



MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

P.O. Box 657, Kenmore. 4069

MCCG NEWSLETTER Summer 2023



ABOVE: David Edwards' image, *Is 3 a Crowd?*, captured 1st prize in MCCG Native Birds category, and won the People's Choice Award.



ABOVE: Youth (YP) 'Photo Comp' entries this year, included pictures from Joseph Pappas, whose Possum picture was Highly Commended and won the YP People's Choice Prize. More at p 4.



CENTRE, right: Anne Love's image, *Pinwheels*, was awarded 2nd place in the MCCG Photo Comp Native Plants & Fungi category.

Turn to page 5 for more from some of the winners of our Open Categories

BELOW, right: A successful Rafting Ground Reserve planting event (picture: Jim Pope). For more from Jim Pope, turn to page 3

Your latest issue: *A Successful Planting* (p3), *Bandicoots* (p7), *Bush Bite* (p7), *Chairman's Report* (p2), *Eight-legged Passengers* (p6), *Froggin' Around: Dam Research* (p6), *Mistletoes* (p3), *Moggill Platypus Magic* (p8), *The 25th MCCG 'Photo Comp'* (p3-6),



Chairman's Report

There were a lot of engaging community activities to recall and celebrate across the Moggill Creek Catchment Group, looking back over 2023.

We finally opened the Old Gold Creek Sawmill Walk near Gold Creek Reservoir in March, with thanks to Federal Member for Ryan, Dr Elizabeth Watson-Brown and Gordon Grigg, a result of many years of dedicated revegetation efforts.

Regular extension activities included our June *Kids' Day Out at the Cottage*. This attracted over 350 (mostly young) people, getting them involved in learning and interacting with fauna and flora of the catchment, and talking to eminent local experts in plant propagation and fauna identification. We've had three different speakers discussing aspects of the fauna, flora, and ecology of the catchment as part of our *Moggill Creek Talks Series*, covering topics as diverse as Myrtle rust, local native vines, and fireflies. These provided stimulating public interest and discussion at their conclusion. Finally, our recent MCCG photo competition in October, displayed at the Kenmore Village, captivated many hundreds of viewers, with nearly 500 people involved in the People's Choice award, and generating local social media interest. We've also been involved in extension activities with primary school students from Kenmore South State School, and with undergraduates from the Queensland University of Technology.

The September Platypus survey stirred 47 volunteers to scan for Platypus across 34 different locations within the greater Moggill Creek catchment. Our catchment continues to be a focal point for Platypus within the inner Brisbane area, and this long-term fauna research influences and informs knowledge of this species in south-eastern Queensland.

The MCCG Gold Creek plant nursery has grown and distributed around 15,000 native trees, shrubs, and grasses, for planting projects for our members and volunteers across the catchment—propagating more than 150 different plant species. Our nursery continues to be a popular and wonderful area for volunteers to meet and work together, with more than 15 people present per working bee.

During the 22-23 Financial Year, 70 working bees were organised, involving more than 600 people contributing more than 2,500 hours of work across all our Sections of Moggill Creek. These efforts resulted in the planting of about 3,500 plants. Thanks to all our hard-working Section Leaders who make this happen. We've also been successful in obtaining Brisbane City Council (BCC) grants to update and modernise our somewhat dated MCCG membership database, and

some of our audio-visual equipment. We hope to have a portal system available soon, on our website, which will enable MCCG members to update their own membership details more conveniently.

As the year draws to a close, I'd like to thank the very many hardworking members of the Moggill Creek Catchment Group for all their efforts over the year—in particular Committee members Chris Bruton and Zoe Bishop-Kinlyside, for being such a great and hard-working Secretary team.

Sandy Pollock

Editorial

Congratulations to all of the photographers who entered the 25th MCCG Photography Competition, and thanks to everyone who also shared stories about their images for the Newsletter. Great to have so many in this issue, with more held over to enjoy in the Autumn Newsletter.

