

protected

Magazine of National Parks Association of Queensland

NPAQ CUTHBERTSON GRANT; ONE YEAR LATER

PLUS

**An Alliance Between Tourism and
Conservation**

ALSO FEATURED

NPAQ's Kids in NP Activity Days

Jolly's Lookout Weed Clearing

NPAQ outing in the 1974 Floods

Eastern Bristlebird

Ranger spotlight



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Images

Cover Photo: *Belenois aurota* (Caper White Butterfly) - Samantha Smith

Banner Photo (left): *Melanitis leda* (Common Evening Brown caterpillar) - Samantha Smith

Editor Samantha Smith

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(supplied)



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Photo: Grant Fraser (supplied)



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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Susanne Cooper

It's amazing to think we are half way through the year already. We will be watching the State budget with interest later this month to see the scale of investment being made in our essential assets of protected areas, including national parks.

Looking more broadly often gives a useful context for understanding the levels of protection we should be aiming for. The United Nations target of 17% of land areas protected by 2020 is the current internationally accepted target for protecting our biodiversity.

There is expectation that this will increase to 30% of land and sea areas globally to be protected by 2030 in the next United Nations Convention of Biological Diversity meeting later this year. The call for "30 x 30" will be a clear message to governments worldwide, including Australia.

However, recent research¹ is recommending that we need to be looking at conserving more than 40% of the earth's surface to maintain biodiversity of the planet (interestingly one of the authors is Queensland's Chief Scientist, Prof Hugh Possingham). Over 35,000 fauna species were mapped, and the minimum range needed to conserve them identified.

This is the most comprehensive work of this kind, as it covers so many species. The area needed equates to 44% of the Earth's surface.

It's sobering to think that each time research is undertaken that expands our understanding of the earth's biodiversity, the outcome is a higher target of land and sea areas required for its protection.

44% may sound a lot, but vast areas of land already have some form of protection. Interestingly, Australia has large areas considered to be ecologically intact, especially in more remote areas. Areas down Australia's east coast are considered to be vulnerable, and in need of greater protection.

So how does Queensland's biodiversity rate globally? We have remarkable biodiversity, with double the species of any other state or territory. We have 72% of Australia's bird species, and 85% of its mammals. Half the species living in Queensland are found nowhere else in the world – they are unique to this state. We have an opportunity to further protect this amazing natural legacy, and recognise it as an essential asset for our future well being.

But we have a way to go! This graph shows how Queensland rates against the other states for protected areas, compared to the IUCN 17% target. We are way behind. Action is needed and now.

Allan, Possingham, Atkinson, Waldron, di Marco, Butchart, Adams, Watson. "The minimum land area requiring conservation attention to safeguard biodiversity". *Science*, June 2022.

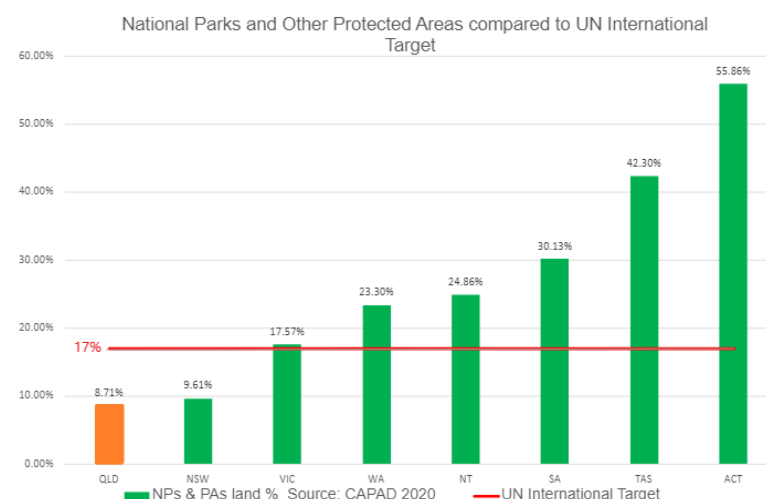


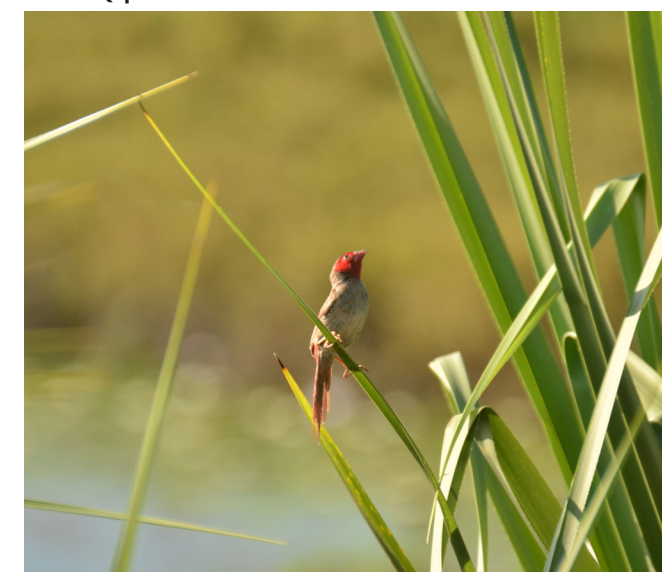
Photo Banner : *Nymphaea 'Aquatic Star'* (Tropical Waterlily) - Samantha Smith

