

# **WILDLIFE IN COLLINSVILLE AND SURROUNDS**

## **OBSERVATIONS ON MOVEMENTS**

### **DESCRIPTION OF SOME IMPORTANT HABITATS**

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#### **PRELIMINARY**

In less than 100 years of exploitation, Collinsville [including Scottville] has been reshaped by man's efforts. So much so that there is very little land that has not been cleared, partially cleared and/or invaded by introduced weeds and/or impacted by soil erosion.

In a wider context, the brigalow bioregion ecosystems that define the Nature of Collinsville, have been extensively cleared - such that most regional ecosystems represented in the Collinsville area are either endangered or 'of concern' [Queensland State Government Legislation].

The main industry, mining, has not had as much impact on the wildlife as grazing. In Collinsville, and adjacent surrounds, the grazing of horses has been the main activity. Many families in the towns own horses as riding is a common activity for their children. The pony club has land so that people without grazing land can own a horse. Other families have for many years, illegally occupied and fenced land surrounding the town. This occupation has created divisions within the community.

These activities have been carried on for many years with no regard given to the welfare of natural areas surrounding Collinsville.

In the opinion of the members of Wildlife Whitsunday, there is an obligation [or duty of care] for landholders in the region to have regard to the native plants and animals that we share this area with.

We are also of the opinion that the grazing of animals and the conservation of Nature are not necessarily mutually exclusive activities - although selected core areas need to be reserved exclusively for wildlife. Proper management of these areas should be the responsibility of the land managers and owners. Central to this overall management is the coordination and enforcement role of NRME.

#### **AIM**

The aim of this paper is to provide information to the Department on the important Natural Assets that continue to exist in Collinsville and immediate environs. These assets need to be secured and sustainably managed.

#### **FORMAT**

Because of tight time constraints, the information is presented as a list with a map for identification of areas discussed. The map base is an aerial photo mosaic in faint greyscale, with areas considered of major conservation importance shown in colour. The boundaries of these areas are somewhat plastic, and have not been organised along cadastral boundaries. Both perceived

core areas and connectivity corridors have been considered.

## **REFUGIA**

Areas where native animals take shelter or are to be found in some concentration are identified. At night these animals move out into the surrounding land to feed.

## **CONNECTIVITY**

Water courses and ridge lines are likely to be the most important corridors in the area.

### **MT DEVLIN** [map location 1]

*Not under any immediate threat, these areas nevertheless need to be identified as important wildlife assets.*

- Dry Vine Scrub remnants
- Black stripe wallaby group (road kills usually between Strathmore and Powerhouse turnoff - no road kills observed in the last 12 months- concerns for the group)
- Whiptail wallabies congregate at Hillside Haven during the dry times for green grass and water particularly the females and young
- Wallaroos travel between Mt Devlin and the old dump area
- Grey kangaroos travel mainly from Bowen Road towards the Powerhouse
- Links to High School area, dump area, Pelican Creek

### **RIDGE BETWEEN COLLINSVILLE AND PELICAN CREEK** [map location 2]

- This ridge provides cover and access for larger animals

## **CARPET SNAKE CREEK**

### **Council reserve between High School and Hospital** [map location 3]

- Special area, especially black tea trees near High School
- Potential for a public area of parkland
- Wallabies seen in this area
- Koala sighted in this area
- Links to Old Dump area and Mt. Devlin

### **Brigalow area, behind Gralton Street** [map location 4]

- Evidence of visits by wallabies from Pelican Ck over nearby ridge
- Bower birds, apostle birds
- Biodiversity and regeneration need protection
- Sugary soils susceptible to erosion if incorrectly managed
- Links to Pelican Creek and Station Street area

*Currently described by biologist, Ian Sutton, as an endangered regional ecosystem 11.4.9*

*Approximately one hectare of predominantly brigalow and yellow wood forest supports at least 28 native plant species and provides shelter and food for native animals such as wallabies, bower birds, double-bar finch and apostle birds. A number of weed species need to be controlled.*

*Although clearing for two power lines, dumping of rubbish and numerous impacts from gratuitous vandalism has seriously compromised the area, it has never been cleared. It is not 'regrowth' under the state legislation.*

*Currently, some residents are lobbying to have some of the brigalow trees cut down on the pretext that the flowers bring on asthma attacks - The Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy<sup>1</sup> considers wattle does not normally cause asthma. Introduced grasses like Buffel or wind pollinated trees like Tamarix are more likely to be the cause. Both of these species grow near the people concerned.*

*The area provides current and future opportunities in regard to conservation, education and recreation.*

