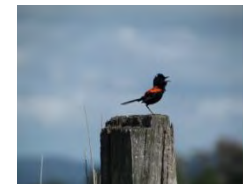




NEWSLETTER

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.

"Our Community Caring for Our Common"
December 2023 - Number 51



SAVE THE DATE

FOOCC Bird walk Sunday, 6.30am
February 25th, 2024
Morning Tea and
General Meeting 10 am.

Tuesday Common Carers

Tuesdays 7 – 9 am.
Weeding resumes 6th February.
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 28th February,
Hear Warwick Willmott talk about
The Great Artesian Basin.
5.30 for 6 pm at the Red Shed.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hugh Possingham

Before the November General Meeting, about 30 of us enjoyed a pleasant walk out to Pelican Lagoon. We found 72 species including Brush Cuckoo, and Common Cicadabird. The Black-shouldered Kites look like breeding again. Since the rain, waterbirds have dispersed – The Common is probably at its best for waterbirds when everywhere else is dry.

Two new species have recently been added to the Oxley Creek Common list (which now stands at 226 species) – Noisy Pitta (normally in the rainforest) and Black-tailed Native-hen (normally in arid and semi-arid areas).

Last week was the Australasian Ornithological Conference at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. 450 birders and bird scientists descended on Brisbane from around the region – the biggest of these conferences, by over 100 people, showing that Ornithology is booming. Probably half of the talks were

BECOME INVOLVED IN OXLEY CREEK COMMON

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

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

focussed on some aspect of bird conservation showing how the field has changed.

David Niland led a bird walk at The Common for the conference – amongst the many activities for visitors.

TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

Mary Lou Simpson

As work proceeds at The Common, Tuesday Common Carers find themselves closer to the creek bank and confronting infestations of Asparagus fern climbing through the trees and through the Cockspur. Consequently, there are huge difficulties accessing the base of the asparagus and neutralising the crown. If you see autumn browns along the creek bank, you know the weeders have been hard at work.

Planting, watering and weeding along from Fern Gully, occupied most of September. This is a wide flat area, which hopefully will become a place to meander in the future. It is pleasing to see the new planting at Scrub-wren Point filling the gaps after the removal of masses of *Rivina*. Future growth here should enhance a diversion off the track.

Although I was away for 5 weeks, this amazing group of people continued working, nurturing the new plantings during the dry spell, and weeding past Stoney Gully. We have 21 volunteers, with an average of 15 people attending each Tuesday.

Our plan is to revisit the areas we have worked in this year, hoping to reduce the weed regrowth over summer. During 2023, hundreds of seedlings have been planted at

The Common. The good survival rate is largely due to the regular watering by volunteers.

Our Christmas Party will be at 8am on Tuesday, 12th December. Bring a plate to share. RSVP to Mary Lou on 042 9911555.

Thanks to all the other people who contribute to the maintenance of the Common.

Bushcare and Beer meets on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Willing workers have joined the stalwarts from OCCA to plant, water and weed, often in difficult creek-side sites. A voucher to Helios Brewery is their reward.

Thursday Creek Care planted two new areas along the fence, and willingly attacked creek-side thickets. Notably, they have blazed a path from Stoney Gully well past Timberfell. This will complement the path now being used from the gate to Stoney Gully.

Several corporate groups, organised by OCCA, have made valuable contributions. On National Tree Day volunteers planted hundreds of seedlings in the paddock, which will greatly enhance the habitat at The Common.

Thanks to the volunteers from Tuesday Common Carers who work many hours beyond our Tuesday commitment.

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.

CREEKBANK REGROWTH



This picture shows the natural revegetation of the creekbank, after invasive weeds have been removed. Mangroves re-emerge, as do *Phragmites australis* (the long stems in the photo) and *Apium prostratum* native celery,

which can be seen in the bottom righthand corner of the photo. Walkers along the creek track can also notice *Eclipta prostrata*, *Sporobolus virginicus*, (Saltwater couch), *Crinum pendunculatum*, *Acrostichum speciosum* (Mangrove Fern), *Wollastonia biflora* and a variety of sedges.

LIVING AT THE COMMON

After the devastating floods of 2021, it is pleasing to see the return of Brown Quail. Before the flood, there were possibly 100

quail on the site. Gradually new sightings have been reported, and this Spring at least 3 different groups have been seen.

Photo: Joanne Perkins



In addition, we have had the arrival of the Pink-eared Ducks and the Black-tailed Native-hen. Latham Snipes have been present at Jabiru Swamp and Buff-banded Rail are often seen by weeders.



Jenny Richard's lovely photo reminds us of one of the exciting visitors to the Common this year.



Paul Francis's photo captures the yellow eye, the green upper beak and the red flash under the beak of the Black-tailed Native-hen. Although the tail is not erect, the 'square' shape can be clearly seen.



This Red-backed Fairy-wren is displaying the brown plumage. Photo: Jenny Richards.



