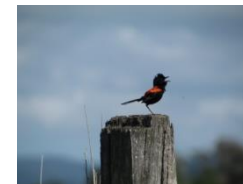




NEWSLETTER

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.

"Our Community Caring for Our Common"
March 2024 - Number 52



SAVE THE DATE

FOOCC Bird walk Sunday, 26th May,
6.30 am, followed by
Morning Tea and
AGM 10 am.

Tuesday Common Carers

Tuesdays 7 – 9 am. Meet in the
car park. New members welcome.

Walk and Weed

1st Saturday of the month. 7-9am
To register call 0429911555

Bushcare and Beer

3rd Sunday of the month, 2.00pm
Weeding resumes 17th March.
Afterwards a quencher at Helios
Brewery.

OCCA General Meeting

23rd April
Guest Speaker: Simon Cole
From Population Australia
5.30 for 6 pm at the Red Shed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hugh Possingham

Before the February General Meeting, over 30 of us enjoyed a pleasant walk out to Pelican Lagoon. We found 62 species including lots of Rainbow Bee-eater, Spangled Drongo, Tawny Grassbird and Red-backed Fairywren. Many people had excellent views of Chestnut-breasted Mannikin. We all learnt the call of the Striated Pardalote. The weather was overcast and the waterbirds were sparse – Jabiru swamp was almost devoid of waterbirds. There were many new faces on the bird walk.

At the General Meeting we resolved to get election commitments from all the major parties to complete the transfer of land from the state government to the local government so the bird sanctuary can progress.

We also committed to a small display and some activities at Peaks to Point on July 21st coordinated by Simon.

Cath showed us first draughts of a new logo featuring a Red-backed Fairywren over the map of the Common while Mary Lou reported that Tuesday Common Carers is stronger than ever with an average of 16 weeders every week! Matt noted that our bank balance was healthy, >\$7,000, and we had some more money to spend on our federal government grant before the end of the financial year to support volunteer work. Membership of FOOCC continues to grow – now 46.

BECOME INVOLVED

JOIN Friends of Oxley Creek Common.

JOIN one of the weeding groups to help maintain the natural bushland.

LIKE the **Facebook Page** of Friends of Oxley Creek Common to keep in touch.

CHECK bird sightings on **Oxley Creek Common Birds Facebook Page** and **eBird**.

VISIT the FOOCC website:
<https://friendsofoxleycreekcommon.org>

TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

Mary Lou Simpson

This hardy band of workers returned in the first week of February, to a massive regrowth of weeds. Most of the tracks we use have disappeared under the grass, and several of our plantings are totally obscured. Because the task is so immense, we are concentrating on areas where the weeds are seeding.

The grasses have returned in force. Remember the devastation of the 2021 flood, when the whole area looked like a moonscape. Green Panic, *Megathyrsus maximus*, has shown the most prolific regrowth, closely followed by Rhodes Grass, *Chloris gayana*, and Crow's Foot, *Eleusine indica*. There are two types of Panic, the smaller variety with a purple base and a larger variety, with blue extending up the stalks. This variety grows to about 1.5 metres and once established is very difficult to eradicate. There are large stands of South African Pigeon Grass, *Setaria sphacelata*, growing in the university plantings, which are becoming a troublesome source of weeds.

Happily, there are quite a few areas of native grass, and the quail can be heard in multiple places. Removal of the grass often reveals native regeneration, evidence that not only the weeds are growing.

Our first task this year is to retrieve our plantings from the inundation of weeds. Apart from a resurgence of Green Panic, invasive *Commelina benghalensis* is rampant at several sites. New plantings are totally obscured. After the initial challenge of finding last year's plantings, we hope to attack the creekbank between Stony Gully and Commelina Gully.



Commelina Gully with weeders obscured by the undergrowth.



After the Commelina had been removed.

Welcome back to the 17 people, who came ready for work. A special thanks to Anna Jack and other helpers, who worked away over the summer break and to the people who are keeping an eye on progress. (The cattle did damage one section of a planting, but they left fertilizer behind.) Tuesday Common Carers' challenge this year would be even greater without the dedication of these volunteers.

Join this amazing group of people to help make a difference at the Common.

DOGS OFF LEASH

It is pleasing to see that most dog owners keep their dogs on a leash at the Common. Perhaps the gentle reminders have helped.

Recent research has shown that birds are much more wary and liable to flee if dogs are unleashed. A study, conducted by the Victoria and Deakin Universities has confirmed that a bird can judge whether an approaching dog is leashed or not. If the dog is unleashed a birds' response is escape. However, if a dog is walking quietly close to their owner, this appears to be the equivalent of being leashed and the birds are less likely to need to flee.

Source: *Australian Birdlife*, Vol 12 No 4 Summer 2023 p12.

THURSDAY CREEK CARE

A very productive morning was spent on the creekbank, where *Commelina benghalensis* has become rampant. The area was hand-weeded and then the bags were dragged up the slope to Trevor Armstrong's vehicle.

Thanks also to Mick Richardson for taking 13 remaining bags of commelina to the dump. Tuesday Common Carers had already taken 2 carloads of bags to the bins. Trevor's load weighed 400kg. This weed is particularly difficult to eradicate, as it doesn't decompose in piles, like other weeds. Even when it looks like good soil, it sends up new plants.



