



Landcare UpHunter

Autumn 2016

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Citizen Science

Citizen science is an increasingly popular way of engaging communities in scientific research and in advancing scientific investigation. It is also an excellent hobby for enquiring minds, whatever age you are! Put simply, citizen science is people like you participating in scientific research, not only in Australia but worldwide. There are some great social, educational and partnership benefits to being part of this.

There has been a huge growth in citizen science over the past decade. Activities range from local collecting and analysing of data and/or testing natural phenomena to developing technology - recording devices like mobile phones have helped.

Lots of organisations in Australia are active in citizen science, like the Australian Museum, the Atlas of Living Australia, the Great Eastern Ranges, National Parks Association and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). The Citizen Science Strategy and Position Statement recently released by OEH, also outlines the priorities and kinds of projects they will be engaging in over coming years.

Have you ever heard of the Eureka Awards? They are Australia's premier scientific excellence awards. The newly created Eureka Award for Citizen Science is of huge significance (sponsored by Federal Department of Industry Innovation and Science)

The Australian Citizen Science Association (ACSA) is currently in the process of putting together a project registration portal where you will be able to find projects to participate in nationwide - so stay tuned. Local schools can be part of this too.

Examples of current great projects to participate in or get some inspiration from are: Bathing Birds, Fungimap, Cat Tracker, Warrumbungle Snap and DigiVol.

BioBlitzes are also a really great tool to involve local communities in surveying for flora and fauna. An Australian Guide to Running a BioBlitz is a fabulous resource to help people plan and coordinate an event. Or how about drawing inspiration from an online 'image curation' initiative launched by OEH and the Australian Museum!

The WildCount DigiVol project has been hugely successful with over 33,000 images reviewed by online citizen scientists over a five-week period. A recent statistical review of the data, which compared experts to citizen scientists, found that the public had a 96% accuracy rate when evaluating the presence or absence of a species. That's really citizen science at work!

As a good first step, you can register on the Australian Citizen Science Association's Mailing List and visit the Atlas of Living Australia's Citizen Science Project Finder. Find out what others are doing first. Is there an existing project in your local area that you can participate in? Do you want to organise your own citizen science project? There are lots of possibilities.

Erin Roger



Editors Note: Many Upper Hunter Shire school students and adults have studied local soils and vegetation, planted native trees, monitored waterway health and aquatic species e.g. MyRiver and WaterWatch projects. Bird surveys also help to identify native and introduced species, woodland birds and migratory birds in different parts of our Shire and at different times of the year. You can record your results and observations on the Atlas of Living Australia and the NSW Bird Register.

QuestaGame & DigiVol



[QuestaGame](#) is a great mobile game that gets players outdoors to discover what's around them.

This great free mobile app lets you send your research information and an 'expert person' at the other end will always review it. All records go into the Atlas of Living Australia database.

Find out about QuestaGame at www.questagame.com

I am an EMU. Who are You and what are YOU?

The Office of Environment and Heritage and the Australian Museum's DigiVol digital image investigation project has masses of photos taken by people just like you, from all over New South Wales.

You too can be part of this big project and be a citizen scientist.

To find out more go to www.ala.org.au and follow the DigiVol prompts.



Photo: S. Cottrell

Citizen science is a great way to get your school and teachers involved in scientific research about wildlife and the environment we live in'

Maybe your family, friends or other local people you know will want to get involved and register the results online.

Make sure you all have fun while you are doing it!

Platypus Posers

There are Platypus living in some of our waterways in the Upper Hunter Shire. They may be difficult to spot but they are there.

We have names for our homes like house, flat. or unit. Do you know what a Platypus home is called? It is a BURROW.

Write down your answers to these questions and then hunt for our answers on another page.

1. Where does a Platypus sleep?
2. When does it usually sleep?
3. What is the favourite place that a Platypus makes its home?
4. What is a baby Platypus called?
5. How long does a baby live in its Burrow before going outside?



What's in the Field

There are so many volunteers working for our community across a really diverse range of activities and services in the Shire. Sometimes it can be surprising to know how broadly different organisations, residents and business work together.