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

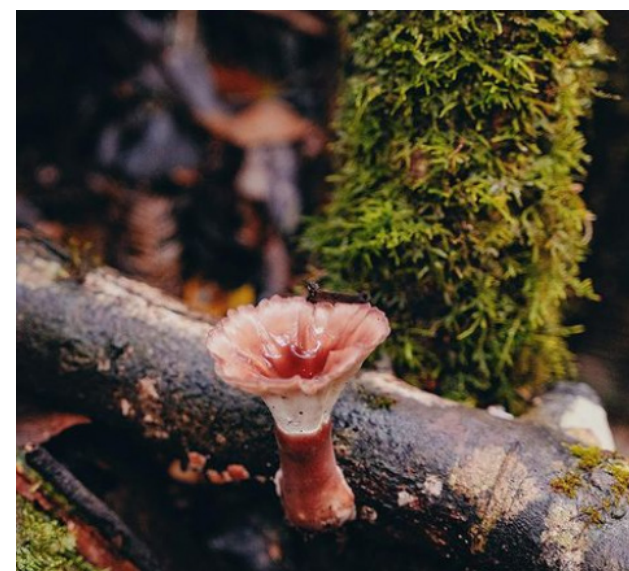
Do you have photos from a visit to a national park or protected area? Send them to admin@npa.org.au or connect with us on Instagram [@nationalparksassocqld](https://www.instagram.com/nationalparksassocqld) for your chance to feature in the next edition of NPAQ's PROTECTED Magazine! The best photos will also be featured on NPAQ social media channels and go in the draw to win some awesome NPAQ prizes*.



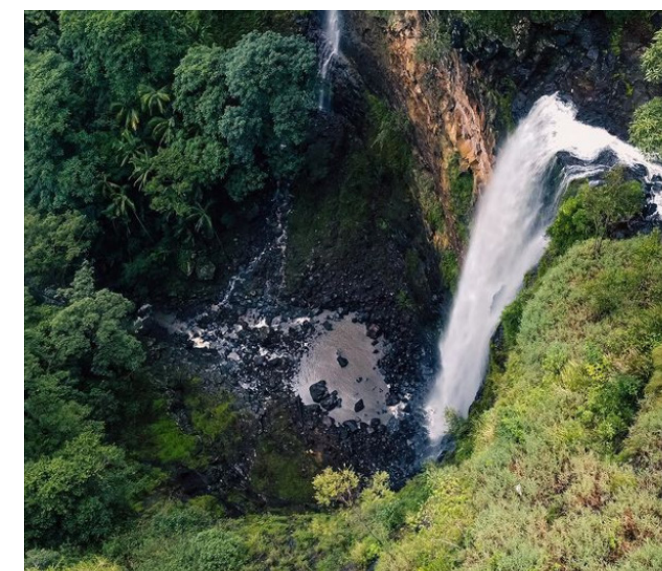
Girraween National Park
(@lora.theexplorer - Instagram)



Neochmia ruficauda (Star Finch)
Photo: Cathy Warren



Unknown Fungus, Main Range National Park
(@msmoodley - Instagram)



Mapleton National Park
(@alifestyleproject - Instagram)

NPAQ JIM CUTHBERTSON GRANT; ONE YEAR LATER

- Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh, Samantha Smith

The Jim Cuthbertson Grant is awarded every two years to assist in funding a project which:

- improves the conservation value/resilience of one or a number of parks;
- strengthens the science and evidence base of one or a number of parks or park proposals; or
- advances community knowledge of, or connection to, Queensland's national parks

This time last year, Ms Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh with Paul Revie were the 2021/22 Jim Cuthbertson grant recipients. Over the past year, they have used the grant to undertake the first fauna survey in Nerang National Park since 2003.

We caught up with Ms Lovegrove-Walsh to see how her research is progressing and how the Cuthbertson Grant has been invaluable to their research efforts.

What are you hoping to achieve from the project?

We're hoping to gain baseline data of the vertebrate assemblage in Nerang National Park. Of particular interest for these surveys are the nocturnal

animal surveys, as Nerang NP has scant records of greater gliders and powerful owls, but also small mammal surveys which have never been conducted in the Park.

Mountain biking is on the rise in Nerang NP, and the results of these surveys could elude to impacts mountain biking or increased urban pressure is having on the vertebrates in the park.

Why is this research important for Nerang NP?

Nerang NP is a large section of remnant bush land surrounded by a sea of rapid development in Australia's fifth largest city. The management plan for Nerang NP is currently being reviewed and these fauna surveys will inform future park management decisions. The surveys help us with our understanding of threatened species in the Park or where species are that are sensitive to disturbance.



Why did you apply for the Cuthbertson Grant?

The revision of the management plan and lack of baseline fauna data compelled us to apply for this grant. We primarily needed the Cuthbertson grant for costs associated with fauna surveys, specifically the development of a fauna survey guide and an ecologist to conduct small mammal trapping that would otherwise be impossible to conduct with volunteers alone.

How has the Cuthbertson grant been used (what has it funded)?

Thus far, the grant has paid for the fauna survey guide developed by a zoologist which we have been following for our fauna surveys over the last 12 months. The guideline has been used as a point of reference for community surveys to ensure best practice methods are followed.

To date, 20 surveys and one round of camera trapping has been conducted. Results of these surveys compelled us to apply for an additional grant to install 50 nest boxes in Nerang NP for greater gliders, as we discovered greater gliders in areas of the park where they hadn't been recorded before.

Would this project be possible without grants?

The majority of this project would not be possible without grants. The Cuthbertson grant has allowed us to hire a zoologist to write a survey guide, engage volunteers in nocturnal animal spotting, and will pay for a zoologist to conduct small mammal trapping surveys (which wouldn't be possible without funding).

