her team from Project Kial. Tina talked about the work Project Kial does rehabilitating injured and orphaned wildlife. Tina also outlined two threatened species recovery projects being undertaken at Kial, one being a captive breeding program for the endangered bridled naitail wallaby. The other is a collaborative research project to develop techniques to artificially inseminate wombats.



Project Kial volunteer Mackenzie Smith shows a six-month-old hairy-nosed wombat to Peggy Taylor and Bailey and Natasha Ward. Photo: Suzy and John Watson from the Spectator News Magazine



Event participants enjoy the wildlife. Photo: Suzy and John Watson from the Spectator News Magazine



Since 1962 Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (Wildlife Queensland) has led the fight to protect wildlife and habitat. With unwavering determination, integrity and advocacy we are, and always will be, there for wildlife who have no voice.

Please help us to continue our vital work now and in the future by remembering Wildlife Queensland in your will.

Contact: Wildlife Queensland
95 William Street Brisbane Qld 4000
07 3221 0194 www.wildlife.org.au

protecting wildlife influencing choices engaging communities



Photo (c) Darren Jew/darrenjew.com

Your bequest is as precious as water...



Wildlife Land Fund Limited



Wildlife Land Fund Limited

Des Boyland, Secretary

Thank you to those who responded to our call for new members and to existing members who renewed. The downward trend in our membership has been halted and reversed but, like Oliver Twist WLFL needs 'more please'. WLFL still requires more members, more donations and more volunteer time. Membership costs but a few cups of coffee- a once only joining fee of \$5 and an annual fee of \$20. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Sadly, the Board noted the recent passing of one of our founding members, Fred Short from the Gold Coast. Fred saw significant change during his 100 years but was always an advocate of conservation and a strong supporter in every sense. Our thoughts and sympathy go out to his family and close friends.

On a brighter note, the weather gods finally behaved and our contractors managed to complete works on both Witta and the Neil Holloway Reesville Conservation Reserves. Works to the value of some \$14,000 have been completed this financial year with about 80% of the costs being met by grants from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council for which your Board is very appreciative. On top of this, some additional volunteer works were carried out at Witta Conservation Reserve which is to be the focus of volunteers from Parsons Brinckerhoff Green Team (PB) late in July. Conservation Volunteers' Mark Dwyer from the Sunshine Coast has been liaising with PB and WLFL with regard to works required. Mark will be supervising the volunteer effort together with some of your Directors. Barung Contracting Services, our contractors for Witta, have been advised and consulted so works will complement the ongoing strategic control program.

Weather has also impacted on Bukkulla Conservation Park with negative outcomes. Access has been limited, reducing agistment income and the excellent season has seen an explosion of lantana and rubber vine. Your Board is exploring ways of addressing this weed problem. There will be no organised visit for 2011.

Finally the Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in conjunction with the Southern branch get together at Springbrook on 10 September. Agenda and reports will be circulated in due course to members.



Reesville resident
Photo: WLFL





Why join Wildlife Queensland?

Our local branches!

Queensland wildlife issues — need a wildlife organisation based in our state.

You can find Wildlife Queensland branches around the state: up and down the coast and inland too. Members can get together with conservation-minded people and work on together on local issues.

Our members!

All types of people are Wildlife Queensland members and supporters — land owners, lawyers, students, pensioners, business owners, and parents. We're the conservation organisation that brings city and country together.

Our valuable projects!

Our wildlife projects — support wildlife from the ground up. Wildlife Queensland's projects help protect wildlife, build community capacity, and enhance habitat. Quolls, gliders, echidnas and platypus all benefit from our current programs.

We speak up for wildlife!

We campaign — for better wildlife outcomes. We encourage and persuade governments at all levels to make the right decisions across the state. We make a difference when we talk to decision-makers.

Join Wildlife Queensland today:

1 year membership: \$30.00 Single • \$20.00 Concession • \$45.00 Family/non-profit group • \$12.50 Junior

Subscribe to Wildlife Australia Magazine: 4 issues within Australia \$42, 4 issues overseas \$65

Go online to www.wildlife.org.au or call **07 3221 0194** today to join/renew/donate/subscribe.

