

# An Interpretive Guide to the Noosa Trail Network



## Why use this Interpretive Guide?

Accompanied by this interpretive guide you will be able to meander along the trails and develop a greater understanding of the area. From current day uses and the history of times gone by, to local flora and fauna and its place in the region, as well as the vast array of sights, sounds and smells on offer to your senses, this guide will enhance your trail experience.

As you roam the extensive trails be sure to keep an eye out for scurrying, scrambling, soaring and sleeping residents as they go about their day. You may like to tick off the ones that are outlined in the following pages if you spot them.

Above all have a safe and enjoyable day on the Noosa Trail Network!

## Current Land Usage of the Region...

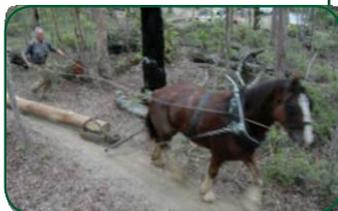
The trails meander through and past working farms including three working dairy farms, plantation timber, macadamia nut crops, a Dexter (small cow) cattle breeding stud, worm farm and an Arabian horse stud.

The trails also pass through the towns of Pomona, Kin Kin and Cooran and the residential areas of Forest Acres and Cudgerie.

## Constructing the Trail Network...

Trail construction began in 2000 with development of the Kin Kin Countryside Loop.

In order to maintain the sensitive environment during construction of trail 4 Clydesdales were brought in to transport bridge bearers for various creek crossings along the trails.



Government grants and funding have been an integral part of the development of the Noosa Trail Network, which would not exist without the help of such sponsorships.

The trails now accommodate several events such as the Noosa Enduro (a mountain bike race), the Kin Kin annual horse trail ride and competitive horse trail rides.

## History of the Noosa Trail Network Region...

The Noosa Hinterland is steeped in early settler logging and farming history. During the mid to late 1800s a number of timber getters frequented the area leading to small scale settlement and development of timber mills and transporting services. The region was well known for its abundance of Kauri and Hoop Pine and other hardwoods such as Red Cedar. The timbers were popular in furniture making and Red Cedar was often shipped to the UK for this purpose. By the early 1900s the timber stocks in the region had been exhausted and much of the land went up for selection and was developed into farms.

Due to the rich, fertile soils in the area the local dairy industry was quite prolific until the mid 1900s when the profitability of dairy farming began to decline. Many of the farms also grew bananas and for a decade or more the Noosa Hinterland was one of Queensland's premier banana producing areas until a disease known as "bunchy top" spread throughout the farms and production became unsustainable.

*Cane sugar crops grown in the region began as an addition to sustain the cattle during dry winter months. Cane farms became abundant throughout the Sunshine Coast during the 1900s assisted by the construction of the sugar mill at Nambour in 1897. Cane farming in the region is now diminishing due to the closure of the mill in 2004.*



*The Lenske bullock team at the Hotel Premier in 1920. Photo Noosa Museum*

For more historical information keep an eye out for the heritage signs situated along the trails!

# Flora and Fauna you may see along the Trails...



The Noosa Trail Network covers a vast area of the Noosa Hinterland region and several different habitats from country lanes and paddocks, to rainforests and scrubland, and spectacular lake and mountain vistas.

The Noosa Shire is home to thousands of species of native flora and fauna that all share a unique and integral part of these habitats and the entire region.

Remember to enjoy your trail experience, respect the local inhabitants and to “take only photos and leave only footprints”.



## Flora...



### Grass Trees - *Xanthorrhoea latifolia*

Grass Trees have had many traditional uses over time for example:

- the nectar was extracted by soaking in water to produce a thick dark drink,
- the soft wood of the flower spike was used in fire making,
- seeds were crushed to make flour,
- the resin-like sap was softened in a fire, mixed with charcoal, beeswax or fine sand and used as an adhesive to waterproof bags and secure axe heads to handles and spear points to spear shafts.

Due to its adhesive properties it was also used as a trade item.

Seen it



### Scribbly Gum - *Eucalyptus racemosa*

The Scribbly Gum is a beautiful tree deriving its name from the scribbly markings left by burrowing insect larvae travelling along the trunk of the tree beneath the bark. The ‘Scribbles’ are visible once the bark sheds, which is an annual occurrence for this tree. Scribbly Gum Kino (gum) was used by the aboriginals and in colonial times to combat Diarrhoea and as an astringent.

This tree also happens to be a favourite Koala and bird habitat too, so remember to look up!

Seen it



### Straw Tree Fern - *Cyathea cooperi*

The tree fern was the identifying symbol for the Blackall Range Dalla and Nalbo people. The fern was used as a food source with the central heart of the plant at the crown being removed and eaten after a process of rinsing away the tannin content. It has since been used as a landscaping and ornamental plant.

Seen it



### Sandfly Zieria - *Zieria smithii*

The Sandfly Zieria was traditionally used as a mosquito and sand fly deterrent. This was achieved by crushing the leaves to release the natural, aromatic oils and rubbing them onto the skin. In colonial times the biting insects were just as abundant and the people were quick to discover these properties and put them to use in this manner as well.

