



LAND FOR WILDLIFE

voluntary wildlife conservation

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAND FOR WILDLIFE SCHEME VOL 7 NO. 2 JULY 2010



Photo: Roger Grose

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*Acknowledging the
International Year
Of Biodiversity*



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Cover image;
Tawny Frog mouths
Photo by Roger Grose

Editorial

Dear Land For Wildlifers,

This newsletter acknowledges 2010 - The International Year of Biodiversity. As Land for Wildlife members, you all define the meaning of biodiversity conservation, and hold the key to ensuring the survival of wildlife and their habitats. So be proud of your membership and keep up the good work! To read more about The International Year of Biodiversity, visit the website at www.cbd.int/2010/

As you may be aware, the Land for Wildlife program has been operating nationally for more than 10 years, with interstate agencies working under an agreement with the Victorian Land For Wildlife Program, which holds the national copyright and trademark rights. The Northern Territory is about to launch Land For Wildlife in the Darwin area, with Mackay Regional Council and South East Queensland Catchments (including 11 Shires) renewing their agreements. Together with our interstate agencies, the LFW Program retains its popularity. For this we thank you all for your ongoing support.

In this edition, John and Stella Reid, are LFWers and Wildlife Shelter Operators from St Andrews, near Kinglake. This area was burnt out during the 2009 Black Saturday fires. The Reids were able to return to their property soon after and take on the demanding role of rescuing local wildlife and helping them recover. Sue Aldred from Healesville shares her observations of wombats enjoying her property, which also has been recovering after the fires. Given the amount of devastation, it is comforting to hear about wildlife returning once again to bushfire affected properties.

Membership with LFW is not just about dedicated landholders participating, but there are many organisations which are also members. Together, the LFW "Family" is focused on protecting and enhancing habitat for wildlife. LFW involves schools, water authorities, local government, golf clubs, vineyards, plus a range of corporate and federal government bodies, including interstate and international signatories. In this issue, you can read about the latest water authority to join LFW and how one LFW Extension Officer is working with LFW schools in Central Victoria.

As a result of good rainfall early in 2010 in central Victoria, we have seen early and widespread flowering of the Box Ironbark and foot-hill forests and woodlands. For the first time in several years we have seen Swift Parrots return to feed on the abundant nectar and lerps. To participate in the Swift Parrot and Regent Honey-eater Winter count to be held across Victoria in August, see the back page of this edition for further details. With spring almost upon us, I would like to wish you all the very best for the coming season.

Peter Johnson

Editor and Statewide Coordinator

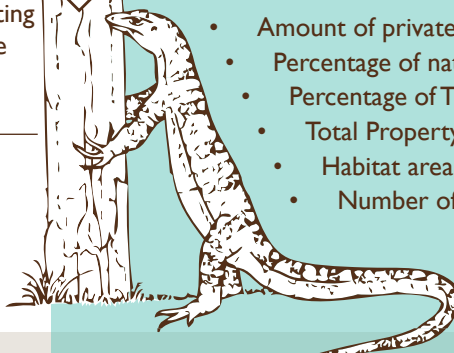
Land For Wildlife, Victoria



Land for Wildlife Property Statistics

LFW Membership	Property Area	Retained Habitat	Habitat Under Restoration
5,903	545,380 ha	145,492 ha	23,046 ha

- Amount of private land represented by LFW = 4% of private land in Victoria
- Percentage of native vegetation represented by LFW properties = 17%
- Percentage of Threatened Habitat represented by LFW = 15% of total area
- Total Property Area is almost equal to the Alpine National Park in area
- Habitat area being restored is similar to the Grampians National Park
- Number of properties Working Towards Registration is less than 20%



Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr Forbes,

I wish to thank you and congratulate you for the programme, Land For Wildlife, and the service your Department provides.

I recently had a visit from one of your officers, Terri Williams who gave me advice, support and links to networks to enable us to embark on the first step in returning our 35 acres back to its original vegetation. Without her advice we would be struggling to get off the ground and may well have found the task all too daunting. Like many land-holders (ex city dwellers), we have very little knowledge of what is required to care for our land. The support and offer of ongoing support and the encouragement we received has been instrumental in our determination to succeed on this long journey.

This service certainly fulfils one of the declared aims of your Department's stated Role and Purpose. I not your Department will face many challenges in the time ahead but programmes like these help the community to work with you to "ensure the future for generations to come".

Thank you

Yours Sincerely

Francine Thomas
Majorca, Victoria

Cherry Ballart Pruning Machine

Hi Peter,

We are new to the Land For Wildlife family but will be very interested to see the Newsletter when it is organised.

