



Quarterly Update No 22 ... October 2020

Welcome to a wonderful wet Spring!

A decade to promote biodiversity

Did you know the years 2011-2020 were declared the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity? At a UN conference in 2010, participating parties adopted a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and a set of Biodiversity targets for the decade (referred to as the Aichi targets after the conference venue).¹ The Australian Government, along with other participating parties, agreed to subsequently revise national biodiversity strategies and action plans and develop national targets aligned with the Aichi Biodiversity targets.²

In its fifth report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2014, the Australian Government states that "the most significant past and present pressures [on biodiversity] are clearing and fragmentation of native ecosystems, invasive species and pathogens, inappropriate fire regimes, grazing pressure and changed hydrology."³ The report noted these pressures have been growing worse over the past decade.

The Government's report said it "is moving toward an integrated landscape-scale approach to conservation and NRM. Landscape-scale planning and management will help address risk, uncertainties and trade-offs between biodiversity conservation and other objectives for land use.... This will enable a more sustainable approach to land use change, including the protection of valuable environmental areas over the long term, maintaining habitat connectivity at a national scale, and building

resilience of both communities and ecosystems (DSEWPaC, 2012).⁴

As habitat connectivity is of particular interest to LUCI, expectations were raised on reading in this report that the Government had completed a National Wildlife Corridors Plan in 2013 "to promote guidance on linking national parks and reserves and well-managed private land... provid[ing] guidance for collaborative, whole-of-landscape approaches to conserving Australia's native plants, animals and other organisms."⁵ Frustratingly, scouring the Government website only turned up a description and drawing of wildlife corridors but no copy of the plan!

In November 2019, the Australian Government released *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2018-2030*, which provides "a national framework for government, non-government and community action to strengthen Australia's response to biodiversity decline and care for nature in our many environments."⁶ It is described as a "shared roadmap". There is no reference to a National Wildlife Corridors Plan in the Strategy but buried away under *Objective 7: Reduce threats and risks to nature and build resilience* is the following progress measure "**Retention, protection and/or restoration of landscape-scale, native vegetation corridors.**" (p.24) It will be interesting to see how governments of all levels in collaboration with non-government and community groups retain, protect and restore *native vegetation* corridors in the absence of a national wildlife corridors plan.⁷

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/2011-2020/Aichi-Targets-EN.pdf>

² <https://www.cbd.int/countries/targets/?country=au>

³ *Australia's 5th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity* (p.18)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶ *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2018-2030*

⁷ For comment on *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2018-2030* read [The conversation.com](#) article.

Continuing our members' stories "why conservation matters to me" ... by LUCI member Barb Lindberg



When I was asked to write this piece, I thought back to when I started to notice the world around me. It was back in year 5 (1982), I became aware of the plight of whales, was passionate about saving them from

extinction. I used my pocket money to join the Australian Whale Conservation Society. I promoted saving whales, screen printed my own t-shirts that I designed, told everyone about the plight of the whales and the need to put pressure on the International Whaling Commission (IWC) members. I felt proud I was doing something. That same year IWC made a decision to introduce a moratorium on commercial whaling. Power of the people and a positive reinforcement for me.

I was completely fascinated by the natural world. I learnt about the 'web of life' and realised everything is in balance & humans have a negative impact on the world around us. I watched the koalas disappear from the Redlands & houses appear. People complained about mangroves but weren't aware of the life they supported. I didn't understand why it was so hard to protect, I didn't understand the politics.

But then I too grew complacent, life happened, I stopped looking out at the world and became part of the rat race.

Then in 2006 I got my motorcycle licence and became part of the environment again, I smelt the smells, felt the temperature, the breeze, explored the roads less travelled and reconnected. I found myself wanting to explore the world and her natural wonders before they disappeared. I came back from a trip to Spain and realised I needed to escape Brisbane and breathe.

So, 30 years on from the whales I had an opportunity to 'save' a patch of land, learn

about it and how to restore it, to create balance.

We have watched how our patch of land is recovering in a very short space of time. Our land teaches us and keeps us healthy both physically and mentally. Every time I go for a wander, I discovered something new or I want to learn more about something. The more I learn, the more I want to learn and the more I realise I have a lot to learn. So why does conservation matter to me? I want to create opportunities to be connected to the natural world and to protect it for as long as we can, so future generations can marvel in the wonderful diversity and to heal and be healed.

