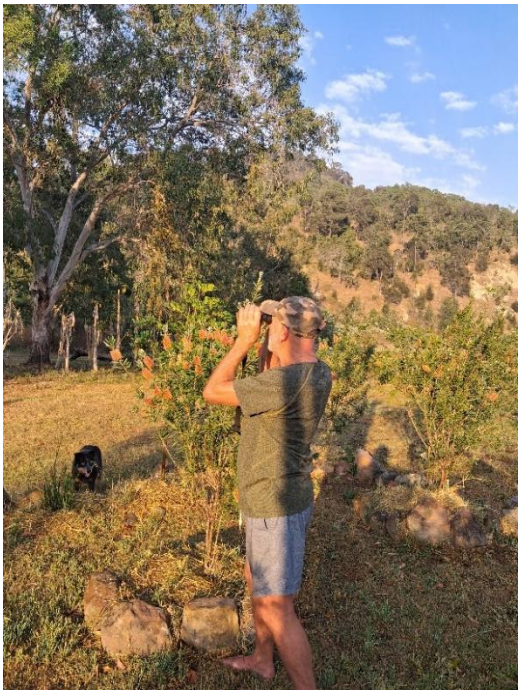
LUCI Update No 41 … October 2025

Greetings on a welcome rainy Spring day.

Flourishing feathery friends by LUCI member John Hopwood

Four years ago, I took over an eight acre, old pumpkin patch with a newish abode and a few established fruit trees. I immediately started planting hundreds of trees, natives plants and cultivars. The home is now surrounded by 'bush' with something always flowering and an accompanying huge array of bird (and insect) life.

I have observed over 105 bird species and counting. Fuscous, Lewins and White Naped Honeyeaters fill my home with birdsong. With a breezeway dividing the building, swallows fly through my house and sometimes kingfishers too!



Me and my mate Zoltan in our piece of heaven we share with over one hundred bird species. Photo supplied.

Organic vegetable paddocks are nearby as part of the Fordsdale valley with steep sandstone escarpments behind me. Ma Ma Creek with long deep swimming holes wraps around my boundary. The landform diversity enhances the birdlife from Sea-Eagles to Nankeen Night Herons and Brown Falcons.

Apart from the fabulous aesthetic of plant life all around the home, the intense pleasure of birdwatching, literally lying in my bed with Red Backed Fairy Wrens dancing at the window, one could believe you were in Heaven.

Ideas for planning a conservation project (continued)

It may be the case that, in restoring the natural values of your property, the size, condition and existing ecological values (or lack thereof) of your property call for some planning and research. To help in this research, the last LUCI newsletter provided links to information on Regional Ecosystems and property vegetation management issues related to your property. In thinking about your property's potential for habitat connectivity, it was suggested that you check out the surrounding landscape vegetation as well as what fauna species are recorded and/or supported in your area by consulting open-source databases (e.g. WildNet, ALA , iNaturalist) and your local Environment or Land for Wildlife Officer.

Never underestimate the value of a plan – even if that plan is 'adaptive' and revised in the face of changing property and personal conditions. A plan, based on your research, would include your vision for your property, what approach you're adopting on which

parts of your property (e.g. natural regeneration, assisted regeneration or reconstruction[1]), priority works with each approach (e.g. weed management, fencing, planting or remediation earthworks) and resources needed (e.g. budget, time).

To avoid being overwhelmed, it is a good idea to plan your project in terms of management areas and then prioritise which areas to work on. For example, the weeds in one area may have potential to impact other areas and compound your problems, so that area may need to get your attention first.

If weed management is a major part of your project, it might help to target your efforts to address declared weeds first and weeds that rapidly destroy a vegetation community (e.g. cats claw and madeira vines) and to time treatment with when it is most effective in terms of the weed growth cycle. Be aware also, that some weeds (e.g. particularly lantana) are probably providing substitute habitat and an incremental treatment approach may be desirable in conjunction with replanting efforts.

If planting is a major part of your project, choose species from your Regional Ecosystem plant species description and get advice from your local Environment or Land for Wildlife Officer and your local native plant suppliers. Choose a combination of trees, shrubs and ground layer plants including pioneer, early secondary and mature species. In southeast Queensland, the recommended planting window is February through to May. Good site preparation can mean the difference between success and failure and is not a step to be skipped in your planning.

