



Streamlines

Newsletter of the Pullen Pullen Catchments Group Inc.

February 2021

Welcome to the first issue of Streamlines for 2021. We have a very varied collection of articles beginning with a description by Karen Roberts, self-described Butterfly enthusiast since October 2020 and for evermore, on her family's involvement in the Big Butterfly Count. Karen also happens to be a mountain-biking enthusiast so she is in a good position to comment on the Draft Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy in our second article.

John Ness discusses the demands made by humans on global biomass over millennia and the influence of 2020 – not just because of COVID-19! Read more on page 8!

Our Wildlife carer, Irene Darlington, answers the question that many of us have faced 'What do I do with a baby bird found on the ground?' Irene very smartly disposes of some widely held misconceptions about the behaviour of baby birds and our handling of them and describes the best things to do.

Articles by members on what they have done to restore habitat on their own land are always popular. If you would like to share your story – either written by yourself or in conjunction with me – I would love to hear from you at the email address below. Residents revegetating their properties are reminded that plants are available free of charge to PPCG members from the Moggill Creek Catchment Group's Nursery. For more information, please contact Brian Hacker on 3374 1468 or jbhacker@powerup.com.au.

All members are welcome to submit articles to Streamlines via helian@pretirementresorts.com.au. The deadline for the next issue is 15th May 2021.

Helen Ogle
Editor

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Pullen Pullen Catchments Group

A Landcare Group

Meetings

Meetings are held at 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre, 250 Grandview Road, Pullenvale.

Website

www.pullenpullencatchments.org.au

Working Bees

Anstead Bushland Reserve – 1st Sunday of the month, 8.30 - 11 am.
Pullenvale Forest Park – 2nd Sunday of the month, 8.30 – 11 am

Tools, gloves, etc are provided at Working Bees. Just wear sturdy boots, tough clothes and bring water and a hat!

Committee Members 2021

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Membership Options

Membership fees are:

- Annual Membership – \$10 per person payable on March 1 each year
- Life Membership – \$100 per person

We are delighted to accept donations.

- a) Send a cheque payable to PPCG to PO Box 1390, Kenmore, 4069 or
- b) Transfer the funds electronically to BSB 064 152, Account No.10107038 Ref: your name.



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

“The PPCG acknowledges the support of the Lord Mayor’s Community Sustainability and Environmental Grants Programs for a grant to help with administrative, bushcare and educational costs”

NEWS

Committee News The first management committee meeting for the year was held on February 3rd and we were very happy to welcome Brendan McIntyre to the meeting as our Acting Creek Catchment Officer.

Anstead Bushland Reserve is still without a Bushcare Coordinator. John Ness is temporarily filling the position to enable work to continue at this site. Information about the position appears below. For more information or to express your interest in this position, please contact PPCG at contactus@pullenpullencatchments.org.au. Working bees at Anstead Bushland Reserve currently take place on the first Sunday of the month from 8.30 to 11am.



Position Vacant

Bushcare Coordinator

Anstead Bushland Reserve

PPCG is seeking someone to take over this well-established and thriving Bushcare Group

Co-ordinating the group requires planning activities and liaising with Brisbane City Council on the ongoing management of the Reserve, ensuring that tools, plants and other materials are ready to use on each working bee, keeping the workers happy (eg with morning tea!) and above all a desire to work alongside other lovers of the land in a common cause – making and keeping our environment a rich and diverse legacy for the future.

Pullenvale Forest Park In Lynn's absence, Brendan reported that an area infested with castor oil plant has been cleared in preparation for a community activity including planting in the cleared area to be held on April 11th or 18th. Working bees take place on the second Sunday of the month from 8.30 – 11 am.

Airlie Road Park Some weeding and replanting has been completed following recent rain along with mowing in the open areas. It was suggested that QUT students in the SCIP (Student Catchment Immersion Project) program could re-clear areas cleared by contractors some years ago.

Moggill State School Nursery Project During the school holidays, Karen Roberts and Narelle Wren coordinated the installation by PPCG volunteers of an irrigation system for the shade house.



