

THE LAND OF CLOUDS REVISITED

The Biodiversity and Ecology of the Eungella Rainforests

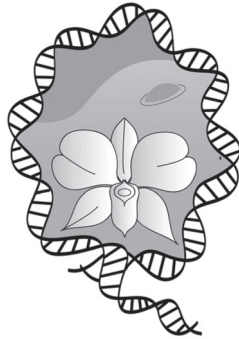
Edited by Roger Kitching



The Society thanks the anonymous referees who reviewed papers submitted for publication in this Special Issue of the *Proceedings*. Special thanks are extended to Griffith University – Environmental Futures Research Institute, Reef Catchments natural resource management group, and an anonymous philanthropist for contributing to the costs of typesetting and printing this volume.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION

The view south from Peases Lookout on Dalrymple Road looking across the upper Pioneer Valley to the cloud-enshrouded Broken River area of Eungella National Park. (Photograph by Gary Cranitch, Queensland Museum.)

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FOREWORD

The Royal Society of Queensland and its predecessor the Queensland Philosophical Society have been publishing the results of scientific and natural history investigations since 1859. From 1884, this has been primarily through a nearly annual issue of the *Proceedings*, supplemented from time to time with Special Issues on specific themes. This volume stands in that proud tradition.

When Professor Roger Kitching of Griffith University approached the Society with an offer to assemble scholarly papers resulting primarily from fieldwork in the Eungella rainforests, the Society's Council did not hesitate to endorse the proposal. We are delighted that Professor Kitching has been able to fulfil his commitment and bring this fine collection of papers to maturity.

As I write this foreword, a debate – or perhaps more accurately, a controversy – is alive over the credibility of the science associated with the condition of the Great Barrier Reef. A faction of politics is claiming that the science is ambiguous, that the institutions established to conduct and disseminate research have been biased and, perhaps worse, that a third or more of scholarly articles in the sciences generally are flawed and unreliable.

Without denying the legitimacy of a credibility problem in some corners of scientific research, particularly commercially orientated research, an excellent retort to these contemporary attacks on scientific integrity was provided by Dr Alan Finkel, Chief Scientist of Australia, in the John O'Hagan Lecture on 20 November 2018 (John O'Hagan is an Honorary Life Member of The Royal Society of Queensland):

Probably the most credible journals are the journals of small societies, edited by volunteer scientists working through the night.

This status eminently describes the *Proceedings of The Royal Society of Queensland!*

Any person who has edited a journal in the natural sciences can attest to the painstaking attention that authors and reviewers and the others involved give to their roles, by poring over manuscripts word by word, fixing typos, clarifying ambiguities, hunting for mistakes. The result is typically as reliable as human cognition can achieve.

The Society is immensely grateful for financial contributions from the Environmental Futures Research Institute, Griffith University, through its director Professor Zhihong Xu, the Reef Catchments natural resource management group and an anonymous donor towards the publication of this volume. These donations have enabled the Society to proceed to print publication, giving the work a tangible presence and long archival life. The support from these bodies is evidence that scholarship is valued and that the labours of the authors, reviewers and Editor have resulted in a permanent addition to human knowledge.

Dr Ross Hynes
President

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- 2002 *Landscape Health of Queensland*
- 2006 *Bushfire 2006 Conference* (Vol. 115)
- 2011 *A Place of Sandhills: Ecology, Hydrogeomorphology and Management of Queensland's Dune Islands* (Vol. 117)

GUEST EDITORIAL

In 2010 I delivered a talk to the annual meeting of Environmental Officers from local government agencies held at Surfers Paradise. I described the extensive biodiversity survey work we completed in Lamington National Park and at Mt Lewis in the Wet Tropics of Queensland. I ended by lamenting that detailed, elevationally partitioned surveys of the Eungella massif, more or less midway between our two earlier locations and known to be of great biological interest, had not been carried out and would not happen unless substantial funding was provided from somewhere. This was a sort of throw-away line, I'm afraid, with the perennial research scientist's appeal for more funding, please.