For Landcare UpHunter I work with and provide resources to urban and rural residents, farmers, schools, business, Local Council and other services, to enhance land and water outcomes across the Shire. With Scone Landcare I work in a more defined area - Segenhoe (east) to Aberdeen (south) to Bunnan and Kars Springs (west) and Burning Mountain (north).

I could be office based in the morning, at a rural services support meeting of environment, health, farmer and Local/State government representatives in Scone after lunch and then visit a town or rural school. The next day I might be in the middle of a paddock talking and learning with farmers, service support staff and even agricultural companies at a workshop or Field Day in Moonan Flat, Merriwa, Woolooma or Scone before driving off to a Landcare or other meeting elsewhere in the Shire.

Every day is different. I meet a wide variety of people, we share our skills and experiences, I improve my sustainable farming and conservation knowledge for my own applications on the land or to pass on to others in towns and rural areas.

At a Tree Planting Day organised by Merriwa Landcare and Hunter Local Land Services, along with local farmers we had "sit-down" information sessions in the morning and then (after a good lunch) travelled to a local farm to see firsthand and learn more about soil health in differing pasture landscapes. We covered ripping, mulching, pasture cropping strategies, use of equipment and successful tree, shrub and wind-break plantings across the landscape.

A great day all round. Beats being in the office!

Landcare UpHunter and Scone Landcare have new projects coming up - more about that in another edition.

Ruth Hardy



Resources & Funding

CropLife Australia - web tool for growers to access the 2015 resistance management strategies for fungicides, herbicides and insecticides. It provides up-to-date advice covering all commodities. For information go to croplife.org.au.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA: the "Judas Carp" approach to tackling Common Carp - identifying Carp numbers, patterns, distribution & behaviour in the Glenelg Hopkins region. Working towards a more effective capture & removal system. For information go to <http://www.ghcma.vic.gov.au/news/article/judas-carp-wins-innovation-award>

Future Beef: Beef Cattle Australia - Calf Rearing strategies including newborn calves, dehydration, controlling sickness, tips for a successful calf-rearing program, weaning and solid feed. Go to futurebeef.com.au & click on Calf Rearing.

Department of Primary Industries - Plant Quarantine Manual for New South Wales version 10 January 2016. Covers import conditions for plants and plant products for NSW. View through www.dpi.nsw.gov.au website.

Blue Gum Farm TV - A Fun Adventure for Kids aged up to 6 years. A children's educational entertainment hub that lets children learn about where fresh food really comes from (not a bottle or the fridge). Go to <http://bluegumfarmtv.com.au>

ABC Rural: Heywire curriculum programs for educators -provides students in regional Australia an online 'voice' covering varying topics & agriculture & animal resources. Go to [/haywire/topics/?tag=agriculture](http://haywire/topics/?tag=agriculture) or [/haywire/topics/?tag=animals](http://haywire/topics/?tag=animals)

Target 100 - Greener Farms, Farming Throughout History & Future Foods are 45 minute video conference lessons linking key science & sustainability messages, within a curriculum base. View at www.target100.com.au/Hungry-for-Info/Education

Harnessing Citizen Science—European Citizen Science Association guide at www.ecsa.citizen-science.net

Citizen Science Toolkit—Cornell Lab of Ornithology practical guide when designing and delivering a citizen science project. Go to www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitoolkit

1. In its burrow. 2. During the day. 3. In an earth river bank covered with thick native plants. 4. A Pugle. 5. Four months.

Answers - Platypus Posers

Events for your Diary

Landcare UpHunter stall - farming, environment, Landcare, education resources, plants/herbs. Visit us at:

Murra County Markets - 29th May, 8.00 - 2.00pm RSL Hall, Mayne St, Murrurundi. Local Landcare will be there - the Pages River Warriors

Bloom Markets, Scone Public School, Liverpool St, Scone on 4th June 8.00 - 2.00pm.

Merriwa Festival of the Fleeces - 11th June 8.00 - 3.30pm at Golden Highway, Merriwa (in main street). Merriwa Landcare will be there.

