

**Platypus** *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*

The platypus is an extremely precious animal, as it is only found in Australia. It is a monotreme (egg laying mammal), laying one to three eggs between late winter and early spring in a nesting burrow. The burrow is built by the female in the banks of fresh water creeks and water holes. The male platypus is considered dangerous due to the venomous spurs located on its hind legs. Platypus are vulnerable to human activities and susceptible to water pollution. Its presence, or absence, is a good indicator of catchment health.

**Scarlet Percher Dragonfly**  
*Diplacodes haematodes*

The Scarlet Percher is a common dragonfly found along all types of freshwater habitats although it has a preference for fast flowing rocky creeks. Maturing to 35mm, the male takes on the distinctive vivid red thorax, abdomen, eyes and face characteristic of this dragonfly, while the female is a pale yellow in colour with black patterns along its abdomen. The Scarlet Percher can often be seen perching on rocks along the waterway or on sandy creek beds.

**Kookaburra** *Dacelo novaeguineae*

The largest of the kingfisher family, the kookaburra is commonly found throughout the region in open forests and along water courses. Its loud chuckling laugh can be heard in the early morning or late afternoon. The kookaburra nests in the hollows of old trees and enjoys a feed of small reptiles, snakes and frogs.



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# Native Flora and Fauna of Ipswich Waterways

Since European settlement, over 79% of natural vegetation within Ipswich's catchments has been cleared, the numbers and abundance of native wildlife have diminished and the makeup of the catchment has been permanently altered. Through good catchment management practices, revegetation or just by chance, there are still some remaining stands of native vegetation providing a home for native wildlife.

The presence (or absence) of native fauna and flora is a reflection of the condition of the surrounding environment, and often a result of human activities. Many native species act as biological indicators of water quality and catchment health. That is, by monitoring their abundance at a particular site, we can determine the health of the surrounding environment and look at the effects of adjoining land uses.

Here are some different plant and animal species you may find along waterways in Ipswich.

**FLORA****Cheese Tree** *Glochidion ferdinandi*

This small tree likes moist soils and is often found in gullies and along water courses. Its small flowers and pumpkin shaped fruit provide moths, insects and fruit-eating birds with a delicious meal.

**Willow Primrose** *Ludwigia octovalvis*

This semi-aquatic herb grows in the soft mud along creek banks and drainage areas. The bright yellow flowers can be seen blooming around May.

**Sandpaper Fig** *Ficus coronata*

This fig is commonly found along water courses, growing to a height of 8 to 10 metres. The leaves are very rough, resembling coarse sandpaper, and were used by Aborigines to produce a smooth finish on wooden tools and weapons. The Sandpaper Fig produces a dark fruit which is very palatable and is enjoyed by a range of birds and bats.

**Mat Rush** *Lomandra longifolia*

Lomandra is commonly used in creek bank rehabilitation projects and is popular in landscaping design. It grows in a tufted clump of grass-like foliage, providing valuable habitat for frogs. Its flowering stems are highly perfumed, smelling similar to bananas. Aborigines ate the pea like fruit and leaf bases and used the leaves for weaving.



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**Wild May** *Leptospermum polygalifolium*

Commonly found along creek banks and drainage channels in sandy soils, this plant is easily recognised around August by its prolific crop of long lasting, small white flowers. Insects are attracted to the scented flowers making this plant popular in the home garden.

**Weeping Bottlebrush** *Melaleuca viminalis*

The brilliantly red coloured, bottlebrush shaped flowers of this species are a welcomed source of food for many of the nectar feeding birds and insects within the riparian zone. The weeping bottlebrush is very common within the Ipswich region, providing valuable overhanging vegetation to many of our waterways.

**Creek Lilly Pilly** *Acmena smithii*

This rainforest plant is sometimes found growing alongside creeks and is a popular plant for home gardens. It produces a mass of small, fluffy, white flowers followed by edible, blue fruit. Overripe fruit can be used to make jam.

**Queensland Blue Gum** *Eucalyptus tereticornis*

Often found along waterways, it is also known as the Forest Red Gum. This fast growing tree can reach up to 30 metres in height and live for up to 200 years. It has a straight trunk and dense crown with smooth bark that sheds in long strips during autumn, revealing mottled colours of gray, white and blue. The Blue Gum provides habitat and food for Koalas, with its blossoms (June and October) also providing a food source to the Grey-headed Flying Fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) found in the Ipswich region.

**Brisbane River Lily** *Crinum pedunculatum*

Also known as the Swamp Lily or Spider Lily, this large perennial herb is a very hardy plant reaching as high as 2 or 3 metres. Large perfumed white flowers can be seen from November to March spanning 10cm across in clusters of 10-25. The Brisbane River Lily likes damp conditions in full sun or half shade and tolerates poorly drained and clay soils. River lily's can be grown in pots and make a great feature in the home garden.

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## FAUNA

**Pacific Black Duck (Wild Duck)** *Anas superciliosa*

This is the most common native duck in the region. They are often seen walking across the golf course or along the local creek looking for an early morning breakfast. They breed after the wet season in hollow logs or among tall grass near the water, laying 6 -10 cream coloured eggs.

**Purple Spotted Gudgeon** *Mogurnda adspersa*

Growing to only 140mm in length, the Purple Spotted Gudgeon, once abundantly found throughout the Murray-Darling Basin, is now listed as an endangered species with distribution limited to northern New South Wales and south Queensland. This brightly speckled fish is primarily a bottom dweller, found in slow flowing waters in amongst aquatic plants where it lies motionless waiting for its prey of small fish and aquatic insects.

The destruction of its habitat through pollution, the removal of streamside vegetation, invasion of aquatic weeds and competition with exotic fish threaten the long term survival of this species in the Bremer River catchment.

**Eastern Water Dragon** *Physignathus lesuerii*

This large, spiny lizard is often seen basking in the sun on overhanging branches and logs along creeks and rivers. When disturbed, it will drop into the water and remain submerged for some time. The eastern water dragon feeds on aquatic crustaceans, insects and fruits of riparian vegetation.



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