The Cuthbertson grant alone does not cover all the costs associated with the fauna survey's we're aiming to do, but has set us up to receive further funding from other sources to continue this incredibly important work.

Discoveries to date:

- Copper backed toadlet (*Pseudophryne raveni*) is widespread in Nerang National Park, favouring ephemeral pools throughout the Park (even on ridge lines!).
- Cane toads are also throughout the Park, even on ridge lines in dry sclerophyll forest.
- Greater gliders are more widespread than previously

thought! The discovery of more greater gliders in Nerang NP led us to apply for a larger grant to install 50 nest boxes for them as part of a Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Grant.

- No feral or domestic animals appeared on our baited cameras (no foxes, cats, dogs).
- First record of a common dunnart on our camera traps:



The \$4,000 NPAQ Cuthbertson grant is made possible thanks to a much-appreciated bequest from Jim Cuthbertson, and matching funding from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The grant is offered every two years via the NPAQ website, with the Inaugural grant being presented in 2018/19.



Photo (Banner) : Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh in Nerang NP - Samantha Smith

Photo (Inline left) : Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh & QPWS Ranger selecting tree for glider box - Samantha Smith

Photo (Inline, above left) : Dunnart caught on camera trap - Samantha Smith

Photo (Inline above) : Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh measuring height of tree - Samantha Smith

AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN TOURISM AND NATURE

- NPAQ Advocacy Committee

Queensland's national parks protect Queensland's rich biodiversity and provide opportunities to appreciate nature and healthy outdoor recreation that helps our physical and mental health. They also generate approximately \$2.64 billion through ecotourism annually and support thousands of jobs, particularly in the regions.

Queensland currently has over 1,000 protected areas, including national parks. However they are underfunded which compromises effective management and limits the capacity to grow our protected area system.

In October 2020, the

Palaszczuk Government released the Protected Areas Strategy 2020-30. The strategy promised to double the protected land in Queensland from 8.2% to 17%, an increase of 15 million hectares.

Twelve months after the release of the plan and Queensland has only added an additional 0.5% to its protected land estate, maintaining its position as the worst performing state in Australia towards reaching the internationally accepted 17% goal.

To better protect and present Queensland's critical natural assets, the National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) has formed an alliance with the Queensland

Conservation Council (QCC), the Queensland First Nations Tourism Council, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Ecotourism Australia, and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC).

"It's a practical move" explained Susanne Cooper, President of NPAQ. "The Queensland Tourism and Conservation alliance members have come together to ensure the government looks after our joint interests in growing and improving our protected areas and better progressing its Protected Areas Strategy."

The alliance brings together the leaders of Queensland tourism and conservation sectors to ensure that there is a stronger voice to advocate for our natural resources and to push for greater funding to maintain and preserve Queensland's unique natural and cultural environment for the benefit of locals and ecotourists.

Ultimately, it's about a partnership where the combined organisations speak as one voice in pursuit of our common interests.

"NPAQ has made it very clear from the outset that we will not necessarily be in full agreement with all positions and priorities

that the tourism industry or others in the partnership and that from time to time we are likely to have differences. This was acknowledged by all parties upfront. But where there are common agendas, we will have a bigger impact with a united approach to government rather than a divided approach," said Ms Cooper.

The Alliance has called on the state government to significantly increase management funding and provide an acceleration of growth of Queensland's protected area network by 2032 in time for the Brisbane Olympic Games.

"If we are going to reach the 17% target, we need to start now. A substantial commitment is needed in the 2022 state budget with funding to grow our national parks and nature refuges," said Susanne Cooper.

Additional funding will ensure effective management of existing and new protected areas; support nature-based tourism activities, and provide new opportunities for Indigenous-led conservation and cultural ecotourism.

"By increasing the protected area estate of Queensland

and correspondingly raising the funding dedicated to the maintenance of these natural assets, more habitat will be secured to protect our iconic biodiversity," said Ms Cooper.

"Queensland is home to 85% of Australian mammal species, and half of the species living here are found nowhere else on earth; they are unique to this state."

"Also, investment by the Government to develop sensitive infrastructure which allows visitors to sustainably appreciate these assets will be essential to secure the future of ecotourism in our national parks."

"We look forward to working further with our tourism and conservation partners to better safeguard Queensland's special natural areas."

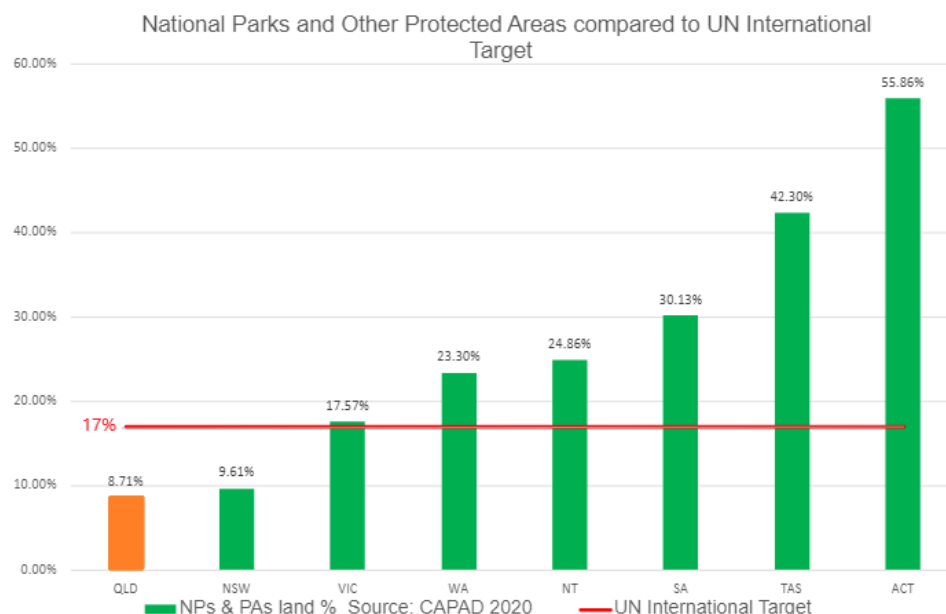


Photo Banner : Fraser Island track - Samantha Smith

JOLLY'S LOOKOUT WEED CLEARING

- Ian Witheyman

This is a conservation story about longevity, consistency, leadership and determination.

