

ISSUE 30

Dry Season 2005

JABIRU

Newsletter of the Mareeba Wetland Foundation

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www.mareebawetlands.com

for news, forms, and wildlife
updates

The Great Outdoors.....



We were delighted to play host to the crew of The Great Outdoors at the end of April. The Pioneer Experience with Tim Daniel of Wilderness Expeditions was the

main story, a trek with pack donkeys to a remote location within the Reserve, setting up bush camp, five star bush cuisine from the camp oven, and star gazing and

Members Enjoy Jabiru Camp

With our new safari camp officially up and running it has been good to see our members enjoying the opportunity to stay overnight in the Reserve. Our first guests have been very enthusiastic about the quality of the accommodation and the attention to detail by our wardens, not to mention the marvellous wildlife.

The safari tents provide extremely comfortable accommodation. They have ensuite bathrooms with power and hot water laid

on. Queen or twin bedded options are available, and each tent has a lovely timber verandah on which to enjoy a peaceful bush breakfast, or a sunset chardonnay. Fresh food for a bbq can be provided at the Visitor Centre, complete with wine, if pre-booked.

As we expect bookings to build up with the start of the main tourist season just around the corner, we do encourage our members to take

port round the camp fire.

Next morning saw our eager team taking the boat cruise on Clancy's Lagoon and admiring the new Jabiru Camp safari accommodation. The segment was shown on TV on June 6th. As you can see from the photo left, it rained!



Presenter Di Smith & Jane Burgess

advantage of the excellent members rates available. For Foundation members the cost is just \$63pp per night b&b. To book a night in the outback, simply call Tim or Lisa at the Visitor Centre on 4093 2514, or email visitor.centre@mareebawetlands.com for more information.



Calling All Bards of the Bush!



*“And he sees the vision
splendid
Of the sunlit plains extended”*

Entries for the Far North Bush Poetry Festival 30-31st July, are rolling in well. Attractive cash prizes are up for grabs for all ages, so do encourage friends young and old to take part. The competition is in two parts, written verse (closing date 15th July) and performance poetry, to be performed on Sunday 31st.

The Reserve will be open all weekend at no charge to participants and onlookers alike. Food and drink will be available on both days.

Obtain your free programme and entry forms by phoning Merv

Webster on 4159 1868 or email thegrey@tpg.com.au ; or phone Gwyneth Nevard on 0408 932303, email info@mareebawetlands.com or visit our website.

There are several age categories in each section including juniors and locals, and prizes and trophies will be awarded on the day.

If you are keen to find out more about bush poetry and how to write it, attend our workshop on Saturday 30th July at the Visitor Centre

If any of our members would like to help over the weekend, please give Tim or Lisa a call at the Visitor Centre.

Programme Outline:
Fri 29th – school workshops

Sat 30th – 10am-3pm
Bush Poetry Workshop,
Visitor Centre
5.30pm onwards –
Bbq and evening
entertainment including
“Laughter and Tears
from the Bush”

Sun 31st – 8.30am
Walk up poets’
breakfast
11am onwards
Performance Bush
Poetry Competition

Free Reserve entry all weekend. Gold coin donation for workshops and poetry competition.

Gouldian Finch Update



During the last few months our finches have been busy little birds. Both aviaries are abuzz with nesting and fledging behaviour and we wait for the breeding season to come to a close before our next release.

As some of you will remember, a sighting last year by members of the Cumberland Bird Club in an area to the north of the Reserve remains unverified, so we are still unsure whether or not there are some birds from earlier releases living in the wild. It is, after all, a

big country out there! However, the reintroduction programme continues this year, with a big release of up to 100 birds planned for early July.

We are extremely grateful to Maroochy vet, Dr Brendan Barker, who is donating health tested birds for the release, and these are due to hop on a flight to Cairns in the next couple of weeks to join our own stock. We are lucky indeed that Julie Deleyev, warden last year, will be coming back to assist with the banding

and release of the birds, and we also have assistance from visiting researcher from Ireland, Dr Fintan Bracken. It promises to be an exciting few weeks.

As in previous years, we encourage all members of the Foundation and the local community to be especially vigilant and phone the Visitor Centre if any sightings are suspected. We will follow up on all leads! If any members would like to be part of the post release monitoring, please speak to Tim or Lisa. Tel: 4093 2514.

Wildlife Report

As the dry season progresses, increasing numbers of waterbirds are making the Mareeba Tropical Savanna and Wetland Reserve their home. Cotton Pygmy-Geese (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) are abundant, with a record count for the season so far of 31 individuals on Clancy's Lagoon at the one time. With striking white windows on the wing, the males are busily and noisily chasing each other around the lilies.