Seen it



### Inland Banksia - *Banksia integrifolia*

The Inland or Coastal Banksia can be seen throughout the Noosa Trail Network and was traditionally used as a source of nectar.

In colonial times the flower cones were sometimes used by bushman as a base for candles made of fat. The nectar is still sought after in the winter months for honey production and the tree are also used in landscape gardening.

Seen it



### Bracken Fern - *Pteridium esculentum*

Bracken fern is abundant in the Noosa hinterland region. It prefers Eucalypt forests and thrives when clearing has occurred. Traditionally the juice of the young fronds was used to stop the itch of tick and insect bites. Once the tick was removed the frond was broken and the thin sap was rubbed on. The rhizomes could be pounded and made into cakes to be cooked in the fire ashes and the roots where roasted when fish were scarce.

Seen it

# Fauna...



## Mary River Tortoise - *Elusor macrurus*

The Mary River tortoise is probably Australia's largest fresh water turtle and has had an interesting journey on its way to discovery.

Until 1974 these turtles were sold widely in Victorian pet stores as penny turtles and in 1990, after extensive searches, it was finally found to be a new species living only in the Mary River drainage system. Apparently a farmer was catching and reselling the hatchlings from his property in the region, unawares of the pressure he was placing on this unique species. The Mary River Tortoise is now listed as endangered by the Commonwealth Government.



## Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo - *Calyptorhynchus funereus*

Yellow-tailed black cockatoos are also known as Rainbirds due to the fact that they can often be heard screeching overhead just before rain, and especially before thunderstorms.

Black cockatoos generally feed on seeds, fruit and grubs and sometimes can be heard tearing the bark off trees to reach the grubs and insects beneath. The sound is something like a loud, plastic, tearing noise that can be quite unsettling when first heard but on inspection these intriguing birds can be found feasting as they cling to the tree trunk.



## Lace Monitor or Goanna - *Varanus varius*

Goannas are Australia's largest lizard and are predators and scavengers feeding on carrion, small birds, mammals and reptiles, and raiding nests for eggs, even turtle nests! Lace monitors are found in Eastern Australia from south of Cape York through Queensland and NSW into Victoria and are common in the Noosa Trail Network region. They can often be spotted sunning themselves on the trunks of large trees or swaggering through the undergrowth. It is not widely known that goannas carry venom in their saliva that is the same as that of a rattle snake however they do not have a means of injecting it into their prey.



## Spotted-tailed Quoll- *Dasyurus maculates*

Spotted-tailed Quolls are a rarely seen resident of the Noosa Trail Network. They are a member of an unusual group of carnivorous marsupials known as Dasyurids with relatives such as the Tasmanian Devil. Quolls are nocturnal animals, coming out in the late afternoon and early evening to feed. They have an interesting behavioural trait of using shared latrine sites, resulting in piles of droppings in open spaces such as rock ledges. Unfortunately, they are currently listed as a vulnerable species in QLD.



## Red Necked Wallaby - *Macropus rufogriseus*

Red necked wallabies are the most abundant wallaby found on coastal eastern Australia from Gladstone down to South Australia and Victoria.

They can often be spotted feeding on grassy road verges and in paddocks.



## Australian King Parrot - *Calyptorhynchus funereus*

King parrots are one of the many charismatic bird inhabitants of the Noosa Trail Network Region. They reside in the rainforest, scrubland and wet eucalypt forests of the trails and have a screeching call with a metallic chaat chaat sound. They can be seen in amongst the trees, perched precariously on wobbly branches stretching out to the nectar-filled flower spikes of trees such as grevilleas and banksias.



## Snake Stories...

The following story was provided by Rob Jolly who slashed the trail for several years (2005 – 2008):

*Early in Dec 2006 I was slashing the trail between Grady and Wapunga Lanes when I saw a 7ft Brown Snake slithering towards me, it stopped and raised its head and body about 50cm and looked at me and kept coming, I tried to avoid it but ran over it with my front tyre! It then came up onto the tractor and was striking at me. I managed to raise my legs out of reach and get the seatbelt off and abandoned my trusty steel steed with the motor still running.*

*The snake disappeared somewhere on the tractor so I poked around with a long stick but could not find it so decided to look under the bonnet. As I opened the lid the snake shot out from the top of the hot motor missing me by inches landed on the seat and slid off onto the slasher and went on its way. I had staggered backwards and landed on my backside in the grass (Snake/Rattle/Roll) I was shaking after that experience.*

*I have recounted the tale to a couple of Kin Kin old timers and they reckon it was a King Brown. One old fella told me he had a King Brown strike at his moving tractor and embedded its fangs in his back tyre and ended up with a King Brown spinning past him as the tyres rotated!*

# Sights, Sounds and Smells of the Noosa Trail Network...



Whilst on the trails visitors can be sure to have a full sensory experience. The trails not only offer stories of history and interesting facts on the resident flora and fauna to stimulate the inquisitive mind, but an array of changing sceneries, intriguing sounds and distinctive smells.

