

Community Participation

LEP23-024-4-002

Family Nature Night - Frogs and Turtles

Southern New England Landcare Ltd



Engaging families during the school holidays

The issue

Engaging young people with an interest in their local environment is a key issue. There is a gap in connecting youth with their surrounding environment, and fostering awareness and appreciation for local ecosystems and species within them. This lack of engagement could hinder future conservation efforts and ecological stewardship.

The solution

With the aid of a grant from the NSW Office for Regional Youth, we organised two 'Family Nature Nights' during the April 2024 School Holidays - one at Mother of Ducks Lagoon in Guyra and a second at Racecourse Lagoon in Uralla. Guest speakers came from the Australian Museum, Northern Tablelands Local Land Services and Southern New England Landcare. Fun, interactive activities included scavenger hunts, games, presentations, frog hunts, trivia, and lucky door prizes.

The impact

More than 40 families and 70 people joined us for the two events, fostering interest in the local environment and key species such as the endangered Bell's Turtle, and Yellow Spotted Bell Frog. Expert presentations increased awareness of local endangered species, highlighting threats from feral animals such as foxes. Participants learnt more about the activities being carried out by these organisations on a local level and gained hands-on experience in identifying and protecting local wildlife, including what they can do at home to help.

The events strengthened community bonds, inspired young people to appreciate and protect their natural surroundings and provided valuable educational experiences. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, indicating a high level of enjoyment and learning. The initiative showcased effective community-driven conservation and education. Thanks to recent rains, frogs were very active, and a large number were found by eager young ecologists. New friends were made, social connections formed, knowledge gained, and frogs found!

Learnings

- Engaging experts and using interactive activities is effective for knowledge sharing.
- Collaboration with other organisations produces successful outcomes.
- Need to identify better ways to engage 12-18 year olds and tame unpredictable weather!



Key facts

- There are many critically endangered species found in the New England, particularly frog and turtle species.
- Introduced foxes and cats do a great deal of damage to our ecosystems.
- The Australian Museum and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services are doing a great job raising awareness of and protecting our native animals.
- Family audiences are hungry to know more about native wildlife and what they can do to help protect it.

Project Partners



This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Enabling Program, a collaboration between Local Land Services and Landcare NSW supported by the NSW Government.

18 Jun, 2024