

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

April 2024

Plant of the Month -



Pest Spotting -



A Brush with
Nature



Clean up Australia Day



PIONEER
Catchment
LANDCARE

Our Mission

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

Clean up Australia Day & Tangaroa Blue Monitoring

Success at Clean Up Australia Day: Uniting Communities for a Cleaner Environment

Clean Up Australia Day saw an incredible turnout and dedication from our local community. Participants came together to clean up Harbour Beach, and the results were remarkable – an astounding 101 kilograms of litter removed from just ONE beach in a single day.

This achievement showcases the power of community action and collective impact. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the 50+ participants who contributed, as well as Mackay and District Turtle Watch and Yuwi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC Mackay for their support. As we celebrate this success, let's remember the importance of ongoing environmental efforts. Together, we can make a difference and create a cleaner, healthier planet. Thank you to all who participated, organised, and supported Clean Up Australia Day – your commitment is truly inspiring.

Tangaroa Blue Monitoring

During the bustling Clean Up Australia Day event, we also completed our first round of Tangaroa Blue Monitoring for the year. Lucky enough to participate quarterly, this monitoring program adds depth to our environmental efforts. Tangaroa Blue Monitoring involves meticulously documenting and analyzing litter collected during clean-ups. This data helps us understand marine debris, identify sources, and find effective solutions.



Native Plant of the Month

***Tabernaemontana orientalis* Eastern Gondola Bush**

Family: Apocynaceae

Description: Layered and attractive large shrub/small tree usually not more than 30cm dbh (diameter at breast height). Twigs produce a milky sap. Distribution northern Australia including CEQ. Habitats include monsoon forest thickets, sandstone, stabilised dunes, and vine thickets on rocky outcrops.

Leaves: Simple, elliptic, obovate, opposite and light green in colour. Leaf blades have lateral curving veins 8-15 on each side of mid-rib. Upper and lower surface are hairy. Leaf blades 70 – 100mm long by 30 – 50mm wide.

Flowers: White star shaped with tubular corolla 12- 20mm diameter. Stamens attached above middle of corolla tube. Flowers have a fragrance similar to jasmine.

Fruits: Fruits are orange to red orange in pairs and banana/boat shaped 10-20mm long by 10-15mm wide. Seeds are red and about 7mm long by 4mm wide.

Growing notes: Prefers a shady, protected position in well-drained soil. Beautiful addition to the garden and suitable for the smaller yard.



Reference: References – CSIRO, *Tabernaemontana orientalis* - Some Magnetic Island Plants, *Tabernaemontana orientalis* Apocynaceae – Native Plants Queensland – Townsville Branch (npqtownsville.org.au)

Pest Spotting

***Felis catus* Feral Cat**

Family: Felidae

Description: Feral cats are found throughout all states of Australia. They were introduced as domestic animals with the first fleet in 1788 and are now considered one of the most damaging invasive species worldwide.

Habitat: Historical records and genetic analyses show cats colonised the entire continent within 70 years and now occur in all habitats, from alpine areas in south-eastern Australia to the arid deserts of Central Australia.

Threats to Australia: Many native animal species are preyed on by cats. Some of our most significant threatened species in this region including the Northern Quoll, Greater Glider and stream dwelling rainforest frogs have cats listed as a major threat to the continued existence of the species. Cats are also responsible for spreading diseases such as Toxoplasmosis which can affect livestock and humans.

Control: There is a Threat Abatement Plan in place for Feral Cats in Australia. Current control methods include baiting, trapping, and shooting. There is a new automated grooming bait station which relies on bait being sprayed onto the fur of the cat. It is species specific, and trials have met with more success than traditional control methods.

What you can do: Keep your cats inside and in a run if outside to prevent them from hunting wildlife. Bells do not prevent cats hunting or scare away prey. Desex your cat. Report feral cats to your local Council.



Reference: Fact-sheet-The-impact-of-cats-in-Australia-Threatened-Species-Hub.pdf (invasives.org.au)

Image: Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network

Eungella State School

On Tuesday 12th March PCL officers Mitchell and Donna brought 50 free plants from Mackay Regional Council to Eungella State School. They gave a talk to the entire school, discussing significant plant species native to the Eungella region, what constitutes a vulnerable plant, the rediscovery of a Cloaked Bee thought to be extinct, the uniqueness of Eungella as a biodiverse area, and the excitement of scientific discovery.

Every student participated in planting at least one plant, with older students assisting younger ones. The plants included Eungella mint bush, flax lily, and Eungella bottlebrush, arranged formally for an ANZAC/memorial garden. Special thanks to Mandy Tennent, the school groundskeeper, and all the teachers and Principal for their invitation. Kudos to the students for their keen interest, insightful questions, and teamwork during the planting; their efforts were truly impressive!