I have attached a photo of my Cherry Ballart Pruning machine, which I think is amusing - others may find it commonplace - I still have to learn what's unusual and what's not.

Cheers,

Glen & Olwyn



Dear Land For Wildlife,

I thought you might be interested in this photo of a Fairy Martin nest constructed on one of the west walls of our mudbrick house. It is facing the carport and about 10 – 12 feet (3 – 4 metres_ from the door we use several times a day, just around the corner to the left. The birds (I think) successfully reared one, perhaps two, nests of young. It is difficult to tell, as the shape of the nest makes it nigh impossible to see what is inside – the opening is above the part where the nest is.

For many years I have had Swallows nesting around the house, with five nests this year, plus bats that discovered the gaps up the side of the windows, between windows and walls, with an added bonus of no mosquitoes! I don't seem to be able to entice the bats into the bat boxes. Perhaps someone has a suggestion here? So, the Fairy Martins were a bit of a surprise, but a very welcome one.

Jenny Lacey
Red Lion (Near Talbot in Central Victoria)

Call for Articles and Contributions

Would you like to have your article featured in the next Land For Wildlife newsletter?

If so, please send in your stories, snippets, photos, etc, and we will consider them for publication. Any experience you have had with solving a problem, or a new approach to an old problem, are all welcome. They can be hand written or e-mailed to us – any format is ok. We look forward to hearing from you, including "letters to the editor".



Frolicking Amorous Wombats

A beautiful sunny, winter's afternoon in August and we are sitting on our verandah looking across at the hill which is greening up nicely after the fires. We notice a wombat sunning itself – and then there are two!

They start to play in the warm sun, running around in circles, diving down the burrow and out again. Their speed is surprising and they look like two small bears. They are in lovely condition and their fur shines in the sun. After a while the chase seems to become more purposeful and they cover the same ground over and over. Suddenly they collapse on the ground and we realise that the game of chase is courtship. The male spoons up behind the female and they mate. Again the chase starts, round and round and the mating is repeated, this time with the female scrabbling at the ground. The whole chasing/mating process takes around 40 minutes and we begin to grasp just how lucky and privileged we are to see this.

I go inside and grab James Woodford's lovely book, *The Secret Life of Wombats* (Griffin, 2001). When I read that "it was not until 1990 that scientist Clive Marks, using infra-red equipment, captured wombat sex in the wild" (115:2001) I am staggered. Woodford goes on to describe exactly the behaviour we had witnessed, with "the female running in wide circles and figures of eight, periodically allowing the male to catch up with her" (115:2001).



Photo: Sue Aldred



Photo: Sue Aldred

Given the amount of devastation we have witnessed since February 7th it was wonderful to see these wombats doing what wombats do!

Her baby will be born in about a month, making its way to the pouch and teat. At around 3 months it will weigh ~250 grams and at 6 months can "grasp the occasional blade of grass from the safety of the pouch" (118:2001). From 7 months baby moves in and out of the pouch and by 8-10 months can leave the pouch permanently. Not until the age of 2 years, weighing around 22kg, will the young wombat leave the mother. The father plays no part in child-rearing.

I hope our post-fire baby stays safe. I wonder if either of the parents are those I fed for 8 weeks after the fires? The biggest dangers he/she faces now are predators – foxes, cats and humans in speeding cars.

Our biggest disappointment was that we didn't have a good camera with us, although the memory will last forever. However, my niece captured these 2 shots on her phone! They show the chase on the hill and the burrow.

Sue Aldred
Healesville

Fungi

Branches and leaves are not the only aspect of a healthy habitat



Photo: Terri Williams

Often forgotten under a blanket of leaves or hiding on the side of a tree, Fungi are an important part of a healthy habitat.

Fungi are in a Kingdom separate from plants, animals and bacteria and occur in a variety of sizes, shapes and colours. The fungi play an important role in composting the dead matter that would otherwise accumulate. Usually occurring in wet areas fungi can occur below ground for a long period before producing short lived fruiting bodies that are often termed mushrooms or toadstools. These fruiting bodies release spores which are dispersed and have the potential to germinate into another fungus.

Often we think of fungus as either edible mushrooms or 'poisonous toadstools' however apart from providing a role as the composters of the forest fungi provide much more. Truffle fungus provides food for small mammals such as Potoroos. These fungi grow below the ground and are often associated with the roots of trees. Truffle fungi comprise approximately 90% of the diet of Potoroos.

Fungi can provide habitat for invertebrates and there are associations between fungi and algae which are termed Lichens. The Mycorrhiza group have even formed a symbiotic relationship with the roots of vascular plants, such as orchids, and are now crucial for the survival of their partner plant species.

