

# Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

Sea To Source  
Conservation Volunteers  
Australia

April 2023



## Eungella Honeyeater Banding Research

By Jennifer White

## Beach and Estuary Clean Up Days

Plant of the Month - Pest Spotting -  
Peanut Tree Caster Oil Plant



Koala Mapping  
Training



Whitsunday  
Anglican College



**PIONEER  
Catchment  
LANDCARE**

### Our Mission

To implement an integrated, science-based approach to natural resource management through supportive partnerships across our catchment

## SeaToSource with Conservation Volunteers Australia

“#SeaToSource focuses on where litter starts its journey, encouraging us all to find ways to eventually make beach clean-ups a thing of the past.” (Conservation Volunteers Australia)

At Conservation Volunteers Australia’s National Day of Action on Saturday 18th February, PCL joined with Mackay Regional Council, Mackay and District Turtle Watch, Health Rivers to Reef Partnership and Reef Catchments along with community volunteers to remove 30kg of litter from Bucasia Beach and foreshore area. Sorting of the rubbish, enabled volunteers to determine the potential source of the waste. There were also educational stalls on display.

PCL Officer, Sally Stutsel, delivered a source reduction presentation, introducing a range of plastic alternatives including stainless steel tea stirrers (teabags with strings can entangle birds legs), refillable dental floss, shampoo and conditioner bars with self draining bamboo container, durable stainless steel plates used by Sally’s family since the mid 1960’s, stainless steel razor and container to return used blades, cutlery, reusable lunch bags, wraps, veggie bags, bread bags and other containers.



## Eungella Honeyeater Banding Research by Jennifer White

In 1959, details were published of a Bridled Honeyeater seen in the Clarke Ranges west of Mackay. We jump to 1975, when a field trip by the Australian and Queensland Museums captured a bird and identified it as the Bridled Honeyeater. The specimen, with photos, was lodged with the Australia Museum. From that photograph and with further research in the early 1980s, it was discovered that the bird had been incorrectly identified. The Eungella Honeyeater, as it became commonly known, was described in 1983. It has an all-black beak with no yellow markings on the beak. It is one of the last new species of birds to be discovered in Australia.

The research continues. As of January 2023, 85 Eungella Honeyeaters have been banded. *Help is needed to build upon the information we know about the Eungella Honeyeater by contacting the researchers if you see any banded Eungella Honeyeaters.*

David and Rosemary Braithwaite dedicate many hours banding and collecting information under a Scientific Purposes Permit with Local, State and Federal approvals. From their banding data and with re-sightings, we now have evidence that the Eungella Honeyeater has a longevity record of 3 years 5½ months. Banding began in January 2019.

Can you help? Here are the banding locations. Sites 1 and 2 are private property, however Chelman's Road may be a potential area for sightings. Sites 3-7 are close to the road so it's likely they may be spotted around here. Take a photo if you can.

**Site 1 Private Property Chelman's Rd, 41 birds**

**Site 2 Private Property Chelman's Rd, 11 birds**

**Site 3 End of Dalrymple Rd, 15 birds**

**Site 4 Dalrymple Rd Track, 4kms before the end of Dalrymple Rd, 1 bird**

**Site 5 Eungella National Park, 1.2 kms past the end of Chelman's Rd, 11 birds**

**Site 7 Cocky's Creek, Crediton State Forest, 6 birds**

Contact: David Braithwaite - [dlbraithwaite6@gmail.com](mailto:dlbraithwaite6@gmail.com) or  
Birdlife Mackay – [birdlife.org.au/groups/birdlife-mackay/](http://birdlife.org.au/groups/birdlife-mackay/)



Eungella Honeyeater Leg-Band Colours:  
Left= PINK over BLUE, Right= GREEN over METAL

## Field Study with Whitsunday Anglican College

As a part of a study into land cover transformations across the Pioneer Catchment for Year 12 Geography at Whitsunday Anglican College, eight students visited Slade Point Reserve, meeting with PCL Officer Sally Stutsel to learn about natural and anthropogenic changes in the area and conduct flora and fauna species identification.



**Above: Whitsunday Anglican College students working on their field worksheets at Slade Point Reserve.**  
**Left: Two Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*) sitting in a Beach Almond tree (*Terminalia catappa*).**

Did you know that PCL has a Support for Schools Program? Environmental education can be easily tied into the school curriculum and helps children of all ages develop important environmental values and skills. It also helps the school achieve environmental goals, working to a greener, brighter future.

If you want our help, you only have to ask!

## Koala Mapping Training with Ian Gottke

Pioneer Catchment Landcare would like to thank Ian from Padaminka Nature Refuge Koala Rescue & Care for his time on Friday 24th February training our team in Koala mapping. The team learnt about recording Koala sightings through the BioCollect app, contributing to the database for koala sightings on Atlas of Living Australia. To learn more about this project or to report a Koala sighting, visit the project website [here](#).

If you come across an injured koala, please inform Padaminka Nature Refuge Koala Rescue & Care on 0459 362 911.

*PCL Team with Ian Gottke (far right)*



## Tangaroa Blue Beach and Estuary Clean Ups

We have been continuing litter clean ups and monitoring days as a part of the Tangaroa Blue Litter Monitoring Program with clean ups taking place at Harbour Beach Mackay on the 9th of March and at the Pioneer River Estuary site on the 10th of March. At harbour beach, PCL officers removed 7.75kg of rubbish mainly consisting of bottlecaps and plastic remnants, and at the Pioneer River 4.2kg of rubbish was removed. This rubbish was then sorted and recorded for data collection purposes.



