

protected

Magazine of National Parks Association of Queensland

a focus on value in national parks

WHY AND HOW WOULD WE PLACE A DOLLAR VALUE ON OUR NATIONAL PARKS?

PLUS

A Season of Giving & Adventure

ALSO FEATURED

Deciduous Trees

Romeo Lahey Lecture Review

NPAQ Moments in Time

Dingoes

Ranger Spotlight



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The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) advocates for the protection, expansion, effective management and presentation of national parks and other protected areas in Queensland.

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Contributors, please include contact details and brief personal summary. Articles can be submitted via email or hard copy. Digital photos should be minimum 300dpi.

Images

Cover Photo: *Himantopus himantopus* chicks (black-winged stilt) - S Smith

Back Cover Photo: NPAQ Archive 1953 newsletter season greeting - NPAQ

Banner Photo (left): *Jacaranda mimosifolia* - S Smith

Banner Photo (pages 18-19): *Laridae* (Great crested tern) - S Smith

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Editor Samantha Smith

Want to get involved with NPAQ?

NPAQ welcomes people from all walks of life and offers a variety of ways to be involved:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
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BECOME A MEMBER, DONATE OR VOLUNTEER

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Wallaman Falls

Photo: Robert Ashdown



Melia azedara

Photo: Michel Chauvet



Dingo (*Canis lupus dingo*)

Photo: Karlel on Pixabay



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Susanne Cooper

Welcome to our Spring issue of *Protected* - though it's been a very dry, warm start to the season. Welcome also to Sara Byers - our new Marketing and Communications Manager who started with us early October.

A recent highlight was the annual Romeo Lahey lecture, this year given by Prof Hugh Possingham on The Future of Biodiversity Conservation. In a great lecture, Hugh presented interesting factual information that challenged our thinking, and how we regard the status quo. One of these that struck me was that if Queensland was a country, it would be the 10th largest in the world! This makes sense, given the diversity of our landscapes and ecosystems, as our state spans such a wide latitudinal range. Another intriguing statistic was that Australia has 10 of the top 100 ecological scientists globally; an amazing achievement for a nation with such a small population.

There have been some major environmental announcements by the Federal Government recently. One that received a fair bit of media attention was the release of the (draft) feral cat management plan - a 10 year plan across all states and territories to reduce the impacts of feral cats on our native wildlife. The statistic of cats killing over 6 million animals in Australia every day is challenging to comprehend. Since arriving in Australia with Europeans, cats

have played a major role in the extinction of 34 mammal species. They have spread across 99% of our country (only some islands and specially constructed fenced-off areas are cat-free). I think we all await the implementation of this plan with positive expectation; they are a threat to our wildlife that needs to be actively reduced.

Another announcement that did not generate much attention was Australia is one of the first countries to sign the High Seas Treaty. The high seas are the international waters lying beyond the boundaries of any country. They make up roughly two-thirds of our planet's oceans, but only about one percent is currently protected. Once 60 countries have ratified the High Seas Treaty, it will come into force, allowing for the creation of international marine parks on the world's high seas. Signing the treaty is the first crucial step.



Although the high seas may seem somewhat distant from National Parks in Queensland, they are part of conserving our state, national and global biodiversity.

It's all connected, so protecting and managing one part will have benefits for the whole system.

NPAQ is one of many State based National Park Associations across Australia; others are South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, and Tasmania. They come together as the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC). NPAC recently had their AGM in Adelaide, where a number of issues relevant to Park protection and management across the States were discussed; more on this in upcoming issues of *Protected* and *Neck of the Woods*. Queensland hosted the AGM 4 years ago; it will be our turn again soon.

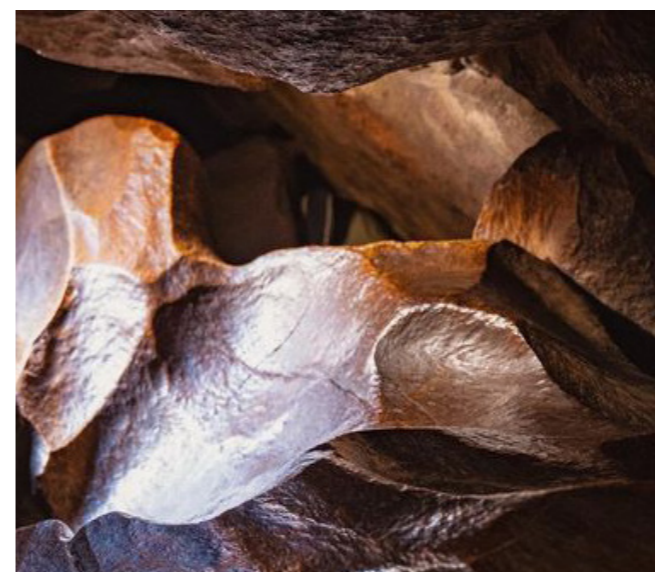
Our next *Protected* will be out in January - so I hope you get a chance to appreciate our unique natural areas as part of your festive season activities. This year has been one of considerable change for NPAQ, but change with a lot of potential and positive opportunities for the years ahead.

Susanne Cooper
President, NPAQ

Photo Banner: *Rhinoptera neglecta* (Australian cownose ray) - S Smith
Photo Inline: Great Barrier Reef - S Smith

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

Do you have photos from a visit to a national park or protected area? Send them to admin@npaq.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*.



Inside a cave - Girraween National Park
(@Tils - Instagram)



Water dragon at Mt Coot tha Botanical Gardens
Photo: anonymous



Bougainvillea
Photo: Samantha Smith



Goolboddi (Orpheus Island) National Park
(@mrbenblanche - Instagram)

WHY AND HOW WOULD WE PLACE A \$ VALUE ON OUR NATIONAL PARKS?

- Richard Brown & Sally Driml

Why place dollar values on national parks?

National Parks generate a wide range of benefits to society including their contribution, directly and indirectly, to our economies and to our general well-being.