Immediately after the talk, and to my surprise and delight, I was approached at the podium by Dan McKinlay and Councillor Wendy Cameron from the Mackay Regional Council with the suggestion that we begin a conversation about how the suggested Eungella work might be achieved and funded. And that was how the 2012–2014 Eungella Biodiversity Survey (EBS) began. The full details and funding arrangements are described and acknowledged in Louise Ashton's contribution in this volume. The greater part of the funding came jointly from the Mackay Regional Council, with matching funds from the Queensland Government as part of a larger grant under the Queensland-Chinese Academy of Sciences Joint Biotechnology Programme. Drs Aki Nakamura and Louise Ashton were employed to run the survey.

Considerably later, we were faced with the challenge of making our many results available to the widest possible audience. Some of our Eungella data had already been presented, usually as part of comparative analyses, in other journals. There remained, though, a large body of detailed information that still sought a home and, ideally, a shared home in which adjacent scientific results remained adjacent upon publication. I approached Geoff Edwards, then President of The Royal Society of Queensland, about dedicating a Special Issue of the *Proceedings* for this purpose. He and the Council of the day welcomed this suggestion, some outside funding was sought and gained, and the present volume is the outcome.

As Editor I took the opportunity to invite additional papers, beyond the initial scope of the EBS, to expand the coverage of the Special Issue. The recruiting of contributions, awaiting the last submissions, getting contributions refereed, and then going through several stages of the editorial process took time and effort and would not have been achieved without considerable assistance. As referees I especially thank Daryl Barnes, Chris Burwell, Frank Kohler, Bert Orr and Geoff Tracey. Geoff Edwards encouraged, promoted and ultimately approved the whole process, for which I am very grateful. Finally, I thank Darryl Nixon of Sunset Publishing Services for his proofing and typesetting skills, and for seeing the drafts through to their elegant final form.

Roger Kitching

CONTENTS

KITCHING, R. L. Eungella – the Land of Clouds revisited	1
OGILVIE, P. The development of national parks in the Eungella region.....	5
ASHTON, L. A., LEACH, E. C., ODELL, E. H., McDONALD, W. J. F., ARVIDSSON, D. & KITCHING, R. L. The Eungella Biodiversity Study: filling the knowledge gap	11
STANISIC, J. & WINDOW, E. Land snails of the Eungella plateau and environs, Clarke Range, mid-eastern Queensland.....	23
BURWELL, C. J., THEISCHINGER, G., LEACH, E. C. & BURWELL-RODRIGUEZ, A. I. Dragonflies and damselflies (Odonata) of the Eungella region, central coastal Queensland, Australia.....	33
BURWELL, C. J. & NAKAMURA, A. Rainforest ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) along an elevational gradient at Eungella in the Clarke Range, central Queensland coast, Australia.....	43
KITCHING, R. L., ASHTON, L. A., ORR, A. G. & ODELL, E. H. The Pyraloidea of Eungella: a moth fauna in its elevational and distributional context.....	65
MAHONEY, M. J. The amphibian fauna of Eungella and their important role in unravelling the evolutionary history of the Australian east coast closed forest biota	81
MEYER, E. A., HINES, H. B., CLARKE, J. M. & HOSKIN, C. J. An update on the status of wet forest stream-dwelling frogs of the Eungella region.....	97
LEACH, E. C., DALY, G. & BURWELL, C. J. The avifauna of the Eungella region, central coastal Queensland, Australia.....	117
HINES, H. B., BROOK, M., WILSON, J., McDONALD, W. J. F. & HARGREAVES, J. The extent and severity of the Mackay Highlands 2018 wildfires and the potential impact on natural values, particularly in the mesic forests of the Eungella-Crediton area.....	139
CONTRIBUTORS.....	159