

Quarterly Update ... January 2017

New year greetings and best wishes for the year ahead. LUCI's November-January quarter has 2017 off to great start...

Glossy Black Birding Day - 30th October 2016

Many thanks to LUCI members and supporters who participated in The Glossy Black Conservancy's Birding Day, which takes place across south-east Queensland and the Tweed area in New South Wales.

Our volunteers covered nine properties in the Mount Whitestone, Stockyard, Rockmount and Preston areas and a section of Dwyers Scrub. Three birds were sighted on the day and extensive evidence of orts (chewed *Allocasuarina* cones) was found on four properties. Ort colour suggested the birds had been feeding on the properties just days and weeks prior to Birding Day.

The GB Conservancy reported a total of 96 bird sightings across all sites on the day, which is down from 132 on the 2013 Birding Day but the highest number since 2014. The percentage of juvenile birds sighted was above the long-term average.

While stars don't always turn up on cue, a number of GBC sightings have been reported by LUCI members both before and since Birding Day. This fine pair, one of a group of five, is currently frequenting one LUCI member's water trough and feed trees.



Photo courtesy Dougal Johnson

Remember, you can submit your sightings (bird or orts) at any time to the Conservancy website
http://www.glossyblack.org.au/correct_id.html

The 2017 Birding Day will be held in the first half of the year with a date yet to be advised. Volunteers will be eagerly sought - again!

Fire and Biodiversity Workshop - November 2016 (by Jim Kerr)

Two LUCI members attended the Fire and Biodiversity Consortium's workshop on Property Fire Management Planning, which was organised by LVRC's Land for Wildlife Officer.

While plants have evolved with fire in the landscape, members learned that different types of vegetation require different fire regimes to remain viable. For example, forest with a grassy understory requires more frequent fire than a shrubby understory, while semi-evergreen vine forest is not well adapted to fire.

As a warming climate brings hotter and more extreme conditions, workshop attendees were encouraged to develop a property level fire management plan which takes into account the sustainability of the property's regional ecosystems.

When planning to burn, landholders need to consider that the amount of fuel creates different fire behaviour depending on slope, height, wind speed, humidity, and time of day.

Planned and unplanned burns do not always bode well for scarce nesting tree hollows. Victorian research reported such habitat trees, directly reached by fire, were on average 27.9 times more likely to collapse. (http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/files/documents/DELWP_Lucas_Bluff_2016_Reducing_the_effect_of_planned_burns_on_hollow-bearing_trees_Fire_and_Adaptive_Management_Report_95.pdf).

Let's celebrate the plants we have and look after them!

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Groundwater meeting -November 2016 (by Judy Whistler)

LUCI's groundwater interest began at the October 'Breakfast' when LVRC Cr. Jim McDonald spoke of his visit to Glen Rock National Park with hydrologist, Dr Jim Galletly .

Jim Galletly generously agreed to meet with some LUCI members and other interested people at Glen Rock where, despite the dry creeks elsewhere, water was flowing continuously.



Photo courtesy Judy Whistler

Jim explained to the group how this continual flow from the basalt capped mountains is a significant natural system of groundwater recharge into streams and aquifers - the other natural recharge coming from floods and surface runoff.

Groundwater is a community issue affecting the health of wildlife, habitats, farming and irrigation. LUCI flagged the idea of a community event on the issue and would like to hear from any interested members. Contact Judy Whistler 5462 6724.

Lockyer Valley Wildlife Research meeting - December 2016

Representatives from LUCI, Lockyer Community Action and Friends of Lake Apex attended a half day meeting at the Gatton UQ campus with Dr Guy Castley (Griffith

University (GU)) and three of his colleagues to discuss wildlife research in the Lockyer Valley. Three members from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection also attended.

GU researchers outlined the results of their 2016 research projects in the Lockyer, which investigated koala presence and activity in the Lockyer National Park and Glossy Black feed tree ecology. GU is keen to extend their research activities in the valley and proposed a five year research partnership with Lockyer environment groups, whose landholders would participate in citizen science projects. Further discussions are planned in conjunction with the start of the university academic year.

Protecting and improving the natural assets of the Lockyer Uplands

LUCI has completed phase one of a project to protect over 50 hectares of Semi-evergreen vine thicket (SEVT), which is listed as endangered in Queensland. (See SEVT fact sheets at <http://www.seqcatchments.com.au/news/new-regional-ecosystem-factsheets-now-available>).

Through a National Landcare program grant from SEQ Healthy Waterways and Catchments, LUCI has overseen (a) the installation of more than two kilometres of fencing to protect SEVT on two properties by reducing the impacts of grazing on this remnant vegetation and (b) the release of a bio-control measure to combat an invasion of Cat's Claw creeper in SEVT on another property.