PPCG volunteers installing irrigation for Moggill State School's shade house

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The Happy Wanderer

Karen Roberts

For me the PPCG 2020 AGM was the best AGM ever! I'll leave it to the reader to decide whether that is mostly because our brilliant president, John, kept formalities brief and on-time, or whether it was the excitement that erupted from Jutta Goodwin's butterfly talk. Jutta's introduction to Brisbane's Big Butterfly Count (view the brochure here <http://brisbanecatchments.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Popular-Butterfly-Count-Sheet-2020-09-30-2-final.pdf>) has inspired an exciting new world of colour, observation and fun for our family and friends. Who would have thought that this is what they meant by 'the butterfly effect'?



L to R: Jutta Goodwin inspiring the PPCG AGM audience, Queensland Museum butterfly display, Stefan Myburgh exploring Anstead Bushland Reserve.

Whether mountain biking or walking in the local reserves, stepping into our backyard or visiting the Butterfly Collection at the Queensland Museum, our 2020/2021 summer has been filled with some wonderful butterfly adventures and we've been noticing them everywhere.



Butterfly identification (chase, sometimes catch (and always release after identifying)) excitement

We've taken a number of families butterfly spotting at the Anstead Bushland Reserve and Pullenvale Forest Park, where (as I watch the hundreds of butterflies feed and lay eggs on the Lantana, Singapore Daisy and Purple Tops), my views on 'total weed eradication bushcare' have been somewhat broadened. In one hour of observation we identified 20 species in the weed infestation between the equipment containers and the main carpark at Anstead Reserve (along the western side of Hawkesbury Road). When I say "we" I mean my trusty butterfly field guide and enthusiastic 6yo and 8yo field hands.

We have also been fortunate enough to attend a school holiday butterfly walk at Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network (CWCN), which has further inspired us (and informed us where to get our own nets). We learnt how caterpillars can be vulnerable to parasitisation from wasps just after they stop eating and before their hard protective chrysalis forms. So, we devised an intervention (thank you mesh washing bag) and got to observe the lifecycle of a common crow butterfly on our back veranda. So exciting!



Our washing bag over the Narrow Leaved Fig, temporarily protecting our common crow caterpillar as it progresses from caterpillar, through chrysalis to butterfly

All this butterfly action has prompted numerous trips to the Paten Park nursery, and lots of backyard butterfly food plantings. Let's hope our 'wet season' continues for the next 5 years at least, so we can continue observing the joyous 'butterfly effect' for years to come.



Top (from left): Monarch, Blue Tiger, Blue Triangle, Pale Triangle.
 Bottom (from left): Small Green Banded Blue, Plumbago Blue, Tailed Emperor, Large Grass Yellow.
 Photos Karen Roberts, Carla Myburgh, Dan Clark.

Thanks Santa Claus and my Boys for the fantastic field guides and nets, thanks CWCN for the school holiday butterfly adventure with Cliff Meyer, thanks friends (for forgiving my un-finished sentences and distraction when a butterfly flies past), thanks to PPCG volunteers and finally thanks for a little rain for helping to create such a great environment to attract and observe the butterflies! Stop and say G'day and join in the fun when next you see us running (randomly, like a butterfly) with our nets in the local reserves.

Thanks to Carla and Stefan Myburgh, Dan Clark and Daniel Roberts for sharing the fun and photos.

Clean-Up Australia Day CWCN is holding a clean-up day on Sunday 7th March, from 8:30 to 11:00 am. Meet in the park near the Caltex Service Station at the corner of Marshall Lane and Moggill Road, Kenmore. To register for the event, go to:
<https://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/fundraisers/tonypressland/cwc-marshall-ln-and-moggill-rd-kenmore>

Draft Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy – perspectives of a catchment group and mountain biking member

Karen Roberts

When it comes to recreation if I'm not butterfly watching (refer *The Happy Wanderer* article in this issue), learning about our local reserves and making nature-art (refer May 2020 Streamlines article titled *Coronavirus 2020: A Bushland Parental Release and Educational Opportunity*) I'm often mountain biking through our bushland parks and reserves.