The absolute deadline for the next issue is 10 March 2024. Why not start writing now? I look forward to your New Year [email](#).

Cathi

Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) is a volunteer action group, aiming to conserve & improve the natural environment of our catchment on both private & public land.

Chairman: Sandy Pollock

Secretary: Zoe Bishop-Kinlyside (Secretary) and Chris Bruton (Assistant Secretary)

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Articles of interest to Members are always welcome.

The Editor reserves the right not to publish any item submitted. Material will be edited for clarity, style, and space. The decision of the Editor is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. **Please email YOUR news direct to mccgeditor@outlook.com.au.**

Newsletter Editor: Dr Catherine A. Lawrence (Cathi)

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MCCG Photography Competition

Congratulations to Rebecca Bain, MCCG 'Photo Comp' Chair, and to her Committee. The 25th year of the competition was celebrated in style with some wonderful entries displayed at Kenmore Village. Thanks again, Rebecca.

Another successful photo competition drew to a close in October. We are so lucky to receive so much support from the many people involved, including the photo comp committee, our sponsors, the volunteers manning the display, and our wonderful photographers.

📷 83 photos were submitted into our Open categories—which this year included 'Silver,' to celebrate 25 years of the photo comp running;

📷 13 photos were submitted by primary school kids, into our Young Persons digital category;

📷 \$1,550 in cash and gift vouchers were awarded to the prize winners, thanks to our local sponsors.

Be sure to check out the winners' gallery on the [MCCG website](#). Rebecca Bain

Mistletoes: Hidden Habitats

Mistletoes are often thought of as wild plants, occurring far from urban situations. However, they may be found in suburban Brisbane gardens if you look close enough. Mistletoes can also be cultivated with patience—and you don't even need potting mix or pots! This specimen of *Dendrophthoe vitellina* (Yellow-flowered or Long-flowered mistletoe), pictured below, grows on Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) beside an exposed Kenmore nature strip, and has persisted for over 20 years. Despite many gardeners' concerns, these mistletoes appear to cause no long-term harm to the host plant.



A very large array of butterflies (over 12 species) can utilise this species as a larval food plant, while the bright sulphur yellow, red-tipped flowers provide honeyeaters with nectar. So mistletoes can provide a powerful biodiversity boost in these sometimes species-poor suburban environments of Brisbane.

Sandy Pollock

A Successful Planting

Approximately 40 volunteers, young and old, took part in our community planting at Rafting Ground Reserve on the morning of Sunday 8th October (see photos below and on the front cover). Sandy Pollock spoke about the history of the site, which in the nineteenth century was the centre of the local logging industry. Timber logs were brought from the surrounding area by bullock carts, and assembled into rafts for floating down the Brisbane River to sawmills closer to the city. Wesley DeMuth (BCC Creek Catchments Officer) provided an overview of plans for the day, and Cody Hochen ('Land for Wildlife' Officer) gave a Health and Safety briefing.



The area chosen for the planting had become overgrown with weeds, but Wesley had previously arranged for contractors to clear the area, to prepare the site for planting, using funding from BCC's Public Works Order funds. We all then got to work, putting in around 750 native plants and shrubs, and spreading the mulch that had been provided. The event was capped off with a sumptuous morning tea that included some delicious homemade vegetable soup and cake provided by Bahereh Sabet, one of our regular volunteers. Thanks to all who participated.

Jim Pope

e-newsletter? Just email the **MCCG Secretary** with 'email newsletter' in the subject line, and add your name and address in the message. Thank you.

MCCG Photo Comp: 'YP' Stars

Congratulations to all of the entrants in the Young Persons (YP) categories of the 2023 Photo Comp. Here's a little from some of the successful competitors, in their own words.