In addition to enhancing the health of these tracts of SEVT, the added significance of this project is the potential for connectivity between habitats in these tracts of SEVT and to SEVT in Dwyers Scrub Conservation Park. Measures which promote connecting

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habitats of a particular kind, in a landscape which has become fragmented through human activity, is now considered a key element of wildlife conservation (for further reading see

<http://www2.ecolex.org/server2.php/libcat/docs/LI/MON-080215.pdf>)

Other LUCI activities funded by this grant include weed management of tree pear and lantana across two additional properties.

If you'd like to know more about the grant project or how to address similar matters on your property, contact Diane on 0413 333 681.

Friends of Dwyers Scrub Project

Weeding got off to an early January start in 2017 with the ongoing battle with Cats Claw vine. Last November, some members of Friends of Escarpment Parks (Toowoomba) generously gave of their time to work with us for a morning.



Their weeding expertise and company were greatly appreciated. It's a connection and an ongoing exchange that LUCI values.

Junior Citizen Science Project

LUCI is keen to develop an interest in wildlife conservation in the younger members of our Uplands communities. To this end, LUCI will partner with Mt Sylvia State School in a junior citizen science project. Principal, Mark Thompson, will pilot a learning approach that sees students

engaged in "on-ground" activities in their local area to better understand how environmental conditions affect the growth and survival of living things. The year-long project will involve Years 5-6 investigating the life cycle, characteristics of and threats to Glossy Black Cockatoo feed trees (*Allocasuarina littoralis* and *Allocasuarina torulosa*). Years 3-4 will investigate the impact of human activity and natural changes on critical wildlife habitat resources, such as tree hollows.

The plan is for members of LUCI and other relevant community groups to actively engage with students by sharing their conservation knowledge at appropriate points throughout the project. Principal Mark is confident this approach to learning will prove a success and be extended to other schools in the area.

Upcoming events ...

☞ *The Lockyer Uplands Koala Project in partnership with Griffith University and Lockyer Community Action.*

Planning is underway to launch this project within this next quarter. The goal is to encourage as many landholder families as possible to be involved in koala surveying on their property. Training will be provided as well as assistance with surveying if required. If you are interested in participating, contact Diane on 0413 333 681.

☞ LUCI's first AGM will be held in March, with specific date/time and venue to be advised. Current members come from Mount Whitestone, Fordsdale, Rockmount and Stockyard areas and LUCI is keen to engage with landholders from other areas within the catchments of Tenthill, Ma Ma and Flagstone Creeks. Information on LUCI's activities can be obtained by emailing lucatchmentsinc@gmail.com .

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Of interest...

Various LUCI members have been enjoying the increased activity of the woodland birds with the onset of the warmer weather and rain.

A Yellow-rumped Thornbill feeding hungry mouths...



...up high in their nest!



Photos courtesy Janne Dipple

A pair of Red-browed finches choosing their new house site under a pergola...



...get cracking on construction...



...and achieve lock-up stage!



Photos courtesy Paul Stevens

Important contact details...

UQ Gatton Small Animal
Hospital 5460 1788
Wildlife carers Kath and Steph
0410 334 661 (available 24/7)

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One of our Dwyers Scrub weeders took time out to enjoy one of the many little gems the park has to offer such as the orchid below.

Rhinerrhiza divitiflora (Raspy Root Orchid)



Photo courtesy Dougal Johnson

A quick snapshot of LUCI...

Current office bearers

President: Diane Guthrie
Secretary: Peter Darvall
Treasurer: Elspeth Darvall
Management Committee:
James Kerr
Judy Whistler
Paul Stevens
Financial members 17

Current projects

- Glossy Black Project
- Koala Project
- Friends of Dwyers Scrub Project
- Junior Citizen Science Project
- Groundwater Project
- LUCI Breakfasts
- Protecting the natural assets of the Lockyer Uplands Project

Meanwhile.....

There is still time to have your say on the draft 25-year planning framework for south-east Queensland. The closing date for comments is 3rd March, 2017.

<http://www.shapingseq.com.au/> Comments can be hand-written or typed, sent by mail or on-line.

If you are thinking of getting on top of your lantana or tree pear problem, LUCI has two splatter guns and a tree spear for member hire at *very* competitive rates. Contact Peter Darvall on 5462 6841 or Paul Stevens on 0429 880 144 for further information.

If you are interested in joining the Friends of Dwyers Scrub Project to do a bit of weeding for a few hours once a month, contact Jim Kerr on 5462 6724 or Paul Stevens on 0429 880 144.

...and...

If you're not already a LUCI member, and would like to join others in caring for native habitats and getting together at informative and fun events, then consider becoming a member. Only \$5 per person/year, children free! Membership year starts 1st November.

If you have any suggestions, photos and/or concerns that you would like LUCI to include in the Quarterly, let us know...remember...

Stay connected, it's healthy!

If you do not want to be included on the email list for this newsletter please let us know at lucatchmentsinc@gmail.com.
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