This article is a little different to my previous two. It's about how, as an environmental scientist with a love of the outdoors and a strong appreciation of the human condition (and the future of two small humans to consider in my daily actions), life has directed me to this current opportunity to help transfer knowledge on the critical ecosystem services and significance that our natural bushland areas provide and to highlight the value and importance that these areas also have to the mountain biking community.

As an active member of our PPCG catchment group, and a member of the Brisbane Off Road Riders Alliance (BORRA) Conservation Committee, I am extremely disappointed by the damage I see being caused by some of the unauthorised trail building and poorly designed mountain bike trails. It's more than rogue mountain bikers, though. I am also saddened by the number of people I see (daily) letting their dogs roam free off leash in our conservation reserves and terrorising our terrestrial and avian fauna, for example.

Sadly there will always be a recalcitrant and uncaring minority who will continue to break the rules and have a greater environmental impact than those who abide. Conversely, there will also be a positive movement towards managing impacts to achieve sustainable environmental outcomes and restoring out natural areas. That's where today's exciting opportunity exists – the Brisbane City Council Draft Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy (download it here <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/things-to-see-and-do/outdoor-activities/riding-in-brisbane/brisbane-off-road-cycling-strategy>).

This is exciting because there is opportunity to contribute to the development of a considered, connected and sustainable off-road trail network which protects the waterways and important ecological areas, balances (and addresses) the recreational needs and desires of all trail users (nature watchers, dog walkers, joggers, horse riders, mountain bike riders etc) and minimises the future risks of poorly designed and unauthorised trail creation. The opportunity also exists for greater regulation around the management of these areas.

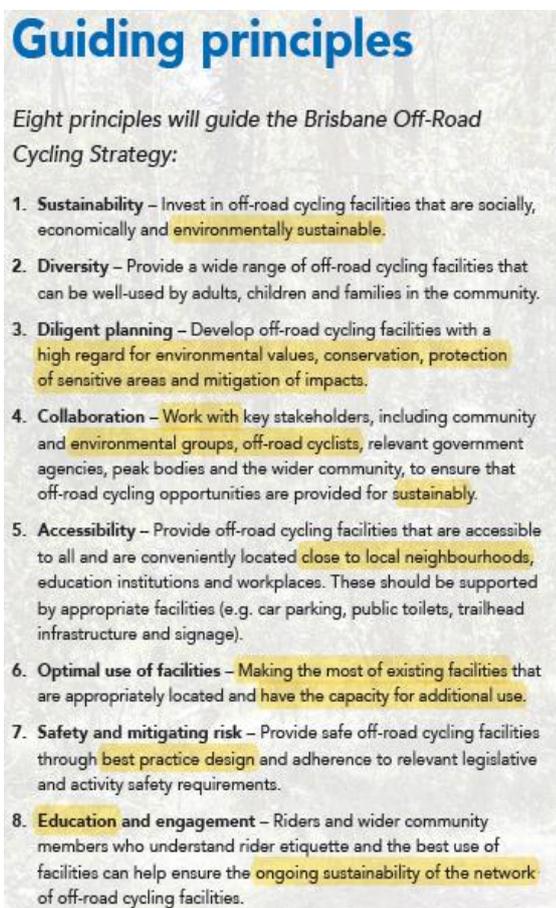
Catchment groups and mountain bike groups working together with Brisbane City Council to minimise (and appropriately manage) our footprints on these areas? Now that's exciting!