Picture: Joseph Pappas' *Tawny Family*, was awarded 1st place in the YP Category. Joseph also won the YA People's Choice Prize, with the front cover Possum pic. *Congratulations!*

📷 One day I was going for a big bush walk. When we were returning close to home, we were excited to find a tawny nest. The mother Tawny was sitting on her eggs patiently. We visited the nest every day from the on. Then one day there were little chicks in the nest. They were adorable. Then a few weeks later they all fledged the nest, and they were all cuddled up together and that's where I got the great photo (*above*).

Joseph Pappas

📷 We were walking up my school hill on a Sunday morning only to find a nest in the tree. It appeared to be a noisy miner's nest, when I saw an adult miner who flew into the tree to the nest holding a stick but sadly I could not get a good glimpse of it to take a photo. Then I heard my dad and my brother calling my name that there was a baby miner on the floor. I rushed to take a photo of the baby miner, about 2 weeks old, and luckily I got the most perfect picture I could possibly get!

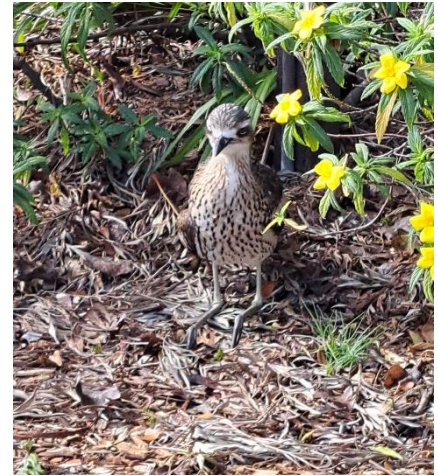
Evie Drummond



Picture: *Baby miner*, by Evie Drummond, YP Category Chairman's Choice. *Great work, Evie!*

📷 This photo, taken at the botanic gardens, shows a stone curlew that looks like it is defending its territory. Its eyes show gentle dominance, a sweet gaze that insinuates the phrase 'don't mess with me'.

Eva Henricksen



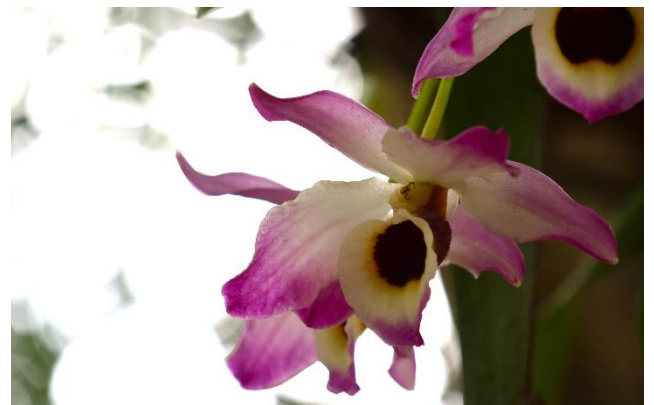
Picture: *Standing Guard*, by Eva Henricksen, was Highly Commended (YP Category). Eva also entered *Unwelcoming Welcome Sawallow* picture, below. *Well done!!*



📷 This native bird, otherwise known as a welcome swallow, is being less than welcoming to a fellow swallow who wants to sit on this pole too. There is a flutter of wings and a clash of minds as two birds decide who will sit down. These birds love to swoop and dive around the ferries in the river and it's always fun to watch them fly around in such a playful manner.

Eva Henricksen

Picture, below: *Orchid with Tiny Spider*, by Jasper Drummond, Highly Commended, YP Category. *Excellent, Jasper!*



📷 I took this photo of my Great Grannies' orchid. It is on our deck. I didn't see the tiny Spider until I looked at the photo.

Jasper Drummond

In Their Own 'Open' Words

Thanks to the many talented photographers who entered the 2023 MCCG Photography Competition. And thanks to everyone who shared a little more information about their images (and to Rebacca Bain for organising all of this information for the Editor!). More to follow in future Newsletters.

David Edwards was successful in several categories of the competition, including with the striking front cover image, *Is Three A Crowd?* David also won 1st place in the Native Plants & Fungi Category, with this glorious '*Capparis sarmentosa*' (below) and here tells us a little more about each image.