If you have ever wondered "What IS that smell?" or "I wonder what's making that noise?" this is where some of those questions can be answered!

Because the Noosa Trail Network consists of a variety of settings in built and natural environments there is always something new and different to encounter. So, open your senses, be aware of these spectacular surrounds and truly experience the Noosa Trail Network.



## Sights...



### Animal tracks

Whilst walking the trails you may like to keep an eye on the path as well as the surrounds. Many animals will leave tracks in the sand. The easiest tracks to identify are snake tracks which are generally a continuous, squiggly line getting wider at the bends where the snake has dragged its body up ready to stretch out again. Lizard tracks are another common sight in this area and can be identified by the small, clawed foot prints that alternate left to right much the same as human tracks, accompanied by a line through the centre as they drag their tail behind. Some will be curved especially for lizards such as goannas who have a swaggering gait



### Climbing Claw marks on trees

If you stop to look at a few smooth tree trunks along the way, especially eucalypts, you may find claw marks leading straight up! Koalas and Goannas are the easiest to spot with Koalas having five digits and opposable thumbs leaving a spread out, hand-like marking with the separations where the hand is shaped for grasping tree branches.

Goannas have five digits that are evenly spaced on the fore limbs and with two elongated digits on the hind limbs. These markings will also head up the tree alternately where as a Koala will 'hop' up the trunk fairly evenly.



### Smoke plumes from cane fires

Before harvesting sugar cane it is often first burned to remove leaves and debris, and to clear the area of visitors such as venomous snakes that thrive in the rich habitat offered by the long cane. Once the cane has been burned out it can then be cut down as the moisture rich stalks and roots remain unscathed.



## Views...

Mt Tinbeerwah

Mt Ninderry

Mt Cooroy

Mt Eerwah



# Sounds...

## Frogs

Throughout the Noosa Trails Network visitors can pass creeks, dams and rainforest areas that are thriving habitats for a multitude of frog species. If you are quiet in these areas you may be able to hear several different frog calls from tinkling bell sounds and high-pitched trills and reeek's of sedge frogs and froglets, to quacks and chirps of rocket frogs. You may hear the resonant bonk of the "pobblebonk", the tok of "marsh frogs" or the deep, resonating crow-k crow-k crow-k of the fabulous "green tree frog" the only local frog that actually makes a croaking call.



## Koalas

During mating season from October to January, male koalas can be heard making deep, gruff grunting and barking sounds as they approach a female or ward off a potential rival. If they are nearby the sound can be quite loud and startling. Also throughout breeding season female koalas may be heard making a screaming noise, much like a fighting cat, as they try to escape the clutches of a dominating male. Unfortunately for the females, breeding time for koalas involves very little romance and courting!



## Eastern Whipbird

This elusive bird may be hard to see but it's definitely not hard to hear! The sound is that of a drawn out, quite high pitched, and pretty, 'whip-crack' with a following chew chew made by the same bird or a responding female. It is an iconic sound of the rainforests and densely vegetated areas of the region so keep your eyes and ears open and hopefully you will be lucky enough to not only hear the Whipbird but see it as well.



# Smells...

## Macadamia Blossom

There are a number of Macadamia Nut crops along the Noosa Trail Network, the largest being on trail 4 between Louis Bazzo Drive and Lake Macdonald. During winter and spring when they are flowering a lovely, sweet scent can be smelt wafting on the breeze.



## Bracken Fern

In the moist, damp areas of the trail network where bracken fern is abundant, such as rainforests and wet eucalypt forests, there is often a sharp, pungent and somewhat musty aroma around the damp clumps of the fern.



## Koala habitats

You can often tell when you are in a koala habitat due to the strong, pungent eucalypt odour. During breeding season this can be quite a musty smell as the males secrete a substance from a scent gland located on their chest leading to the common 'dirty chest' appearance. They rub their chest on trees and branches to mark their territory. If you are unsure you can generally look at the ground beneath the trees and spot plenty of oval shaped droppings that are another source of the smell.



## Molasses Grass

On hot summer days when travelling through the open, dry paddocks, a pungent, acrid smell may be encountered that gives a gentle stinging sensation to the nose. This is usually in areas containing molasses grass as well as the invasive lantana.



## For Further Noosa Trail Network Information...

- go to our website at [www.noosa.qld.gov.au](http://www.noosa.qld.gov.au)

- call Noosa Council on (07) 5329 6500

This information was put together by Sunshine Coast University Student Rachel Malcolm in 2007

Images courtesy of: 2005 SCU Student audit, Rachel Malcolm & Wikipedia.com

Flora and Fauna information: 'Noosa's Native Plants' by Stephanie Haslam, 'Bush Heritage' by Pat and Sim Symons, 'Wildlife of Greater Brisbane' by QLD Museum, 'Our Vanishing Natural Heritage' by the former Maroochy Shire Council