



Something New

In this edition we are excited to have some bird information for everyone, kindly prepared by two of our members - Bruce and Joshua Coyte - Both are also members of the Illawarra Bird Observers Group. A big thankyou to their effort and we felt the article was so good we let most of the newsletter to it.

Look out for the new item in this newsletter -WEEDS TO WHACK!!!!. There will be a different weed featured in each edition, and will include hints to help differentiate the weed from look-alike natives.



National Tree Day 2007 (July)

We were very excited be awarded second place (nationally) in the 2006 Planet Ark-'Saving Endangered Ecosystems' competition.

This year, our 5th Planet Ark National Tree Day at Elizabeth Brownlee Reserve, Albion Park will be held on 28th July 2007. All community members and interested residents are welcome to attend.

The Lantana was removed from the target area during the May Working Bee, as rain although very rejoiced caused cancellation of the April working bee. This area will provide extension of the plantings of previous years.



Update on Madeira Vine

The work done on Madeira Vine around the storm-water drain HAS been followed up again: this time with a major undertaking to remove vines from the crown of a *Trema aspera*. On this same day, the team chased it back several metres from the sediment fence, and we are continuously removing the re-sprouting tubers this area in an effort to halt it from entering the drain.

Remember: The WHEELIE bins at the Reserve are ONLY for composting the Madeira Vine, and are not for garbage.



"Small Illawarra coastal plain vine thicket" snail

Several more sightings of this undescribed species of *Meridolum* snail were made whilst removing Madeira Vine in the drain area. Several live individuals were encountered under decaying litter and rocks.

All sightings should be recorded, to enable an appraisal of the actual population size of this snail in the Reserve.

Trial Area update

The 12 month inspection of the trial area has revealed minimal natural regeneration, although the previously recorded native vegetation over this area has matured - and some is now producing seed (Native Grape, Wombat Berry). This area has required very little weed follow-up in the previous 12 months and low moisture conditions (drought) would explain low overall seed germination rates.

There has been a recent limb loss in the overhanging Alphitonia.



WEEDS TO WHACK!!!!

Senna pendula-glabrata (Winter Senna)
(formerly *Senna bicapsularis*)



- Yellow flowers (~3cm across) and ROUND green to brown 10-15cm pods.
- Leaves are alternate and pinnate, 3-6 pairs of opposite leaflets along rachis.
- Leaflets are sub-glossy to glossy and bright green, 1cm wide 3-4cm long.
- Leaflets are slightly pointed at tip when compared to look-alikes others.
- Is found everywhere in the Illawarra even in home gardens: It proliferates wildly seed, especially if unattended in bushland: Seeds have a very long-term viability.
- Leaves will close together in poor light & darkness.

Look-alike natives

Breynia oblongifolia



- Flowers are insignificant, but develop to fleshy black fruits (berry-like) on the underside of twigs.
- Leaves are simple and arranged alternately, usually ~1cm wide ~2cm long and rounded at the tip. Stipule at node, palpable on underside.
- Leaves are sub-glossy mid-green, slightly bluish-green on undersides.

"Birds" of Tullimbah Landcare Group focal area: Elizabeth Brownlee Reserve

Generally speaking, birds are a highly vocal, mobile and active group of fauna. Their active lives and behavior alert us to their presence and as a result, their observation requires little effort. They are easily the most readily observable fauna in the reserve and provide a valuable indication of the Reserves habitat value and the general health of the local environment over time. Birds play a vital role in ecosystem functioning as vectors for plant pollination, seed dispersal, insect population control as well as being major participants within predator-prey interactions and the natural food chain.

Birds are regular observers of the Tullimbah Landcare Group's (TLC) activities within Elizabeth Brownlee Reserve. These activities, which involve the removal of weeds, assisted re-vegetation of native flora and natural native plant regeneration, are expected to improve the habitat value of the reserve. This should have positive outcomes for a variety of native fauna including the local native bird population.

"Feral" or introduced species of birds that are present in and around the reserve include Common (Indian) Myna (Photo 1), Red-whiskered Bulbul (Photo 2) Spotted Turtle-dove (Photo 3) and European Goldfinch. Common Myna frequent the grassy verges, dead trees and lantana thickets along the edge of the reserve - returning to breeding territories on residential properties containing tree hollows or nesting sites in rooftop guttering spaces. Spotted Turtle-Doves breed and roost in dense vegetation foliage in and around the reserve and on nearby residential properties - exploiting a number of available bird feeders containing birdseed. Red-whiskered Bulbuls are mostly confined to the lantana thickets in the reserve, venturing out to feed on fleshy fruiting plants in the reserve and the gardens of the surrounding housing estate. European Goldfinch are normally observed in association with seeding of introduced weeds such as Cobblers Pegs upon which they feed, returning to the lantana for shelter. All "ferals" seem more comfortable within disturbed patches where weeds are prevalent.

Sharing the lantana with these "invaders" are notably Satin Bowerbirds and Eastern Whipbirds, as well as smaller birds such as Superb and Variegated Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwrens, Silvereyes, Brown Thornbills, Yellow Thornbills, Grey Fantails and occasionally Rufous Fantails. Lantana provides shelter and protection for many small passerine species, fruit for rosellas, bowerbirds, bulbuls and silvereyes, nectar from flowers for Eastern Spinebills and insect prey for Common Mynas.

Fruiting native vegetation attracts and supports Satin Bowerbirds, Currawongs, Olive-backed Orioles, Brown Cuckoo Doves, White-headed Pigeons and Bar Shouldered Doves.