There are an estimated 5,000 species of Macro-fungi in Victoria and even more Micro-fungi and Lichens. However, knowledge about the biology, ecology and even the distribution of many of these organisms is lacking. Much work is being done, and everyone can help the advance of fungi knowledge. Through 'Fungimap' any person who sees a targeted fungi species can report a sighting and help with our fungal knowledge.

Next time you are observing the leaves and trees of a forest or Land for Wildlife property keep your eyes peeled for some of our amazing fungus – you never know when you may spot something new.

For information on Fungimap and how you can contribute to this project:

Aiden Campbell

*Project Officer - Natural Resource Management
Department of Sustainability and Environment
Ballarat*



Photo: Terri Williams

The Native Water Rat

Cute, cuddly and amphibious

The native Water Rat or “Rakali”, is one of two aquatic mammals, the other being the Platypus. People squirm when they hear the word RAT, due to the widely held perception that all rats spread disease, eat stored foods, electrical wiring and even attack people on occasions. However, the Water Rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*, which means “water mouse with golden belly”) is a gentle creature, which can be found in and around irrigation channels, billabongs and most wetlands, including rivers and streams, estuaries, coastal lakes, and sheltered marine bays.

Typical markings of the Water Rat include a rich dark brown on the back and head, golden-toned belly fur, and the end of their tail is white. It prefers low banks to flat water edges, and builds a nest in a burrow in dense cover close to water in low banks, although hollow logs may also be used, and young are suckled in the nest.

Feeding Tables

Water Rats may be seen swimming in the early morning or evening, with just the head showing ahead of a distinctive bow-wave. Water Rats are mostly carnivorous and hunt by sight, during the early or latter part of the day. They obtain their food by diving or stalking through bankside vegetation. Prey is caught and carried in the mouth and taken to a suitable feeding place, known as a “feeding table”, such as flat sites on rocks, logs or banks – and even the decks of moored boats. These feeding tables often display evidence of the rat’s meal by the presence of mussel shells, yabbie skeletons and fish remains. Mussels are often left out of the water at feeding sites until they open for convenient eating.

Hunted for pelts

During the early 1900’s Water Rats were widely hunted for their pelts, and were not protected by legislation until 1938. In the 1950’s the Australian Primary Producers Union called for them to be classified as vermin, following reports of damage to irrigation channels and structures, through burrowing which created holes leading to water loss. After extensive trials, The Fisheries and Game Department agreed to a licensed season. As a result, about 55,000 skins were sold for 4 to 9 shillings each (40 to 90 cents), with 5 – 10% royalty being paid to the Government. However, subsequent open seasons were less successful and no further requests were made for a repeat. Full protection was confirmed by the Wildlife Act in 1975 and there have been few concerns about damage by Water Rats in the last 30 years.

Conservation

While the Water Rat may appear to be common in local areas, it is feared that it is on the decline. Changes to their habitat over the last few decades have meant that many local populations are now isolated from each other. There is the possibility of local extinction due to agricultural, domestic and commercial developments, pollution, pesticide and fertilizer run-off, and general loss of habitat by removal or wetland drainage. Where important habitat exists on farming land, continuation of farm practices which avoid removal of native vegetation around dams and drainage lines, are more likely to result in long-term survival of the species. Landholders can help conserve the breeding and feeding sources of this glorious native animal by protecting important habitat features, helping to ensure its survival.

Peter Johnson

Statewide Coordinator



References:

Menkhorst, Peter, (ed.) (1995). *Mammals of Victoria: Distribution, ecology and conservation*. Oxford University Press, South Melbourne.
 Seebeck, John (2000). Wandering with Water Rats or, Rambling with Rakali. *The Victorian Naturalist*, Vol. 117 (6), pages 229-231.

Illustration: John Gould, *Mammals of Australia Vol III*

Schools in Land for Wildlife

Shaping the future for Biodiversity

Throughout Victoria there are 142 schools that are in the Land for Wildlife program. They are very important parts of the program. They provide education to the students who in turn go in to their communities conducting environmental programs and educating the members of those communities. Many of the schools have incorporated specific environmental education programs teaching the students about Australian, Victorian and local threatened flora and fauna.

I have been very privileged to help with some of these programs over the past few years. I get a lot of joy from the students when they discover something new about the world around them.



Photos: Terri Williams

On many of these excursions I bring along some friends to help me. I love seeing the students faces when I pull them out from behind a cupboard or out of a near by closet to show them.