#### **RAILWAY RESERVE** [map location 5]

- Opposite Station Street
- Agile wallabies observed accessing Carpet Snake Creek park area for green pick and mangoes
- Links to Carpet Snake Ck, Pelican Creek, Old Town, Golf Course

#### **Mine Ck, adjacent to Henderson Street and football field** [map location 6]

- Well grassed and treed
- Only area in Collinsville and Scottville where bandicoots have been sighted
- Sugar glider found in this area
- Links to Red Hill, Mine lease and old dump

#### **Suicide Bend, Scottville Rd and the creek beside Pattel's which skirts the Golf Club and joins Carpet Snake Street** [map location 7]

- Green pick during drought periods
- Links to Mine Lease, Golf Course and grazing area
- Black stripe wallabies and agile wallabies. Some of the black stripe wallabies were very large and muscular.
- Pheasant coucal

#### **Carpet Snake Street beside Golf Course** [map location 8]

- The Golf course is an important food source and habitat.
- Wallabies seen cavorting in the area at nighttime.
- Links with mine lease, Carpet Snake Creek, Red Hill, Pelican Creek and grazing areas.

#### **CORDUROY CREEK** [map location 9]

- 34 USL 46754 (3.12 hectares)
- Special area
- Connects to mine lease, grazing properties, sewerage treatment plant
- Road kills indicate an active corridor (agile wallabies, echidnas, snakes, possums, coucals)
- dense trees and ground cover (in spite of current grazing pressures)

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.allergy.org.au/aer/infobulletins/pollen\\_allergy.htm](http://www.allergy.org.au/aer/infobulletins/pollen_allergy.htm)

- potential for future studies and identification
- ducks and frogs in this area worthy of investigation
- Helpful distance from Collinsville and Scottville to reduce predation by people and domestic animals.
- Permanent water from water at sewerage treatment plant and water released into the creek from water treatment plant
- Acts as a source of green pick during dry periods
- Provides refuge from surrounding grazing areas
- Grazing is damaging this area and reducing biodiversity.

#### **Old Scottville Dump area [map location 10]**

- Part of 32 USL46754
- The only watershed in Collinsville and Scottville which has not been grazed for many years
- Native grasses have not been completely taken over by buffel
- Trees are healthier and not as stressed as in surrounding grazed areas
- Some Grevillea and Dodonea species along gully which would be wiped out by stock
- Few weed problems
- Would make a good control area for assessing the health of adjoining grazed areas
- Buffer zone for eroded area near DK67
- Area currently used by grey kangaroos, agile wallabies and sometimes whiptail wallabies. Coucal pheasants, echidnas and bettongs make their homes in the long grass
- Local residents go for walks in this unfenced natural area
- Local residents take a shortcut to Collinsville through this area
- Powerlines going through this area
- A released agile wallaby travelled with the wild wallabies from Scottville to Gralton Street twice suggesting movement from Scottville to Pelican Creek area
- Grey kangaroos travel from this area to the mine site and also to the paddocks bordering Corduroy Creek Road.

#### **Eroded area adjoining Scottville Dump and DK67 [map location 11]**

- This area is identified because of the serious erosion
- Eroded down to the clay
- Edges decaying particularly near dump area and Scottville Road
- Sugary soil
- Water runoff down the shortcut from Ninth Avenue to Scottville Road aggravating erosion in this area

#### **ROAD RESERVES**

- The road reserves along Scottville Road should not be used for grazing. It should be left as a buffer zone.

#### **MINE RESERVE**

In relative terms alone, the natural areas enclosed by the operational areas of the Mine, are critical. These remnants provide a very large habitat for wildlife. The pool of native species likely migrates to and fro areas around and in Collinsville.

### **PELICAN CREEK**

- From Mt. Devlin to Old Town, Mt Coolon Road
- Links to significant wetland areas at the junction of Pelican Ck and Bowen R.

### **STRATEGIES FOR NATURAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT**

Natural assets in the area are at a low ebb, and they should not be allowed to deteriorate further. Unless action is taken now, the situation is likely to get much worse. Vegetation remnants need to be protected in Collinsville and other integrated strategies for management implemented to increase the likelihood that the remnants can be kept in as near natural condition as possible:

- RECOMMENDED PLANT LISTS
- UNDESIRABLE PLANTS
- LEASE CONDITIONS  
Included in the lease conditions should be a reference to landholders duty of care towards wildlife that share the land.
- WEED CONTROL
- EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### **END PIECE**

This paper is submitted to inform the Department on the perceived requirements for the wildlife in the Collinsville and Scottville area, so that it can be more sustainably managed.

# WILDLIFE IN COLLINSVILLE AND SURROUNDS CORRIDORS AND REFUGIA