Upcoming events ...

- ☞ LUCI Spring **Special Interest Walk** on a member's property with guide Martin Bennett on **Sunday 1st November, arrive 8:00am**. Only a couple of places left with numbers limited so, if interested, contact [LUCI](#)
- ☞ Weeding with **Friends of Dwyers Scrub** on **first Thursday of each month** from **8:00-10:30am**. All welcome. Interested? Contact [LUCI](#)
- ☞ **Glossy Black Cockatoo Project Annual Workshop** with Dr Guy Castley, Griffith University, and statistician Tim Roselli, on **Sunday 22nd November, 9:30-11:30am**. What have we learned and where to next? **RSVP essential** with venue details available upon booking your place. Contact [LUCI](#)
- ☞ **LUCI AGM and General Meeting and Christmas Sausage sizzle** will be held from **10:30am, Sunday 6th December at Ma Ma Creek Community Hall**. Draft agenda, office bearer nomination forms and 2019 minutes will be emailed to members and supporters two weeks prior to the date. Any items for the agenda, enquiries and RSVPs contact [LUCI](#)



A bit of reflection...

People's views on their role in the natural world range across the following ...

- humans are the most important species
- humans should manage the earth for humans and other life forms valued in terms of their use to humans
- humans should care for the earth and pay back our debt to the earth by leaving it better than before
- humans should avoid causing the premature extinction of species and their unique genetic information
- humans should think about their obligations to all life forms and not reduce the interdependence and diversity of life.

Whatever our views, are we (humans) effective earth managers? One measure we can use is the Ecological Footprint (EF), or the amount of earth's biological resources "needed" for human consumption either at an individual, regional or global scale. This measure can then be compared to available resources. A 2014 study concluded the per capita global EF had overshoot the biocapacity (or carrying capacity) of the planet. In other words, "[i]t takes Earth more than one year and eight months to regenerate what is used in one year." Biological resources needed to sustain human life are being depleted faster than they are replenished. The study also concluded that if all humans consumed at the level of an average American then the biological resources of five Earths would be needed.⁸

The EF does not take into account the resource requirements of the million or so other species who also rely on the earth's resources! So, what are the chances of sustaining biological diversity if human consumption patterns charge on unabated and what responsibility do we take for our own EF or contribution to the global EF?

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/science/ecological-footprint>

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Looking back over the last quarter...

Google Earth for Beginners workshop

Thanks to Martin Bennett who took the time to teach seven LUCI members the basics of using Google Earth. Martin stepped participants through placemarks, polygons, some basics on using the layer pane and saving layers and files and very generously has provided a link to his lesson plan.⁹ Already, the skills acquired have proved useful when preparing location maps for grant applications. Thank you, Martin, for generously sharing your time and knowledge.

National Threatened Species event

LUCI, together with Ma Ma Creek School Project Club and the UQ Wildlife Students Association, held stalls at the Ma Ma Creek Markets on 12th September to mark National Threatened Species Day and raise awareness of several threatened species found in the Lockyer. A busy morning and very pleasing when people stopped to tell us stories of koalas they had seen in their area or asked about the Glossy Black Cockatoo and their local feed tree resources. A highlight was the "guess the poo" competition where community members guessed which was the koala scat from among four scat samples including possum, deer and kangaroo. Ten of thirty-two people who had a go guessed correctly and

⁹ Martin Bennett invited you to view the [Google Earth GIS Beginners Guide](#) on Dropbox.

won themselves either a Glossy Black or a Koala food tree.

Thanks to Eva Schmidt, Ma Ma Creek School and Ma Ma Creek Hall Committee, for her invaluable support and Jane Trainer, Wildlife Students Association, for organising the student collaboration.

Native Grasses workshop

Thirty people attended LUCI's Native Grasses and Grassy Habitats of the Lockyer workshop on Sunday 20th September at Ma Ma Creek Hall with Dr Darren Fielder of Red Leaf Environmental. We learned there are 12,000 species of grasses in the world, 929 taxa in Queensland including 208 exotic species and 407 species in the Moreton Region. Darren explained the ecology and habitat function of grassy woodlands and some of the threatened regional species they harbour.



Darren Fielder identifies participants' grass specimens.