However, most of these benefits are not explicitly incorporated or even acknowledged in our standard measures of economic performance such as national income (ie. GDP).

One important reason for this is that the services our national parks provide as inputs into our country's production/output/income are effectively free – gifts of nature. In many respects they are invisible.

Why does it matter that we have dollar values for national parks?

If a resource is under-valued in monetary terms, such as the air we breathe, if left unregulated we will over-utilize it, possibly beyond a sustainable level. If it is not evident that it is contributing significantly to the economy/incomes/welfare, policy-makers could be tempted to use the resource for some other economic activity that appears to generate more visible/tangible economic benefits; eg. logging of old-growth forests; property development of vacant park land for commercial and/or private use.

For these reasons our governments (Federal, State and Local) allocate part of their budgets to the acquisition and maintenance of parks in the public interest, and introduce policies and regulations, such as Queensland's Protected Areas Strategy 2020-2030, to conserve national parks in the public interest for present and future generations.

For all these reasons placing a dollar value on our national parks is important.

Two main practical reasons are: (i) for advocacy purposes to justify the protection and sustainable management of national parks; and, (ii) provide some basis on which the level of spending by government on their acquisition and maintenance can be determined and justified, vis-à-vis spending in other areas.

What sorts of economic values do national parks generate?

Like other natural assets, such as the Great Barrier Reef, national parks provide a range of values that should, ideally, be incorporated into any attempt to estimate their 'Total Economic Value' (TEV) – the term generally accepted in the environmental economics literature. TEV consists of two broad components of value: 'use values' and 'non-use values'. The former are the values generated by

our use – whether directly as, say, recreational visits, or, indirectly, in terms of production of oxygen and carbon sequestration. But, we also gain values from parks without using them (directly or indirectly). For example, we value the option of keeping them intact so that we, or future generations, would have the option of using them at some point in the future. We also value the continued existence of natural wonders even if we have no intention or ability to visit them.

How can we estimate dollar values of national parks?

The environmental economics discipline has designed a whole host of methods for estimating dollar values for natural assets that do not have a market price; ie. they are not traded in markets like the many goods and services we spend our money on every day. These are generally referred to as 'Non-Market Valuation methods'. They range in complexity and in terms of the breadth and rigour with which they are able to capture the various elements of TEV.

Our recently published study on 'Estimating the Value of National Parks to the Queensland Economy' (2020), demonstrates how it is possible to calculate the annual contribution of Queensland's national parks to the state's economy (Gross State Product). This study was carried out over

three years (2017-2020) and involved designing, testing and implementing a comprehensive survey of visitors to a cross-section of national parks. From these surveys it was possible to estimate two main components of TEV; (i) the additional dollar income generated from national park visitors that would not have been generated if the parks were not there (or not accessible); and, (ii) the dollar values of the additional non-monetary benefits that visitors to the national parks gained. It is important to stress that these estimates are not based on the total expenditure, in the region in which the park is located, of all tourists who visited a national park, but more correctly, that expenditure that can genuinely be attributed to the parks and that would not otherwise been incurred in the absence of the parks. The survey data were then combined with secondary data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA) to apply the values produced from the sample of national parks across all 312 national parks in Queensland. To estimate the non-market value of the benefits to users of the national parks, our study employed the Travel Cost Method. This method estimates how much park visitors were willing to pay for their visits, from which we subtracted the actual amount spent on the visits (on travel, accommodation etc.), to obtain a dollar value for the net gain – referred to as Consumer

Surplus in the economics discipline.

How valuable are our national parks: A case study of Queensland?

In summary, the Queensland study found that:

- Total expenditure in 2018 generated by national parks was approximately \$2.64 billion which is equivalent to more than 11% of all tourist spending in Queensland in that year.
- The total contribution to Gross State Product (GSP; direct and indirect) was approximately \$2 billion, equivalent to approximately 10% of the tourism sector's contribution to GSP in 2018.
- The total value of the benefits to park users (consumer surplus) was estimated at a further \$659 million in 2018, of which \$238 million was gained by visitors from Queensland itself. (The difference was made up of benefits to inter-state and international visitors.)
- The expenditure generated by the national parks supported over 17 thousand jobs in Queensland in 2018 out of a total of 234 thousand jobs in the whole tourism sector (approximately 7.5%).

Perhaps the most important finding from all of this from a policy perspective was that for every dollar spent by government on national park maintenance in 2018,

approximately \$10 of benefits were generated (across all of Australia) or, \$6.30 in Queensland.

It is data such as these that provide a sound basis for evidence-based decision-making when it comes to allocating our scarce resources across the competing claims on governments' budgets. This Queensland case study provides a good illustration of why estimating the dollar contribution of national parks to the economy is important and possible, and why similar such studies need to be undertaken across all states in Australia. Furthermore, this study underlines the importance of sufficient government funding to maintain the health of the fauna and flora in our national parks ensuring that these valuable assets are preserved and available to present and future generations.



Photo Banner: Girringun National Park - Robert Ashdown

Photo Inline: Wallaman Falls - Robert Ashdown

A SEASON OF GIVING AND ADVENTURE

THE NPAQ CHRISTMAS APPEAL AND KIDS IN PARKS SUMMER SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

- NPAQ

The holiday season is upon us, and in the Sunshine State of Queensland, Australia, there's a special blend of festivities in the air. It's not just about decking the halls and exchanging gifts; it's about giving back to the environment, celebrating the beauty of nature, and educating the future stewards of our planet. This year, the National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) is leading the charge in preserving the state's natural treasures while providing educational experiences for children through its Christmas Appeal and Kids in Parks December School Holiday Program.

The NPAQ, founded in 1930, is dedicated to the conservation and preservation of Queensland's national parks. With a rich history of advocating for the protection of these natural wonders, we've turned the holiday season into a time for giving back to the environment and nurturing a love for nature among children.

