



NEWSLETTER

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.

"Our Community Caring for Our Common"

August 2020 - Number 38



SAVE THE DATE

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Birdwalk

led by Hugh Possingham
Sunday, 1st November, 6.30 am
Followed by morning tea and a
General Meeting 10 am

OCCA Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 17th November, 6–8 pm
Corinda Bowls Club,
Hall St, Corinda

Guest Speaker: Rebecca Worrall,
speaking on the environmental
management of the Greenbank
Training precinct.

TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

gather every Tuesday in the car park
to begin at 7 am.
New members welcome.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hugh Possingham

Bird News

We had an informal bird walk before the August General Meeting on 9th August. The weather was cool, but almost perfect for birding. While we saw nothing out of the ordinary amongst the 72 species recorded, we enjoyed good views of finches, scarlet honeyeaters, white-throated gerygone and black kite.

While the walks are marketed as bird-*watching*, there is a lot of bird-*listening*. A Rufous Fantail was heard repeatedly and distinctly from the canoe pontoon – a few of these birds seem to have “moved in” over the past two years and are now regular residents. (They are discernible from their call but are hard to see in the dense mangroves). We all learnt and enjoyed the distinctive calls of the Bar-shouldered Dove, Scarlet Honeyeater and Double-barred Finch.

Pelican Lagoon and Jabiru Swamp are still a disappointment. Carp causes high turbidity in

BECOME INVOLVED IN OXLEY CREEK COMMON

JOIN Friends of Oxley Creek Common.

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 Friends of Oxley Creek Common website:
<https://friendsofoxleycreekcommon.org>

CHECK you have paid your membership fees. See the form below.

SIGN your friends up to receive the newsletter.

the Lagoon and Jabiru Swamp is choked with water hyacinth, *Eichhornia crassipes* (see below). Hence the abundance and diversity of waterbirds was low. On the bright side, the lagoon beneath the high ground, which is just visible from the mound near the Red Shed, has remained surprisingly full of both water and birds. So, those with good binoculars,

don't forget to patiently scan this nameless lagoon. Perhaps it could be Glossy Ibis Lagoon, or Pied Stilt Lagoon.

According to eBird data, 164 species have been recorded at Oxley Creek Common this year, and 190 since January 1st 2019 – see <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L967148?yr=all&m=&rank=lrec>. Only three new species have been added to the Oxley Creek Common eBird list this year – all by Gus Daly in January: King Quail, White-cheeked Honeyeater and White-naped Honeyeater. Let's hope Spring brings some more excitement.

Birds at The Common

3900+ ebird checklists for The Common

221 species recorded on ebird

164 species seen so far this year

72 species identified on the August bird-walk

3 new species seen this year so far



This family of Blue-faced Honeyeaters are concerned about something other than the Cockspur thorns. The greenish faced bird is the immature.

Photo: Kevin Fairley

Water hyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes*

Water hyacinth is a noxious aquatic weed deliberately introduced to Australia - <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/weeds/water-hyacinth>. It is choking Jabiru Swamp. Few birds like it, possibly with the exception of the Glossy Ibis and Purple Swamphen. (In the dryer months it rots and emits a terrible smell.) We have asked the relevant authorities to investigate its eradication at the site and they say they will. It would be a terrible shame if it spread to other water bodies on Oxley Creek Common. It is also choking the ponds on market land adjacent to the northern boundary of The Common. All the water bodies on The Common need more care and attention, and we are hopeful that the Oxley Creek Transformation process will provide the resources to improve their diversity, size and habitat quality.

Top three most prevalent birds sighted on the bird-walk:

44 Brown Honeyeaters

30 Welcome Swallows

20 Red-backed Fairywrens

View the full list at:

<https://ebird.org/checklistS72233828>

TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

July marked the 5th birthday of Tuesday Common Carers. There are significant achievements since our humble beginnings. Our starting point was the Glycine smothering the trees just beyond the Red Shed, which was so dense, when the roots were exposed, it could be rolled into massive 'logs'. It is now possible to walk close to the creek from the fence to Stoney Gully. Commelina Gully has continued to be an on-going project, but the area south of the gully has now been cleared of weeds and is in the process of being planted. We are currently working between Jagera Corner and Fern Gully.

Our goal is to remove invasive weeds that are strangling native vegetation and to create a dense natural habitat. Frequently, once the most invasive weeds have been removed, there is very little habitat left. Consequently, we work in small areas, aiming to restore a canopy and establish under-plantings that provide small bird habitat. Our species choice is governed by the Greening Australia plant list for the area.

There are significant challenges at this site. There are years of seeds stored under Asparagus Ferns, Glycine and Rivina. Last Summer, welcome rain revitalised the pasture grasses, which provided bird seed, but swamped new plantings. It is our policy to

remove grass where it is competing for moisture with new plants and to use it as mulch. Walkers and vehicles bring in seeds and Khaki weed was prevalent along the track after the Summer rain.

Many people help. Thursday Creek Care work at The Common every six weeks; OCCA business unit come monthly; before COVID, OCCA regularly had corporate volunteer days; Belong volunteers have worked at different sites for 3 months; plants have been donated by the Willmott family, John Mansell and Gregory Breeze.

Congratulations to the hardy band of volunteers who loyally turn up every Tuesday morning and cheerfully tackle the most stubborn of sites. Over 5 years, nearly 3,000 hours of work have achieved significant results, not always obvious to the casual walker.