Participants were able to apply Darren's descriptions of the anatomy and identification of native grasses to the many grass specimens that some participants had brought along and in the field trip that followed his presentation.



The field trip provided a first-hand native grass identification experience.

Between the grass collections and the field trip, around 50 native grass species were represented.

Post picnic lunch, the group discussed the next steps in this six month project: a citizen science project to monitor diversity of native grasses following specific weed control; development of a pressed native grasses collection; and the development of a native grasses field ID booklet. In six months', the project will conclude with a second workshop with Darren where the three streams of activities will be brought together.

LUCI thanks the Lockyer Valley Regional Council for their support of this project through the Community Environment Grants program.

Propagating Native Plants workshop

There is so much to take in when learning the basics of propagating native plants from seeds. The workshop, presented by LUCI member Karen Gruner at her Tanglewood Natives Nursery, was the perfect mix of theory and practice backed up by Karen's own lessons as an experienced seed propagator. Participants learned about the different types of seed, seed collecting, seed preparation and storage, propagation equipment and seed raising mixtures and fertiliser needs.



Karen Gruner explains the 'craft' of seed propagation.

A highlight involved each participant preparing a tray of soil mix and planting out a range of seed varieties, some already

soaked overnight and ready to pop in while others had to be "clipped" first or have the aril removed. Seeds included *Angophora floribunda*, *Flindersia spp*, *Alstonia cristata*, *Dichanthium sericeum*, *Rhaponticum australe*, *Acacia salicina*, *Acacia fasciculifera*, *Sterculia quadrifida* and many more. Having tagged our trays with our names, Karen has been able to keep us up to date on the success of our propagation efforts with "milestone" news.

Thanks to Maree Rosier for being the 'on duty' WH&S officer for the event and Martin Bennett for providing additional flora expertise.

Visit to B4C

A group of LUCI members had the pleasure of meeting with Wayne Cameron, Catchment Manager, with Bulimba Catchment Coordinating Committee (B4C). LUCI reaches out to other groups to learn about their successes and how we can enhance our operations.

B4C sets a very high benchmark. Our group of seven were greatly impressed during our tour of their Sustainability Centre at Carindale with its office complex, nursery, machinery and equipment sheds and gardens followed by a visit to one of the group's revegetation sites.



LUCI members with B4C's Wayne Cameron visiting a revegetation site with wildlife "furniture".

While B4C and LUCI share some similarities in our early beginnings, each group has taken a very different path in response to the contexts in which we operate, members'

interests and pool of available volunteers on which to draw.

It was a very worthwhile exchange and along with our earlier meetings with Tamborine Mountain Landcare and Hinterland Bush Links groups, a lot of lessons can be drawn for LUCI going forward. Thank you to Martin Bennett for facilitating the introduction to B4C.

Landscape weeding project

LUCI's strategy to assist landholders with weed management on their properties was given a great start with a Commonwealth Government's Community Environment Program grant for 2020. The funds enabled LUCI to provide contractor support to landholders from five properties who are tackling significant weeds such as Cats Claw and Madeira vines and Tree pear. In all, the contractor and landholders will address weeds across approximately 60 hectares located within LUCI's landscape of interest.

The contractor, known for his weed management work in ecologically significant areas, has kindly participated in the making of a video of his methods which LUCI member Roxane Blackley is putting together as a resource for LUCI members. When completed, the video will be posted on the LUCI website.

Glossy Black Cockatoo Feed Tree Project

Phase two of LUCI's Lockyer Uplands Glossy Black Cockatoo Project, which has focused on three species of preferred Glossy Black feed trees in the landscape and the bird's feeding patterns, has reached an interesting decision point. The rate of die-off in the more dominant species in the landscape (*A. littoralis*), most likely due to drought impacts, has decimated the sample size in a number of the transects being surveyed. It may be that our project needs to move to exploring questions around recruitment and resilience of feed trees following extreme weather events.

Our annual workshop to be held in November with project mentor, Dr Guy Castley, will consider what the data analyses are showing from the past three years data and guide our next steps in furthering our understanding of the Glossy Black's use of our local landscape and what actions might be relevant to conserve the feed tree resource in our landscape.

Friends of Dwyers Scrub

Recently, our FoDS team were delighted to receive a Certificate of Appreciation from Senior Ranger Tim Wood on behalf of QPWS. FoDS members have been weeding since 2015 and, after hundreds of hours work, we are making headway on the canopy killer Cats Claw in the Park's Semi-evergreen vine thicket areas.