The NPAQ Christmas Appeal: A Gift of Conservation

Queensland is renowned for its extraordinary natural beauty, from the lush rainforests of the Daintree to the stunning coral reefs of the Great Barrier Reef. These treasures, however, face numerous threats, from habitat destruction to climate change.

The NPAQ recognises the importance of not just enjoying these natural wonders but protecting them for future generations.

The NPAQ Christmas Appeal is an initiative that encourages individuals, families, and organisations to give back to Queensland's national parks. The goal is to raise awareness and much-needed funds for conservation efforts that ensure these national parks remain pristine and bio-diverse.

"Christmas is a time for giving, and what better gift can we give to ourselves and future generations than the gift of nature," says Susanne Cooper, President of NPAQ.

The Christmas Appeal invites people to contribute to the cause in various ways, from one-time donations to becoming regular supporters. Funds raised through this initiative are channelled into NPAQ conservation projects, educational programs, and advocacy efforts that ensure Queensland's national parks remain the natural treasures they are. Your contribution can go a long way in safeguarding the breath-taking landscapes and unique biodiversity found in these parks.

The NPAQ believes that everyone can be a part of this conservation effort, from the youngest to the oldest. It's an opportunity to come together, not just as individuals but as a community, to ensure that Queensland's national parks are preserved for generations to come.

<https://npaq.org.au/donate/>



The Kids in Parks Summer School Holiday Program: Where Adventure Meets Education

Queensland is not just about serene beaches and bustling cities; it's also home to some of the world's most diverse and breath-taking ecosystems. However, for future generations to truly appreciate and protect these environments, they need to connect with and understand their importance.

Enter the Kids in Parks December School Holiday Program.

Launched by the NPAQ, this program combines adventure and education to ignite a lifelong love for nature in children. While it operates throughout the year, the Summer school holiday program is when it truly shines.

Throughout the December /January school holidays, this program promises children unforgettable adventures in the heart of Queensland's national parks. Through a range of carefully crafted activities, children not only get to explore the natural world but also gain a deeper understanding of it.

The program includes nature walks, wildlife encounters, and hands-on conservation efforts. Children learn about the various ecosystems, the importance of protecting them, and the role they can play in conservation.

It's a unique blend of adventure and education that makes learning about the environment fun and memorable.



How the Christmas Appeal Supports Kids in Parks

The synergy between the NPAQ Christmas Appeal and the Kids in Parks program is evident. Funds raised during the Christmas Appeal contribute directly to the program and other NPAQ projects to connect the community with nature. This financial support allows the Kids in Parks program to expand, reach more areas, and provide additional resources for outdoor education.

The Kids in Parks program represents a beautiful fusion of adventure and learning. It's not just a chance for children to have fun during the school holidays; it's a journey into the heart of nature, where they discover the magic of our national parks and protected areas. They'll also learn about the

vital role of conservation, instilling a lifelong love for the environment.

A Vision for the Future

Both the Christmas Appeal and Kids in Parks program have a common goal: nurturing a deep appreciation for nature and ensuring that Queensland's natural treasures are preserved.

The NPAQ understands that the future of these national parks lies in the hands of the younger generation. By educating and inspiring them today, we pave the way for responsible environmental stewardship tomorrow.

The Kids in Parks program provides children with a profound connection to nature, teaching them to respect, connect and protect the natural world.

This connection is a valuable gift that will continue to give, as these young individuals grow up to be conscious and caring citizens who prioritize conservation.



Getting Involved

If you're inspired by the NPAQ's mission and would like to get involved, there are several ways to make a difference:

- **Donate to the Christmas Appeal:** Visit the NPAQ website and contribute to the Christmas Appeal to support the conservation of Queensland's national parks. <https://npaq.org.au/donate/>
- **Participate in Kids in Parks:** If you have children/grandchildren sign them up for the Kids in Parks Summer School Holiday Program to give them the gift of adventure and education.
- **Spread the Word:** Share information about the NPAQ's Christmas Appeal and Kids in Parks program with your friends, family, and colleagues to inspire others to join this heart-warming cause.

This holiday season, you have the opportunity to make a significant impact. By participating in the NPAQ Christmas Appeal and enrolling your children/grandchildren in the Kids in Parks Summer School Holiday Program, you're not just celebrating the spirit of giving; you're contributing to the conservation of our precious national parks and nurturing a new generation of nature enthusiasts and advocates. Let's make this Christmas season one to remember, as we unite for the love of our environment.

Photo Banner: Kids in NP Coastal Exploration activity day - Emily Griffiths

Photo Inline (left): Hinchinbrook Is National Park - Ann Ingham

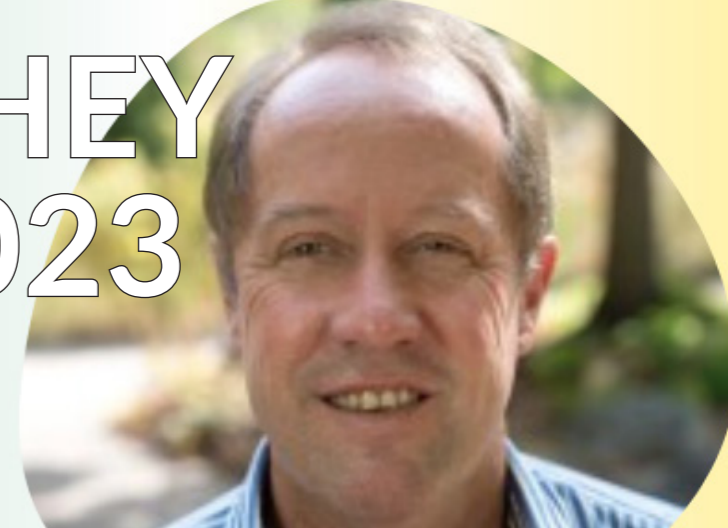
Photo Inline (right): Kids in NP activity days - anonymous

DECIDUOUS TREES OF BUNYA MOUNTAINS

- John Learmont

ROMEO LAHEY LECTURE 2023

- Prof Hugh Possingham



The first question we might ask is, 'What is a deciduous tree?' and the next question might be, 'Why are some trees deciduous and some are not?' The next question might be, 'Are there any deciduous trees in the Bunya Mountains and if so, how many?'

