


SITE 15. Often seen on the bank opposite are Orange-clawed Fiddler Crabs *(Uca coarctata)* which we have adopted as our logo. **Female fiddlers** have two small claws, but **males** have one small and one large claw, the large claw being used to either warn off other males when defending a territory, or to attract females. We have six species of fiddler crabs at the Sanctuary. **Royal Spoonbills and White-faced Herons** are often seen wading in the shallows hunting for fish and crustaceans. The **Azure Kingfisher** perches above the water where it waits to swoop on small fish.

Webley Road, known locally as Punt Road, played an important role in the history of Bli Bli. Constructed of felled trees laid crosswise – a typical corduroy road – it extended from Sports Road to the river, but is long overgrown. The waterway here was a drain built beside the road to help keep it dry. From 1912, the Maroochy Shire Council provided a flat-bottomed punt which serviced the north shore of the river, as well as the areas from Mudjimba to Coolum. It carried people, goods, livestock and produce but ceased operation in 1959 when the Bli Bli bridge was completed. **[Continue on the main boardwalk towards the river.]**





SITE 16. Walking to the pontoon, you will pass **Salt-water Couch** *(Sporobolus virginicus)* where Swamp Wallabies graze at night. The **Stilt-rooted or Red Mangrove** *(Rhizophora stylosa)* is easily identified by its stilt roots. It is the least common of our mangroves. One specimen is adjacent to the boardwalk here, but better specimens are located upstream. Like all mangroves, they play an important role in stabilizing the banks, slowing floods, creating fish-breeding habitat, and providing habitat and resources for birds, reptiles, mammals, crabs and insects. Check the bank opposite the pontoon for Darters, **Egrets**, or **Cormorants**, and look up to find **Brahminy Kites**, Whistling Kites or magnificent White-bellied Sea-eagles either perching in trees along the banks or flying over.

As you return to the Information Centre, enjoy the birdsong [the cheery song heard throughout the Sanctuary is that of the Brown Honeyeater], watch some crabs, and see if you are able to identify the vegetation already described in this brochure.


Golden Whistler


Golden Mistletoe


Brown Honeyeater


Purple & Cream Shore Crab

Proudly supported by the Sunshine Coast Council Grants program.

Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc

SELF-GUIDED WALK

An initiative of

The Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.

Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary is located at the end of Sports Road, Bli Bli.

Email: mwssgi@gmail.com
Website: www.maroochywetlandssupport.org.au
Phone: 5448 6723 (Please leave a message)
Facebook: Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group

Mosquito Repellent and protective clothing are recommended.

PLEASE PROTECT THE SANCTUARY

- **Remain on the Boardwalks**
- **Remove all litter**
- **Leave plants undisturbed**
- **Protect wildlife**
- **NO dogs, horses, bicycles, skateboards, or fishing**

The Sanctuary is managed in a three-way partnership between Sunshine Coast Council which provides land and facilities, maintenance and administration; Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc. whose volunteers provide displays (including the Information Centre and Mangrove Rooms), information, guided walks, species identifications and welcoming visitors; and Education Queensland which staffs and equips the Sunshine Coast Environmental Education Centre.

Do you wish to become a member of the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc? More volunteers are always welcome.
For enquiries -Phone 5448 6723

AREA: Approximately 115 Hectares BOARDWALK: Approx. 1 kilometre

BIRDS: Over 180 species of birds have been identified at the Sanctuary - bush birds, raptors, water birds, pigeons and doves, ground-dwellers and night birds. The calls and songs of some of them should entertain you as you stroll along the boardwalk.

FUNGI: Fungi are vital life-forms. The part above ground or on dead wood is the fruiting body, their way of spreading spores to reproduce. Hidden beneath the surface, their main functions occur through networks of filamentary threads (mycelia). Some fungi break down organic matter into nutrients and composts, food for plants and creatures. Other fungi have a special symbiotic relationship with the roots of specific trees and are able to exchange nutrients with them. Both parties need this relationship. Some solid fungi produced in previous seasons will be visible on dead wood, but soft fruiting bodies are found after rain. They have innumerable shapes and sizes – like mushrooms, cups, jellies, fans, clubs, brackets, stars, balls – on vegetation, wood or soil.

BUTTERFLIES: Many butterflies use the nectar of the various flowering plants, including the mangroves, mistletoes, melaleucas, and shrubs. You may encounter (in order below) Black Jezebel, Scarlet Jezebel, Orchard Swallowtail, Varied Eggfly, Monarch, Common Crow, Swamp Tiger, or Satin Azure. Swamp Tigers need the Mangrove Vine to breed, while Satin Azures depend on the mistletoes.