Superb Fairy-wren. Photo Joanne Perkins



Tawny Frogmouth's excellent camouflage.
Photo: Joanne Perkins



Delia Walker captured this photo on the birdwalk.

Is it a Brown Goshawk or a Collared Sparrowhawk?

Enlarge this image on your computer and check the similarities: (a yellow eye, cross barring on the tail, yellow legs and cross barring on the breast) and differences (the tail shape, the size of the beak). Menkhorst's *Australian Bird Guide* gives an illustration of these birds' heads and suggests that the secondaries on the Collared Sparrowhawk extend beyond the rest of the edge, while the Goshawk has a fairly straight edge. Have fun deciding.

FUNGI -the unseen workers

Alison Pouliot's book *Underground Lovers: Encounters with Fungi*, has a wealth of information about this little known, but essential part of the ecosystem. Fungi was designated its own kingdom as recently as the 1950's and even now there are still hundreds of unnamed fungi.



We see only the 'flowers', but underground, fungi is busy creating the architecture of the soil, recycling and distributing nutrients to other plants, filtering water, providing habitat and food for

other organisms, protecting plants from disease and improving drought resistance.

Decaying trees are full of fungi, which are the only organisms that can break down the lignum in wood. The photo below, shows the soft decay, where the organisms have been at work and the 'plates' flowering on the remaining hardwood.



Purple Swamphens are often lurking in the grass near the lagoons. There wasn't enough grass to hide this activity. Hatchlings are black with huge legs and large toes, which develop a spur on the back.
Photo: Delia Walker



Bracket Fungi Photo: Robyn Mulder

Many plants have a symbiotic relationship with ectomycorrhizal fungi, which wraps itself around the roots and sends out 'fingers' to access nutrients and water. Scientists have discovered that the root fungi in *Eucalyptus grandis* can control the genetic development of the tree.

(www.newscientist.com/article/2303696)

While you are birdwatching or noticing the plants, give a thought to the workers beneath your feet.

The following photos are from the photo archive.



Walkers will notice that Robyn Mulder has been busy refurbishing the signs at the Common. These markers are invaluable in identifying locations. The Warrigal Green sign is a beautiful and informative addition to the Common. Many thanks Robyn.

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

Photo credits: Jenny Richards ,Joanne Perkins, Paul Francis, Robyn Mulder, Delia Walker. All other photos are by the editor.



Tawny Grassbird. Photo: Delia Walker

EASTER CASSIA or NOT?

Before you rip out that weed with yellow flowers, or something that looks like it, take a moment to look more carefully.



Easter Cassia *Senna pendula*

Height: 2 – 4 m.

Leaves: Pinnate, paired with 3-6 leaflets.

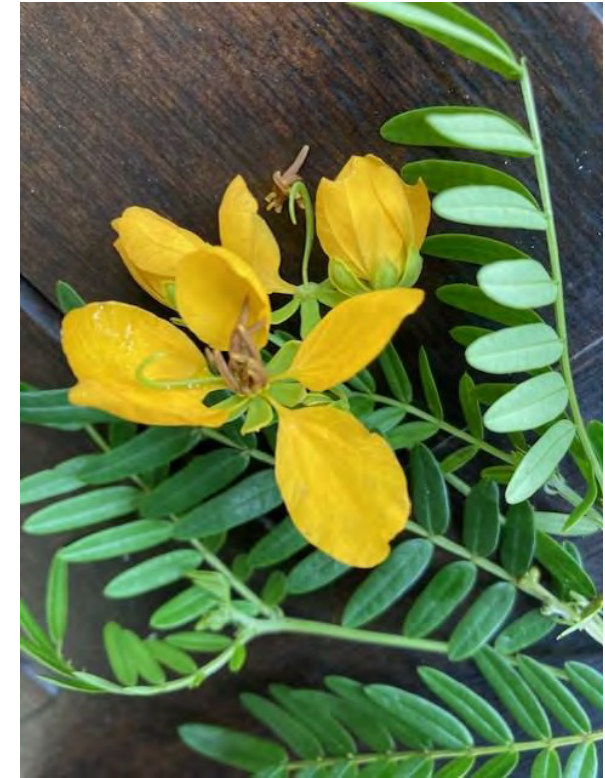
1-5cm long; 5-20mm wide; **rounded tips.**

Seed pods: rounded, 10-20cm long, 5-10

seeds. Green turning to brown.

Flowers: 5 large, robust petals.

Highly invasive.



Senna acclinis

Height: 1-2.5 m.

Leaves: Pinnate, paired with 3-6 leaflets.

5x25mm; discolourous.

Seed pods: flat, brown 15cm x 5 mm. Not constricted between seeds.

Flowers: 5 softer, cup-like petals.

Host for Small grass-yellow and Yellow migrant butterflies.

**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

You will automatically receive the Newsletter.

Name: _____

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Address: _____

Phone: _____

P/code: _____ Date: _____

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:	\$...		