Deciduous is defined as the falling or shedding of any plant part and is of Latin origin. In temperate zones this occurs in the autumn when light levels decrease, and the tree detects that the photosynthesis process has reduced. It then goes into a form of 'hibernation' and its leaves lose their chlorophyll and turn yellow, orange, or brown before falling off. In tropical, subtropical, and arid regions this happens in the dry season. Many deciduous plants flower when they are leafless, as this increases the visibility of the flowers for the pollinators.

If you look at a gardening climate zone map of Australia, you will see that the Bunya Mountains are in the warm temperate zone. The climate is cooler in summer than the surrounding areas by 5 to 6 degrees, and cold in the winter with frost and occasional snow. Listed below are 4 trees here that lose all their leaves in the winter. The leaves of the first 2 on the list, turn yellow in autumn before falling

off. They all remain leafless until the spring. The Bats Wing Coral Tree gets its new leaves in early December and are preceded by a show of brilliant orange flowers, although the flowering is not an annual event.

- White Cedar - *Melia azedarach*
- Bats Wing Coral Tree - *Erythrina vespertilio*
- Red Cedar - *Toona ciliata*
- Koda - *Ehretia acuminata*



Throughout Australia there are many, many species of Brachychiton trees and shrubs that are deciduous or semi-deciduous. On the Bunyas the bottle tree group are deciduous but only very briefly. The 3 species that grow here all have a leaf drop prior to flowering. They are:

- Bottle Tree - *Brachychiton rupestris*
- Lacebark - *Brachychiton discolor*
- Flame Tree - *Brachychiton acerifolius*

The only *Grevillea* species that grows on the Bunyas, indeed

the only member of the entire Proteaceae family to which it belongs, is the Silky Oak, *Grevillea robusta*. There is a leaf drop in spring prior to the arrival of bright yellow flowers.

Although listed as an evergreen tree, the Giant Stinging Tree, *Dendrocnide excelsa*, has a major leaf drop in late November or early December. The leaves have 5-millimetre-long silicon hairs on the underside of the leaf which break off with contact to the skin. They can deliver a painful sting even when dry.



Photo Banner & inline center: *Erythrina vespertilio* (Bats Wing Coral Tree) - Bill & Mark Bell

Photo Inline (above): *Dendrocnide excelsa* - Tatters

"I am an obsessive bird watcher," confessed Prof Hugh Possingham. He reflected that, in the distant past, everyone in this region was inherently a bird watcher, and yet despite the lower number of bird watchers today, the collective interest in nature, biodiversity, and natural history is on the rise.

The talk was structured into three main sections: a reflection on the state of biodiversity and nature in Queensland and Australia, an exploration of ongoing conservation efforts, and an invitation to challenge the traditional boundaries of conservation. Our speaker was not one to shy away from controversy, for he believes that true progress often emerges from pushing the boundaries of conventional thought.

Part I: The State of Biodiversity and Nature

The first part of our speaker's talk delved into the state of biodiversity and nature in Queensland and Australia. He painted a picture of the current landscape, and was candid about the challenges we face. The encroachment of human activity, habitat loss, and climate change have undoubtedly put a strain on our natural ecosystems.

Yet, Prof Possingham remains optimistic. He highlighted the growing interest in nature and

conservation. This burgeoning awareness, he believes, is a testament to humanity's innate connection to the natural world. He encouraged everyone to embrace this momentum and channel it into meaningful action.

Part II: Current Conservation Efforts

The second part of the talk focused on the ongoing efforts to conserve and protect our natural heritage. Prof Possingham acknowledged the hard work of conservationists, scientists, and organisations dedicated to preserving the environment, like NPAQ. He underscored the need to celebrate their achievements and support their initiatives.

Conservation is a dynamic field, and it is essential to adapt to the ever-changing environmental challenges. Prof Possingham encouraged us to embrace innovation and modern technologies to enhance conservation efforts. The focus is on finding creative and effective solutions to safeguard our biodiversity.

Part III: Embracing Progress and Controversy

In the final part of his talk, our speaker took a bold step, challenging the conservation movement to break free from traditional conventions. He suggested that conservation, in some respects, has been too conservative

in its approach. The world is changing rapidly, and our methods must evolve to keep pace.

Prof Possingham's message is clear: "...it is time to think beyond the boundaries of traditional conservation." He advocates for a more progressive and dynamic approach to address the challenges that lie ahead. His call to action is a rallying cry for conservationists to be bolder, more innovative, and willing to embrace change.

He emphasised that now is a unique opportunity to move the conservation movement forward. "The world is awakening to the importance of biodiversity and the urgency of conservation. This is our moment to be pioneers, to explore new strategies, and to forge ahead with determination."

Prof Possingham's talk serves as a reminder of the rich tapestry of nature in Queensland and Australia. It is a call to action, an invitation to embrace progress and innovation, and a challenge to push the boundaries of traditional conservation. To watch a recording of his presentation, visit

<https://npaq.org.au/romeo-lahey-2023/>

Photo Banner & Inline: NPAQ Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture banner with Prof Hugh Possingham - Samantha Smith

MOMENTS IN TIME

- NPAQ Archives

The following was taken from the 1953 October & December NPAQ newsletters.

The National Parks on and off the Queensland Coast between Bowen and Mackay.

This map (right) is issued on the occasion of an extended field outing by 57 members of the National Parks Association of Queensland to the Whitsunday Island group of National Parks (two weeks) in August, 1953. May it prove of use to those unable to take part in this visit as well as to the participants.

63 Islands are included in a National Park group contained in County Herbert. With Conway Range National Park (on the mainland shore of Whitsunday Passage), the area of the reserves in the group is 114,467 acres. They were gazetted between 1936 and 1944. Island National Parks off the coast of Queensland occupy 212,000 acres.