Don't forget to monitor your project as it's a good way to look back on all your work, your achievements (and hard lessons) and showcase what is possible. Remember, take the time to register 'before' photos of the restoration site before jumping into your project. Monitoring can be in the form of a simple photographic journal through to standardised methods involving transects and research grade metrics.
Guide to monitoring ecological restoration projects

Everything you want to know about soil - soil and pasture health, compost vs earth worms and vermicomposting - compiled by Pam Pittaway (retired research scientist) in comprehensive, easy to read factsheets available on LUCI's website

Photo K Dave

Tools for Fauna Monitoring workshop

Our workshop on 13th September began with a presentation by Joe Joseph on the role and functions of a remote sensing camera and bioacoustic recorder and included the opportunity to handle the devices. Joe highlighted the non-invasive value of the devices, their ability to record more cryptic species and, in the case of bioacoustics, species present but not visible. Joe pointed out the pitfalls to avoid when deploying cameras and the software analytic challenges with the bioacoustics data. Participants learned all the settings on the devices and how to deploy for best results and about databases for uploading records (Birdata, Wildlife Insights, WildNet, ALA, iNaturalist).

Joe's talk was followed by a presentation by Roxane Blackley, LUCI member and Desert Channels Research and Development Manager, who provided a comprehensive

[1] Healthy Land and Water, South East Queensland Restoration Framework: Guideline (2012).

introduction to the Avenza Map App and its multiple functions and uses in supporting property management and fauna and flora monitoring (download a copy of the Avenza Field Guide here). Roxane also covered mobile device apps for geotagging photos (*Solocator, Theodolite*), how to view and edit photo metadata on a laptop, the Australian Emergency Plus app and real-time natural disaster Bushfire .io app.

Thanks to Joe and Roxane for very informative presentations and Jim and Judy for hosting the workshop.

Birds of the Lockyer Uplands Conservation Action

LUCI will be involved in a Glossy Black Cockatoo (GBC) nest site and nest box monitoring project over the next 12 months. The project began with a workshop in June presented by GBC expert and field ecologist Mike Barth who described the bird's breeding and nesting habits and habitat requirements (see LUCI's July newsletter).

In August, on the property on which the workshop was held, a group of Glossies, usually between 6 and 9, was observed daily in the early morning and evening. Among the mixed group of males and females, it was exciting to see at least one fledgling. The hope is that there is a nest site not too far away but we will have to wait now until the next breeding season to find out.

Glossy fledgling, part of a group observed in the Egypt area. Photo D Guthrie.

The nest site and nest box monitoring project will see Mike Barth working with LUCI and partner groups in the Bunyas to Border (B2B) project to implement the monitoring plan across three locations in the regional corridor. The work will be supported by a BirdLife Australia Community grant and funding under the B2B project (see Bunyas to Border item on page 6).

Given availability of nesting hollows is a limiting factor in survival of the Glossy Black species, there have been, and continue to be, several trials of Glossy use of various types of nest boxes in Queensland and New South Wales. The only recorded use of nest boxes by Glossies is on Kangaroo Island. Our upcoming project will be looking at different designs including the 'cockatube' (developed for West Australia's black Cockatoos) and carved wooden hollows.

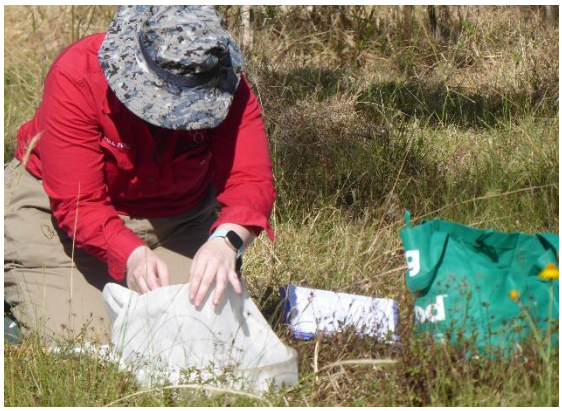
Threatened Carnabys Cockatoo has best breeding season on record
Artificial nest trial for Cape York Palm Cockatoo

Cockatube (left) photo Landcare SJ and carven wooden hollow (right) photo Mike Barth.

Insect diversity in grasslands

It was of great interest to watch UQ PhD researcher, Rhiannon Bird, carry out her investigation of insect diversity in a grassland community on our property. Rhiannon's research will compare insect diversity in grasslands in native and agricultural landscapes. Insects are crucial to the functioning of ecosystems (decomposition, nutrient recycling, pollination and seed and spore dispersal), directly related to soil health and a food source for many other fauna species.[2]

Rhiannon's study method involves sweep netting over six 1m x 1m quadrats, 50m apart, on each of 12 properties. In addition to the number of netted species per plot, Rhiannon also records categories of insect such as, for example, predator vs non predator, winged vs non-winged.