Although my friends aren't alive anymore they certainly bring the kids to life. Being able to show the students what they look like in real life instead of just showing photos is very important. Although they can't touch them they can look at them and it brings out a lot of questions.

I have received various letters from the students where they have developed a real interest in a certain animal or plant that we discussed and have researched them. The students also tell me stories about seeing some of these animals in the wild and talking to their families and friends about it. The students have taken part in different projects where they have worked towards protecting these animals and their habitats. What a great result!

Terri Williams
LfW Extension Officer
Bendigo



Photo: Felicity Nicholls

Regeneration After Fire

One couple's decision to begin again

What can LFW'ers do to help wildlife recover after a fire, and what can we do to help injured orphaned wildlife? While the bush can look after itself with minimal help, orphaned, sick or injured wildlife are often left to fend for themselves.

One LFW couple made the decision soon after Black Saturday, 2009 to go back and begin again, but not for their own needs, but the needs of fire affected wildlife.

The story of Alan and Stella Reid from St Andrews, near Kinglake, is an inspiring one. Their recovery and that of the wildlife in their care is the basis of this "picture" article.

It's more than 18 months since the 2009 Black Saturday (BS) bushfires. For LfW'ers, often the very reason why they live in fire risk areas is the lifestyle. People love living with the bush at their door-step.

Before BS, many people understood and knew of the dangers of fire, as many small fires occurred regularly throughout summer, and were extinguished rapidly. Plants and animals have different ways of coping with fire, and depending on the severity or intensity, some cope better than others.

The regeneration process following fire is often observed as a steady return of leaves on the trunks of trees followed by the emergence of ground plants. However, the intensity of the BS fires left many LfW'ers wondering how their beloved bush would ever regenerate. Very little if any substantial vegetation began appearing for months after, and would it ever be the same again?

The first thing seen sprouting from trunks and branches of gum trees was the epicormic growth. That's the short, stems with leaves you see first emerging from the trunks and branches. That is how they keep surviving after fire. But the ferocity of the BS fires meant that many trees may never re-sprout. However, if the lignotuber (the main root system of the tree) survives the tree may take up to 2 years to start re-sprouting.

The legacy of BS will remain with thousands of dead standing trees left as "Stags". Stags is the name given to trees which have died and are left standing, to become different habitat for wildlife as the bush slowly, but naturally repairs. New hollows will appear and many trees will continue to fall as they weaken, providing new habitat for different plants and animals on the recovering forest floor.

The recovery process is termed succession. In a major event like the BS fires, where literally everything is burnt, succession must start at the basic "primary" stage. The ground cover is returning in most areas. After a mild summer and good autumn rain, the tree ferns, sedges, and bracken ferns started to shoot, and recently on a visit to Kinglake West, many diverse species have been appearing.



Photo: Stella Reid

One observation made is the dense regeneration of eucalyptus, presumably from old seed stored in hard seed cases and released by the heat of the fire.

Alternatively, trees have been sending up shoots from buried roots, to seek light and nutrient for the standing trees. Wattles have been observed regenerating profusely, along with Cassinia (Coffee Tree or Dogwood), and many other fire emergent species have been appearing.



One of the most remarkable things about regeneration after fire is the emerging forest of “fire emergent” species, including grass trees and tree ferns. The grassy skirts of Xanthorrhoea and their wonderful architectural spikes with hundreds of thousands of individual flowers are a rare sight, but a unique symbol of the Australian bush. In some locations, galleries of grass trees appeared from the charred trunks of pre-fire grass trees. Similarly, tree ferns quickly re-foliated – a wonderful, fresh sight which provided much needed hope and inspiration.

Alan and Stella Reid

Wildhaven St Andrews



To see more photo's of Alan and Stella's property and the animals that share it with them, please visit www.wildhavenstandrews.com.au

For more great stories about wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, why not check out a new book, **“Rescued”**

Details can be found in the News, Events and Resources section.



Keeping the Rocks On

The Importance of Retaining Surface Rocks

10

Remnant volcanic plains extend into central Victoria and are often associated with remnant grasslands or grassy woodlands. These rare and threatened native grassland communities may have varying degrees of scattered surface rock which may have been retained or moved and perhaps used in rock wall fences, dating back to the early or mid 1900's.



“More than 95% of Victoria’s native lowland grasslands have been grossly altered since European settlement”

Surface rocks are important habitat for small native wildlife such as the nationally vulnerable Striped Legless Lizard. Other small, harmless reptiles may also be found under rocks, including Olive Legless Lizard, Bougainville’s Slider, Boulenger’s Skink, Little Whip Snake, various Geckos, and the Large Striped Skink. Many species of invertebrates are also found under rocks and are the expected food sources for the above reptiles. It is well known and therefore not surprising that small reptiles are significant in controlling crop pests, including making a small, if not significant contribution to locust control.