PCL have been lucky to receive grant funding to continue Mangrove Mouse monitoring at Sandringham Bay Conservation Park. The previous project was completed in 2019 and found populations of the Mangrove Mouse (*Xeromys myoides*) which is listed as Vulnerable (faces a high risk of extinction in the medium-term future) in both the EPBC and the Nature Conservation Act. It also found evidence of the presence of pest species known to either prey on, or destroy nesting sites, of the mouse including foxes, pigs, and cats. Our recent project has several objectives:

- To continue monitoring of the mouse population at Sandringham Bay.
- To provide education to the community on threatened species and endangered regional ecosystems.
- To provide skills in fauna monitoring processes to our community partners.
- To engage in an interesting and informative morning of fauna monitoring and vegetation surveying with our volunteers.
- To identify pest animal species which may be a threat to the mouse population.



Our project commenced early Wednesday morning on the 13th March at Sandringham Bay Conservation Park. The ground was waterlogged, and mosquitoes were in abundance, but once on the track, the walking was high and dry. PCL officers Danny and Donna set up the furthest 4 cameras in the exact locations of the previous monitoring points. It was a pleasure to walk through unspoilt salt marsh and mangrove communities. The biodiversity of this area is stunning and a must-see for visitors or nature enthusiasts, with 8 different regional ecosystems, 5 of which are listed as Endangered (at very high risk of extinction in the near future) and 3 are listed as Of Concern. There was also a multitude of bird life. After setting up the harder to get to cameras, PCL officers met with the Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers and PCL volunteer John (thanks John for your continued support!). A discussion was held on the history of the Conservation Park, the biodiversity, its unique habitats and concentration of Threatened and Vulnerable plant and animal species, and the project aims and objectives. Danny led participants through programming a trail camera and set up of monitoring sites. With the theory completed, the group headed off into the coastal scrub to set up the remaining cameras and complete the vegetation surveys. At the end of the morning, 8 cameras had been set up and will remain in place for 3 weeks. The images will then be analysed and the information shared with QPWS and other stakeholders.

Thanks for an amazing morning to everyone involved, thank you to the Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers for attending and helping us with the camera set up, thanks to our wonderful volunteer, John, and his awesome support of our various projects, and finally thank you to our funding bodies – Stanmore Resources and Friends of Parks Queensland. This project wouldn't be possible without your support!

A Brush With Nature

In a delightful blend of art and nature, 23 folks recently gathered at Bottletops & Brushes Mackay for a special workshop titled 'A Brush with Nature.' This event celebrated National Eucalyptus Day and World Frog Day by painting scenes of eucalyptus trees and frogs.

Why World Frog Day?

World Frog Day is a day dedicated to raising awareness of frogs and other amphibians. Frog populations have been under threat and many species are disappearing or have already gone extinct due to Chytrid Fungus infection, habitat degradation, pollution, feral animal predation, pesticide use and climate change. Approximately one third of the world's frog species are Critically Endangered.

Why National Eucalyptus Day?

National Eucalyptus Day is a special occasion celebrated annually on March 23rd. It's dedicated to honoring the vital role that these magnificent trees play in Australia's natural environment. These iconic Eucalyptus trees hold a special place in the hearts and lives of Australians, and this day aims to raise awareness about their significance.



Image: Catering by Tinas's Fig and Coffee Cafe

Meet our new Senior Field Officer , Rhys

Rhys brings with him 12 years of extensive experience in the hunting and shooting industry. Previously, he served as the Conservation Pest Management Manager for the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, where he coordinated volunteer pest control programs in partnership with Parks Victoria. Additionally, Rhys held the position of Project Manager and Professional Shooter at Victorian Pest Animal Control, overseeing large-scale deer control projects spanning across Victoria and South Australia.

Before joining our team, Rhys resided in Mackay for five years, from 2007 to 2011, where he worked as a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) ranger at the Eungella and Clermont work centres. His time as a ranger allowed him to gain valuable insights and experience in habitat management and wildlife conservation.

We are excited to have Rhys on board, bringing his wealth of knowledge and expertise to our organisation.



Upcoming Community Events

April 2024

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1 Easter Monday	2	3	4 Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at Botanic Gardens meeting	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Anzac Day	26	27	28
29	30					

May

Thurs 2 - Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) Botanic Gardens Meeting Room 7:30pm.

Tues 7 - PCL Volunteering in the Botanic Gardens Nursery , 8am to 12pm.

Tues 14 - PCL Volunteering in the Botanic Gardens Nursery , 8am to 12pm.

Tues 21- PCL Volunteering in the Botanic Gardens Nursery , 8am to 12pm.

Tues 28- PCL Volunteering in the Botanic Gardens 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 | Taleah Virgona
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!



PCL Membership is Changing

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



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.