Rhiannon Bird, UQ PhD researcher, at work on her insects in grassland surveys.

It was exciting to learn that the six plots on our property, yielded 54 species including leaf hoppers, Hemiptera, crickets, beetles, mantis, grasshopper, moths, ants, lacewings, peacock spider and so on.

Of further interest is that Rhiannon's research is undertaken on properties that are part of the Birds on Farms project. Her research in conjunction with the bird survey records will provide some initial correlational data which may suggest directions for further research into bird-insect relationships.

Upcoming events …

- **LUCI Spring Walk Saturday 15th November, 8:30am-11:30am** at **Ravensbourne National Park** with walk leader Martin Bennett. There are several walks, easy walking and not too long, through a mix of wet sclerophyll and rainforest ecosystems with big old gums, Mountain turpentines, Palm trees, tree ferns and more. Meet and park at Blackbean day-use area, National Park Road, at 8:30am for a 9:00am start. Wear suitable walking clothing and shoes and bring water bottle. BYO morning tea for post-walk catch up. Register your place by emailing LUCI.

- It's that time again, **LUCI's AGM/GM and Christmas Party, Sunday 7th December, 10:30am start, Flagstone Creek State School, 56 Flagstone School Road, Flagstone Creek.** Meetings are kept to one hour followed by a guest speaker then our usual delicious Christmas lunch. Guest speaker UQ's Felicity Charles will talk about her recently completed PhD research program on "*How fire history influences food resources for the notoriously picky Glossy black-cockatoo*". All are welcome to come and celebrate a busy year of achievements and have a say in planning for the new year. Put the date in your calendar and it's essential that you RSVP at LUCI info for catering purposes.

[2] https://invertebratesaustralia.org/

Friends of Dwyers Scrub project

Our little volunteer weeding group for Dwyers Scrub CP has been working for 10 years now to contain canopy killer vines, Cats Claw creeper and Madeira, in the semi-evergreen dry vine forest (SEVT) areas of the park. Last month, we acquitted funds from a three-year grant from the Queensland Government's Community Sustainability Action Grant 2022 program that provided much needed materials and equipment and expert assistance in weed mapping in control of lantana around the perimeter of the SEVT. We thank the department for their support of our weed control work in the park, which is a project without an end date, requiring many more willing volunteers and constant vigilance to just maintain our gains in controlling the canopy killer invasion.

We welcome volunteers to boost our number for just a half day a month. If you would like to know more or join our Friends of Dwyers Scrub working group contact LUCI.

The Friends of Dwyers Scrub weeding group.

Collared delma Project by Justine Rice (Project Officer)

We are on the home run with the *C. delma* project scheduled for completion by end of November. Funded by the Australian Government Saving Native Species Program, the project is a partnership between LUCI, Pullen Pullen Catchments Group Inc., and Kholo Creek Catchment Group. The project is managed by Penny Kidd (LUCI), myself and a project team involving representatives from the three community groups plus two ecologists, two university researchers and a DETSI officer.

The project involves *C. delma* surveys (by both an ecologist and a scent detection dog) on 32 properties, 24 habitat condition assessments, weed control work undertaken by contractors, university research investigating artificial habitat use and *C. delma* genetics, community open days, conference presentations and preparation of a C. delma handbook.

Australia's smallest legless lizard, the C delma lives in leaf litter.

To date, only three of the Vulnerable *C. delma* sightings have been recorded in the project although the scent detection dog made strong positive indications of a target scent at several sites across properties.

Mervyn Mason, ecologist, and Dino Greenlees lifting landscaping log where a C delma had been found.

In the closing stages, there are some follow up weeding works still happening for Brisbane and Lockyer properties, final ecological surveys to be completed and the university research wrapping up with student reports forthcoming. Already, outcomes from the project are becoming clear with a better understanding of this cryptic species' habitat requirements and additional options for conservation action.

Bunyas to Border (B2B) – regional corridor project

The B2B project saw major gains in regional efforts to expand habitat linkages in a wildlife corridor from the Bunya Mountains to the Border ranges. The B2B project, which LUCI manages, is funded through a partnership between the Great Eastern Ranges and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) as part of a broader effort to create Koala Climate Corridors to support wildlife adaptation and build resilience. In its first two years, B2B has benefitted from the passion, knowledge and skills of two coordinators, Justine Rice and Maree Clancy.