BSU and OCCA joined us for our birthday party.

BELONG

After a chance encounter, a group of environmental trainees began working at The Common, under the leadership of Steven Cameron. As part of the traineeship programme, run by Belong Community Group at Acacia Ridge, these young people have done an amazing amount of restoration and planting.

Their work is obvious in the area around Birding Ridge and along the fence strip to Stoney Gully. They restored an eroded section of Stoney Gully but they felt their finest achievement was to clear and replant Jagera Corner. This included crawling under the cockspur to tussle with Asparagus Fern, keeping disturbance to a minimum, in order not to worry the resident Whipbird.



At the end of the course, several students guided visitors around the sites, demonstrating how much the group had learnt about plant species, habitat, soil, weeds and methods of rehabilitation. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

FRIENDS of OXLEY CREEK COMMON COMMITTEE

President: **Hugh Possingham**
Secretary: **Karen Gillow**
Treasurer: **Matthew Mendel**
Media Co-ordinator: **Erica Heaton**
Tuesday Common Carers and Newsletter
Editor: **Mary Lou Simpson**
Committee: **Colleen Enchelmaier**
Lynn Whitfield
Zena Dinesen
Robyn Mulder

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COULD YOU STOMACH IT?

“Many cuckoos and cuckoo-shrikes (no relation) dine on hairy caterpillars. Cuckoo-shrikes have learnt to rub the hairs off on branches before eating them, though cuckoos are also able to eat large quantities of the hairs without ill effect, regurgitating them in pellets.”

Source:
Birds in their Habitats Ian Fraser 2018 p 96

LIVING AT THE COMMON



Venomous Eastern Brown snakes adopt a defensive S, ready for attack, when threatened. Photo: Kevin Fairley



A displeased Pheasant Coucal. Photo Kevin Fairley



Rarely seen Fairywren flight. Photo: Kevin Fairley



Hovea acutifolia was named after the Polish Botanist, Anton Hove, who was commissioned by Sir Joseph Banks to collect plants in West Africa, India and the Crimea. This Hovea is found in southeast Queensland and northeast NSW. Photo: M Simpson



Judy Lucas captured water dragon.



Red-browed Finch. Photo: Kevin Fairley



Little Grassbird. Photo: Judy Lucas



This delightful mass of flowers is asparagus fern. Photo: M Simpson

HABITAT



A Corvid is feasting on the berries of a Broad-leaf pepper tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), (a Class 3 weed in Southern Queensland). Usually, small birds, such as Silvereyes and Fairywrens can be found in this important food source. Photo: Kevin Fairley



This European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) is just one of the many insects supported by *Acacias*, which have given us a magnificent display of blossom this spring. Photo: Kevin Fairley



Hollows in dead trees are vital nesting places. Photo Kevin Fairley



Some of the Chestnut-breasted Mannikins which flock to the seeds in the paddocks near the Lagoons. These little birds like weedy vegetation near water. Photo: Kevin Fairley



Wanderer butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) feed almost exclusively on milkweed (*Asclepias spp.*). This immigrant is harmless to native species. Photo: Judy Lucas



White-necked heron at Jabiru Swamp. Photo: Oliver Mitchell

BENEATH OUR FEET

A new source of income for Australian farmers is carbon farming. Chris Hall, a NSW farmer, explains it is more than just ploughing in a crop. The important thing is growing plants. "It's about collecting sunlight. The more sunlight a plant collects, the more sugars it produces. Any excess is pumped into the soil where microbes use it as a food source, which helps them build carbon." Chris Hall keeps his soil covered with a diverse range of plants and feeds his soil nutrients that increase photosynthesis, which feeds soil microbes. Synthetic fertilisers, herbicides, fungicides and insecticides all damage soil microbes, so have been phased out. Good plant nutrition helps control pests and diseases.

Source: *Australian Geographic* July-August 2020 p 94

Tino Carnevale, from the ABC's *Gardening Australia*, is a self-confessed lover of dirt. To him the magnified life in soil is akin to a science-fiction horror movie. The living residents in the soil range from the 'giants' – worms, termites and ants – to the tiny fungi, bacteria and viruses. Just 1 gram of soil can contain thousands of different species, most of which live in the top few centimetres of the soil. He thinks of soil as having clusters of activity with the residents moving to 'greener pastures'. He believes "Over-cultivation, the use of pesticides and inorganic fertilisers, over-wet or over-dry conditions all have a negative effect on soil biology".

Source: *Gardening Australia*, September 2020 p43-45

DIFFERENT FACES OF THE COMMON



Morning light captured by Kevin Fairley.



Fog over Pelican Lagoon. Photo: M. Simpson

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.
represents a broad range of individuals and
community groups that have shared visions in
educational, social, ecological and agricultural
sustainability.

Become a friend of The Common

Pay your membership directly into our BOQ
account – BSB 124017 – A/c 20161909

Return this form or the appropriate details to:
friendsofoxleycreekcommon@gmail.com

or

PO Box 319, SHERWOOD, Qld 4075

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Membership:

Single \$15

Concession: \$12

Family: \$20

Group: \$30

Corporate: \$80

Donation: \$....

Please send Contributions, Comments and
Corrections to Mary Lou Simpson
marylouit@hotmail.com