BUTTERFLY SURVEYS



Blue Tiger, although not in the list has been seen at the Common. Photo: Kevin Fairley

Two butterfly surveys were conducted at the Common in September and November, last year.

The September survey noted 9 species: Cabbage White*; Chequered Swallowtail*; Common Grass Blue*; Lesser Wanderer*; Monarch*; Lemon Migrant; Meadow Argus; Small Grass Yellow; Two-spotted Line blue.

The November, in addition to the asterisked species above, Caper White; Common Crow;

Orchard Swallowtail; Striated Pearl White and the very rare Satin Azure were also found.

Acacias, Breynia, Cupaniopsis, the mistletoes and the grasses are hosts for butterflies at the Common. *Senna sophora* arrived at the Common after the last flood and recent plantings have included *Capparis arborea*; *Pipturus argenteus*; *Cryptocaria sp*; and *Dodonea triquetra*.



Wanderer caterpillar. Photo: Kevin Fairley

Cliff Meyer will conduct the next butterfly surveys, from 9am to 11am at:
Oxley Creek Common, on 16th March
Archerfield Wetlands, on 6th April.

For more information email:
info@oxleycreekcatchment.org.au

LIVING AT THE COMMON



Large Green Tree Frog



Tawny Frogmouth young, one looking suspicious the other bemused. Photo: Quentin Olckers.



Pallid Cuckoo Photo: Quentin Olckers



Red-browed Finch Photo: Quentin Olckers



One way for the ibis to dry their feet.



Glossy Ibis
Photo: Tanja Schueler

GROWING at the COMMON



Damp conditions have produced a profusion of fungi at the Common.



The white 5 petalled, windmill shaped flowers of *Tabernaemontana pandacaqui*, turn into banana shaped fruit, which will split to reveal poisonous red seeds. This small rainforest tree has relished the wet weather.



Breynia oblongifolia is fairly prevalent at the Common. However, it is rare to see it covered in fruit, the result of the inconspicuous green flower, which hangs on the stems.

Breynias are home to a variety of insects, such as this shiny beetle. Chewed leaves are a welcome reminder that the insect world is busy feeding.

SILKY OAKS

This well-known tree, *Grevillia robusta*, is endemic to an area between Grafton and Gympie, where it can be found in dry rainforests.

We are familiar with the timber, because our parents and grandparents' furniture was often silky oak or silky oak veneer. It is not a true oak but was named 'oak' because of its durability and because the ray cells run from the centre to the cambium, resembling the English oak. This gives the wood its defining horizontal streaks.

Less well known is that the tree is now planted all around the world. It was first introduced into Kenya, 100 years ago to shelter tea and coffee plants. Now it is grown among food. the lower branches are cut for fuel and **Wafodder**, and it is planted to mark boundaries. The continual pruning of the side branches, leaving enough stem to provide a ladder, turns the tree into a pole. Rowan Reid, who has worked with Kenyan farmers, was asked: 'You have Grevillia in Australia, too?'

Although older Silky Oaks can become rather straggly, their orange flowers in spring are always a delight. The Silky Oaks planted at the Common are still fairly young, but they held

the banks during the flood and continue to grow, despite being covered by glycine.

Source: *Heartwood* Rowan Reid p 92-95
Plants of Subtropical Eastern Australia, Andrew Benwell, p 313



This silky oak, now about 2 metres high, has a flush of new leaves.

SAVE THE DATE

National Tree Day at the Common

28th July OCCA community tree planting.
25th and 26th July corporate tree planting.

Peaks to Point

20th July – 4th August

Sunday, 21st July Family Fun Day

Clean-up Australia

3rd March 8-10am Granard Wetlands, 190 Marshall Rd, Rocklea. See the Oxley Creek Catchment Facebook Page to register.



Paul Francis captured this Pheasant Coucal delivering a grasshopper meal to its mate.



Traces of busy insects. Photo: Robyn Mulder

PLANTS HAVE BEEN KINDLY DONATED BY:

Warwick Willmott
Marie Hollingworth
Doreen and Ralph Schwartz

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President: Hugh Possingham
Secretary: Karen Gillow
Assistant Secretary: Zina Dinesen
Treasurer: Matthew Mendel
Newsletter Editor: Mary Lou Simpson
Media Secretary: Cath Tavatgis
Committee: Simon Murray, Lynn Whitfield.

Please send contributions, comments and
corrections to Mary Lou Simpson.
maryloulit@hotmail.com

Photo credits: Quinton Olckers, Tanja
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Paul Francis. All other photos are by the
editor.

**Friends of Oxley Creek Common
Inc.**

**is dedicated to preserving this
natural habitat for wildlife.**

Become a friend of The Common

Pay your membership directly into our BOQ
account BSB 124017 – Ac 20161909
and send the appropriate details to:
friendsofoxleycreekcommon@gmail.com

or

Return a cheque with this form or the
appropriate details

PO Box 319, SHERWOOD, Qld 4075

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Membership:	1 year	5 years	
Single	\$15	\$60	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concession:	\$12	\$48	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family:	\$20	\$80	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group:	\$30	\$120	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate:	\$80	\$320	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Membership	\$400	Concession \$320	
Donation:	\$....		