For this to work, I believe we need to understand each other's desires and needs and have our say constructively so that BCC is encouraged to listen and work with us. The opportunities I see include:

- Catchment groups educating off-road cyclists (and BCC) on the important ecological areas to be protected
- Mountain bikers educating catchment groups (and BCC) on what is important about riding in natural areas (e.g. the research is irrefutable on the psychological benefits of immersing yourself in nature, whether that's trail walking, dog walking, horse riding, bird watching, trail running, butterfly observing etc).
- reducing the motivation for unauthorised trail creation and supporting properly constructed trails (which are safe and aren't prone to ongoing erosion etc).
- responding to the increase in demand by all recreation users in a considered and managed way (the Moggill Conservation Park, just like Gap Creek and Anstead Reserve, Daisy Hill and Toohey Forest, saw an explosion in the number of walkers/dog walkers/runners/riders/horse riders in 2020, all of whom were reliant upon this close to home natural area 'escape').

I've seen a great deal of social media encouraging individuals and groups to sign a petition to extinguish the Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy, or propose a wholesale ban of mountain biking in natural areas. This will not work. It will not appropriately protect and manage our natural assets whilst encouraging opportunities for people to learn about, experience and appreciate these areas; instead, it will drive trail building underground and it will likely be done by untrained people who may not be motivated by sustainability considerations. More damage is likely to be done by this further unauthorised trail building, and the cause will be lost. We have seen the evidence for this emerge over the last several years at Gap Creek, a time during which trail management was prohibited: existing trails are suffering and unauthorised trails are being constructed without consent of the land managers or thorough consideration of ecological and environmental issues. This is not the outcome we want.

BORRA was formed to work with BCC, as the responsible land manager that's recognised the increase in demand and need for a master planned approach to future trail networks. The eight (8) guiding principles included in the Draft Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy, all of which BORRA fully endorse, are reproduced in this image below – noting of course that a strategy is not a development approval, and there are detailed assessment and design processes and procedures to be followed for any specific projects which the strategy may deem worthy of further investigation.



The public comment period for the Draft Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy ends on 28th February. I encourage you all to read it and provide your thoughts via BCC's website

<https://brisbane.qld.gov.au/things-to-see-and-do/outdoor-activities/riding-in-brisbane/brisbane-off-road-cycling-strategy#haveyoursay> or to me, or your catchment group secretary or your local councillor.

The good news is that I am planning on drawing on the knowledge of our local catchment group members, who've lived in and appreciated this area for years longer than my 20 years as a Bellbowrie resident, as such input will be critical to the informed decision making for which I'm advocating.

And if you're still reading, there's also a great podcast that's well worth a listen where Dr Ann Jones (Off Track ABC Radio reporter) interviews Dr Catherine Pickering of Griffith University on exactly the challenges we're facing today at Gap Creek and some of the other BCC forest reserves. Search "Ann Jones Off Track Loving your environment to death" or go here to download the podcast (<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/offtrack/do-we-love-our-environment-to-death3f/6555368>).

I hope this article has inspired at least some of you to have your say, constructively, so the management of our natural areas can further reap the benefits of your knowledge.

Healthy Land and Water Report Card came out on 5 November 2020. 'The 2020 results revealed that most western catchments remained poor or declined further while coastal catchments generally remained in moderate to very good condition.' More details on <https://hlw.org.au>.

Human Made Mass

John Ness

The biomass of the earth provides the food and the oxygen that all animals, including humans, need to survive. In recent years, the demands that humans have placed on this biomass have attracted considerable attention and various ways have been devised to try to quantify these demands and predict what disasters might follow if the demands are not reduced.

It is generally agreed that the first discernible effect of humans on the global biomass was around 3000 years ago when humans started clearing forests and building large structures. The rate of human demands on the biomass has increased greatly over the last few decades and 2020 represents a critical year not only because of the COVID19 pandemic. One effect of the pandemic has been that CO₂ emissions actually fell by around 6.5% compared to 2019. This is a most unusual event in view of the relentless increase in CO₂ emissions over the past fifty years or more. Not surprisingly, the major reduction in 2020 was in aviation where emissions fell by almost 50%.

The other key feature of 2020 is that it is the year in which the total mass of all things made by humans (roads, buildings, infrastructure, cars, ships, etc) and in use exceeded the total biomass of the earth on a dry weight basis. The vast majority of the biomass (>90%) is in plants and it has been estimated that when humans started farming and multiplying the biomass was about 2000 GT. (1 GT is a billion tonnes which can be visualised as a 1m deep sheet of water covering a square area of roughly 30 by 30km or about that of greater Brisbane).

