



Mt. Beerwah seen from the verandah after the storm. Photo: K. Ebert

Crohamburst BugCatch 2015

The Crohamburst property was a beautiful location for a weekend of insect collecting. DEHP Ranger Brent Smith graciously provided us with comfortable accommodation in the house and surrounding outbuildings. Storms and heavy rains put a bit of a damper on collecting, but nevertheless, we managed to find some interesting insects and had an enjoyable weekend.

Eighteen enthusiastic people of all ages attended. Lyn Cook, from UQ, brought Dr. Laura Ross, a visiting scale insect specialist from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and several UQ students. Other visitors included Ava (9) and Peter Smith (7) with their dad, Tony, who drove all the way down from Maryborough and enthusiastically joined in with the collecting.



L to R standing: Lyn Cook, Don Sands, Paul Lin, Katherine Burgess, Perry Bennion, Laura Ross, Brent Smith, Susan Wright. **Kneeling L to R:** Peter Smith, Tony Smith, Ava Smith, Olivia Wright, Kathy Ebert, Geoff Wright
Absent: Penny Mills, Ethan Briggs, Helen Schwenke, James Fish



Penny's *Apiomorpha minor*. Photo: K. Ebert

In the open areas near the dams, Susan Wright netted several species of dragonflies and damselflies as well as robber flies and syrphids. Penny Mills located several species of galls including *Apiomorpha minor* and *Fergusonina* sp. and other assorted Coccoidea. The eucalyptus trees also harboured armoured scales (Diaspididae) and psyllids.



Dragonfly captured by Susan. Photo: K. Ebert



Collecting aquatic creatures. Photo: K. Ebert

The children enjoyed collecting the abundant Christmas beetles

(*Anoplognathus* sp.) on the young eucalyptus saplings, and pursued countless water beetles and dragonfly nymphs (and hapless fish!) in the dams and ponds.

Brent Smith acted as 4WD taxi driver/guide and took us to the far corners of the property where there were pockets of riparian rainforest. Susan and Geoff were lucky enough to get a glimpse of a birdwing butterfly and Don found signs of larvae on the recently

planted birdwing vines which are growing well.

Small baited pitfall traps were set out in a variety of habitats, and the rainforest traps yielded the native red-shouldered dung beetle (*Lepanus ustulatus*). The mushroom baits also attracted lots of Staphylinid beetles.

Light trapping on Friday night was quite exciting with gum moths, goliath stick insects, mantispids and a variety of scarab beetles flying in. We were all very disappointed when the second night of light trapping came to an abrupt end with a heavy downpour which lasted a couple hours. The kids managed to catch a few beetles that came in to lights under the house after the rain which included the introduced dung beetles, *Onthophagus sagittarius* and *O. gazella*.



Lepanus ustulatus (Lansberge, 1874)
Photo: K. Ebert



Susan pinning the light trap catch while Laura and Ethan examine the specimens. Photo: K. Ebert

While it rained, we all gathered around and listened to Brent tell us a bit about the history and plans for the Crohamhurst property. Since the Crohamhurst property was purchased by DEHP three years ago, over 14,000 trees have been planted. The trees are now well established and growing well with Brent and his team regularly mowing around them and keeping the weeds down. One hundred and twenty-five birdwing vines have also been planted in an attempt to add to the "stepping stone" habitats from Mary Cairncross NP to D'Aguilar NP. Brent also hopes to plant 500 figs to attract the rare Coxen's Fig parrot, and casuarinas to increase the habitat for glossy Black Cockatoo. He feels the area has the potential to become a

relevant conservation area. Unfortunately, these plans are all contingent upon continued funding.

Don Sands also gave us an update on insect conservation from some of the discussions at the recent Australian Entomological Society (AES) meeting. They are hoping to have an all day symposium devoted to insect conservation at next year's AES conference. Don stressed that while taxonomy is key to insect conservation, we must also consider behaviours, interactions with other species and habitat requirements to be able to effectively conserve threatened species. With so many exotic plants and weed invasions, habitats are being altered, and factors such as climate change will also affect species distributions. Many of the threatened species are intricately linked with their environment in tritrophic interactions. To effectively conserve these insects, we need to not only identify them but understand how they interact with their environment.



All in all, it was another enjoyable BugCatch weekend!
