

SPRING NEWSLETTER

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Spring flew by in the Little Liverpool Range. Thank you to everyone who came to our first LLRI Bioblitz. The event was a big success. Across the weekend, we documented 315 species including a range of bryophytes, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and spiders. The bioblitz was run in conjunction with the Great Southern Bioblitz - a southern-hemisphere wide initiative where groups from all continents document species through iNaturalist. Attendees learnt from experts from a range of environmental organisations including the Qld Herbarium, University of Southern Queensland, Birdlife Australia and the Lockyer Valley Regional Council. Everyone enjoyed a range of walks and activities, including a skulls and scats identification workshop run by Dr Meg Edwards from the University of Southern Queensland.

I hope everyone kept an eye out for all of the beautiful flowering plants showing off throughout spring.

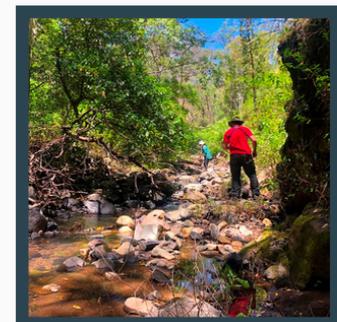


Fig 1. Skulls Workshop and creek side adventuring at the LLRI Bioblitz (Photo credit: Martin Bennett)

LLR Native Species Profile

By Martin Bennett

Common name:

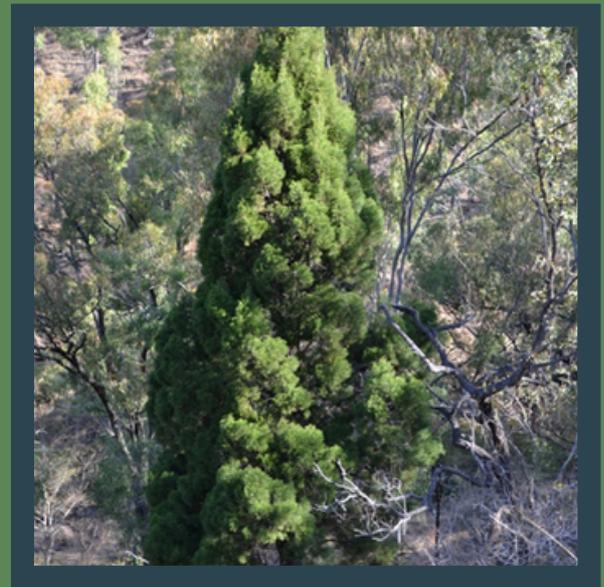
Baileys cypress pine

Scientific name:

Callitris baileyi

Status:

Near threatened (Qld)



A threatened species in Queensland, often found growing as a mid-storey tree in Hoop pine rainforest, or under Spotted gum, Gum topped box, or ironbark communities without fire, common as isolated trees on basalt and sandstone soils on the Little Liverpool Range. Bailey's Cypress Pine is a tree growing up to 18 m tall, with spreading branches, or an erect branching form, with rough greyish bark. The foliage is dark green and is quite dense for a cypress pine. The small star shaped flowers are difficult to see, although the cones are obvious. Each cone has several short horns.



Pest Features

Common name: Feral cat

Scientific Name: Felis catus

Feral cats pose a bigger threat to our native wildlife than most other introduced species. According to the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions, cats are major contributors to two thirds of mammal extinctions across Australia since European settlement. We may not often see feral cats, but don't be fooled, they are around.

Exciting find in the range!

Written By Martin Bennett

In recent adventures, the black plum was stumbled upon in a small dry rainforest patch on basalt soils on the western side of the Little Liverpool Range. *Diospyros australis* (the black plum) is a small midstorey tree, growing to 15m tall in wetter rainforest areas. Its foliage is dark green on the top of the leaves, and pale-yellow underneath with fine hairs. It has small cream flowers, followed by black fruits to 2cm with the typical *Diospyros* calyx or cup which the fruit sits in. The fruits are edible when black and soft, they can be eaten raw, or made into chutneys and jams. Also known as ebony's, the timber is hard, is an attractive black or black streaked with brown, and has many small uses such as making musical instruments.