The names of more of the Island reserves are: -

- Gloucester (6,080 acres - Mt Bertha 1,870 ft) - off Bowen.
- Saddleback, Gumbrell, Armit & Double Cove.
- Hayman - north end of Whitsunday Passage.
- Arkhurst, Langford, Bird, Black (adjacent to Hayman).

- Hook (12,800 acres - Hook Peak 1,478 ft) - north section Whitsunday Passage.
- Whitsunday (27,000 acres - Central Peak 1,426 ft) - principally eastern barrier of Whitsunday Passage.
- Deloraine, Esk, Dumbell, Ireby, Harold, Edward and Teague.
- South Molle, Mid Molle, Shute, Planton, and Denham, North Molle.
- Long (2,085 acres).
- Border (volcanic mass) east of Whitsunday Island (Mosstrooper Peak 757 ft) Haslewood - east of Whitsunday Island.
- Pine, Henning and Cid.

The next southern group of Island National Parks are the Cumberland group at the south end of Whitsunday Passage: -

- Lindeman Island (1,920 acres), Little Lindeman.
- Shaw Island (4,100 acres).
- Lion or Pentecost, Baynham, Maher, Mansell, Keyser, Thomas, Silversmith, Blackcombe and Repulse.

Sir James Smith group is between Cumberland Group and Mackay: -

- Achorsmith, Blacksmith, Anvil, Hammer, Ladysmith, Pincer, Goldsmith, Linne, Tinsmith, Solder, Ingot, Locksmith and Allonby, Bellows.
- Brampton (700 ft high), Newry Island, Rabbit, Wigton, Cockermouth, Scawfell, Aspatria,

Calder, Carlise.

Nara Inlet and Mocona Inlet on south coast of Hook Island Cid Harbour is on northwest section of Whitsunday Island. Gulnare Inlet on southwest of Whitsunday Island.

In Conway Range on Mainland, High Mt, in centre is 1,841 ft and one mile inland from Cape Conway the peaks rise to 1,510 ft. At Shute Harbour, the Hump is 1,079 ft, Mt Hayward 1,418 ft and Mt Conway 1,468 ft.

The expected route to be taken in August is: -

Direct from Mackay to Seaforth Island opposite Lindeman Island - depending on which week outer reef is visited, this will be used as base camp site or as overnight stop on the way to Cid Harbour on Whitsunday Island. Cid Harbour is the other base camp site.

Points to be visited are: -

Lindeman, Shaw and Pentecost Islands; Hamilton, Dent and Long Islands; Molle group and Mandalay (on mainland); on Whitsunday Island the Peak will be climbed and Whitehaven Beach visited; Border Island and Reef; Hayman Island; on Hook Island a climb of Hook Peak.

Photo Banner & Inline: NPAQ 1953 October & December Newsletter - NPAQ historical documents

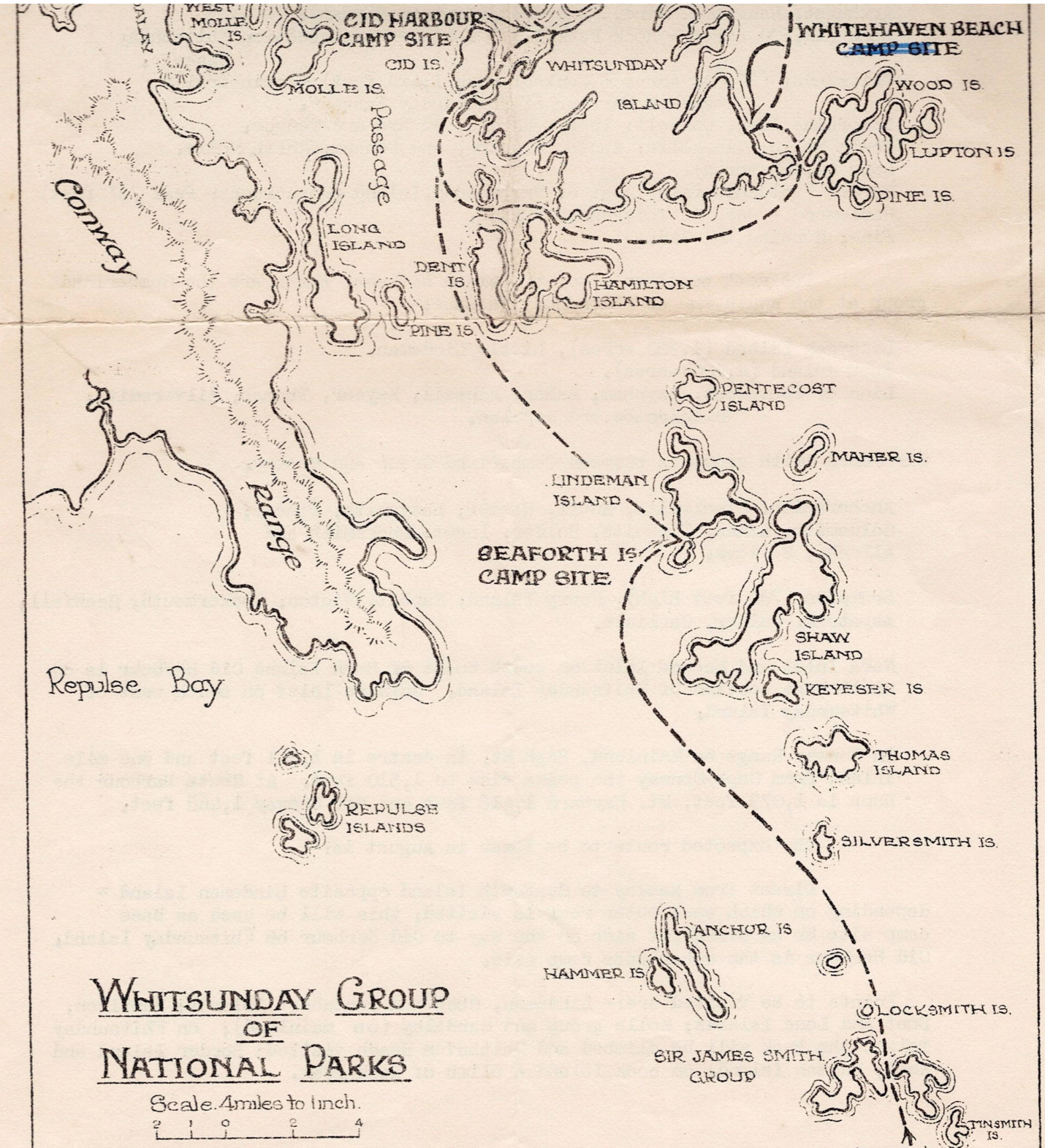
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VALE ARTHUR GROOM: Death has put a dreadful stop to the physical activities of one whose energy has been a byword for more than 30 years. From the very beginning his influence moulded the activities of the Association, and his position as first secretary gave him the opportunity to profoundly affect public opinion on the great need for and value of, National Parks.