*PCL Officers conducting litter clean ups at Pioneer River (below) and Harbour Beach (middle). Harbour Beach sunset (right)*



### Peanut Tree

Family: Sterculiaceae

*Sterculia quadrifida* is a large semi-deciduous canopy tree reaching up to 10 metres or more in height, found in rainforests and littoral forests of northern Australia. It is characterised by its bright orange-red seed pods with black-skinned edible seeds. Other parts of the tree have also had traditional uses including the non-edible leaves for medicinal purposes and the bark for fibre craft.



**Leaves:** Simple, alternate, opposite or whorled, 30-280 by 30-190mm; upper side glabrous or sparsely clothed in stellate hairs; underside almost glabrous or sparsely clothed in stellate hairs, domatia as tufts of hairs; petioles 20-100mm long, pulvinus at base; stipules about 4mm long.

**Flowers:** Petals absent; sepals 4 or 5, green, white, cream, pink, orange or brown, borne in axillary sprays. Feb. -Nov.

**Fruit:** A follicle, orange or red, 35-80mm long by 18-50mm wide, velvety, usually in clusters of 2 or 4; seeds 2-10, brown to satin black, 13-20mm long. May-Jan.



**Growing Notes:** Grows best in full sun with well-drained soil and an abundance of water and mulch, but will tolerate poor sandy soil. This species grows quickly, making it a great pioneering shade species for bushland regeneration. With pruning, it can be kept smaller. Bird and insect attracting.

Sources: *Fruits of the Australian Tropical Rainforest* by Wendy Cooper, <https://tuckerbush.com.au/peanut-tree-sterculia-quadrifida/>. Images: Ian Morris

## Pest Spotting

## *Ricinus communis*

### Caster Oil Plant

Family: Euphorbiaceae

*Ricinus communis* is an invasive plant originating from Africa, but has now become widespread and naturalised in many tropical and subtropical regions of the world. It is a fast growing perennial shrub, growing up to 12 metres in height and can vary in appearance due to the many cultivars developed for oil production.



**Leaves:** Glossy, 150-450mm long, alternate, borne on long petioles, palmate with 5-12 deep coarsely toothed lobes. In some varieties young leaves are dark reddish purple, changing to dark green, sometimes with reddish tinge when matured. Other varieties have green young leaves, or have leaves that remain a purple-to-reddish-brown throughout the life of the plant.

**Flowers:** Monoecious without petals, borne in terminal panicle-like inflorescences of green or shades of red. The female flowers, borne at the tips of the spikes, have prominent red stigmas; male flowers yellowish-green with prominent creamy stamens in ovoid spikes up to 150mm long.

**Fruit:** Spiny, greenish (to reddish purple) capsule containing large, oval, shiny, bean-like, highly poisonous seeds with variable brownish mottling. Castor seeds have a warty appendage called the caruncle, a type of elaiosome, which is a fleshy ant-attracting structure on seeds. The caruncle promotes the dispersal of the seed by ants (myrmecochory).

**Spread by:** Prolific seed production and dispersion methods by ants, rodents and birds, shoes, vehicles and machinery and by floodwaters. It is also spread by an explosive mechanism when the capsule dries up and split, throwing seeds over 5 metres.

**Control:** It is best to treat the weed infestations when they are small to prevent them from establishing (early detection and rapid response). Controlling the weed before it seeds will reduce future problems. Control is generally best applied to the least infested areas before dense infestations. Consistent follow-up work is required. Herbicides can be effective as cut stump treatments or basal bark applications (painting herbicide onto the bark).

Sources: [https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/eafrinet/weeds/key/weeds/Media/Html/Ricinus\\_communis\\_\(Castor\\_Oil\\_Plant\).htm](https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/eafrinet/weeds/key/weeds/Media/Html/Ricinus_communis_(Castor_Oil_Plant).htm). Image: Sheldon Navie

## Upcoming Community Events

### April

**Tues 4** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

**Thurs 6** - Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Regional Botanic gardens meeting room

**Tues 11** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

**Tues 18** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

**Tues 25** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

### May

**Tues 2** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

**Thurs 4** - Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Regional Botanic gardens meeting room

**Tues 9** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

**Tues 16** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

**Tues 23** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

**Tues 30** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.



**PCL'S ID:  
C10041933**

### VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Keen to volunteer with PCL? We are looking for new volunteers keen to get involved in Landcare planting activities at beautiful locations! Come join us! Contact [projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au) for more information.

There are no longer restrictions in place for new volunteers for propagating activities at the MNEC nursery. Existing and new volunteers are welcome.

### Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc.

#### Executive

**Chair** | Sharon Dwyer

**Deputy Chair** | Judith Wake

**Secretary** | Fran Mann

**Treasurer** | Claire Stribbles

#### Committee Members

Earl Neilsen

Paul Tippett

### Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Office contacts:

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A. Mecoles

#### **OUR VISION:**

To empower our community to build biodiverse ecosystems

#### **OUR MISSION:**

To implement an integrated, science-based approach to natural resource management through supportive partnerships across our catchment.

#### **VALUES:**

- We are innovative, and driven by action at a grassroots level ◦
- Ethical ◦ Engaged ◦ Passionate ◦