By 2020, humans had effectively halved this biomass to around 1100 GT and had managed to accumulate the same mass in human made structures basically by digging up and rearranging the materials on or close to the earth's surface. At around 7.5 billion people, humans themselves make up a relatively low biomass of around 0.5 GT although this is a significant fraction, especially for a single species, of the overall animal and insect estimated mass of 4 GT. Unfortunately, this 4 GT of animal biomass is only about half that of the mass of man-made plastics which is also increasing every year.

Humans are now adding about 30 GT per annum of human-made mass to the surface of the earth although this is not adding more mass to the earth, of course, but rearranging what is already there to suit human activities. Curiously enough, this is about the same amount of CO₂ at around 35 GT that humans add to the atmosphere every year. The CO₂ is made by burning the buried carbon from biomass of millions of years past with the oxygen generated as a by-product of that and more recent biomass growth. This rate of production means that each person on earth is, on average, producing somewhat more than their bodyweight in anthropogenic mass each week along with a bit more than that in gaseous (CO₂) mass. As a consequence of this overwhelming effect on the surface, atmosphere and oceans of the earth the epoch since 1950 is now being referred to as the Anthropogene.

In recent decades there has been an uneasy truce with plant life in that the rate of destruction is now roughly equivalent to the rate of human assisted regeneration of forests and trees although swapping 100 km² of planted pine trees for a 100 km² of Amazon rainforest is a Faustian bargain at best.

Since plants are about 50% water by weight, the wet weight of biomass is about double that of the dry weight and it is estimated that human made mass will exceed the wet weight of biomass as soon as 2030. If current trends continue, humans will have around 3000 GT of man-made mass by 2040 or around three times that of the projected dry biomass at that time.

Ref: Nature Article 17 Dec 2020: "Global Human made mass exceeds all living biomass."

What do I do with a Baby Bird?

Irene Darlington

There have been lots of phone calls and baby birds arriving at my door in the last 5 weeks. These are little figbirds. It's about the only baby bird being found on the ground during this time. The babies are a dull brownish-grey colour with a yellowy, flecked chest. Sometimes the babies will open their beaks, gaping for food, whilst shaking their heads with what appears to be a tremor.

Often baby birds of all kinds, not just figbirds, will leave their nests as they are learning to fly. Some will land on a branch and hang on, staying up in the tree. Others will flutter down to the ground, unable to flutter back up the tree for protection.

For as long as I have been a foster carer (38 years) I have been telling people that if the baby bird has a short little tail and is covered in opened feathers, not quills, it is safe to pick the baby bird up and place it on a branch.

People ask me if they need a towel to do this as there is a belief that 'if you touch a baby bird, the parent birds will reject it'. That is an old wives tale! Totally untrue! Birds do not work on 'smell' and seeing someone handling their baby only makes parent birds anxious and more intent on having their babies returned to them.



Young figbird

So the solution is to check that the baby bird is not injured or dehydrated. If the wings are sitting at a parallel level, the baby bird can stand or use its legs, no blood or ruffled feathers indicating injury are visible, the head is not hanging and the baby bird appears nice and awake and even sometimes hungry, it should be fine to place up into a tree

The most common mistake people make is believing the baby bird must be returned to the exact tree, or even nest, it came from. That is not true. Baby birds leave the nest before they can fly competently. As they hatch and leave the nest when old enough, they flutter down from the nest in different directions, often landing in different gardens or trees. It is pointless to return them to their original nest or to an artificial nest. They will be out of each 'nest' very quickly.

So picking up the baby and placing it on a branch is the best move. I normally ask people to stay a safe distance away, ten meters or so, and check that the baby bird is not being attacked before its parents come to it and return with food for their baby. Once you can see the baby being fed by adult birds similar in colour and appearance, then it should be fine.