But his soul goes marching on and we must not let his mantle fall to the ground, but dedicate ourselves to carrying on the work he so ably initiated.

Early in the new year probably late January, a public meeting will be called to consider the best means of perpetuating his memory.

R. W. LAHEY, PRESIDENT.



PARK IN FOCUS

Gloucester Islands National Park

NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE

- Sara Byers

Tucked away in the heart of Queensland's Whitsunday region lies a true natural treasure – Gloucester Island National Park. This pristine paradise, known for its untouched beauty and rich biodiversity, offers a unique experience for nature enthusiasts, hikers, and adventure seekers.

A Natural Haven

Gloucester Island National Park covers approximately 2,960 hectares, making it a significant part of the Gloucester Islands group in the Whitsundays. The park is renowned for its diverse ecosystems, from lush rainforests to eucalypt woodlands, and its stunning coastline with secluded beaches, rocky headlands, and turquoise waters.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Gloucester Island National Park is its isolation. It's one of the few national parks in the Whitsunday region where camping is permitted.

Wildlife Wonderland

Gloucester Island National Park is a biodiversity hotspot, home to an array of wildlife species. This beautiful national park is one of the last remaining strongholds for the endangered Proserpine Rock Wallaby, so as you explore the park, keep an eye out for wallabies, goannas, and a variety of bird species. You may also see playful dolphins that frequent the waters around the island. Lucky visitors might even spot humpback whales during their migration season.

Birdwatchers will find Gloucester Island a paradise. The park is known for its diverse bird population, and keen observers can spot species like honeyeaters, sea eagles, and rainbow lorikeets.

A Hiker's Dream

For hiking enthusiasts, Gloucester Island offers a network of well-maintained trails that vary in difficulty, catering to both beginners and experienced hikers. One of the most popular trails is the Gloucester Island circuit. This 4.6-kilometer loop takes you through a pristine rainforest and offers stunning panoramic views from Gloucester Peak.

The varied landscapes, from dense forests to rugged cliffs, make every hike a new adventure. For those who enjoy overnight treks, camping is available at designated sites. Camping permits are required, and they are easily obtainable through the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) booking system.

Marine Adventures

While the park is renowned for its terrestrial wonders, its marine environment is equally captivating. The waters surrounding Gloucester Island are ideal for boating and water activities, making it a must-visit destination for those who love to explore the sea.

Boating enthusiasts can anchor their vessels in secluded bays and coves or set out for a day of fishing. Snorkelling and diving are also popular activities in the clear waters, where you can encounter colourful coral formations and an abundance of marine life.



Conservation and Preservation

Gloucester Island National Park plays a crucial role in the conservation of Queensland's unique ecosystems. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

is committed to preserving this natural wonder and protecting its diverse flora and fauna. Visiting this national park provides an opportunity to appreciate the importance of conservation and sustainable tourism.

Practical Information

Before embarking on your Gloucester Island adventure, here are some practical details to keep in mind:

- **Access:** The park is accessible only by boat, so you'll need to arrange transportation from the mainland. A variety of charters and water taxis operate in the region.
- **Camping:** Camping is permitted in designated areas. Ensure you obtain a camping permit in advance.
- **Supplies:** As there are no facilities on the island, be sure to bring all necessary supplies, including water, food, and camping gear.
- **Safety:** Always practice the 'Leave No Trace' principles and respect the environment. Stay informed about weather conditions and tidal patterns before heading out on the water.

Conclusion

Gloucester Island National Park, is a hidden gem that offers a unique blend of terrestrial and marine beauty. From lush rainforests to tranquil beaches and crystal-clear waters, this park showcases the diverse wonders of the Whitsunday region. As you explore the park's trails, camp on its shores, and immerse yourself in its natural splendor, you'll understand why Gloucester Island is a destination that lures adventurers and nature enthusiasts from around the world. Its isolation and untouched landscapes make it a symbol of the unspoiled beauty of Queensland's natural environment.

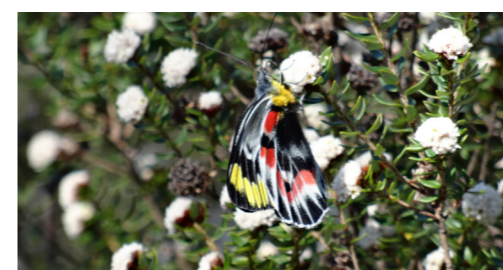
Photo Banner: Gloucester Island National Park - John Attkinson

Photo Inline: Manta (Manta ray) - John Attkinson

Queensland is world-renowned for its stunning natural environments – heritage listed rainforests, famous surf beaches, iconic outback landscapes, mountains, mangroves and marine parks including, of course, the Great Barrier Reef. But after moving here from Melbourne some years ago, the last thing I expected to find was a Queensland national park that felt more like a little slice of Victoria.

