

# BUSH NEWS

• from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook and Environs

No 6, Spring 1990

GreenBrook Association

## EDITORIAL

The last 3 months has seen the latest of the regular dredgings of Kedron Brook.

Once again the effect on wildlife has been devastating - the fish have not yet returned, and the water-weeds are just now beginning to regrow.

To date we have accepted that the "experts" must know best.

However in this latest exercise much of the spoil dug from the creek (over 2000 cubic metres) was taken upstream from Webster Rd and dumped on the banks of the same creek - in one of the few remaining "wild" areas.

Not only does this question the logic of the existing flood-mitigation practices, but it also suggests a mismanagement of our natural areas.

We desperately need to consider alternatives to creek management, and to start experimenting with less brutal, and hopefully more cost-effective, solutions.

Frank Box

## FLOODS

Several times every summer Kedron Brook becomes a raging torrent. The resulting floods have over the years caused enormous misery. Because of this the creek is now maintained in a state that minimises flooding. In this article I want to discuss the costs, and the alternatives, of this approach.

## How a Natural Creek Works

Natural watercourses are always lined with large trees. The roots of these penetrate deep into the banks and even under the creek.

Exposed during floods, these roots form a rough, uneven bed, and set up vortexes in floodwaters, which in turn churn up sediments and carry them downstream.

This self-cleansing action caused by tree roots tends to create a series of rapids and deep pools - the rapids being scoured at normal flow, and the deep pools during floods. Many older residents remember the deep swimming holes right along Kedron Brook only a generation ago.

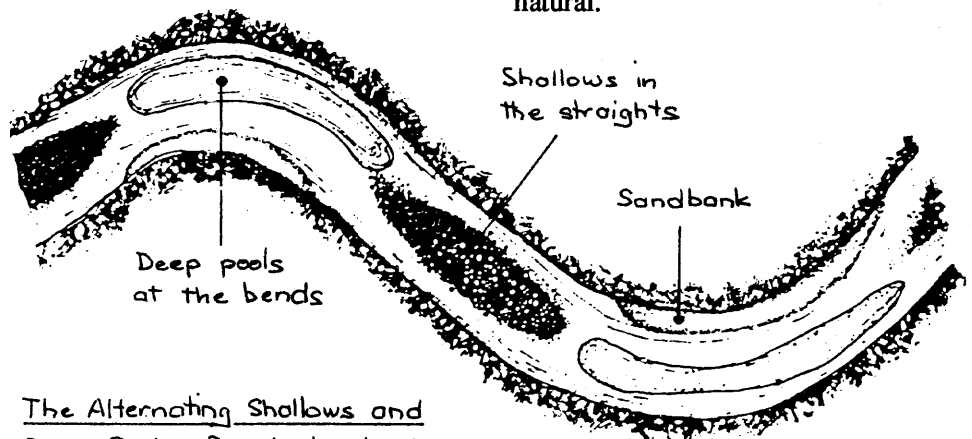
During big floods the waters spill over the banks and onto the surrounding flood plain, while the trees continue to protect the banks.

## The Lower Reaches

Downstream from Webster Rd, Kedron Brook is rigidly contained in the centre of a huge channel.

## The Middle Reaches

Between Grovely and Webster Rd most of Kedron Brook remains "wild". However it is far from natural.



The Alternating Shallows and Deep Pools of a Natural Meander

In many places the creek can still form deepish pools supporting fish, tortoises and ultimately a fairly complex food chain. Trees remain few, since the rank grasses which choke the creek also choke young trees.

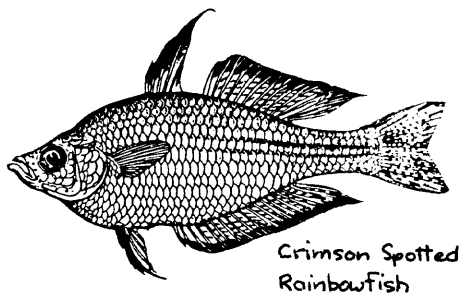


It is possible that selected parts of this stretch, such as that below Sparkes Hill, could again carry rainforest. It would not be cheap, but it may well be cheaper than what we are currently doing downstream.

### KEDRON BROOK - WILDLIFE HABITAT ?

The deep swimming holes, once common along Kedron Brook, were also good fishing holes. The trees which supported swing ropes also added leaf-litter to the creek, and this in turn became a food source for yabbies, dragon-fly larvae, mussels and insects.

The cool depths were home to Freshwater Cod, Eel-tailed Catfish and some of the larger gudgeons. The most colourful form of the beautiful Crimson Spotted Rainbowfish came only from Kedron Brook. On the banks lived the web-footed Water Rat and the Platypus.



Crimson Spotted Rainbowfish

Sadly, with not a single deep pool left along the whole length of Kedron Brook, almost all of these animals are now locally extinct.

### The Current Situation

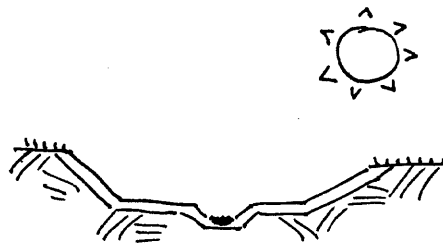
There are now few trees overhanging any part of Kedron Brook, and the loss of leaf-litter has severely restricted the numbers of crustaceans and insects.

The creek also receives more direct sunlight, which causes greater algal growth. This in turn favours introduced fish, particularly Mosquito Fish and Swordtails. Unfortunately Mosquito Fish, for all their abundance, don't control mosquitos very well.

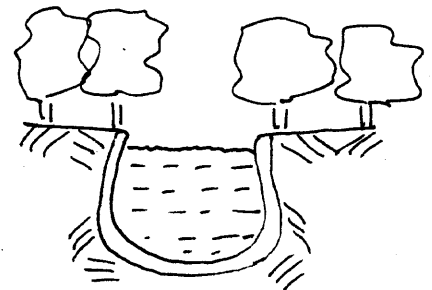
Native fish still continue to survive in the "wild" stretches where rank grasses offer shelter and protection.

Where flood mitigation works have removed even the fringing grasses, virtually the only fish remaining are introduced species. Only native young mullet and eels can compete in this harsh environment.

Gary Hart



Hot, shallow waters  
- little water life



Cool trees and deep pools  
- rich water life

### CAN YOU HELP US ?

Over the years many foreign plants have been dumped in the bush, and some have flourished to such an extent that they have almost taken over from the native plants.

Lantana, Madiera Vine and Morning Glory are just a few of the weeds that have to be cut out if the bush, and it's associated wildlife, is again to reach its full potential.

Our next activities to achieve this will be held on -

- 4 November
- 2 December

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

Bob Devine

### PLANT OF THE MONTH

#### Acmena smithii "Small-Leafed Lilly Pilly"

This is a small tree which once was common along Brisbane creeks. It can grow to 8m, but remains a tight-foliaged, compact plant - good for privacy and as a wind break. It is also a good climbing tree for kids.

While it retains a preference for moisture, it is nevertheless hardy. The fruit is edible.



Available from Perrotts Nursery, Elkhorn St, Enoggera