I often reflect—is conservation about a feeling, an ideal, or an action? Well, in this story, it's all three. As humans, many of us have an emotional connection with nature that drives conservation tendencies and actions.

Interestingly, the word 'conservation' is a noun (a place, a thing etc.) whereas the word 'conserve' is a verb (doing something). The characters in this story are the doers. They have tremendous energy and commitment, some turning up monthly for 25 to 30 plus years. This equates to 300 or more visits to the mountain in times of drought or flood for some of these long-term volunteers!

The Jollies Lookout bush regeneration project started with grand Lantana-pulling sessions in 1986. Honorary protectors, along with some NPAQ members, were led by QPWS rangers Wil Buch and John Ravenscroft. They undertook an initial project area between Boombana and the Mount Nebo village, restoring degraded areas using the Bradley method bush regeneration technique.

NPAQ ramped up their presence in 1990 to celebrate the association's 60th anniversary and support their national park advocacy role with a hands-on activity in the park. In 2005, NPAQ activities moved to the Egernia circuit at Jollies Lookout, again targeting Lantana in the understory with many large thickets being removed, though this group isn't fussy—they'll remove any weeds that happen to pop their heads above ground! The Thylogale walking track became the focus in 2010 with more challenging Lantana infestations to tackle.



Lantana has been the key offender in the decline of native species, invading when the ground was disturbed during early settlement, logging and, in some locations, subsistence farming. The NPAQ technique has been hand removal, which includes removing the root system and following up with re-treatments for months and years afterwards, with some astonishing results. Areas previously dominated by Lantana have regenerated with native ferns, ground covers and mid-story species. Photo monitoring plots set up over time have catalogued the changes in recovery.

The ecosystems around Jollies Lookout and Boombana are made up of rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest, with flagship species like Brown Pine Podocarpus elatus and Lacebark Brachychiton discolour. The contribution of the volunteers assists in protecting many plant and animal species.

In more recent years, there have been multiple challenges that include difficulty in recruiting new volunteers and enduring significant droughts and bumper wet seasons. Despite these challenges, the current work area is targeting perhaps the biggest area of Lantana invasion to date, where steep scree slopes make removal even more challenging. Angus and the crew (somewhat ironically) call this 'the last major thicket'.

Like most volunteer groups, there is a core of long-term, dedicated individuals that keep the show on the road. It's important to recognise the great contribution these members have made to the conservation project over the years, and without their

commitment the project wouldn't have been possible. We mustn't forget the great efforts that all the other volunteers make by supporting the main activity with shorter bursts of enthusiasm that keeps things ticking along.

Some key contributors to the project more recently include: Angus McElnea (current co-ordinator who began work in 1994), Russell Gardner since June 1990, John Nowill since 2005. Some earlier project stalwarts that contributed greatly to the success include Ruth Read, Helen Lucas, Ken Sandercoe, Dawn Vance, Don Cumming, Heatherbell Mellor, Len & Nola Frazer, and more recently Lorraine Best and Ian Peacock.

I had a chat with Angus prior to preparing this article about the NPAQ project, and I asked him about what motivates him, and what are some key benefits and milestones. Here's some of what he said:

It's a beautiful place to work with views out to the bay islands. I enjoy working with a great group of people where friendships are forged. Some students do their Duke of Edinburgh award volunteer element using the project and first year ecology UQ students walk the trails annually as part of their botany/ecology studies. It's a breeding ground for volunteers and new rangers. Another highlight was in 1995 when The National Trust presented NPAQ with a John Herbert Award for the Boombana bush regeneration project.

QPWS passes on its gratitude and thanks to NPAQ for coordinating the project over many years. Examples like these help to drive and motivate our own local staff to achieve great results for conservation.



Photo Banner : Lantana - supplied
Photo inline (left) : Ranger Matthew Wiseman with Angus McElnea, 2010 - supplied
Photo inline (above) : Volunteers - supplied

KIDS IN NP ACTIVITY DAYS 2022

"I'm bored", "can we go and do something?", "we've been at home for ever!" Every parent has experienced at least one of these phrases during school holidays.

This year, NPAQ have re-launched our Kids in National Parks initiative to both encourage children and families to interact with and appreciate nature and beat school holiday boredom.

As well as some great at home projects and resources on the NPAQ Kids in NP web page, NPAQ have are now hosting a number of interactive activity days in national parks and protected areas around south-east Queensland on long weekend and during school holidays.

NPAQ strongly believes there are a number of benefits of childhood interaction with nature, including:

- positive mental health outcomes
- physical health benefits
- enhanced intellectual development
- a stronger sense of concern and care for the environment in later life

Our first activity day was held

at Wellington Point at the King Island Conservation Park. During the 2 hour interactive event, children explored what coastal ecosystems were and why they are important.