Since 2023, over 500 participants have planted more than 5,800 native trees and shrubs on 30 properties including two school plantings. B2B also focuses on assisting groups from across the region to collaborate on projects that can improve knowledge of eight target species and their resource needs and improve their movement pathways. Collaboration with Crows Nest Environmental continues with monitoring Greater Glider nest boxes at Dingo Mountain with year 3 to see significant expansion in the work and the collaboration with the planned addition of more cameras thanks to Friends of the Forest (Somerset Region) and management and analysis of monitoring data thanks to Leaftail Environmental and UniSQ.

Year 3 will welcome Mitchell Roberts on board as B2B Coordinator of on-ground fauna projects including a region-wide Glossy Black Cockatoo project. The Glossy is one of B2B's eight target species and Mitchell will be working with field ecologist and Glossy Black expert Mike Barth on a citizen science project to monitor nest sites across the region. More tree planting is planned for the new year involving at least two schools and will be coordinated by Dale Brouwer from B2B partner group High Country Koala Action Group.

Two hundred and ten native trees and shrubs planted at Amaroo Environmental Education Centre on 18 October 2025. Photo Maree Clancy.

In August, 29 landholders attended "From the Ground Up" Field Day, organised by Maree and held at a property in Thornton, Lockyer Valley. It was a morning packed with information on soils and soil processes, weed management techniques, using iNaturalist and a landholder's journey in bush regeneration. Thanks to Lockyer Valley Regional Council for their support of this event.

Ecologist Michael Tervo providing field day participants with an entertaining introduction to using iNaturalist.

A B2B partnership reference group has been formed involving, currently, representatives of six community groups. The goal is for B2B to be community-driven, with the reference group providing community input into B2B directions, oversight of activities and access to a broader network of supporters.

If you are interested in becoming involved in B2B or want to know more about the project, contact B2B Coordinator

Flora snippets by Martin Bennett

Amazing to find Piccabeen Palms, *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, in a dry area of the Lockyer Valley surviving in a refugia of springs and pools within a deep gully. I say 'find' like it was the first sighting of the palms, but no, the locals know of them, we are the first to record them. Piccabeens are known from the southern extremity of the valley under the Main Range NP in Thornton, where they have been ravaged by fires over the years, and also in the northern deep damp gullies of the Helidon Hills. Each example highlights the importance of refugias.

A stand of Piccabeen palms in a shady, deep gully in west Lockyer. Photo supplied.

Of further interest is that we recorded these palms in two regional Semi Evergreen Vine Thicket ecosystems, which they have not been recorded in previously. The obvious differences between the Piccabeen and the Alexandra Palm, *Archontophoenix alexandrae*, a native going wild in the SEQ area is the greener colour of the Piccabeen, and small ramentum (small string-like appendages) on the back of the leaves.

The underside of the Piccabeen leaf with ramentum (string-like appendages). Photo Martin Bennett.

The Piccabeens were only one of the highlights of the day, another being the 'find' of only the second record of *Diospyros pentamera*, Yellow persimmon, in the Lockyer Valley. Usually found in wetter habitats, it was a real shock to find this species in the Egypt area. The Lockyer Valley already has four members of this same family here although *Diospyros* might not be familiar to most people except for *Diospyros kaki*, the commercial Persimmon.

The leaves of Yellow persimmon showing paler underside (right). Photo Martin Bennett.

The Yellow persimmon is a tree to 30m tall, with dark green undulating leaves, which are paler on the underside. Small cream flowers are followed by 16mm red fruit.

At the recent Aroona Bioblitz event, I checked out my favourite tree, which is an ecosystem in itself, a *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, Creek she-oak, with all 3 Mistletoes on it.

Casuarina cunninghamiana, Creek she-oak with three different mistletoe species.

I first saw this foursome back in 2018, and it appears they are all still good partners. The she-oak supplies dry seeds for birds and small mammals and the Mistletoes valuable nectar and fruit for birds and insects.

One of the mistletoes is *Amyema cambagei*, Needle-Leaf mistletoe, which is a pendulous mistletoe with she-oak like leaves, red flowers, and juicy, sticky fruits. It is found on several Casuarina and Allocasuarina tree species and is a host for Satin Azure butterfly (*Pseudodipsas argentata*).

Also present was the *Viscum articulatum*, Leafless jointed mistletoe, a pendulous mistletoe, with articulated leafless stems. It has tiny cream flowers and small juicy, sticky fruits. This mistletoe is found on other mistletoes.

