

# BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

No 11, Summer 1991

GreenBrook Association

## EDITORIAL

Brisbane City Council has legislated for a Vegetation Protection Ordinance.

For too long bushland has been destroyed or threatened with destruction through insensitive development. Brisbane is the last capital city to have protective legislation.

Some disturbing statistics make it quite clear that this ordinance is critical for the survival of bushland within the city.

For example 63% of Brisbane's bushland is privately owned and 75% of total existing bushland is expected to be cleared in the next 20 years if current trends continue.

Our bushland is our unique natural heritage. Of the small percentage that remains very little is in original condition. Mostly it is in pretty poor shape, being invaded by weeds and littered with rubbish.

Bushland not only provides a refuge for wildlife and a reservoir of plant stock but also is a vital link with our past. Our nature reserves are living museums that give us some notion of what a district was once like.

Ideally each suburb should have local reserves, places where we can observe and enjoy nature or simply relax.

This ordinance is essential if we

are to preserve some of the bushland that remains. Congratulations to Council for implementing this reform.

Colleen Crosthwaite



## FLYING FOXES

*The second article in a series on flying foxes. This issue refers to the social structure of flying fox colonies.*

Flying foxes live in large colonies that have complex social structures. Their communication is highly sophisticated.

Group knowledge and behaviour patterns are passed on from generation to generation.

They are noisy communicators having over twenty different calls that humans can identify. Some calls are between mothers and babies, others signal breeding or a squabble over a roosting site or food.

The characteristic odour of a flying fox camp comes from the breeding males who use a musky scent as a social signal.

Flying fox raise a single young each year. The new-born are carried everywhere for about a month. When they become too heavy to be carried on night flights they are left in "creches" with adult supervisors while mother feeds.

Once the young flying foxes become competent fliers they form adolescent groups still under the care of adult escorts.

One morning I was walking through Grinstead Park just before dawn when a group of five adolescent flying foxes settled to roost in a tree on the "wrong" side of the creek. As dawn broke, a large adult flew across from the colony, sqwarked softly at the youngsters as it circled the tree and was promptly followed home by the five truants.



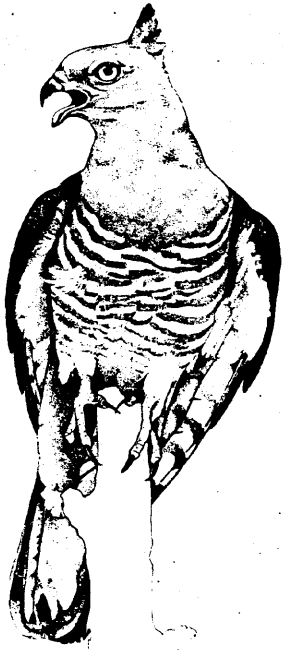
For further information, or for assistance with injured or orphaned flying foxes:

Janey O'Shea 352 5634

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

Over the past three months I have been told of two pairs of **Crested Hawks** nesting in the district. One pair at The Grange and another pair at Ferny Hills. Both pairs were nesting in backyards in fairly open situations.

Enquiries into the occurrence and habits of Crested Hawks led me to Greg Czechura of the Queensland Museum. Greg has been studying these birds for many years and his research is continuing.



Each year from about early winter to mid-spring, Brisbane is treated to an "invasion" by large numbers of this medium-sized, beautiful bird of prey. On fine, warm days single birds, pairs, or even small parties may be seen soaring effortlessly overhead.

Crested Hawks may be found in habitats ranging from rainforest to suburban gardens. Their diet consists of a variety of small lizards, tree-frogs and insects.

Breeding season is between October and early January depending on weather conditions. During drier times it may be delayed until mid to late January.

Their nest is a flimsy structure of small sticks lined with green leaves and is usually high in tall trees.

The reason for the marked influx of Crested Hawks into suburban Brisbane during winter is poorly understood. These movements probably occur in response to changes in the availability of prey.

However observations also suggest that some birds remain in a given location throughout the year. In the Moggill-Brookfield area they can be found at any time.

*If anyone has any interesting information or observations on Crested Hawks Greg would like to hear from them. His phone number at the Museum is 840 7642.*

## IDENTIFYING BIRDS

Numerous phone calls have identified a wide interest in birds. Often I am asked to recommend a book for their identification.

The revised edition of "The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds" is ideal for this purpose.

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## CAN YOU HELP US?

Bush News is published four times a year and we are looking for more people to help with the distribution.

It takes about 30 minutes to place 100 copies in letter boxes. If you could help out by doing your street or block please phone 356 6577 for details.

One hundred and thirty rainforest plants were planted in the "big gully" last working bee. Despite the dry season most of our recent plantings have survived well.

The next working bee will be held on 1 December.

Meet at 8.30 am at the Blandford St entrance to Grange Forest Park.

Bob Devine

## PLANT OF THE MONTH *Pittosporum rhombifolium*

This is a local plant of the dry rainforests. It is always a small tree of good shape.

Its flowers are small and sought by insects. However the fruit is the main attraction - masses of small orange berries that persist on the tree for months.

This is a plant that needs full sun to look really good, but then it looks spectacular. Highly recommended.



Available from Perrotts Nursery,  
Elkhorn St, Enoggera