The FoDS team with Senior Ranger Tim Wood (far left) who presented the team with their certificates.

However, we need more help if we are to turn the tide on this smothering vine and then turn our attention to that other dreaded canopy killer, Madeira vine. QPWS, with FoDS assistance, have now released two waves of the biological control Madeira beetle (approximately 700 beetles a time) and, with the current rain, we have high hopes for the beetles' survival and dispersal and, hopefully, successful breeding. If you would like to join the FoDS team and weed one morning a month contact [LUCI](#) for more details.

Important number: Wildlife carers Kath and Steph 0410 334 661 (available 24/7)

Interesting sights ...

After recent rain, Mark Kidd came across a colony of Earth Star Fungi (*Geastrum triplex*) growing under a Large Belah in the leaf litter. Earth Stars depend on raindrops for spore dispersal, ejecting the spores from the central ball as the raindrops hit it.



Earth Star Fungi (*Geastrum triplex*). Photo Mark Kidd.

Recent displays of Darling Pea (*Swainsona queenslandica*) offered weeks of nectar supply for a range of butterflies including this Long-tailed Pea-blue (*Lampides boeticus*). At this location, the occurrence of this red pea plant is extensive throughout the grassy woodland areas.



Long-tailed Pea-blue (*Lampides boeticus*).

It has been interesting to watch the development of three Magpie chicks - from total dependence in the nest to now walking around the paddock following their parents (and squawking from beginning to now). Two to three times a day I watched as they learned to practice standing by teetering on the edge of the nest for brief periods, hopped back and forth to the surrounding branch, 'prepared' their wings and took their

first ungainly short flights and waited while the "littlest" one was patiently cared for in the nest for days after its siblings had launched themselves. Now they are walking around the paddock - still squawking at parents and squabbling with each other. What an education...for me!¹⁰



LUCI is always interested to hear about (or see photographs of) your sightings as it helps us monitor biodiversity in our local native habitats.

Bush bounty ...

Native habitats are resource larders, providing food, shelter and medicine for all kinds of species, including humans.¹¹ For example, *Lomandra* (*Lomandra longifolia*) seeds are high in protein and, pounded, can be made into a bread mix while the core of the plant and base of leaves provide vegetable. Roots can be used to treat bites and stings. The caterpillars of several butterfly species rely on this plant for food and habitat.

¹⁰ For a fascinating read about Magpies check out <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/news/2019/04/here-are-4-things-you-definitely-didnt-know-about-aussie-magpies/>

¹¹ The information in this article comes from these links [Food, tools and medicine: Five native plants that illuminate deep Aboriginal knowledge.](#)
[The art of healing: five medicinal plants used by Aboriginal Australians](#)
<https://www.recreatingthecountry.com.au/wedge-leaf-hop-bush-dodonaea-viscosa.html>

Wallaby grass (local variety *Rytidosperma tenuius*) provides food and habitat for a diversity of animals including birds, small mammals, lizards, snakes. The seeds can be pounded and made into a bread mix.

Black sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*) seeds are an important food source for many birds, including the Glossy Black. Shoots and cones were eaten by indigenous people.

The juice of the root of the Hop bush (*Dodonaea viscosa*) was applied by indigenous people to toothache and cuts while the chewed leaf and juice was wrapped around stonefish and stingray stings. The dense leafy branches are used by small woodland birds for nesting and the winged seed clusters are eaten by some lorikeets and parrots. The fleshy attachment to the small black seeds is collected by some ants.

... and weed tips by Judy Whistler

In 2016, a LUCI workshop focused on a use for harvested lengths of the canopy killer vine, Cats Claw - as a weaving material! Can harvested (and equally dreaded canopy killer) Madeira vine also be recycled and put to good use? Apparently yes, as a compost ingredient! However, it is very important that harvested Madeira vine is put in a container with some grass clippings and left in the sun to rot. Once all signs of the roots have disappeared, add the sludge to your compost heap.¹²

Madiera vine weeding tip...

Mature vines are controlled using the "scrape and paint" method while young ground level vines are managed by foliar spraying. When scraping bark, be sure to go down to the cambium layer and paint with herbicide. To get on top of Madeira vine, you will need to be vigilant throughout the year and for a few years until the tuber bank is depleted.

