



Saving What's Left

TIN Topic 7



The Beauty of Bangalay

Perhaps the best aspect of a natural resource officer's job is visiting the numerous sites that people are working across the local area, noting the environmental improvements as a result of on-ground activities and realizing the tremendous collective commitment that individuals are making to the preservation of the area's natural environment.

This commitment, the 'stewardship' of the environment, goes beyond removing a mountain of weeds and planting thousands of indigenous plants, but also extends to preserving the oral history of the areas in which we work, to monitoring the bushland reserves for the presence of Threatened Species (which is often missed in a fleeting visit by environmental consultants or vegetation officers), and to negotiating for better development and/or maintenance practices that impact upon the bushland, wetland, creek, lakeside or dunal system in which we are working.



Ninox strenua - Powerful Owl

Working as individuals or in small groups, sometimes in relative isolation, it would be easy to lose heart and think, 'What am I really achieving', particularly when confronted, as we are from time to time, by 'negatives' like rubbish dumping, illegal tree removal or poisoning, poor maintenance practices which destroy our plantings, and deliberate vandalism. Fortunately, like the natural environment in which we work, most of us are resilient, and bounce back in the face of adversity.



Syzygium paniculatum

So let's dwell for a while on some of the 'positives' of the last few of years. Firstly, let's look at Threatened Species. At Aberkirk Landcare site, a Satin Bowerbird was sighted by the Trees In Newcastle bush regeneration team (Anthony, Kate and Jack) at the commencement of work- Wednesday, 26th November, 2003. At Dudley Beach, a breeding pair of White-breasted Sea Eagles has a nest site at the head of the rainforest gully.

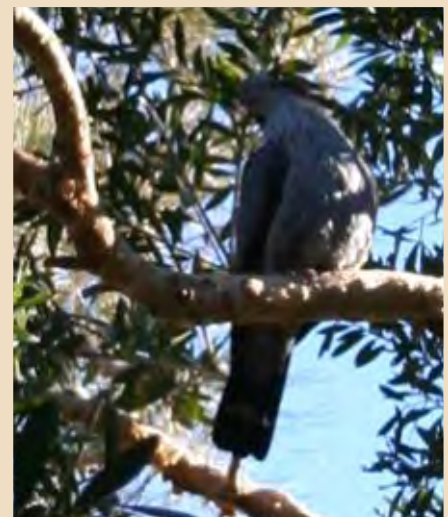
A Regent Bowerbird was sighted in the gully rainforest. (Summer, 2003) Sooty Oystercatchers are sighted on the rock platforms between Nobbys Beach and the Baths, and Dudley. The resident Powerful Owls in Green Point Foreshore Reserve bred again this year (2007), and were observed by the TIN seed collectors.

TIN seed collectors have also seen Glossy Black Cockatoos feeding in Forest Oak *Allocasuarina torulosa* in bushland at Wakefield, a Koala sleeping in a Swamp Oak *Casuarina glauca* at Greenplay Point, and *Tetratheca juncea* is often seen in open forest communities in most of the local area.

Let's look at some other sites. Bangalay Reserve has significant Aboriginal heritage values and supports at least three threatened fauna species (i.e. Powerful Owl, Squirrel Glider, and Regent Bowerbird). There is also Magenta Lillipilly (*Syzygium paniculatum*) and an aroid *Typhonium eliosurum* on site.

At Floraville Ridge Landcare site within the Gully Rainforest, there is *Syzygium paniculatum* Magenta Lillipilly, and *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* Bangalow Palm and *Livistona australis* Cabbage Tree Palm growing together, which is unusual in eastern Lake Macquarie.

The brief to the TIN contract team, who worked the site in 2003, was to extend the local Landcare group's efforts in target weeding environmental weeds along the ridgeline, to note any significant species during the course of works and to link the Floraville Ridge Landcare groups work with the NPWS project on the adjoining private property with a Voluntary Conservation Agreement in place. Terrestrial orchids (*Caladenia alba*, *Corybas aconitiflorus*, *Acianthus fornicatus*, *Pterostylis* sp., *Cryptostylis erecta*), New South Wales Christmas Bush *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, a cycad *Macrozamia flexuosa*, and Black-eyed Susan *Tetratheca juncea* were all noted. A Regent Bowerbird was also sighted by the workers. Threatened Species on the nearby Floraville Voluntary Conservation Agreement Landcare site consists of *Tetratheca juncea*- Black-eyed Susan in the Open Forest zone. A breeding pair of Powerful Owls roosted in the Closed Forest with two chicks in winter, 2003.



Topknot Pidgeon



Salts Bay



Tetratheca juncea

The Salts Bay site also contains the Threatened Species *Syzygium paniculatum*- (Magenta Lillipilly), *Elaeocarpus obovatus* (Hard Quandong) and *Ficus fraseri* (Sandpaper Fig) near their southern limit of distribution, and a variety of migratory bird and bat species utilise the site seasonally, often coinciding with the flowering or fruiting of various trees on site: e.g. Top Knot Pigeons and White-headed Fruit Pigeons on the cabbage tree palms and sandpaper figs.

The diversity of estuarine zones on site accounts for a corresponding diversity of bird species at various times of the year e.g. Sooty Oystercatchers, Pied Oystercatchers, White-breasted Sea Eagle and Osprey have been sighted in the shore zone 2001-2002, Pacific Heron and Nankeen Night Heron have been sighted in the brackish zone behind the cabbage tree palm forest 2001-2002, and Spangled Drongo, Olive-backed Oriole, Figbird and the rainforest pigeons mentioned above have been sighted in the littoral rainforest zone 2001-2002.

The nearby Galgabba Point Reserve is a significant bushland remnant with an Endangered Ecological Community (Sydney Coastal Estuary Swamp Forest Complex) and a number of endangered or threatened species of flora and fauna (Regent Honey Eater, Swift Parrot, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl, Sea Eagle, Osprey, Squirrel Glider have all been sighted at Galgabba Point).

So when someone next asks you ‘What’s left and is it worth saving?’ you can rattle off the above list. And this representative list is only some of the local area.

So how do we save what’s left? It’s important that as well as being weed-killers and tree-planters that we remain active as monitors, negotiators, advocates and activists in whatever capacity our time and expertise allows.