📷 *Capparis sarmentosa* is a scrambling or climbing vine/shrub up to 3m tall, according to most descriptions. It is relatively common along the path around the Gold Creek reservoir. I particularly like the shape of the new stems, and the small velcro-like hooks it uses to climb. We planted two of them approximately 20 years ago, and one of them is still just a small plant with a few tendrils up to 50cm tall. The other of the two decided to go up a grevillea robusta a few years ago and now is about 8m up, and this year had its first decent flowering that enabled me to try and take a photo of the flowers. Taking photos of white flowers is a challenge to try and get even light, without blowing out the highlights. I chose to use a macro lens and flash with a home-made diffuser and was fairly happy with the result.

📷 We do occasionally get scarlet honeyeaters into our garden and at the time this photo (see front cover) was taken we had a grass tree spear as well—but our scarlet honeyeaters didn't go near it, preferring a bottle brush that was flowering. Out on our almost weekly walk we had been watching the grass tree spears getting near to opening, and wondering what birds we might find on them. Mostly it was noisy miners and friar birds, but then we found this other

spear that had a group of scarlet honeyeaters. The first time we saw them, we watched for about half an hour, and I took a bunch of photos including with up to 6 honeyeaters at once. But with the spear being such a tall subject, the way the sun was shining, and some birds always in shadow, it didn't quite work. The next week, they were at the same spear, and a bunch more photos were taken, but still not quite right. I decided I needed to get just a bit closer, and definitely needed a bird on or near the very top. Week 3 and the grass tree spear had finished flowering, but fortunately there was another spear, not far away, to where the honeyeaters had re-located. More time was spent slowly getting close to the spear and waiting for birds to be at the top of it. Fortunately, not only did I get a bird right on top of the spear, but the female flying in to join the party as well. **David Edwards**

Andrew Taylor was also successful with a number of images and has provided some very interesting information about these entries. Definitely more to read about in future Newsletter issues!

📷 This Eastern brown snake, *Pseudonaja textilis*, is shown here in this photo in a clear defensive stance (see image, below, Warning, 3rd place in Native Animals excl. Birds Category). Most people would view this posture as a sign of aggression on the snakes behalf,



when in actual fact it is a fair defensive warning in response to a perceived threat by the snake of my presence as I try to take this photo. If you ever see a snake of any sort in this 'S' shaped posture, then count yourself lucky and fortunate that the snake is being defensive rather than aggressive. From this defensive position a snake may make a few pretend strikes at you, if you haven't moved away as you should. The myths that this species will chase you down are just that and a scientific paper that studied this myth is well worth reading (see *Responses of free-ranging brown snakes (Pseudonaja textilis: Elapidae) to encounters with humans*, P.B. Whitaker & R. Shine. *Wildlife Research*, 1999, 26. 689-704). **Andrew Taylor**

As always, there were lots of wonderful images of native birds, including this colourful Rainbow Bee-eater pair, *below*, by Kim Wright (3rd place),



More to come in future Newsletters. But there is just enough space in this issue to congratulate Anne Love, who was successful with a number of photos—including the painterly front cover Native Plants and Fungi *Pinwheels* image, a winning Silver photo, and two great shots in Native Animals (excluding birds). Anne's Platypus image was awarded 2nd prize, and this Rakali picture (*below*) was Highly Commended.

📷 Both pictures (*of the Platypus and of this Rakali, below*) were taken down at Moggill Creek: one at The Mumford Bridge and one at the causeway at the bottom of Haven Road.



We have seen a Rakali on two occasions, and have very regular sightings of the Platypus.