With its large granite boulders, rocky outcrops, woodlands and streams, Girraween is reminiscent of Mount Buffalo National Park where I spent countless childhood holidays camping in Victoria's high country.

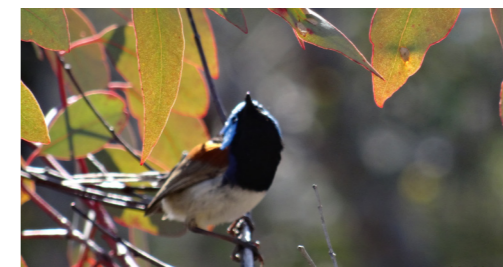
Meaning 'place of flowers', Girraween comprises 11,800 hectares of red-gum, stringybark and blackbutt eucalypt forest, sedgelands and heathlands that transform into a spectacular carpet of wildflowers each Spring.



Located 260km south-west of Brisbane on the NSW border, Girraween National Park has walks of various lengths and abilities (class 2, 3 and 4), a visitor information centre and campgrounds set in open forest at Bald Rock Creek and Castle Rock.

The area is culturally significant for First Nations People, with rock markings, tools and marked trees providing a glimpse into their deep connections with this ancient landscape.

Girraween is one section of the Stanthorpe Granite Mass underlying Queensland's Granite Belt. Frogs, lizards and snakes rustle among the woodlands and the park is a haven for bird watchers looking out for turquoise parrots, yellow-tufted honeyeaters and fairy-wrens.



Our family visited in July when it was icy cold, with overnight frosts and clear, crisp mornings perfect for bush walking. In the middle of winter, Girraween felt so unlike a Queensland holiday destination that I wondered how many locals had experienced the uniqueness of this stunning National Park right on their doorstep.

Away from the east coast light pollution, the night skies were magnificent. An unexpected highlight was star gazing with a local astronomer who had built a 4.5m observatory dome on his property at Ballandean (well worth an overnight stay for curious kids and amateur astronomers).

A Girraween getaway can also include sampling local produce and wine tasting in Queensland's only wine growing region (thanks to the unique combination of Granite Belt soil, climate and altitude). For me, the rolling hills full of vineyards were another nostalgic reminder of north east Victoria.

So next time you're seeking a bush escape, visit Girraween National Park for

great walking trails, spectacular views, all access camping and the added bonus of cellar door sales at many local wineries.

My next trip will be in Spring to see spectacular yellow, purple and red pea flowers, golden billy buttons, blue bells, white heath bells and sarsaparilla splashed across the rugged granite landscape.



Photo Banner: Caves in Girraween National Park - @Tils on Instagram

Photo Inline (left): *Delias aganippe* (Red Spotted Jezebel) - Unknown

Photo Inline (center): *Malurus lamberti* (Varigated Fairy Wren) - Unknown

Photo Inline (above): Wildflowers at Girraween - Unknown

WILDLIFE FEATURE

Dingoes - nature's wild canine



Dingoes (*Canis lupus dingo*) are a fascinating and unique species of wild dog that have been a part of the Australian landscape for thousands of years. Renowned for their adaptability and resilience, these apex predators play a crucial role in the ecosystem. However, it's important to be aware of safety precautions when encountering dingoes in the wild to ensure both human and dingo well-being.

The Role of Dingoes in Ecosystems

Dingoes are apex predators, meaning they sit at the top of the food chain in their ecosystems. This vital role helps regulate prey populations, control mesopredators (mid-sized predators), and indirectly benefit the plant life by preventing overgrazing. Dingoes contribute to the balance and health of the ecosystem in ways that are often underestimated.

Safety Around Dingoes

While dingoes are an integral part of Australia's ecology, it's crucial to understand how to be safe around them, especially when encountering them in their natural habitat.

- **Keep Your Distance** - Maintaining a safe distance from dingoes is the most effective way to avoid conflicts. Do not attempt to approach, feed, or interact with them in any way. This applies whether you encounter a lone dingo or a pack. Remember, dingoes are wild animals, and their behaviour can be unpredictable.
- **Secure Your Food** - Dingoes are opportunistic scavengers, and they are known to be attracted to the smell of human food. Use appropriate containers to prevent dingoes from accessing your supplies.
- **Do Not Feed Dingoes** - Feeding dingoes is not only dangerous but also detrimental to their well-being. When dingoes become accustomed to human handouts, it can lead to aggressive behaviour and reliance on human food sources, disrupting their natural hunting instincts.
- **Keep Pets on a Leash** - If you are traveling with a dog, it's important to keep them on a leash. Dingoes may see domestic dogs as competitors or threats and can exhibit territorial or aggressive behaviour.
- **Travel in Groups** - Dingoes are more likely to approach solitary individuals, making group travel a safer choice.
- **Children and Dingoes** - Parents should be especially cautious when camping or hiking with children in dingo territory. Keep a close eye on your children, and educate them about the importance of not approaching or trying to feed dingoes.
- **Dingo Attacks** - Dingo attacks on humans are extremely rare. However, if a dingo behaves aggressively or approaches you, it's important to maintain your distance and not run. Stand tall, make yourself look larger, and back away slowly without turning your back on the animal.
- **Report Problematic Dingoes** - If you encounter a dingo that is displaying aggressive behaviour or appears to be a safety concern, report it to the local authorities or park rangers.

Conservation and Dingoes

Dingoes are a unique and irreplaceable component of Australia's ecosystems. Their presence and role in the environment contribute to biodiversity and ecosystem stability. However, they are also subject to various threats, including habitat loss and human interactions. Conservation efforts are crucial to ensure the survival of this iconic species.

Conclusion

Dingoes are a remarkable part of Australia's natural heritage, and they play a critical role in maintaining the ecological balance of the regions they inhabit. By understanding the importance of dingoes in their ecosystems and following safety guidelines when encountering them, we can coexist harmoniously with these wild canines while appreciating their significance in Australia's unique natural landscapes.



