

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

August 2023

Sandringham Bay
Conservation Park
and the remarkable Mangrove Mouse



Plant of the Month -
Java Sedge



Pest Spotting -
Hymenachne



Homevale NP
Wildlife Monitoring

Support for Schools



Goodstart Bridge
Road Kindy Visit



PIONEER
Catchment
LANDCARE

Our Mission

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

Sandringham Bay and the remarkable Mangrove Mouse

On a foggy morning in late June, PCL Project Officers, Danny and Donna, met with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) officers at Sandringham Bay Conservation Park. PCL will be assisting QPWS to maintain some of their sites. By starting with one easily accessible reserve at Sandringham, we hope to be able to make a meaningful difference in the management of some of our beautiful natural reserves.

The reserve is situated South of Mackay near the town of Dunrock. It is bounded by water on three sides and is a mix of coastal scrub, wetland, salt couch and mangrove. Many bird species thrive in this diverse environment, and it is home to the iconic Mangrove Mouse (*Xeromys myoides*) which is listed as vulnerable and is one of Australia's rarest rodents.



Sandringham Bay reserve is a particularly diverse site. Historically it was open to public vehicle access which resulted in illegal dumping, damage to the mangroves lining to river, habitat loss through illegal felling of trees for campfires, riverbank erosion due to clearing for fishing and boat ramps, and weed incursion from dumping of green waste from gardens. Since the early 2000s, the reserve vehicle access has been blocked and much of the mangrove has regenerated along the riverbanks. The grasslands are intact and resonate with bird song and insect calls.



Sandringham Bay and the remarkable Mangrove Mouse continued...

On site, there was evidence of recent camping and campfires with some litter being left behind, and general litter along the walking track. Garden escapee weeds such as Singapore Daisy (*Sphagneticola trilobata*) and Purple Joyweed (*Alternanthera* sp.), as well as Lantana (*Lantana camara*), Guinea Grass (*Megathyrsus maximus*), Prickly Pear (*Opuntia* sp.).



Singapore Daisy



Purple Joyweed



Lantana



Guinea Grass

Bird life was in abundance with Mistletoe Bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*), Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*) and White-browed Robin (*Poecilodryas superciliosa*), as well as a beautiful Sea Eagle nest at the start of the walking track.



Mistletoe Bird



Spotted Pardalote



White-browed Robin



Sea Eagle Nest

PCL will be working with QPWS to hold a community day at the entrance to the reserve to share knowledge of this unique ecosystem, and encourage participation in camera monitoring of the Mangrove Mouse, weed control and litter collection, to help preserve this rare environment and its inhabitants. Mouse monitoring will start in the latter half of this year and will build on data already gathered by PCL in 2018/19 and will continue into next year.

If you or someone you know may be interested in this volunteering opportunity, please contact admin@pioneercatchment.org.au to register your interest. We will continue to provide updates and confirm dates closer to the event on FB, newsletter, and website.

Sources: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, 'Conservation Advice for *Xeromys myoides*', <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/regional-ecosystems/details>

Project Update: Northern Quoll Monitoring at Homevale National Park

In collaboration with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), PCL has been working on a project to monitor wildlife in the Mackay Highlands. This project, funded by the Queensland Government has yielded some fantastic results so far, capturing images of a variety of native species through our monitoring cameras, including two EPBC Endangered species, the Northern Quoll and Koala.

The data collected through this project will be incredibly helpful for QPWS to guide management decisions relating to fire and pest animals in the Mackay Highlands.



Kindy planting for NAIDOC Week

PCL Officers, Angus and Danny recently visited Bridge Road Goodstart Early Learning to help the children celebrate NAIDOC Week and to explore greener learning environments.

The officers were excited to see the eagerness of the children who all took a keen interest in touching and holding the plants, as well as taking turns planting them in the garden. There were definitely some potential young green thumbs in the bunch.

This was the second visit to the daycare in recent years and we are looking forward in collaborating with Goodstart Early Learning again in the future through our Support for Schools Program, in collaboration with Mackay Regional Council and the Mackay Natural Environment Centre.



Java Sedge

Cyperus javanicus is a tufted perennial sedge that grows up to 1.2 metres in height and 1.5 metres in width. It is suited to growing in wet and dry conditions and has a wide distribution in the northern half of Australia. It is highly adaptable, making it a great option for planting along seasonal creek banks to help control creek bank erosion. It is also used as shelter by native water birds.