Photo: Deane Lewis

SITE 12. The **River Mangrove** *(Aegiceras corniculatum)* is a shrub with spoon-shaped leaves often found as an understory to the Grey Mangrove. It is able to cope with tough conditions by expelling **salt through its leaves**, where it is often possible to see the salt crystals. In spring to early summer, it flowers heavily. **Clusters of small white flowers** attract **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, Brown Honeyeaters and native bees. Small **fruits** containing a single seed appear in summer and autumn. **[Nearly 100 metres to the crab hide which is Site 13]**

SITE 13. The holes which have been evident in the mud along the walk are crab burrows. There are around 30 different species of crabs known in the Sanctuary, and they have an important relationship with the mangroves. Mangroves provide a protective habitat, and the droppings of creatures which consume the mangrove leaves enrich the surface detritus [organic waste]. This detritus and leaves dropped by the mangroves form the basis of the crab diet. Leaves are taken into the burrows and consumed when rotted, while detritus is scooped into the mouth and food particles separated before the remainder of the mud is ejected. The building of burrows turns over the compacted mud, and allows fresh oxygenated water to be exchanged with each tidal inundation. This, along with some of the remaining rotted leaves, becomes available to the mangrove roots. Crabs which may be seen when quietly observing include **Maroon Mangrove Crab**, **Furry-clawed Crab**, **Semaphore Crab**, **Red-fingered Marsh Crab** and **Scarlet Three-Spined Mangrove Crab**. (All are 40mm or smaller) **[Continue to the main walk, turn right, Site 14 is 60 metres]**

SITE 14. **Orange Mangroves** *(Bruguiera gymnorhiza)* are one of the most common throughout the Sanctuary. The "knobbly knee" roots help them obtain oxygen from air in these water-logged conditions, but also form an "enchanted forest" in the dappled light here. After an **off-white flower** inside the red calyx, a cigar-shaped **hypocotyl** forms and remains suspended until mature, ready to drop vertically into the mud and begin life immediately. During tidal inundation, look for small fish swimming amongst the roots, and at other times crabs may be found. Some of our specialised bird species such as **Striated Heron** and Shining Flycatcher frequent this area. **Continue 80 metres, and take the loop track to the right. The crab viewing platform is Site 15]**




SITE 9. The **Swamp Oak** *(Casuarina glauca)* (note its **cones and needle-like "leaves"**) was called "bilai" by Kabi Kabi peoples. Names were repeated to form plurals, thus this place of many Swamp Oaks was "bilai bilai" which resulted in the name of the local area, Bli Bli. The trunks and timbers of this casuarina were "farmed" by placing them in brackish waters where the Toredo Worm chewed into the wood. They later returned and split the timbers to extricate the fat worms which were eaten raw or cooked. Notice the scratchings and holes amongst the needles on the forest floor, made by the Northern Brown Bandicoot in its search for insects, worms, spiders, berries and seeds. It is a longer stroll to the next site, so as you progress along this section, look for **mistletoes – 2 shown here** [semi-parasitic plants growing on branches of other trees]. They are important resources for Honeyeaters, Butterflies, Possums and other arboreal mammals. You may even spot the tiny black, red, and white Mistletoebird. As you continue, you will note that the presence of mangroves becomes more obvious. **[Site 10 is nearly 130 metres on the timber boardwalk on right]**




Photo: Mary Hynes

SITE 10. **ALL MANGROVES ARE FULLY PROTECTED.** The mangrove which has least salt tolerance is the **Milky Mangrove** *(Excoecaria agallocha)*. It often has roots resembling a snake pit! Other common names are Poison Mangrove and Blind-your-eye, so it is important never to touch its milky sap. In summer, the tiny native Sugarbag Bees love **the diminutive flowers** which are followed by **three-valved fruit**. From here to the river, listen for the gentle warbling song of the Mangrove Gerygone. **[Continue, veering right where the boardwalk separates. 60 metres to 11 on left]**



SITE 11. The **Grey Mangrove** *(Avicennia marina)* is Australia's most widespread mangrove ranging from South Australia and Victoria (where it is the only species) to the northern tip of Cape York. The underside of the leaves and the trunk are both grey. Tiny **Creamy-yellow flowers** appear February to June, with small **green purse-like fruit** appearing variably from July to December. The mature fruit are living plants with 2 pairs of formed leaves inside, ready to root immediately without having to await germination after falling. The spikes protruding from the surrounding mud are pneumatophores which take in oxygen for the roots in the dense mud. **[60 metres to 12 on right]**

AIM: TO PRESERVE AND RESTORE THE SANCTUARY TO CREATE A PERMANENT RESERVE OF INDIGENOUS FLORA AND FAUNA

SELF-GUIDED WALK - JUST FOLLOW THE NUMBERS

Distances mentioned are approximate as a guide only

The pictures may help to identify interesting aspects at each site, and are referred to in sequence in the BOLD text below each set.