Photo Banner: *Canis lupus dingo* - Karel on Pixabay

Photo Inline (left): *Canis lupus dingo* - Newtreads on Wikicommons

Photo Inline (above): *Canis lupus dingo* pup - Inugami Bargho

RANGER SPOTLIGHT

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

Ranger Roland Dowling
Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS)

Roland Dowling is Ranger in Charge on Fort Lytton and St Helena Island national parks. He has always been a very keen camper and bush walker and had a heightened interest in the conservation movement during the late 1970s and early 80s. Having also developed a strong interest in land management, becoming a Ranger seemed to be a natural fit.

How long have you worked in national parks?

I first started work as a Ranger in 1984 at Main Range National Park. I was lucky to pick up a job the year after I completed the Gatton Wilderness, Reserves and Wildlife course – which was specifically designed at the time for training people in national park management.

Which parks have you worked in?

Over the forty years or so, I've been based at Main Range National Park, the Toowoomba Regional Office, The Hermitage in the Southern Downs Region, Carnarvon National Park, Fort Lytton, St Helena Island and Peel Island national parks. For a short time in the 1980s whilst travelling overseas, I also worked at Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal.

Where do you work now and what is special about your current park?

Fort Lytton and St Helena Island national parks are very different due to their strong emphasis on cultural site management. They are both unique and special places due to the combination of the remnants of colonial architecture, scenic beauty and important stories that reflect the broader cultural history of Queensland. We also run a great night tour at Fort Lytton. This is a piece of promenade theatre that tells the real story of Ray Stanley, who was

an Army engineer at the fort prior to the First World War. Ray enlisted at the outbreak of war and went on to campaigns such as Gallipoli, Fromelles, and Villiers Bretonneux. Daley Donnelly, our interpretive Ranger also delivers exceptional educational and holiday programs, so we are very fortunate to have his unique talents available.

What is your most memorable moment as a ranger?

Always difficult to choose just one, but one very special day back in 2010 was when we hosted the Governor Penelope Wesley along with Mr Joe Eggmolesse to the historic Peel Island Lazaret—which was originally a lock hospital for people with Hansen's disease (leprosy). Joe had been a child patient on Fantome Island in the 1950s and 60s. Fantome (part of the Palm Island Group) was where they relocated all the Indigenous and South Sea Islander patients from Peel Island in 1940. Joe had direct relatives who were part of that relocation and so the day was full of emotion. What made it particularly special was having the opportunity to treat both the Governor and Mr Eggmolesse as equal VIPs given their starkly different personal background and histories.

Can you describe your favourite national parks experience?

I have always found the Central Highlands to be very special with its diversity of sandstone landscapes and ancient cultural sites. The granite country of Girraween National Park is also a favourite – the broken rocky landscapes, wildflowers in spring and the dark starry skies at night are all wonderful experiences.

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



All jobs have their challenges and advantages. I've always been attracted by the concept of stewardship over country and trying to achieve some progressive management to the conservation values of a site, whether they be the natural or cultural elements. I've also been very fortunate over the years to have known and worked with colleagues who are highly committed and talented people. It's not uncommon that they are undertaking difficult roles or tasks, but they persevere in often challenging circumstances, so that always deserves a high level of respect. **What is your top tip for visitors to your park?**

We regularly get very positive feedback from people who have attended our Fort Lytton at Night program. If you haven't seen it, contact our office on (07) 3393 4647 and book in.

There's no better guide to St Helena Island National Park than one of our Rangers. If you can't join us in person, this remarkable place rich with history is at your fingertips through our virtual park tour - www.parks.des.qld.gov.au/things-to-do/virtual-tours/virtual-parks.

Photo Banner: Views from St Helena Island National Park - Supplied

Photo inline (above): Roland Dowling at Fort Lytton - Supplied

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

WHAT'S IN

NPAQ Activities

Vegetation Management Group

Date: 18 November 2023

Meet: 9:00am - Jolly's Lookout Lower Car Park, Mt Nebo Road, D'Aguilar National Park 4520

Cost: Free

Leader: Angus McElnea (0429 854 446)

Birdwatching Sandy Camp Road

Date: 19 November 2023

Meet: 7:30am - Sandy Camp Road, Wynnum West, QLD, 4178

Cost: \$5

Leader: Ian Peacock (0416 943 280)

NPAQ Major Events

NPAQ Christmas Members Meeting

Date: 1 December 2023

Time: 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Venue: Newstead Brewing Co (67 Castlemaine St, Milton QLD 4064)

Cost: Free

Organiser: Samantha Smith

Vales

NPAQ is deeply saddened by the passing of members, **Brian and Maureen Egan**.

Brian joined the Association in 1955 and was on Council for many years. He was the Association's President 1980-1983 and 1986-1990 and during these years, quietly achieved much for the Association's conservation projects. Brian was a great support and regularly attended member meetings and activities. During the early years, he was an avid bushwalker, later became an Activities Leader organising many camps and interesting and informative bushwalks. He had on occasions, assisted Park Rangers with on-ground work on selected parks. For many years Brian proof-read the NPA News (precursor to the Protected) prior to publication. He will be missed by many. He was granted Honorary Life Membership in 1996.

Maureen joined the Association in 1975 and regularly attended member meetings. She was a great support for her husband during his 7 years as NPAQ President. Maureen supervised the supper roster for many years as well as being a member of the Social Committee, arranging and providing for get-togethers and functions. She will be missed by many long-term members.

We send our heartfelt condolences to their family and friends.

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- ☐ Conservation Partner (Household) \$370

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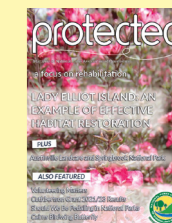
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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

— FROM —

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Celebrating 93 years.



JACANA OR LOTUS BIRD
(Irediparra gallinacea)

A water pheasant found in Qld. & N.S.W. as far south as Sydney. Colouring :- Brown back and wings - black chest & back of neck - white throat & body. Orange margin on neck - scarlet comb. -