A regular sight on the lagoon is the first of our resident Freshwater Crocodiles (*Crocodylus johnstoni*). Each morning we spot it sunning itself on one of our tern nesting platforms at the northern end of the lagoon and estimate it to be just over a

metre in length. This individual will not be alone for long as we hope to release a number of others into the Lagoon this year.

Many visitors are getting good views of the Scarlet Honeyeater (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) along with many other nectar feeders feeding from the flowers of the Broad-leafed Melaleuca (*Melaleuca viridiflora*). Other interesting sightings include an Australian Bustard (*Ardeotis australis*), huge flocks of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus magnificus*) going south in the mornings and heading north in the evenings and increasing numbers of Brolga (*Grus rubicundus*) and Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*).

Along with the many birds seen on our Twilight Safari tour, participants are also getting up close to an Agile Wallaby (*Macropus agilis*) who, drawn to the Visitor Centre deck by the smell of wine and cheese, has become a regular providing many photo opportunities.

Visitors are also getting many photo opportunities with the resident Emus (*Dromaius Novaehollandiae*). With the adult male sitting on eggs, the other three have made the area between the Visitor Centre, the new Jabiru Camp and the release pen their home territory. Ever curious, staff and volunteers have been supervised intensely while going about their daily duties!



A record number of Cotton Pygmy-geese are currently on Clancy's Lagoon

Volunteers



"I am really enjoying my time here. It is a fantastic place, teeming with wildlife and so different than any place in Ireland. What a fabulous experience." Dr Bracken.

Our morning tea this month was well attended and we are delighted to welcome 8 new volunteers to the Foundation, as well as welcome back two of our regulars, Dirk Selderyk and Judith Hathaway.

Volunteers can take part in a range of activities from helping in the Visitor Centre to carrying out bird surveys. We also have

two overseas volunteers staying with us at the moment pictured left – Toshiko Onodero from Japan, and Fintan Bracken from Ireland. Fintan is in particular assisting with the Gouldian Finch programme.

If any of our members would like to become volunteers, please phone Lisa at the Visitor Centre

"Volunteers are an essential part of the Mareeba Wetlands"



Calendar of Events



June

25th Saturday 10am-1pm
Build your own Nest Box
26th Sunday 7:30-9.30am
Waterbird Survey

July

9th Saturday 7-9:30pm
BBQ and Stargazing night
16th Saturday 7-10am
Bird Banding
23rd AGM & Cheese & Wine
24th Sunday 7:30-9.30am
Waterbird Survey
30th-31st Bush Poetry
Festival

August

7th Sunday 7:30-9.30am
Morning Bird Walk
21st Sunday 7:30-9.30am
Waterbird Survey

September

11th Sunday 3-5pm
Know your Local History -
Afternoon Tea and Talks
18th Sunday 7:30-9.30am
Waterbird Survey

Members' News

This year we are holding a series of events throughout the winter months for our members. Further information on any of these events can be obtained from the Visitor Centre or by emailing visitor_centre@mareebawetlands.com

Build your own Nest Box. This has been scheduled for the school holidays to particularly encourage our younger members to participate. All will leave with their own nest box to put up in their garden. Cost for the morning to include materials \$20, children \$11, non members \$25. It is essential that you pre-book this event as soon

as possible.

Waterbird surveys will run throughout the year as part of our monitoring on the Reserve and will be coordinated by wardens Tim and Lisa, themselves experienced birders. Please bring your own binoculars and meet at the Visitor Centre. This is a members only activity, and there is no cost. Remember however that accommodation in Jabiru Camp can be booked for the night before to avoid that early start!

Stargazing Enjoy the cloudless skies of winter and join us for an evening bbq to be followed by an introduction to the stars

with Tim Daniel of Wilderness Expeditions. Cost to members \$25pp to include food and drinks. RSVP is essential.

Bird Banding We offer our members the chance to learn more about this technique, and how to interpret the bands. Free to members and small group only, so book your spot early!

Local History – learn about Mareeba's early years, the gold rush era and more with local experts! This promises to be a fun and informative afternoon. Cost: members \$5, non-members \$8, to include afternoon tea.

AGM 2005

For the Mareeba Wetland Foundation.

Our AGM for this year is being held on Saturday July 23rd at the Visitor Centre, commencing 4.30pm. It will follow the format of previous AGMs, with a short formal meeting to present the

accounts and vote in the Board of the Foundation. It will then be followed by a social cheese and wine. All members of the Foundation are cordially invited to attend. All Board positions fall

vacant, and members of the Foundation are eligible to nominate and also to vote. Please see attached forms or ring Gwyneth Nevard for further information on 0408 932303.



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