Led by Marine Scientist and NPAQ Operations Manager, Samantha Smith, the children and their guardians learnt about some of the plants and animals both on the island and in the surrounding Moreton Bay Marine Park. They also learnt about the importance of protected areas and species and even saved a stranded toad fish from the rock pools before getting creative with sand sculpting and shell painting.



The next NPAQ Activity Day is scheduled for July 2nd and will be focused on teaching participants the art of bird watching with help from Birdlife Southern Queensland.

Keep an eye on emails and the NPAQ activities page for more fantastic Kids in NP Activity Days through 2022!

Photo Banner & inline : Simone Maynard and Susanne Cooper - Kids in NP Coastal Exploration activity day

NPAQ OUTING IN THE 1974 FLOODS

- Cecily SANDERCOCK (now FEARNLEY)

2ND Post-War Field Outing to SPRINGBROOK

January's Foundation Day Weekend, 1947.

As recorded by then new Member, Cecily SANDERCOCK (now FEARNLEY) in 1948 and discovered amongst old papers in 2009.

The N.P.A.Q. Outing to Springbrook was planned for the Foundation Day Week-end, of January 25th – 27th 1947. The Association's Outing Committee was conducting the trip to Springbrook on the border of Queensland and New South Wales, and it was my first with them. I had joined only a few months before. I knew it was on the Queensland/New South Wales border and separated from Lamington National Park by the Numinbar Valley, but I had never been there. Apart from a group of small National Parks on the tableland there should be farms with a few houses, then rain forest, eucalypt forest, creeks and waterfalls. It would be interesting to camp there and visit for the long weekend.

As two lads also from the Brisbane City Council Works Dept.'s Drawing Office had also joined the N.P.A.Q. recently, we three decided to go together. I persuaded a girl friend of mine, Una to join me on this trip, for Una and another friend (Fay) had recently climbed Mt. Samson with me. However Una had become attached suddenly to a young lad who was already going as part of

another group, and we asked if we could join them. They were quite agreeable.

Decisions had to be made as to what food, clothing and equipment should be taken. Then Lionel Simpson, one of the lads offered to take Norm Traves and myself in his car. Una was to come too if she so wished. But she didn't wish, as she preferred being close to her new interest. So the back of the car was to be filled with bread and other luggage that the others of our party perhaps would find awkward to carry in the passenger train.

For the previous four days it had rained – nay, it had poured in great sheets from the heavens. Now and then there was relief; then for a change it just drizzled. The cause of all this rain was a cyclone that was slowly moving down the coast. The morning of Saturday arrived, and early frantic phone calls were made. "Are you going?" "Do you think it will fine up?" "Is it still on?" This was my first outing with N.P.A.Q members, and I wondered how they would react to damp weather. I certainly did not want to be considered a softie or a squib!

With true Sandercock stubbornness and dogged determination I decided to go or die in the attempt. I wasn't going to buy provisions and pack up my bags for nothing!

So at 0800 hrs (yes, I used to use military time then and sometimes

even now) Lionel arrived at our front gate in his little Morris 8/40, and I pushed my huge heavy pack inside. It was the same pack and tent bundle I had carried for Mt. Samson. "I'm going to find a lighter pack somewhere" I thought. We then drove across to the South Brisbane Railway Station and waited there for Norm.

Only a few of the original parties were as foolish as we were, and in our own group we ended up with 7 instead of the intended 11 members. The few who had decided to brave it out 'no matter what' were obviously keen indeed. Though we expected the rivers to be high, we had no doubt that we would be able to get through quite easily.

The train departure time came, and then I realized the other 4 members of the original party including Una had come only to wave off the adventurous ones. Lionel and I said "adieu" to Rex, Rolf, Bill and Ruth, then continued to wait for Norm. The back of Lionel's little car was by now packed with luggage, as the train travellers had handed us most of their bundles and packs. They thought it was inconvenient to carry it in what was after all only a suburban carriage.

Norm duly arrived, and we three set off, rain still falling down and coming through several openings of the material roof on my side of the car, despite fitting in the celluloid windows. Indeed I decided to wear

my raincoat to keep the water off me!

We three were in great spirits as Lionel drove along the road towards Southport. A few sections were under water but we merely made a mighty splash and spray as we went through them. In low sections off the sides of the road we saw whole paddocks were under water, and it looked as if we might indeed have difficulty in getting through. A short discussion, and we resolved to go ahead as far as we could, and meet our difficulties when we came to them.

Passing over the Logan River's bridge, we saw below us a swirling mass of dirty water. The river was very high, indeed it was running a banker! On and on we drove, rain still pouring down, until a car's driver travelling in the opposite direction called on us to stop. Seeing our small low car, he earnestly suggested we should turn back. The Coomera River had broken its banks and the road was well under water. We thanked him, but decided to press on, and see it for ourselves. I had never seen a really good flood before, and here was an opportunity not to be missed.

Lionel contributed one of the many good patches of humour we enjoyed on the way. Almost every car approaching us signalled for us to go back, and he tired of it. So as each car approached he would lean out, wave, and call out "How are you Mate?" which quite upset the

concerned motorist. He uttered it in such a debonair fashion, too!

The Coomera River is very wide at this point, and has a high bank on the northern township side. Consisting of a dozen or so houses, a general store, garage, post office and the inevitable pub, this small town had a great string of roadside parked cars around the pub. We drove on towards the bridge. Only a few cars and owners were stopped there, owners of those previously parked cars were probably drowning their sorrows inside that pub. Here we pulled up, jumped out, and walked right across the bridge in the pouring rain.

Sure enough, the low southern riverbank was well and truly flooded, and side paddocks covered upstream and down. In front of us the road disappeared under a vast sheet of water. Muddy water from the west met the wind and rain from the east, causing small turbid waves to break on the Pacific Highway!