Tocal Field Days at CB Alexander Agricultural College, Tocal Road, Tocal 29th - 30th April from 9.00 - 5.00pm & 1st May 9.00 - 4.00pm.

Visit the LLS Land & Environment marquee at Tocal - see Devil Ark, Hunter Great Eastern Ranges & other environment group activities. Guide book www.tocalfielddays.com

Native Wildlife & Native Flora Photo display at Murrurundi CTC in May. Call Ruth 0407 232 539 for details.

World Migratory Bird Day 10th May www.worldmigratorybirdday.org

Pages River Warriors Working Bee Wilson Memorial Oval, Murrurundi 1st & 3rd Sunday monthly (morning) Email Sandy@boyscreek.com.au

Glenbawn Catchment Landcare Group Contact Gavin MacCallum at glenbawncatchment@outlook.com

Landcare UpHunter & Scone Landcare - refer details below

Beginners Bird ID

You might just be sitting in the garden, or out doing some planting and a bird flits past you. Well of course you don't need to know anything about a bird to appreciate its beauty and to take joy from watching it but what if you want to know what it is? There are a few tips and tricks to follow to help you identify that avian mystery.

The old adage, practice makes perfect, really does apply here. Just going outside, sitting and becoming more observant of what is happening around you really does improve your skills. Take your time and watch the bird because the longer you can watch and make mental notes of any features you can see, the more complete your picture of a bird will be. Is it a female or a male of that species? Look for things like:

Size and shape - compare it to something you already know and think about - what sort of silhouette does it have? Is it shaped like a duck or like a bird of prey?

Distinguishing features - look for colours, marking, anything unusual like a crest.

Beak - the shape can tell you a lot about the bird. For example, birds of prey have short hooked bills, seed-eaters have short stocky bills for cracking seed and insect-eaters often have short, narrow beaks, sometimes with whiskers.

Each bird species doesn't only look unique, it also has a unique way of behaving, moving, flying, feeding and calling. A call can alert you to a bird, and some you will get to know by their call. You will generally hear more birds than you see and some birds you will only be alerted to because they call. By learning the bird calls in your area you can quickly get an idea of what birds are around, before you start a walk.

Spending some time just watching a bird as it moves around, you can soon get a feel for what makes it tick - relax and watch the bird for as long as you can. If you have binoculars they can come in handy too, wherever you are observing them.

The wonders of technology mean that field guides are now available as apps – so it's easy to look up possible candidates on your phone. Or you might prefer to keep a book copy of a field guide handy in the house or the car and look at that instead.

BirdLife Australia has a range of bird call CD's available and also apps for smart phones. In our Birds in Backyards section you can find a range of bird calls on our fact sheets, a **Top 40 bird songs** page and tips on creating your own bird habitat.

Go and sit out in your backyard and just get your eyes and ears to adjust to what is going on in your garden. The time it takes to drink a cup of tea is perfect for doing a **Birds in Backyards 20 minute survey**. Go to website birdlife.org.au.

Finally, don't panic! You won't be able to identify every bird you see, sometimes they don't stay long enough for us to even get a good look at them. The good news is that bird watching is a life long endeavour so there will always be something to catch your eye. Some birds may be around your garden all year, some seasonally.

By sharing with us what you have in your space you are contributing to a nationwide data pool and helping us understand features that birds need to live with us.

Holly Parsons



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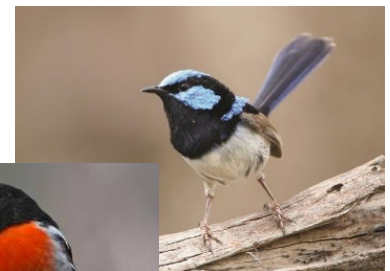
Scone Landcare

PO Box 276, Scone NSW 2337

Contact: Ruth Hardy

Tel: 0407 232 539

Email: sconelandcare@gmail.com



Superb Fairy Wren - Dean Ingwersen Scarlet Robin - Chris Tzaros Magpie - Andrew Silcock

Visit us at www.landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/scone-landcare-group