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Vice-president, projects: Keith McDonald

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Wildlife Grants



Wildlife Queensland Research Grants Program

Through its grants program Wildlife Queensland, funded by its Endangered Species Trust, is supporting research by university students so we can better understand key interactions in our ecosystems. Our inaugural program in 2010 attracted many applications. One successful applicant who received \$1000 towards her research project was Erica V. Todd from the School of Marine and Tropical Biology, James Cook University.

Investigating the link between niche breadth, dispersal ability and vulnerability to river damming in Australian freshwater turtles.

Erica V. Todd

Human-induced changes to river systems, such as river damming, diversion and water extraction for irrigation, severely impact sensitive freshwater organisms through processes such as habitat loss and fragmentation. My PhD research focuses on a neglected but important group: freshwater turtles. Australia supports a distinctive and ecologically diverse turtle fauna. However, these key components of freshwater ecosystems are very poorly researched. In particular, we know very little about the dispersal patterns and population genetics of most Australian turtle species.

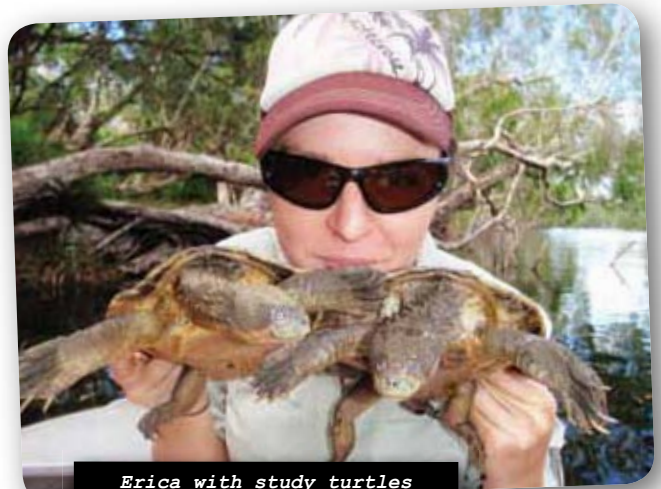
Dispersal among small local populations is important for species survival. It connects populations across the landscape, preventing inbreeding and allowing recovery from local extinctions. River impoundments are likely to create dispersal barriers for highly aquatic turtles, although the extent of this is currently unknown. Without baseline data on natural levels of population connectivity and genetic structure, likely long-term impacts of human-reduced dispersal on the persistence of turtle populations cannot be accurately assessed. Some river turtles may also be more vulnerable than others due to their specific habitat requirements and assumed reduced dispersal capacity.

My research aims to establish the important link between habitat specialisation, dispersal ability and population connectivity, in order to assess likely long-term impacts of river regulation on ecologically different river turtles. To do this, I am using genetic techniques to compare patterns of genetic diversity and population connectivity (gene flow) between two very different species of turtle. Krefft's turtle

(*Emydura macquarii krefftii*) has broad habitat requirements and is common and widespread in Queensland. By contrast, the white-throated snapping turtle (*Elseya albagula*) is a threatened ecological specialist unique to the Fitzroy, Burnett and Mary River drainages of central and south east Queensland. As the project progresses, I also hope to include other turtle species, such as the little-known Irwin's turtle (*Elseya irwini*) identified from only a few sites within the Burdekin River system of North Queensland.

The most enjoyable part of my research is field work. I have already travelled to many interesting sites throughout Queensland to catch turtles, by boat or snorkel or using nets and traps. Turtles are measured and tagged, and a small sample of skin is taken from each animal to provide DNA for genetic analysis. To date, I have collected genetic samples from over 150 turtles from 5 separate species. Other Australian turtle researchers have kindly supplied many more samples for my project.

This research will be the first detailed comparative genetic study of ecologically important river turtles in Queensland, and the first of its kind to assess long-term genetic implications of dams and weirs for this group. It will have important conservation outcomes, providing invaluable information for species management programs and for prioritising conservation actions. By addressing a prominent research gap in Australian freshwater turtle biology, I hope that a better understanding of the vulnerability of different freshwater turtle species to habitat fragmentation will assist conservation planners to design more effective management strategies.



Erica with study turtles
Photo: © Erica Todd