📷 The *Pinwheels* photo (*front cover*) was taken down in the gully in our back yard, in Upper Brookfield, when the creek was not flowing. It is one of the many different types of fungi. Anne Love

Froggin' Around: Dam Research

The sixth annual FrogID Week has just ended, so hope you sent in your recordings. Even “no frogs calling,” same frog, same pond or creek, reports contribute to the annual ‘audio shot’ of Australia’s unique frog species. In the dam, I recorded eastern sedge frog

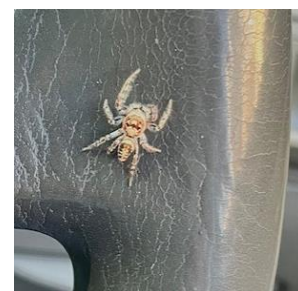
(*Litoria fallax*), striped marsh frog (*Limnodynastes peronii*), tusked frog (*Adelotus brevis*) and emerald spotted tree frog or Peron’s tree frog (*Litoria peronii*). Locally also there were reports of green tree frogs (*Litoria caerulea*), graceful tree frogs (*Litoria gracilentia*), bleating tree frogs (*Litoria dentata*), naked tree frog (*Litoria rubella*), and the occasional cane toad (*Rhinella marina*). Interestingly some of these frogs, like the bleating tree frog, are not heard from our property.

It appears that the water body may have something to do with where frogs live. A recent article in *The Conversation* (by Martino Malerba, Don Driscoll, Jodi Rowley, Nick Wright and Peter Macreadie) referred to Australia’s ‘unsung farm dams’ that provide a vital habitat to threatened species of frogs. These human-made ponds are scattered across rural Australia. Research has found they have become home to over two-fifths of Australia’s 240+ surviving frog species—and researchers discovered many species at very real risk of extinction croaking happily in unnamed dams (e.g. growling grass frogs [*Litoria raniformis*], green and golden bell frogs [*Litoria aurea*], Sloane’s froglet [*Crinia sloanei*] and northern heath frogs [*Litoria littlejohni*]). The dams richest in frog species were those older than 20 years, with a medium surface area around 0.1ha (dams can be a lot bigger than this) and located in areas with high rainfall and intermediate temperatures. That makes sense; older dams are more natural and food/shelter rich. Phil Bird

Eight-legged Passengers

Spiders in the car are a particularly well-publicised internet phenomenon. Huntsman spiders emerging from behind the sun-visor is something many motoring Queenslanders have experienced. For arachnophobes, this seems just about the most terrifying situation imaginable, and the distraction can indeed lead to accidents.

Very recently, while driving to work, I spotted a small lump on the steering wheel of my car, which moved when I shifted my hand. I deduced a small spider, and that’s indeed what it was (*see right*); the ‘lump’ turned out to be the Garden Jumping Spider (*Opisthoncus parcedens*, or near relative). I pulled over, and gently moved the spider outside. If you discover a spider while driving, stay calm, and pull over carefully. Then open windows or doors if safe to do so. The spider (as I discovered) will not be aggressive and will be looking for a way out. Sandy Pollock



Bandicoots

At the MCCG Photography Competition display, one visitor commented on the three photos of Powerful Owls, observing he could do with some of them at his property to clear out the bandicoots at his Upper Brookfield property. Clearly, he is not alone as I hear that many locals are seeing evidence of bandicoots digging up lawns and plants (see *Chris Bruton's photo, below, of a local bandicoot*).

It is great to hear that animals such as bandicoots are in good numbers. Cody Hochen, BCC Land for Wildlife Officer, confirms that there are significant numbers of bandicoots all through the western suburbs (and the whole south-east coast of Australia), noting "It's not often you get to see any animal increase in numbers in such a short time, so good on them. They do lots of good, with removing lawn grubs, aerating soil and spreading fungi, so the more the merrier." Cody is also sure the Powerful Owls and other raptors and owls are enjoying the boom as well.