Photo: Mary Hynes

SITE 1. {Located near the map and sign} The **Littoral Rainforest** is one of a few remaining on the Sunshine Coast. Tall, almost closed canopy provides protection for an understory of ferns, orchids, vines, palms, fungi and grasses. This is one of the areas for the **Eastern Whipbird**, with its classic whip-crack call as it forages for invertebrates on the forest floor. Look for the beautiful peeling bark of the **Native Wisteria** *(Callerya megasperma)* as it climbs to produce light purple pea-flowers in the canopy between July and October. **Native Ginger** *(Alpinea caerulea)* was used by indigenous "hunters and gatherers" to flavour their foods. Fruit and roots were sometimes eaten raw, and pulped roots were used in cooking. Since the 1940's, Buderim Ginger, now located at Yandina, has processed ginger grown from plants which originated in China and India**. [100 m. to Site 2 on right.]**




SITE 2. The magnificent straight trunk of the **Flooded Gum** *(Eucalyptus grandis)* (both sides of the track) has provided hardwood timber for many generations. Pioneers thought the **"stocking" of bark** towards the base was flood debris, resulting in its common name. It may grow as tall as 50 metres and is one of the few eucalypt species able to survive as an emergent tree in the rainforest. Flowers are utilised by Flying-foxes, Lorikeets and butterflies, whilst Koalas are able to eat the leaves. Koalas used the Sanctuary as a corridor to pass from one area to another, but are no longer seen. Koala numbers on the Sunshine Coast are declining through loss and fragmentation of habitat, attack by dogs, and disease exacerbated by stress. **Eastern Yellow Robin** and **Grey Fantail** are frequently observed here. **[Just a few metres to the stairway access to Site 3 on the right]**




Photo: Richard Midgley

SITE 3. The **Green-leaved Moreton Bay Fig** *(Ficus watkinsiana)* is located 50 metres down the side track. Along with our Small-fruited Figs *(Ficus microcarpa)*, they are an important food source for Flying-foxes, frugivorous birds, and mammals. Undigested seeds are deposited in the trees where they germinate, eventually sending many roots to the ground, encircling the host tree and "strangling" it, giving rise to the generic name of "Strangler Fig". Our arboreal mammals, **Fawn-footed Melomys** and **Yellow-footed Antechinus**, scuttle through the root system. **[10 m along walkway to 4 on Rt]**




SITE 4. The **Swamp Mahogany** *(Eucalyptus robusta)* with its spreading branches is more usually found in swampy areas. White flowers appear in autumn. **Piccabeen Palms** *(Archontophoenix cunninghamiana)* are common on the Sunshine Coast. They were an important plant to indigenous people who used the basal ends of the fronds as carrying baskets (pikkis), wove containers and fish traps from the strap-like leaves, and used whole fronds to provide shelter in temporary structures. They also ate the heart of the palm, but this killed the plant. The **Cabbage Tree Palm** *(Livistona australis)* had very similar usages. It is distinguished by the large, shiny fan-shaped leaves on spiny stalks. This is the host plant for **Orange Palm-dart** and Yellow Palm-dart (butterflies). Along the next section, notice how the habitat changes to Melaleuca swamp. **[Another 40 metres to 5 on right]**



SITE 5. Wherever there are swampy lands on the Sunshine Coast, the **Paper-barked Tea-Tree** *(Melaleuca quinquenervia)* tends to dominate. Notice its **layers of bark**. Individual specimens can be most attractive. Heavy flowering with **white blossoms** rich in nectar provides an important resource for butterflies and other insects, birds, Flying Foxes and arboreal mammals. The trees also serve in cleansing polluted run-off from urban areas. Kabi Kabi speaking first nations peoples used the bark for bandages, carrying baskets, and hut coverings. **[25 metres to Site 6 on LEFT]**




SITE 6. **Bungwall Fern** *(Blechnum indicum)* is a somewhat nondescript fern which once played an important role in the foods of the Kabi Kabi people. It has edible underground rhizomes which they dried, pulverised and treated, providing a staple starch in the diet. The stems of the fronds were worked into string. The common vines here are **Monkey Rope** *(Parsonsia straminea)* with the large leaves, **Supplejack** *(Flagellaria indica)* with the strappy leaves which end in a curl to assist its climb into the canopy, and the attractive Climbing Maidenhair *(Lygodium microphyllum)*. **[7 is 75 m on Rt]**



SITE 7. You may not recognize the **Cotton Tree** *(Hibiscus tiliaceus)* as the same handsome tree which graces the riverbank in Maroochydore. Here, they reach to find sunlight, but they still bear their beautiful **yellow flowers** with purple centres in summer. First nations women peeled long strips of bark which they worked into string by rubbing them against their thighs. The holes which pepper the leaves are made by caterpillars and colourful beetles which are important foods for birds and mammals. Look also for the seemingly insignificant **Mangrove Vine** *(Vincetoxicum carnosum)* which grows in these brackish areas and is essential to the breeding of the Swamp Tiger butterfly. As you progress, the next change of habitat becomes obvious. **[80 metres to Site 8 on right]**





Photo: Sue Lee

SITE 8. The **Mangrove Fern** *(Acrostichum speciosum)* is a tall robust plant with fronds up to two metres long, but it is a true fern, producing **spore on the ends of fertile fronds**. These clumping plants form some of the best stands in South East Queensland. Plentiful insects make it a perfect habitat for birds such as Scrubwrens, Whipbirds, and **Rufous Fantails**. **Possums** and ground-dwelling mammals forage on its fresh shoots. **[100 metres to Site 9 on right]**