

# BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

Spring 1989

GreenBrook Association

## EDITORIAL

Without doubt the past 12 months has seen a dramatic upsurge of interest in the state of our environment, with particular calls for action against those forces degrading the global environment. As is often the case, however, the "experts" don't always agree, and much of the response by governments has been to start to gather more information.

This shortage of data is also a problem locally. The environment in which we live is almost totally man-modified. A recent study for the Brisbane City Council found that the near-northern suburbs of Brisbane have fewer natural areas than any other part of Brisbane.

As if to contradict this the Brisbane Wildlife Survey of 1980/81 found a remarkably rich variety of birds in suburbs along Kedron Brook - over 80 species during the 12 month period.

Have all of these birds adapted to urban living, or are there particular areas within the city that they rely on for their survival? And what other animals remain, and more particularly what can we learn about their needs?

To answer these questions we need your input.

We need reports of unusual sightings and interesting happenings, and would like to publish them in order to build up the bigger picture. Where appropriate, exact locations will be treated with discretion.

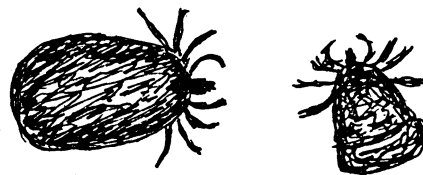
Frank and Marilyn Box (857 1086)

## TICKS

Unfortunately for us all, Brisbane's bushlands carry large tick populations, with spring and summer being the worst seasons for ticks.

The following treatment is based on work by Dr B. Stone, a scientist with CSIRO, and an international authority on the subject.

When you first discover a tick, don't remove it alive. Grasping and pulling it merely squeezes more poison into the wound.



Instead cover it with RID for a few minutes (kerosene or turps will also do). This will kill the animal.

It will then fall off of its own accord, with the mouthparts intact. If still there after 24 hours just brush it off.

Disinfect the bite after initial treatment, and again when it falls off.

Happy bushwalking.

Colleen Crosthwaite

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

It seems that the Koala at Somerset Hills State School is now 3 Koalas! A recent survey of Raven St Reserve, further along Rode Rd, found evidence of Koalas, but no animals. Where are they coming from?

While it is still too early to report on the success of the Kookaburra nests, one has already attracted a pair of Galahs. This is bad luck for them. Kookaburras like to relieve themselves out the door, and have been given a floor level with the base of the entrance. Galahs on the other hand prefer the privacy of a deep hollow - apparently about 1 metre deep.

Normally an animal of rainforests and wet eucalypt forests, a Grey Goshawk has come daily for 3 months to be fed at Gordon Park. A highly efficient predator, and a magnificent animal, this unusual behaviour could have an intriguing explanation. It appears that a Grey Goshawk was caught in a fowl yard at Everton Park some 3 months ago. The owner, preferring the chooks to the Goshawk, took the bird to Mt Nebo and released it.

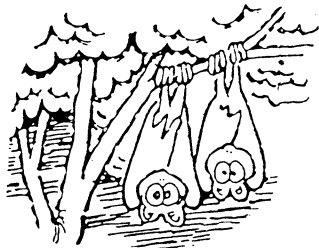
It is supposed that the Gordon Park bird was the mate of the one that got caught. This breaking of a normally very-strong pair bond could explain its uncharacteristic behaviour.

And at Stafford Hts, a Crimson Rosella has come regularly to drink from a swimming pool. Each time it then remained for a quarter hour or so to feed on grass seeds. This spectacular parrot is also normally associated with rainforest country.



## FLYING FOXES

Sparkes Hill is now host to a flying fox colony. Doubtless this will not bring joy to everyone, but urban farmers please consider the following.



A theory now gaining wide acceptance holds that the flying fox and man share a common ancestry. This proposal, which is based on the brain of the flying fox, has it evolving from something like a gliding monkey. This gives it a quite different evolutionary path to the smaller insect bat.

The Sparkes Hill camp contains both Black and Grey-Headed Flying Foxes. They are probably a winter sub-set of the Indooroopilly Island Camp, which numbers some 200,000 animals. It is common for Flying Foxes to disperse during winter.

Flying Foxes travel up to 40km each night in search of food. Like many other native animals, their preference is for native food - gum blossoms in particular. In fact they are thought to be important pollinators of some types of eucalypt. It is the continuing clearing of our forests which forces them to take fruit.

Nevertheless very little is known about them, and any information about this camp (history, age, size etc) would be greatly appreciated.

For those who would like to know more about our new neighbours, try one of the Batty Boat Cruises organised by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld. Take a 3 hour summer cruise up the Brisbane River and watch the fly-off from Indooroopilly Is. You can even fondle a Flying Fox, and every child at least should have the opportunity to do this. The next cruises are in October.

Enquiries to 378 9827.

Doxiadis

## CAN YOU HELP US ?

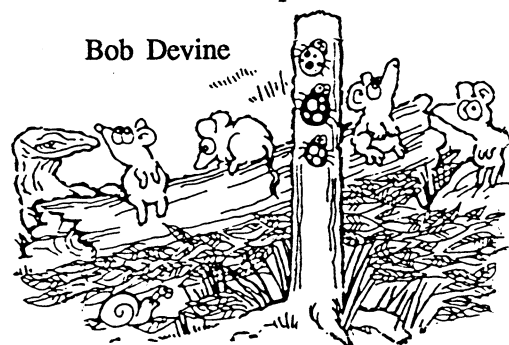
Weed control is the major task for the GreenBrook Association. As weeds flourish (nature's way of protecting the bare earth), native seedlings are smothered and their growth stunted. Hand tools have proved to be the most effective method to reverse this situation. It is time-consuming but rewarding to uncover natural seedlings, and give them a better chance of survival.

The next working bees will be held on -

- . 8 October
- . 5 November
- . 3 December

Start time is 8.30am (until about noon). Meet at the Blandford St entrance to the park.

Bob Devine



## APPROPRIATE PLANTS

All of our remaining bushland areas are similar in one respect - they are all relatively small, and surrounded by housing. Many of the plants grown in house gardens have their seed carried into the bush by birds, where the resulting plants can then radically change the character of the bush.

There is now so little of our original vegetation left in Brisbane that every little bit is precious. In this section one garden escape is discussed, with a suitable alternative proposed by Bruce Perrott of Perrotts Nursery.

### Ochna

Ochna was one of the earliest garden plants introduced to Brisbane, and its popularity has now waned somewhat. Still this South African shrub can well look after itself. The shiny black seeds which follow the yellow and red flowers are relished by birds, and self-sow wherever they fall.

It is remarkably tolerant of just about all conditions, but thrives in light shade, and is now rife through both Sparkes Hill and parts of Grange Forest Park.



### Syzygium wilsonii (Eugenia wilsonii)

This has been a favourite for many years, and deservedly so. The deep red flowers, tipped with white, can form almost a full sphere.

An old plant can reach 3m in height, but is easily contained lower. Its spread is also about 3m for an old plant.

Its big attraction is its ability to tolerate shade. Planted hard against the south side of a high house, or as an understory plant, it will thrive. While preferring garden watering, this is not particularly necessary. A most desirable plant.