The main river itself was a raging torrent, with debris of all kinds floating down. It was respectable debris in a way, for we saw no dead animals like cattle floating along, just trees, branches and fences. Before the week-end was out though, three men were to lose their lives in these waters, and thousands of acres of crops ruined.

We tried to estimate the depth of

water on the road, but thought 3'0" to 3'6" a little too deep for our tiny car. As we stood there in the wet a big truck came along, and stopped to consider the situation. Of course we struck up a conversation with the driver, and a sudden exclamation from both parties revealed that Norm and the driver knew each other from Wartime Service up in Borneo, Tarakan and other similar places.

After swapping yarns, the driver decided to try to get through. Off he went, slowly entering the water, then sinking lower and lower as he progressed. After about 50 yards he stopped, decided to think better of it, reversed out, and parked the truck. He would wait. As it was presently high tide on the coast, the general opinion was that it was the tide backing up the flood waters. Low tide was to be at 1500 hrs, but after a discussion, we three decided to turn back to Beenleigh. There we would ring through to Mudgeeraba where the train party had arranged to assemble if the mountain road was impassable.

As it happened, the low tide later made no difference, for more water was pouring into the river from the headwaters. Instead of subsiding, the depth of water increased.

To read the full story, visit www.npaq.org.au/1974-floods-trip

Photo Banner : Brisbane 1974 floods - Queensland State Archives (ITM1143346 www.archivessearch.qld.gov.au/items/ITM1143346)

PARK IN FOCUS

Whitsunday Islands National Park

If you're travelling to the Great Barrier Reef, it's certainly worth spending a day exploring the Whitsunday Islands National Park and Whitehaven Beach!

The Whitsundays are just a short boat trip from Airlie Beach, about 900km from Brisbane. The area is known for its perfect white sands, crystal clear waters and pristine beaches.

The sand in the area is the result of a now dormant volcano just off the coast which produced the spectacular white silica sand. Aside from the beautiful white colour, the silica sand has the added benefit of never getting above about 26 degrees Celsius so it's perfect to walk on bare foot year round.

The Whitsunday Islands and the surrounding area is internationally significant and protected as part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. It was the first such area ever declared in Australia and is still the largest ever established.

If you're short on time, a great way to explore the area is via one of the many available day trips.

Tours leave from most of the island resorts in the Whitsundays, including Hamilton Island, Daydream Island and Long Island.

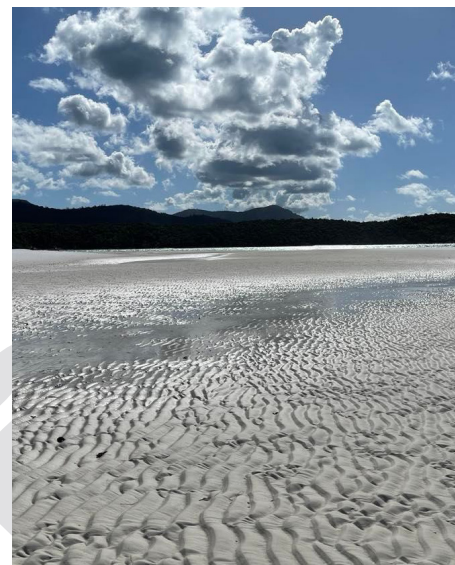
One of the best walking trails at Whitehaven Beach is accessible only by boat. You begin your walk at Chance Bay and then follow stone steps up into a thick rainforest. Native hoop pines on the headlands and hillsides support a variety of native fauna including beautiful birds and rock wallabies native to the area.

After an uphill walk of about 15 minutes, the trail opens up to three fantastic viewing platforms of the white sands and surrounding waters. If you're lucky between May and September you might be able to spot a migrating humpback whale!



Photo Banner & Inline : Whitsunday Islands National Park - Samantha Smith

After soaking up the views on one of three platforms, the path will gradually take you down to the water's edge where you can see baby rays relaxing in the crystal blue waters by the shore. The entire circuit can be done in as little as 30 minutes but I would definitely recommend taking your time to enjoy this world renowned location.



Finish your day of adventure off with some snorkelling before heading back to either Airlie Beach or one of the beautiful Island resorts.



WILDLIFE FEATURE

Eastern Bristlebird

Found in New South Wales and on the southern border of Queensland in the ranges, the endangered Eastern Bristlebird is becoming a very rare sight for birdwatchers.

There are three main areas this shy bird can be found; in southern Queensland, central New South Wales and the New South Wales/Victorian border. The entire population of less than 2,000 individuals is estimated to occupy a total area of about 120 sq km (as of late 2021).

Sadly, there are now only four populations in the southern Queensland/northern NSW area with a total of 35 birds. Just 15 years ago, there were 154 birds across 14 populations.

Like many species in the southern Queensland/northern New South



Photo Banner & Inline : *Dasyornis brachypterus* (Eastern Bristlebird) - Grant Fraser

Wales area, these birds have been severely affected by extreme weather events, including fires in 2019/20.

The Eastern Bristlebird builds their nest close to the ground and will only have a single clutch of 1 - 2 eggs per year. The eggs are laid during August - February, the end of the Australian bush fire season. Unfortunately a large majority of young do not survive to adulthood due to predators and severe weather events.

Dark bristles around the beak give this little ground dwelling bird its name. Though capable of flights, it is rarely seen flying and instead hops around the underbrush in areas with a dense understory.

The favourite food of the Eastern Bristlebird is insects, particularly ants, which is why it is most commonly found scampering along the ground rather than flying.