¹² <https://www.compostinghome.com.au/composting-faq>

Local plant profile - *Ficus rubiginosa* ... by Karen Gruner

Our 57 acres at Lefthand Branch consists of a steep hill of Brigalow forest with some tiny patches of SEVT. There are many weeds, the worst of all, in my opinion, being Madeira vine followed closely by Cat's Claw Creeper. There are stands of Velvety pear tree, Lantana - you name it, it's there. However, one outstanding beautiful feature we do have is a number of huge sandstone boulders. I really mean big! Some of the rocks are metres across in lovely formations, sometimes piled seemingly precariously on top of each other. There are rocks with big cracks, small caves and holes, and there is one plant species which has made itself right at home in the nooks and crannies of these rock clusters - the Rock fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*).



Ficus rubiginosa roots



Ficus rubiginosa in front of the sandstone boulders

The soil up the hill is very porous with minimal humic matter, so how do these large trees survive? Well they have come up with a clever strategy! The tree roots grow all over the boulders, hugging them closely right down to the ground thereby taking advantage of any moisture that collects at the base of the rocks. The fig roots also utilise any of the cracks and grooves that occur on the rocks presumably for anchorage but also to absorb any collected water. The result is an awesome display of root-over-rock configurations.



More *Ficus rubiginosa* roots

Fig trees are not only a terrific fast growing shade provider, but the fruit is a food source for many species - birds, bats, possums, rodents, and insects including the wasp species which pollinates the flowers inside the fruit. The rock fig has fruit that start green then turn yellow then, ultimately, red so you often see a range of mixed colours on the branches. The trees are tough as can be and the ones on our hill thrive with no assistance from us.

Karen Gruner
tanglewoodnatives.com.au

Test your knowledge on local fauna! This issue...the Crow, yes the Crow!

(Answers at the bottom of the page)

True or false...the Australian or Torresian crow (*Corvus orru*)

- Belongs to the same family as the Currawong.
- Is native to Australia
- Is a protected species
- Is a threat to biodiversity
- Forms a monogamous pair bond
- Mother is responsible for feeding chicks?



Photo [Brisbane City Council](#)

Some of the sightings/calls members have reported over the last few months:

- 11 koalas (two dead on roads)
- 1xBlue-bellied black snake (dead on road)
- 1xEastern bearded dragon
- 2xPythons (on road)
- 1xGreen tree snake (on road)
- 1xLace monitor
- 3xPairs of Channel-billed Cuckoos
- A group of Rainbow bee-eaters
- 1xTawny frogmouth
- 1 x Brown Cuckoo-dove
- 5xAustralasian Figbird
- 4xSpangled Drongos
- Multiple Double-barred finch
- Several Little friarbirds
- Common Koel
- 1xLeaden Flycatcher
- Brown quail
- Pheasant coucal
- Nesting Plover

How well did you go on Crow knowledge?

- False. Crows belong to the Corvidae family while Currawongs belong to the Artamidae family.
- True. The Crow is a native Australian bird.
- True. The Crow is protected in Queensland under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.
- False. The Crow is important in maintaining biodiversity as a natural pest manager and carrion recycler and in dispersing native seed.
- True. Crows form monogamous pairs that maintain a permanent territory.
- False. Both parents share feeding duties

Don't forget to check out LUCI's new website...our own domain! If you have any flora, fauna and fungi photos with good focus and detail, please send them to [LUCI](#) so they can be included in the website Gallery.

A draft of [LUCI's Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#) is posted on the web. The Plan needs to reflect members' interests and priorities and your feedback is important. Please send your comments to [LUCI](#)

We are slowly changing over email addresses as well but bear with us as we work out the new systems. Addresses will be as follows:
General information and President's email info@lockyeruplandscatchmentsinc.org.au
Secretary's email secretary@lockyeruplandscatchmentsinc.org.au
Project Coordinators projects@lockyeruplandscatchmentsinc.org.au

Are you interested in native grasses? If you would like to contribute to LUCI's collective survey of native grasses in the Lockyer by documenting and photographing specimens on your property, contact Penny Kidd [at the projects email address](#) for further information.

Do you have a photo or item of interest for the newsletter? Or concerns that you would like LUCI to consider? Then send us an email with your photo or item and...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 info@lockyeruplandscatchmentsinc.org.au
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