Leaves: Long, folded at the base and flat above, 2-13mm wide.

Flowers: Compound brown inflorescences with 6-12 primary rays, up to 80mm long, shorter secondary rays and with 4-6 long leaf-like bracts growing from base of flower stem. Cylindrical spikes are 15-20 by 10-15mm with 5-10 x 2.0-2.5mm spikelets bearing 6-10 flowers.

Seeds/Fruit: Dark brown to black nut, ellipsoid in shape, triangular in cross section, 1.2-1.5mm long.

Habitat: Grows in rainforest, along creeks and rivers, sclerophyll and mesophyll vine thickets, swampy areas in various types of woodland and in sandy coastal areas.

Sources: https://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/266534/Cyperus_javanicus.pdf, <https://apps.lucidcentral.org/>



Pest Spotting

Hymenachne amplexicaulis

Hymenachne

Family: Poaceae

Hymenachne amplexicaulis is a robust perennial grass introduced from Tropical South and Central America as a ponded pasture grass, but is now classed as a Category 3 weed under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and a Weed of National Significance due to the potential impact on primary production and the environment. This invasive species forms dense monocultures, clogging irrigation infrastructure and habitat for native wildlife. Each seed head can produce more than 4000 seeds.

Note: Care should be taken not to confuse this invasive species with the native *Hymenachne* (*Hymenachne acutigluma*), which is a smaller tropical grass. The native species lacks the distinctive stem-clasping leaf bases of the introduced species (see image).

Leaves and stems: Sheath strongly clasping the stem at base, blades 100-450 by 30-60mm, light coloured veins and hairy margins.

Flower/Seeds: Flowers from late spring to early autumn. Flower heads are spike-like, cylindrical, 200-400mm in length, containing large numbers of small elongated flower spikelets, that break off and fall from the seed-head when seeds are mature. The seed is ellipsoid in shape, 1-2mm long and 0.6mm wide) and enclosed in several floral bracts.

Spread by: Dispersal by seed and vegetative growth from stem fragments spread by water, waterbirds and in contaminated stock feed. Infestations are common in lagoons, wetlands, creeks and roadside drains.

Control: Controlling *Hymenachne* infestations on your property will require an integrated approach and you may need to use a variety of control methods and extensive follow-up treatments. For more information on how to manage this invasive species, read the following factsheet from DAF: https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/77092/hymenachne.pdf

Sources: *Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region: Second Edition*, Mackay Regional Pest Management Group, https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/html/hymenachne_amplexicaulis.htm.

Image: Land Protection QDNRW, Weeds Aus.



Upcoming Community Events

August

Tues 1 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Thurs 3 - Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Regional Botanic gardens meeting room.

Sun 6 - Birdlife Mackay Outing, Berri Werri near Gargett, Meet at the old Tourist Office on Nebo Rd at 6:30am.

Tues 8 - PCL Volunteering at Edward Lloyd Park River Access Site, Marian, meet at Southern side of Melba House at 10am.

Sat 12 - MRC Clean Up Mackay - Illawong Drive, 9am to 11am & Sandfly Creek Reserve, 3pm to 5pm.

Sun 13 - MRC Clean Up Mackay - Riverside Drive, 9am to 10am & Hodges Road, 9am to 11am.

Tues 15 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Sat 19 - MRC Clean Up Mackay - Freshwater Point, 9am to 11am .

Sun 20 - MRC Clean Up Mackay - Grasstree Beach, 9am to 11am (Grasstree Beach Progress Association).

Tues 22 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Tues 29 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

September

Tues 5 - PCL Volunteering at Edward Lloyd Park River Access Site, Marian, meet at Southern side of Melba House at 10am.

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

Tues 12 - Small Engines Workshop, hosted by PCL at Mackay Natural Environment Centre, Swayne Street, 10am to 12pm.

Tues 19 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Tues 26 - 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 for more information.

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Management Committee

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.

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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 ◦



Volunteers Needed

Edward Lloyd Park River Access Revegetation Site, Marian - by Pioneer Catchment Landcare

Upcoming planting event scheduled to be held on:

Tuesday 8th August

REGISTER
NOW



Contact us :
07 4944 1979 or admin@pioneercatchment.org.au

Acknowledgements: Mackay Regional Council Queensland Department of Environment and Science for providing grant funding through Community Action Sustainability Grants 2023 (Round 7)