Wattle foliage is important for foraging Yellow Thornbill and Silvereye and provides nesting sites for Red-browed Finch. The seed heads of native grasses and sedges are important to species such as Red-browed Finch and rosellas whilst the foliage provides nesting sites for Buff-rumped Thornbills.



Photo 1. Common Myna on the edge of the reserve.



Photo 2. Red-whiskered Bulbul in lantana.



Photo 3. Spotted Turtle-Dove in the reserve.

Eucalypts support leaf gleaners such as Brown Thornbill, Spotted Pardalote, as well as most honeyeaters that also feed on the nectar of Eucalypt blossoms. Spotted Pardalote have regularly nested at two known locations within the reserve in holes burrowed into soil on the sides of embankments (see Photos 4 & 5).

Other insectivorous birds are represented by Eastern Yellow Robins, Rose Robins, Scarlet Robins, Golden and Rufous Whistlers, Grey Fantails and Rufous Fantails (less commonly White-throated Treecreeper, White-winged Triller and Leaden Flycatcher).

The most frequently sighted honeyeaters within the Reserve are Little Wattlebird, Noisy Friarbird, Lewin's Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Eastern Spinebill. Scarlet Honeyeater (seasonal) and Red Wattlebird are less commonly seen and rare sighting have also been made of White-naped Honeyeater and Fuscous Honeyeater within the reserve. A single sighting of the rare and endangered Regent Honeyeater with Olive-backed Orioles in the near vicinity of the Reserve in March 2006 was a first in. Another first was the sighting of three Pacific Baza's (two adult and a juvenile) in January 2006, a possible indication of a successful nesting site within the local area. The prior year was the first ever sighting of Pacific Baza within the Reserve (Photo 6). Pacific Baza are raptors that prey mostly on insects, frogs and small lizards. Other raptors most frequently sighted within the Reserve are Brown Goshawks and less often Grey Goshawks and Collared Sparrow hawks, which all prey on other birds (and occasionally mice, rats, and rabbits). Peregrine Falcons frequently hunt and perch within the reserve especially when westerly winds prevail. Overhead, White-bellied Sea Eagles, Wedge-tailed Eagles, Whistling Kites, Little Eagles, Nankeen Kestrel and less often and Black-shouldered Kites have been seen.

Parrots commonly seen within the Reserve include King Parrots, Crimson Rosella (both regularly feed on *Dedonia viscosa* legume seed pods) and Eastern Rosella (a grass seed forager). Yellow-tail Black-Cockatoos love the dead and dying branches of black wattle and seem to relish the task of extracting protein-rich woodborer grubs as tasty morsels. Sulfur-crested Cockatoos are attracted to the areas seed feeders but also forage on the seeds and roots of native grasses and herbs, and the berries, nuts and leaf buds of native trees and shrubs. Often Galahs and occasionally Corellas forage along the grassy edges of the reserve. Rainbow Lorikeets and Musk Lorikeet forage on the nectar of eucalypt blossoms, and Silky Oaks, bottlebrushes and banksias in nearby gardens.



Photo 4. Male Spotted Pardalote perched on branch as it approaches nest. Male exiting nest burrow also shown.



Photo 5. Female Spotted Pardalote perched on branch as it approaches nest.



Photo 6. Pacific Baza seen in reserve January 2005 and January 2006.

Magpies and Magpie Larks forage along the open grassy verge of the reserve and nest in the eucalypt trees in and around the reserve. Australian Ravens and Pied Currawongs also nest within the vicinity of the reserve (See Photo 7). Currawongs are omnivores and will prey on small birds, insects (especially stick insects) caterpillars, lizards, snails and feed on berries. Grey Butcherbirds are common all year round, nesting in vegetation adjacent to the reserve, feeding on small skinks, and assisting other birds with the duty of harassing and driving away raptorial species. Dollabirds, Laughing Kookaburras and Sacred Kingfishers all breed within the vicinity of the Reserve from spring to late-summer when invertebrates such as cicadas and vertebrates such as skinks are in peak supply.



Photo 7. Pied Currawongs nesting in a Eucalypt in the reserve.



Photo 4: Joshua Coyte & camera on location: Robertson, NSW. (Photo Bruce Coyte).

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This article has been produced for Tullimbah Landcare Group by collaboration between Bruce and Joshua Coyte and TLC Group.

Elizabeth Brownlee Reserve & the Tullimbah Landcare Group



Next Working Bees:
 June 23rd 2007
 July 28th 2007
 August 25th 2007
 September 22nd 2007
 October 27th 2007
 November 24th 2007

The Reserve is located on the western side of Albion Park, in Digby Close, Albion Park (off Noble Road). This remnant patch of 'Illawarra Subtropical Rainforest' is habitat to threatened Illawarra *Zieria* AND other regionally rare flora.

The Tullimbah Landcare Group (TLC) formed out of concern for this precious vegetation patch and, with the support of Shellharbour City Council, the Reserve is gradually being rescued from Lantana infestation and weed encroachment.

The Group meets twice a month at the Reserve to undertake Bush Regeneration activities (4th Saturday of each month).

We welcome NEW volunteers to join us at the working bees. Contact Ruth Jenkins 4256 2684.

The date of the next working bee will be advertised in the Lake Times.

Come along...learn...share and make a real difference. Wear sturdy shoes and long sleeves and bring a hat & gloves. Morning tea is always provided.