If this scenario is occurring in your garden, check each morning before you let your pets out that the baby bird is not on the ground. If it is, you will need to pick up the baby and place it on a branch again. And keep doing so until it can fly up to the tree by itself. Your overzealous cat or dog can harm a baby bird by wanting to 'play' with it.

If the baby bird is a nocturnal bird (eg Tawny Frogmouth, Owl) then take the baby bird inside in a cardboard box with an old shirt or tracksuit pants, in the bottom. Keep the nocturnal baby safely indoors away from cats/dogs/children, and repeat the procedures listed above after dark. Placing the baby nocturnal bird up into a tree during the daytime will attract daytime birds to attack it. Furthermore, nocturnal parent birds will not come to the assistance of their baby or feed it during the daytime.

Keep in mind that certain baby birds, such as scrub turkey chicks, are independent from hatching. Other baby birds such as ducklings, curlews, plovers, are picking up their own food within an hour of hatching, even though still under protection of the parent birds.

Finally, if the baby bird does not look good and healthy, contact your wildlife carer. The reason a wildlife carer is recommended instead of a vet, is because during spring and summer vet surgeries are flooded with baby birds brought in by well-meaning people who find them on the ground. A wildlife carer can rehydrate, feed and try to reunite the baby as soon as possible. If an injury is detected, such as a broken leg, or maybe a more complicated health issue for figbirds, carers take the baby to their vet for treatment or a humane end.

So next time you find a baby bird on the ground, keep this article in mind and follow the directions.

NEWS (continued)

PPCG Website and Facebook page Thanks to Emma the PPCG Facebook page is now up and running. This is a very exciting time for PPCG as we will hopefully be able to communicate with a much wider audience and get more local information out to you without filling up your inboxes. Emma and Nola are coordinating the handover of responsibility for the website. 'Membership' and 'Birds' modules are ready to upload but have been delayed by our technical adviser's computer problems.

Wildlife Irene reported that she is seeing many possums with badly burnt paws from walking on hot roofs and wires. She is currently preparing a protocol to help local vets decide when an animal is so badly injured that it should be euthanised rather than sent to a carer.

Irene is receiving great support from the community in many aspects of her work from preparing food and cleaning cages to accessing social media and computer support. **On the subject of computers, Irene is badly in need of a replacement for her elderly computer. If anyone can help, please contact Irene directly on 0409 026 883.**

Irene's monthly bill for fruit and nutrient supplements for birds is around \$1200! She is always very happy to receive donations to help cover her costs.

See page 9 for Irene's article on what to do if you find a baby bird on the ground

Education Ron reported that two workshops are planned, one involving entomologist Justin Cappadonna and the other Jessie Cappadonna, a bird ecologist.

Powerful owl workshops Five workshops are planned between 28 Feb and 28 March 2021. They will provide a review of the Powerful Owl project and outline what the project hopes to achieve in the coming years. They will also provide an introduction to nocturnal birds, and some of the mammals. For details, see <https://birdlife.org.au/projects/urban-birds/powerful-owl-project-pow>. Locally, Dr Robert Clemens from Birdlife Australia will be running a free workshop on Powerful Owls on Saturday 29 February. The workshop will begin at 12.30pm at the Hut (THECA) followed by a night walk around the Hut. To book, and for further details please go to <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/birdlife-australia-owl-workshop-training-tickets-94970373945>.

Land for Wildlife Catch-ups for current members and anyone interested in joining. Meet other like-minded people to discuss all things Land for Wildlife. These informal sessions will be tailored to capture what has been happening regarding flora and fauna in the area over the past month & upcoming. Bring samples along for identification and show and tell. Catch-ups will take place at the Pullenvale Hall, 302 Grandview Road, Pullenvale on the second Wednesday every month between 08:30 am-11 am. Stay as long as you like. The Curious Caravan will be on site should you need refreshments! Can't make it but want to know more, contact Tony from Brisbane City Council's Land for Wildlife program at tony.mlynarik@brisbane.qld.gov.au.
