

Louisa Creekwatch News

A volunteer community program
helping Louisa Creek

Water Quality with “Garry the Gudgeon”



My home is in Louisa Creek and like humans, I survive on oxygen but my oxygen must be dissolved in the water. The oxygen I breathe comes from the air as water tumbles over rocks or is disturbed by the wind.

Another way oxygen gets into the water is through the process of photosynthesis by water plants. But plants only produce oxygen in daylight hours and at night time they consume oxygen and produce carbon dioxide through the process of respiration. So I can only survive in the creek when it has the right number of plants to keep the oxygen and carbon dioxide in the right balance.

My mates in Louisa Creekwatch come down each month and monitor the levels of dissolved oxygen in the creek and they tell me that everyone can do something in their own household to help keep the dissolved oxygen levels healthy. It’s easy so here’s two tips:

- ➔ Compost your grass clippings and other garden waste, if this ends up in the creek, as it decomposes, it consumes oxygen.
- ➔ Use fertilizers in moderation or even better use your compost. If fertilisers enter the creek it increases nutrient levels causing too many plants to grow. These plants will use all the oxygen at night, which means I’ll start to suffocate.

Doing these simple things will help me to survive and in return I’ll eat all the mosquito larvae in Louisa Creek so they won’t grow up and bite you!!!

Garry Gudgeon

Who or what is Louisa Creekwatch?

You might see some people lurking in Louisa Creek on a Tuesday. Do not be alarmed they are volunteers monitoring your waterway. Louisa Creekwatch is a community volunteer program funded by the Townsville City Council. The Creekwatch team spends one day a week monitoring water quality and raising awareness of water quality issues and rehabilitation of the Creek catchment. Louisa Creek is an important waterway and provides habitat for native plants and animals. Furthermore water quality within Louisa Creek is of importance due to the fact that it drains into the Town Common Conservation Park.

Volunteers carry out a range of tasks, which include on-site data collection, community-based education and awareness, as well as research, planning and practical restoration work.

In this newsletter Louisa Creekwatch would like to explain some of the activities that the team undertake.

Water Quality Testing

On the first Tuesday of the month, we test six sites along the creek. These visits not only test the water quality parameters such as pH, but we also take observations, such as plant and animal life.

The water quality data is entered into a database, and trends in water quality can be determined. Water quality testing will hopefully provide an indication of the success of rehabilitation activities undertaken on Louisa Creek. This is particularly relevant when monitoring in the areas of Pollution Control Systems constructed by the City Council.

Fish habitat

On the third Tuesday of the month Creekwatch volunteers sample and observe fish, plant and insect life in the creek. Fish habitat is being restored along the creek through weed removal and planting riparian species. The fish monitoring is aimed at assessing native and introduced fish populations over a long period that will hopefully allow us to determine any increases or declines in numbers.

High School Involvement

Students from the Heatley Secondary College Special Education Unit participating in the ‘Life Skills Program’, have been actively involved with the Creekwatch team at Louisa Creek. The youths have been shown how to use the monitoring instruments and have been recording fish catches and water quality readings. They take a great interest in all aspects of the Creekwatch Program and they are now an integral part of the team of volunteers.

Volunteer profile

Peter is 59 years of age and had ceased employment of 34 years with a large Australian company. He had time on his hands and wanted to do something for the community and as such inquired from his local volunteer group for guidance.

His attention was drawn to the Louisa Creekwatch Program. He is now fully committed to the team and enjoys the experience being part of the volunteer team.



Bandicoots are found along the banks of Louisa Creek. They are relatives of the Bilby. You usually see bandicoots at night. They hop around on larger hind legs and range from 15 to 60 cm in length. They carry their young in their pouch. They love to feed on insects and soft roots. Their nest is composed of leaf material raked up into an oval heap. They rest in the daytime in the chamber inside the nest. Townsville City Council has preserved a very important Bandicoot habitat at Banfield Drive and if you are Lucky you might just catch a Glimpse.

Quick Tips

- Don't use the creek as a local dump.
- Wash your car on the lawn – not on the driveway.
- Pickup loose rubbish around your house.
- Clean up after your pets.

Toyota Community Spirit

Late in June, volunteers spent a week at the creek undertaking weed control, tree planting and environmental surveys. The work was part of a partnership between Toyota and Conservation Volunteers Australia, supported by the Townsville City Council, called 'Toyota Community Spirit'. Over 200 trees were planted during the week with this work eventually hoped to improve fish habitat along the creek

Louisa Creek needs you.

Join the team or just come along and see what we do. You might see the creek in a different light We visit the creek on the first and third Tuesday of each month. If you would like to visit or join then give Evan at Conservation Volunteers Australia a call on 0409 353 474.

Weedbusters Week

Weebusters is an awareness program that works with the community to achieve sustainable land and water management, primarily through increased public involvement in weed management, education and awareness projects.

This year Weedbusters week was from October 12th – 19th. The Creekwatch team with assistance from the Townsville Green Corp team and Natural Area Crews carried out weed control and tree planting at Greg Jabs Court.

Anyone wanting to know more about local aquatic and riparian weeds see Evan at the Conservation Volunteers Australia Office.

Environmental Excellence

Award

The Louisa Creekwatch team recently won the Townsville City Council Environmental Excellence Award – Community Group Category for 2003. This is a fantastic reward for all the effort put in by the Creekwatch volunteers and the support given by the community.

National Water Week

National Water Week is an annual event held from October 19th – 25th across Australia and involves the community in protecting and conserving water resources *and encourages thinking on a "Whole of Catchment" basis in protecting and managing water.*

Louisa Creekwatch cooperated in running several activities throughout the week. Tuesday 21st saw students from Heatley conduct a water bug "snap shot" at Greg Jabs Court. By examining aquatic life present, we can get a very good indication of the health of our creek. Results for Louisa Creek were very promising and the "snap shot" will be done annually.

To finish off the week a tour was run focussing on the Louisa Creek catchment. The tour examined the journey of water through an urban catchment with aspects such as the potable water treatment, pollution control systems and sewerage treatment forming part of the morning.

Louisa Creekwatch is constantly looking for volunteers. If you are interested in water quality and in particular the water quality of Louisa Creek give Evan from Conservation Volunteers Australia a call on 47214077 or email ekruckow@conservationvolunteers.com.au



To encourage and promote local community understanding and appreciation of water quality issues in the Louisa Creek Catchment