Fig 3. *Diospyros australis* seeds
(Photo credit: Martin Bennett)



Fig 4. *Diospyros australis* fruits
(Photo credit: Martin Bennett)

Landholder highlight: Generational environmental stewardship at Mt Castle Valleys



For those who pass by the Laidley Valley, the outline of Mt Castle at the headwaters of Laidley Creek is a familiar sight. For my family and I, this mountain and the headwaters of the valley have been our home for six generations, where we've had the great fortune to care for its natural beauty and gorgeous wildlife. Mt Castle Valleys has always been a cattle property, but now we're trying to transition to ecotourism as a more environmentally sustainable form of income, helping us care for the land without damaging it with cattle.

We joined Land for Wildlife and the Little Liverpool Range Initiative when we began this transition journey. Thanks to support from both, we've been able to learn a lot more about the biodiversity on our property (including koalas, rock wallabies and over 200 species of plants!). Our knowledge is growing every day, and we'd like to give special thanks to the incredible expertise of those who visited the property as part of the BioBlitz in October. We've always felt like our property was special (although we might be biased!), so it's been amazing to begin to document just what makes it so incredible.

Beyond learning more about the creatures that make their home here, we've also been heavily focused on weed management.



Fig 5. Great view of Mt Castle (Photo credit: Crosby Family)

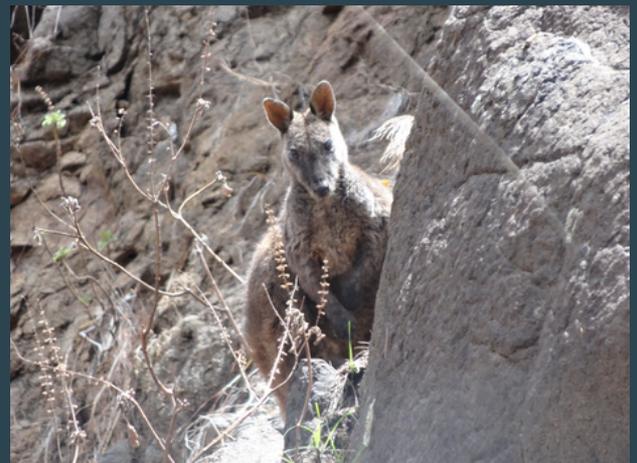


Fig 6. Brush-tailed Rock-Wallaby on the property (Photo credit: Crosby Family)

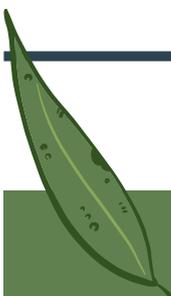


Fig. 7: Camera trap photos capture on the property (Photo credit: Anne Crosby)

Like many properties in the area, Lantana is a big problem for us, closing in creeks and hillsides, and restricting movement of native species. Closed over creek flats also drive cattle further into the hills for food, increasing their impact on the environment. Having such generational history on the property, we remember or have stories of what the property looked like before Lantana took off. It's been really rewarding to see some of those areas return to what they would have looked like in the past.

The biggest challenge for our property has always been, and remains, it's size. We manage 3, 200 ha, much of which is steep or rough hillsides, which limits our ability to manage invasive pests and weeds. For us, the biggest goal for our property is to develop ecotourism on the property so that it can support good environmental stewardship and allow us to reduce the number of cattle we run. It also means we can share the beauty of our property with others and encourage them to think more about how they can care for the environment. If you would like to visit or camp on our property, you can find us on HipCamp under Mt Castle Valleys, or reach out to us at mtcastlevalleys@gmail.com. We would love to share our beautiful landscape with you.

Written by Anne Crosby





Photo credit: Anne Crosby

**iNaturalist
Statistics**

**5879
Observations**

**1594
Species
identified**

**159
Observers**

Upcoming events

- February 2023 - Community Brainstorming Day
- March 2023 - Fire Management Planning Workshop
- Beginning of 2023 - Cultural Burning Workshop (date TBD)