At the Rafting Ground Road planting site Cody notes that "even when you install guards, they are still getting under sometimes [...]. It is boom and bust for bandicoots. They have lots of babies very quickly when conditions are great, and when things are not so great, things slow down." Bandicoots have the shortest gestation period of any mammal (12.5 days), and typically live between 2-4 years. Cody also noted that BCC pest animal controls may benefit bandicoots. The Northern Brown Bandicoot (*Isododon macrourus*) is most frequently seen across Queensland. However, the most common species in our area is the Long-nosed Bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*), which has a longer nose and ears, and a shrill, grunt-like call (and it prefers slightly wetter habitats than its Northern Brown cousin). Cody advises that "Kholo is a great spot for little critters. As Amanda Maggs can attest, there is also a good population of Brush-tailed phascogales and Gliders, and there are most definitely Common Dunnarts, as well as Yellow-footed and Buff-footed Antechinus."

Mike Muller, retired BCC Medical Entomologist, notes that bandicoots are a prime host of Paralysis Ticks (*Ixodes holocyclus*).

Mike reminds us to be wary of ticks; to use mosquito repellents, maintain pet preventative treatments, and

to keep checking yourself and pets. Look [online](#) for more on tick biology & bite management.

Melanie Venz, Department of Environment and Science zoologist, confirms that we will definitely see bandicoot numbers drop as their food gets scarcer. To help the local populations, Melanie suggests creating bandicoot-friendly habitat: plenty of tussock grasses and shrub plantings (as ground cover and protection from predators), and retain fallen logs and litter foraging environments (which offer material and space for nesting sites). 'Deep watering' (fewer, longer watering sessions to encourage deeper roots), and the use of mulch will retain soil moisture. If you are happy to have bandicoots closer to home, consider watering plants with low-phosphorus washing machine grey water, to provide bandicoots with food sources (invertebrates and fungi). **Bruce Dymock**

Bush Bites: Balancing Flora & Fauna

Do visit the MCCG Website for the full version.

The recent seasons have been interesting as, despite excellent growing conditions, the range of bird species has been severely reduced—and is only just starting to recover after several good years. On my own property, we are able to support a wide range of species (over 170), thanks to a number of exotics, including weeds such as Lantana, Chinese Elm, Camphor Laurel and Brazilian Cherry that are all highly prolific when compared with natives. For instance, Lantana not only produces flowers and berries most of the year, but the fruit also dries out (remaining on the bushes as a winter source of 'sultanas,' supporting many fruit-eaters when nothing else is available). Lantana also provides an impenetrable habitat for a range of animals (e.g. Pademelons, Bettongs, and Echidnas), and offers nesting sites for finches and fairy wrens.

I am not suggesting we *plant* Lantana, but we need to look at the plusses of exotic weeds, and balance this information against the negatives. So, when developing a property in the Catchment, give some thought to what is existing in the area *before* removing the exotics that may be supporting the wildlife. Select high producing natives—such as hybrid Callistemons (now Melaleucas) and Grevilleas—and consider Guavas and Citrus. Make sure you plant new habitat *before* clearing weeds. If you clear the weed habitat first the wildlife it is supporting will go away and may never return. Consider species that support insects and provide fruit, and perhaps add a water feature with heavy planting (to give safe access) and you will go a long way to helping the Catchment supporting the wildlife that was here before us. **Ed Frazer**

Moggill Magic: Platypus Survey

Two great pieces of information in this issue about platypus in our catchment, and beyond. The annual MCCG Platypus Survey is an important citizen science event—and it's great to hear that it is inspiring other Catchment Groups to undertake their own surveys. Thanks to all members, volunteers, and team leaders—and a particular thank you to Tamielle Brunt for ensuring that this important survey continues to be a highlight of the MCCG year.

This year's annual platypus survey saw 47 volunteers cover 34 sites across Moggill, Gold, and Farm Creeks. There were 9 individual platypuses sighted across Moggill and Gold Creeks. An exciting sighting was recorded at the foot bridge in the Gold Creek Reservoir (footage of a platypus in lower Gold Creek can be seen [online](#)). After the 2022 floods we didn't have sightings of the resident platypus, and it was thought it may have been washed downstream. It was great to confirm their presence in the pool again. Platypuses had been in the last few weeks in the usual hotspot area of Huntington Estate, but they eluded us in that area on the survey morning.

