

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

November 2023

Citizen Science in Action Eungella Platypus Count 2023

Plant of the Month -
Giant Palm Lily



Pest Spotting -
Yellow Bells



Native Bonsai
Workshop 2.0



Magpie Season
Alert



PIONEER
Catchment
LANDCARE

Our Mission

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

Citizen Science in Action: Eungella Platypus Count 2023

On the 1st of October, PCL hosted the first annual platypus count at Broken River, Eungella. It was a misty morning driving up the mountain, and a cool start for those of us who had camped overnight at the Diggings, but the cloud had lifted at Broken River by our meeting time of 7.30am. Eungella National Park is one of the few places in Australia where the public can be confident of seeing a wild platypus. Much of Eungella's high profile is due to the platypus population and many local tourism businesses rely on the species for their income.

The platypus survey was an opportunity for the Mackay and Pioneer Valley community to come together and experience our beautiful environment along

Broken River at the same time helping us collect some data on platypus numbers and the environment they live in. The survey will be an annual event to measure platypus numbers and habitat over the years, to ultimately collect enough data to monitor if there is a decline or increase in their numbers and therefore be able to inform Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and the community of the possible causes, such as habitat degradation, barriers to movement, and/or predation. It also continued from the original study by QPWS in 2012 which was designed after concerns were raised by locals, tourism operators and environmental professionals, about material from an adjacent dairy farm being washed into the river during heavy rain, directly opposite the viewing platform at Broken River. Before this time and since, there has been no official monitoring of platypus in our region.

PCL officers had the gazebo set up as an admin hub for our participants and were ready to give out our instructions on where to go, what to expect, and what to record on the data sheets. Each person was given a clipboard with a data sheet to fill out, one side with platypus sighting information and on the other a quick subjective habitat survey. The idea of having both types of information is that even if you don't see a platypus, you are still making a meaningful contribution to data collection by recording habitat quality in your location. With our 17 wonderful participants who made the journey to assist us in gathering data on platypus numbers and their habitat, we split into 3 groups – a group headed off to the Wishing Pool, another to the Diggings and the third spread out along the walkways at the Broken River hub. Although some of us were lucky enough to spot platypus, there were no sightings at the Diggings or the Wishing Pool. In all locations, the habitat ratings were good to fair, showing that there are many areas along Broken River which are suitable for platypus. We also spotted a great many bird species and a variety of bug life!





Community volunteers gathering prior to Platypus Count

The morning ended with a wonderful spread put on by Jo from the Eungella Sawmill, thanks Jo for your efforts!

Through this event, we have introduced citizen science as a method by which the community is able to contribute to a meaningful long-term project. We have set up a project in iNaturalist that people can join and add their sightings at any time of day or year. iNaturalist is a worldwide database which is accessible to everyone, you just type in a name such as “platypus” and it will show you projects near you that you can become involved in. Our area is really not well documented in terms of regular and usable information and without data on our amazing local species such as Koala, Northern Quoll, Platypus and endemic species such as Eungella Honeyeater, we find it hard to prove they are there and their habitat needs preserving. The beauty of iNaturalist is that it holds data collected by citizen scientists, can produce reports and is available to everyone on a mobile phone, tablet or computer. It’s a great way to put the spotlight on our local flora and fauna!

If you missed the event but would love to be a part of our citizen science platypus count, log on to iNaturalist and look for Eungella Platypus Count. You can add data (photos and comments) to this project at any time. All records will help us gain a fuller understanding of numbers and locations of our beautiful and iconic platypus, so please share this information with your friends and family and add your findings to our project!

The platypus count was further supported by a radio interview for ABC and our Coordinator Nancy participating in a live forum for Australian Wildlife Week, hosted by the Australian Wildlife Society. You can find this on Facebook through the Australian Wildlife Society, or on their website.

Finally, a massive thank you to all of our participants who made the journey to collect data with us so early in the morning, we really couldn’t do it without your support!



Data Collected at the Eungella Platypus Count

	Broken River	Diggings	Wishing Pool
Platypus numbers	5	0	0
Bank vegetation	Good	Fair	Good
In stream cover	Good	Fair	Good
Bank erosion and stability	Fair	Good	Good
Riffles, pools and bends	Fair	Good	Excellent
Water quality	Good	Good	Good

Native Plant of the Month

Giant Palm Lily

Cordyline manners-suttoniae

Family: Laxmanniaceae

Single or multi-stemmed rainforest shrub endemic to Queensland, growing up to 5m tall, producing a bright red cluster of berries that attract wildlife.

Leaves: Shiny green, blades 350-650 by 60-150mm, stalk 120-300mm long, grooved on upper surface, stem-clasping at base.

Flowers: Small white, tepals 10-12mm long, borne in terminal sprays to 250mm long.

Fruit/Seeds: Pendulous clusters of ovoid shaped red berries, 10-15mm in diameter containing small black seeds.

Habitat: Endemic to Queensland rainforests and other forests surrounding swamps and water courses.