In an attempt to save this species, specifically the Queensland/New South Wales border community, a captive breeding program is under way at the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary in Queensland. This program includes breeding the birds selectively to improve resistance to disease, increase genetic diversity and raise the fertility rate of the species. Eggs/chicks are also being collected



from the wild as part of a recovery plan.

A frequent fire regime of between 3-6 years is required for the southern Queensland/northern New South Wales area and should include ecological and asset protection burns. Education for personnel planning and undertaking hazard reduction burns is now being rolled out so they are able to identify the species and are aware of its habitat.

Weeds and invasive plant species also pose a threat to this bird, particularly Lantana and Crofton Weed. Control programs are being put in place for these two plants and other invasive weeds and encroaching shrub species.

References:

Eastern Bristlebird - profile | NSW Environment, Energy and Science. (2022). <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=10206>

BirdLife International (BirdLife International. (2016, October). IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: *Dasyornis brachypterus*. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22704507/93972785>

NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE

- Dave Haynes

Who doesn't love a waterfall and Barron Gorge National Park is home to several amazing waterfalls that range from beautiful little falls on Stony Creek up to the majestic giant that is Barron Falls.

The Barron Gorge National Park extends from the suburbs of Cairns on the coastal plain at Lake Placid to the elevated regions of the Atherton Tablelands near Kuranda, and lies within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The park is part of the traditional lands of the Djabugandji Bama people and the falls are known to them as Din Din.

My first experience of Barron Gorge National Park was in 2003 when I was invited to Cairns by Professor Jamie Seymour and Dr Teresa Carrette after meeting them in Timor Leste and taken on a tour of the natural wonders of the Cairns region and of course part of the tour involved Barron Gorge falls. Unfortunately, I had arrived at the end of the dry season so there was very little water running over the falls.

I had unsuccessfully attempted to see the falls in all their glory on several occasions since my initial visit and finally in 2022 I

was able to visit the falls after significant rainfall had occurred around ANZAC Day.

My visit to Barron Gorge National Park started with a drive out to the suburb of Kamerunga for a hike along Stony Creek which was flowing strongly after the immense downpours Cairns and the Tablelands had experienced. I headed up to Kuranda hoping the falls would be flowing strongly.

The road access to Barron Falls is through the hamlet of Kuranda, a beautiful little town with vibrant markets and a relaxed feel. Passing through the town the route to Barron Falls is well signposted and is sealed. Alternately, visitors from Cairns can either travel to Kuranda on the Skyrail, a cableway, or on the Kuranda Scenic railway. Upon arriving at the car park access to the viewing platforms is via an elevated, wheelchair-accessible 1.2 km return boardwalk suspended high above the forest floor winds through lush, rainforest canopy to the Barron Falls lookouts and Barron Falls railway platform.

There are 2 main viewing points but I found the lookout located

above the train station to give the best views of the falls as white water falls 125 meters to the gorge below. The sound of the falling water is truly mesmerising and the spray and mist can be felt on the lookout. There is a rocky feature at the base of the falls that locals call "The Praying Man" seeming like a face with hands outstretched in prayer, but to me it reminded me of a bonsai garden.

The area around Barron falls is well maintained and suitable for all levels of fitness; the majesty of the falls in full flood at the end of the wet season is a sight well worth seeing. The best time to see the falls in flood is during the wet season between November and March.



Photo Banner & Inline : Barron Gorge National Park - Dave Haynes

RANGER SPOTLIGHT

Insights into the diverse backgrounds and day-to-day activities of Queensland's park rangers

Ranger Natalie
Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS)

Natalie is a Ranger with Marine Parks based in Moreton Bay Marine Park. For as long as Natalie can remember, she has loved being outdoors. Her love of the natural environment and a passion for protecting it for future generations helped shape her career pathway to becoming a Ranger.

How long have you worked in national parks?

I have been a Ranger in Moreton Bay Marine Park for around 14 years. I started my career with QPWS by volunteering in the Marine Policy team and then with the Moreton Bay Marine Park team. I learned a lot in these roles but found that I was yearning to get back out on the water again, so I jumped at the opportunity when a marine park Ranger position came up in the team. It was, and still is, my dream job! As the Natural Resource Management Ranger, I manage marine animal strandings, including rescuing marine wildlife such as turtles, dugongs, dolphins, and whales. I also do natural resource management surveys and love educating the public about our marine park and its incredible natural values. I feel truly privileged to be a custodian of such a beautiful place and take great pride in our daily work.

Which parks have you worked in?

I have spent all my Ranger years in Moreton Bay Marine Park—if you love it, why change! I have spent time working at Gheebulum Kunungai (Moreton Island) National Park, South Stradbroke Island Conservation Park, Bribie Island and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) recreation areas, assisting other Rangers during peak holiday periods, after natural disasters and being a crew member at planned burns or wildfires.

Before working with QPWS, I worked in New South Wales as a research technician with NSW Fisheries; it was here that I was first introduced to marine park management.

What is special about your current park?

Moreton Bay Marine Park is amazing! Despite the relatively high use it sees, it still boasts incredible natural values. On any day, you can see herds of up to 100 dugong, several different marine turtle species

popping up for a breath or gliding along under the surface, populations of vulnerable inshore dolphins or the good old bottlenose dolphin putting on a show. We also see around 30,000 humpback whales passing through the park on their annual migration every year. Another amazing migratory animal that visits Moreton Bay are the 32 species of migratory shorebirds. Around 30,000 shorebirds migrate annually, from as far afield as Alaska, to spend the summer months feeding and resting in Moreton Bay—what an incredible journey.