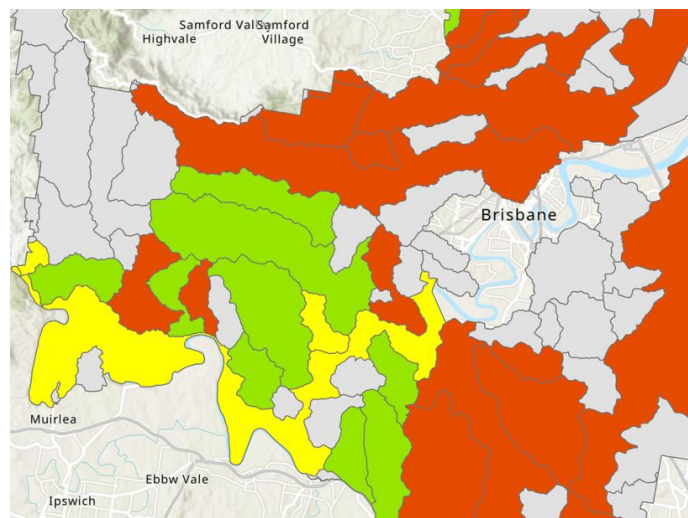
Platypuses rely on water for their essential activities, including feeding, mating, and navigating through creeks. Pools play a crucial role in their habitat because they can effectively search for food in water depths ranging from 1-5m. Dry winter weather meant that creeks are fragmented, potentially leaving platypuses isolated in the deeper pool areas.

While platypuses are capable of travelling over land, to seek water, this increases their vulnerability to predators such as foxes, cats, and dogs, as they lack the speed to outrun these threats. As a result, these pools are expected to serve as vital refugia for platypuses during upcoming years of drought.

Citizen Science is an important tool to help monitor wildlife populations. Thank you to all the volunteers who joined bright and early to help gain valuable data on the population. Thank you also to the Team Leaders (who helped navigate volunteers to sites), and to the Kenmore District Girl Guides Queensland for our post survey breakfast. **Tamielle Brunt**

The map of platypus presence at a sub catchment scale for Brisbane (*above right*) has been compiled from eDNA data collected since 2016—that is, it is based on environmental DNA data collected at point locations across the city. Results from point data are extrapolated to a sub-catchment scale due to concerns around the conservation status of platypus within

urban environments. A precautionary approach to mapping has been adopted, which means that the most conservative result obtained across all years of sampling within a sub-catchment was used to represent platypus status. For example, if there was at least one positive detection for any site sampled within a sub-catchment, the sub-catchment was considered to contain platypus, regardless of whether more recent samples did not detect platypus DNA.



Note that the Brisbane River catchment has been included upstream of the Walter Taylor Bridge at Indooroopilly. The Brisbane River catchment has been labeled as 'equivocal' based on verified expert records and the importance of the upper Brisbane River as a movement corridor for platypus.

For this year, positive or equivocal eDNA data was recorded at Albany Creek, Bullockhead Creek, Cabbage Tree Creek (Lake Manchester), Kholo Creek, Gold Creek, Jindalee Creek, Moggill Creek, Pullen Creek, and Shelley Creek (Kholo).

I was given permission to distribute the Platypus data and map to my Catchment Groups and their members. While there are not as many green and yellow on the map (positive and equivocal sightings), with the current strategies being enacted on a State and Local level, let's all hope for better populations in the future. The ongoing Platypus surveys from Moggill Creek Catchment have gathered some momentum with other Catchment Groups in Brisbane, so we are seeing even more surveys take place as the years go on. This is a fantastic effort from all volunteers involved, and is definitely recognised within Brisbane City Council and other organisations. **Wesley DeMuth**

PS Editors' Note:

Chris Burton highlights that 'it's encouraging to see that our catchment holds the largest portion of the green positive ID areas.' *Absolutely, Chris!*