Growing Notes: Fast growing understorey plant, adapted to poorly drained soil. It will even grow with its 'feet' in water, can be pruned to encourage multi-stemmed growth and makes an attractive addition to shady gardens.

Suitable as an indoor pot plant.



Sources: https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest/text/entities/cordyline_manners-suttoniae.htm, https://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/266528/Cordyline_manners-suttoniae.pdf, *Cordyline manners-suttoniae*, SGAP Mackay Branch information card

Pest Spotting

Yellow Bells

Tecoma stans var. stans

Family: Bignoniaceae

Large, dense shrub or tree growing from 2-10m in height with showy yellow bell-shaped flowers. Classed in Queensland as Category 3 restricted invasive plant under the Biosecurity Act 2014. There are small, scattered populations recorded between Dingo Beach and Sarina.

Leaves: Opposite, pinnate, 80-250mm long with 3-9 elliptic or ovate leaflets, pointed at tip with serrated margins.

Flowers: Bright yellow bell-shaped, 50-70mm long, borne in terminal clusters. Reddish lines in throat of flower.

Fruit/Seeds: Cylindrical, brown capsules 160-220mm long, containing many thin seeds.

Spread by: Wind and garden waste.

Control: Hand pull small plants; larger plants are more difficult to remove. Will reshoot if roots are left. Removal before seeding is also important.



Sources: 'Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region: Second Edition', Mackay Regional Pest Management Group, 2018, <[https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/eafrinet/weeds/key/weeds/Media/Html/Tecoma_stans_\(Yellow_Bells\).htm](https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/eafrinet/weeds/key/weeds/Media/Html/Tecoma_stans_(Yellow_Bells).htm)>.

Image: Matt Tomkins

Native Bonsai Workshop 2.0

Our second Native Plant Bonsai workshop held on Sunday 22nd October was packed with budding Bonsai connoisseurs. With ages ranging from young children to the more mature, the art of native tree bonsai attracts a diverse range of people. Certainly, part of the beauty of this art is that anyone can create a tiny masterpiece out of a native tree. You don't need a big block of land to plant and care for native endemic species! Michael Watt, our local Bonsai expert, again led us through a factual, inspirational, and fun filled journey, explaining plant biology, history of bonsai and the techniques needed to start our own bonsai creation. The examples from his own bonsai collection were stunning and inspired us all as to what can be achieved with our native trees in a relatively short space of time. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Michael is a true artist who shares his love of native trees with passion, sincerity, and kindness. He facilitates a space in which participants feel comfortable to ask any questions, have some fun, and learn a new skill – thank you again Watty for your amazing workshop!



Image: Workshop attendees listening intently to Native Bonsai expert, Michael Watt

Magpie Season Alert!

As you may be aware by now, we are well into Magpie Swooping Season, so here's a few tips to ensure everyone stays safe, including our Maggies.

If you can't take an alternate route during breeding season, there are a few things you can do to protect yourself from swooping magpies.

- Wear protective clothing such as a broad-brimmed hat and sunglasses and use an umbrella. You can even draw large eyes on the back of your hat to deter them.
- Walk in groups when you can and ensure you maintain eye contact with the swooping bird as you walk past a nest, and dismount your bike if you are a cyclist.
- If you are swooped, do not fight back and do not panic. Stay calm and maintain eye contact as you leave their defence zone. Fighting magpies will only make them more aggressive towards humans in the future.

*Image: Australian Magpie (Gymnorhina tibice),
The Australian Museum*



Upcoming Community Events

November 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1 PCL Volunteering at Edward Lloyd Park River Access Site 10am Marian, meet at Southern side of Melba House at 10am.	2 Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting cancelled for November.	3	4	5
6	7 PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm. PCL AGM 8:30am, Vintage Kiss Marian.	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.	29	30			

December

Tues 5 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Wed 6 - 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 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

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

Contact Us

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc.



07 4944 1979



admin@pioneercatchment.org.au



www.pioneercatchment.org.au

Coordinator | Nancy Pratt
coordinator@pioneercatchment.org.au

Senior Project Officer | Donna Jackson
seniorpo@pioneercatchment.org.au

Project Officer | Danny Hudson
projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au

Administration and Marketing Officer | Taleah Virgona
admin@pioneercatchment.org.au

Newsletter |
communications@pioneercatchment.org.au



PIONEER Catchment LANDCARE

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



Follow PCL on social media
to keep up to date with
recent projects and events

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.

Big shout out to our volunteers who have shown their support of PCL by assisting with plant propagation at the MNEC nursery, and for registering their interest in our events and workshops – we couldn't do it without you!

2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7th November 2023

8.30am - 11am

Vintage Kiss Café, 4 Anzac Ave,
Marian

*Coffee and cake provided, please RSVP by Friday 3rd November
More information: admin@pioneercatchment.org.au | 07 4944 1979



PCL Membership is Changing

Keep an eye out for upcoming changes to our membership policies and new opportunities coming for PCL members



QWaLC
QUEENSLAND WATER & LAND CARERS



PCL'S ID:
C10041933

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 •

Printed newsletters are on 100% recycled & carbon-neutral paper.