What is your most memorable moment as a ranger?

Some of my memorable moments have been working with marine turtles. That feeling of satisfaction that you get when you release an adult turtle that has been entangled in rope and struggling for a considerable period. I have conducted many rescues like this over the years, and I have to say, no matter how many times you do it, you still get a massive rush of emotion and sheer elation as you cut an animal free. Watching the turtle swim away freely and surface to breathe is truly one of the most wonderful moments.

Marine turtle feeding ground research trips have also been a highlight. Working with the Threatened Species team, turtles are caught and brought onboard vessels to record a wide range of information, this is by no means easy work; many of these animals weigh over 100kg! But it is one of those 'pinch yourself' moments when I feel very fortunate to have the chance to be hands-on and contribute to important research that assists with managing threatened species within our park.

Can you describe your favourite national parks experience?

Point Lookout on Minjerribah is a special location that holds a place in my heart. The views are something to behold. Every year I visit Point Lookout during the whale season, sit quietly on the headland, and appreciate nature in all its beauty as humpback whales pass by (and dolphins, turtles, rays, and sometimes dugongs and seals). My visits aren't quite as peaceful in recent years as I make a point of taking my two young children with me on my pilgrimage! I feel



Photo Banner & inline : QPWS Ranger Natalie Donnelly, Heathlands Resources Reserve - © Queensland Government.

very strongly about instilling these values in my children, and there's something pretty special about being able to show your children their first breaching whale.

What is the best part about working in a National Park?

Spending your workdays in a beautiful natural environment and playing a role in protecting it for future generations to enjoy is the best part about being a Ranger. It is a very rewarding job, 14 years on, and I still love turning up to work every day. I love being hands-on and feeling like I make a difference, which I think Ranger roles are particularly suited.

What is your top tip for visitors to your park?

If you plan on heading out on the Bay, make sure you do your homework before you go. Familiarise yourself with the Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning maps—available online, on your GPS or apps on your phone—and try to have a good understanding of where you are going and the associated rules and regulations, all of which help keep Moreton Bay Marine Park a natural place for us all to enjoy.

Also, I can't say this enough, take a minute, slow down and take it all in. By slowing down your boat speed, you will see so many magnificent marine creatures that we are lucky enough to have live right in Brisbane's backyard

NPAQ thanks Hank for taking time to answer our questions. We appreciate the work all QPWS rangers undertake in protecting Queensland's national parks.

WHAT'S IN



WANT TO RECEIVE PROTECTED TO YOUR DOOR?

NPAQ activities

Circuit Walk in Dularcha National Park

Date: 9th July 2022

Meet: 9am at 2 Dorson Drive, Mooloolah 4533

Cost: \$5

Leader: Len Lowry (0428 335 572)

2022 Vegetation Management Group

Meet: 9:00am - the lower car park of Jolly's Lookout of D'Aguilar National Park.

What to bring: Gloves, protective clothing, eye protection, insect repellent, sunscreen, water, morning tea, and lunch.

Dates: 23 July 2022, 20 August 2022, 24 September 2022

Bird watching 2022-07-24 Tichi Tamba Wetland Reserve Bald Hills

Date: 24th July 2022

Meet: 7:30am at Wyampa Road, Bald Hills 4036

Cost: \$5

Leader: Ian Peacock (0416 943 280)

Lake Baroon to Kondalilla Falls

Date: 13 August 2022

Meet: 9am at 207 Narrows Road, North Maleny, 4552

Cost: \$5

Leader: Len Lowry (0428 335 572)

The Secret Forest and Its Connection to NPAQ

Date: 16th August 2022

Meet: 9:30pm at 401 Sherwood Road, Rocklea, 4106

Cost: \$5

NPAQ events

NPAQ 90th Anniversary Dinner

Date: 22nd July 2022

Meet: 6:30pm at Brisbane City Hall

Cost: from \$70*

Due to COVID 19 we have been unable to celebrate our 90th anniversary, which passed in 2020. With restrictions now eased, this July we are finally going to celebrate this momentous occasion with a formal dinner on July 22nd at the same venue as that inaugural meeting, Brisbane City Hall.

Vales

NPAQ is deeply saddened by the passing of Annette Peacock after a long illness. Annette joined the Association in 1992 and she and Ian regularly attended member meetings and were supper providers for many years. Annette was always a willing hand at functions. Until this year, she participated in all social activities and camps. She has been a great support for husband Ian with regards Bird Group Activities. Her petite figure and friendly face will be missed by many members.

NPAQ is also deeply saddened by the passing of Cecily Fearnley who passed away on 21st January 2022, just a few weeks before her 97th birthday. Cecily was a life member with NPAQ and sister to Ken Sandercore who also recently passed away. An 'Environmental Icon' in the Noosa area, Cecily became a prodigious writer of conservation articles for local newspapers and enjoyed sharing her deep love and knowledge of the natural world. Both Cecily and her husband were very keep participants on NPAQ outings and enthusiastic NPAQ supporters.

We send our heartfelt condolences to their family and friends.



YES! I WANT TO BECOME A NPAQ MEMBER AND RECEIVE PROTECTED EVERY QUARTER

As part of your NPAQ membership you receive four PROTECTED magazines every year both digitally and in hard copy, if you choose. You will also receive our monthly Neck Of The Woods newsletter, exclusively for members with organisation updates, including advocacy work and NPAQ event information.

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Last Name

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- ☐ Household (\$70)
- ☐ Conservation Partner (Individual) \$245
- ☐ Conservation Partner (Household) \$370

*Conservation Partner membership include one year registration + a tax deductible donation

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