Another mistletoe was the *Notothixos subaureus*, Golden Mistletoe, is a rounded mistletoe with dark green leaves and juicy, sticky fruits. The underside of the leaves and the stems are covered in golden hairs. , It also grows on other mistletoes.

Amyema cambagei, Needle-leaf mistletoe, found in New South Wales and Queensland in sclerophyll forest and woodland on several species of Casuarinaceae.

Viscum articulatum, Leafless jointed mistletoe is hemiparsitic growing on other mistletoes.

Notothixos subaureus, golden mistle toe, is hemiparasitic growing on other mistletoes.

… and a fauna snippet

Recently, I had the opportunity to accompany Paul Revie of Wildlife Queensland who was undertaking a drone survey of Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby

(BTRW) in the Fordsdale area. The BTRW is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC and in Queensland and local Fordsdale landholders have reported sightings of the *Petrogale penicillata* in the area. It was very exciting when the drone picked up, in very short time, footage of a couple of BTRW browsing on shrubs on an escarpment.

With populations declining, Paul's surveys are part of a larger project to establish the presence of the BTRW in several areas considered remaining strongholds for the species. The BTRW is one of the Bunyas to Border project's eight target species and Paul has undertaken a spatial analysis of likely BTRW habitat areas across the B2B corridor, as a basis for conservation action.

… and a word of advice…

Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) such as brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difenacoum, and flocoumafen, are potent rat poisons that cause internal bleeding in poisoned rodents and can be effective with a single feeding. However, SGARs pose a significant risk to non-target animals, particularly birds of prey and other wildlife, due to secondary poisoning from eating the poisoned rats.

First-generation rodenticides, also known as first-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (FGARs), are a class of rodenticides that require multiple feedings to achieve a lethal dose in rodents. They work by interfering with the blood clotting process, leading to internal bleeding and death. Common examples include warfarin, diphacinone, and chlorophacinone.

Criticism over rodenticide review delays

Important numbers:

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

Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld Inc 0488 228134

Interesting links to follow up…

This sad tale is an example of how quickly a species can transition from healthy population to population crash to extinction. What is beyond sad, but unacceptable, is that this extinction is Australia's "thirty-ninth mammal species lost since colonization, more than any other country on Earth." https://news.mongabay.com/2025/10/in-memory-of-the-christmas-island-shrew/

When is it an offence to affect the breeding grounds of a listed species and whose expertise should be relied upon when deciding on significance of impacts? Rainbow bee-eaters prevented from nesting

Can we expect some progress by end of year on reforms emanating from the review and recommendations, five years ago, of Australia's *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act*? It would seem so, according to the new federal Minister for Environment, Murray Watt Companies could have profits from breaking environment laws stripped under Australian reforms

Reads like a state government with a plan! https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/goodliving/posts/2025/09/restoring-biodiversity

With about 40% of ice-free land, globally, used for agriculture, the viability and survival of native biodiversity is, in large part, dependent on farmers' value hierarchies and their notions of what it means to be a 'good' farmer. Most NZ dairy farmers put profitability first but some are planting native trees anyway

Brown Quails, *Synoicus ypsilophorus*, foraging for seeds, green shoots and insects.

What's on show locally …

Clouds of Caper White butterflies, *Belenois aurota*, are around now and seem very attracted to this *Melaleuca stypheliodes*, Prickly leaved paperbark, which is an MLES (Matter of Local Environmental Significance) species. It grows to 20m tall, often along creeks and damp areas, although local records show it on mountain tops in large dense groups.

Droves of *Jacksonia scoparia*, Dogwood or Winged Broom-pea, were flowering recently across the Uplands landscape. Found in the wild only in Australia, it can be propagated from seed and can be a garden feature.

A recently flowering *Dendrobium speciosum*, King Orchid, seen high up on a tree which is their usual location.

REMINDER…

Don't forget to renew your LUCI membership fee, which is due 1st November or consider becoming a member. Only $10 per person per year, join like-minded others and enjoy membership benefits such as guided flora walks, workshops, access to grant programs to support land management, loan of fauna monitoring equipment, newsletters, and more. Membership fee can be paid online but please also email with contact details to LUCI

Brown Honeyeater Lichmera indistincta

Stay connected, it's healthy!

If you would like to share your stories and photos through the LUCI newsletter, we'd love to receive them at LUCI.
Please let us know if you do not want to be included on the email list.
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