More than 95% of Victoria’s native lowland grasslands have been grossly altered since European settlement. In areas where Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland occurs (such as west of Heathcote, or near Maryborough and Carisbrook), surface rock removal and associated grazing or cropping activities has further compounded the problem of habitat loss for small, harmless reptiles.

Where crop pests may occur, small reptiles emerging from remnant rock piles or other suitable habitat during late spring and early summer have been known to contribute to the control of invertebrate pests affecting crops of economic importance.

By avoiding persistent grazing of small remnants of native grassland and retaining surface rocks, small reptiles and other micro fauna may persist to help control agricultural pests. In cropping areas, leaving nodes or strips of remnant habitat with surface rocks, or even logs and other tree debris can also achieve similar results. However, recently placed surface features (such as rocks or logs) in restored habitat will not attract pest controlling fauna overnight. In addition, rocks or logs on their own are not sufficient, in the absence of native vegetation, to aid structure and diversity of habitat. It may take up to three years before the benefits of habitat restoration become noticeable.

By retaining, restoring or carefully integrating remnants of native vegetation and surface rocks (or logs), farming businesses can strengthen their economic position in the medium to long term, with little expense in capital or labour.

Peter Johnson

Statewide Coordinator



Wildlife Corridors

Connections in the Landscape

11

Wildlife corridors are vital links in the landscape connecting larger blocks of vegetated land, and are important in maintaining biodiversity and the health of our landscape. They can be a roadside strip or creek with trees passing through farmland, a railway reserve crossing the landscape, stone fences lining the edge of a farm paddock, or some other linear strip.

Wildlife corridors are key components for the conservation of our biodiversity (flora and fauna) and landscape health. There is much discussion on the effectiveness of corridors for nature conservation. Thin corridors wandering aimlessly over the landscape are not as effective as those which are much wider and which have direct links to large areas of forest. Wildlife corridors that connect between large forests are the most valuable for biodiversity, while longer and thinner conduits are still valuable but are not as effective for maintaining biodiversity.

Our landscape can be compared with a living organism. Its blood vessels and nerves are the corridors of vegetation, connecting the vital organs of remaining forest, such as vegetated hills and slopes in recharge areas, wetlands, public forests and other vegetated areas on farmland. Wildlife moving through these corridor arteries is equivalent to trace elements needed for the efficient operation of the vital organs. Break an artery and life sustaining blood is lost.

When gaps occur in a corridor, weeds, soil erosion, or insect infestations may develop. If not repaired, native species are prevented from moving between populations as the connections are no longer available.

Wildlife corridors may originate in a number of ways. Natural corridors, such as streams and their associated riparian vegetation, usually follow topographic or environmental contours and are the result of natural environmental processes.

Remnant corridors, such as strips of eucalypt forest in pine plantations or along roadsides, result from clearing, alteration, or disturbance to the surrounding environment. Regenerated corridors occur as the result of regrowth of a strip of vegetation that was formerly cleared or disturbed.

Protection of wildlife corridors is beneficial for maintaining biodiversity and farm productivity. This is of long term benefit to land managers, particularly farmers, who are interested in maximising their returns from the land. By planting woodlots for self managed fire wood production, landholders can reduce the impacts caused by firewood collection in adjoining corridor remnants, and indirectly benefit from encouraging wildlife to use remnants. Wildlife populations next to farmland can help to reduce insect pests which may otherwise build up into plague proportions.

Peter Johnson

Statewide Coordinator

Further Reading;

Bennett, A., (1998). *Linkages in the Landscape: The Role of Corridors and Connectivity in Wildlife Conservation*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

Bennett, A., Kimber, S. and Ryan, P., (2000). *Revegetation and Wildlife: A guide to enhancing revegetated habitats for wildlife conservation in rural environments*. Environment Australia, Canberra.

Bennett, A., Brown, G., Lumsden, L., Hespe, D., Krasna, S., and Silins, J., (1998). *Fragments of the Future*. Dept. Natural Resources and Environment, Melbourne.



Coliban Water Authority

Join the Land for Wildlife Program

Coliban Water's Bendigo Water Reclamation Plant was recently awarded Land For Wildlife status, recognising its value as habitat for wildlife.

The site's 67 hectares of lagoons and treatment ponds attract thousands of waterbirds and waders including threatened species such as Freckled Duck, Blue-billed Duck and the Australasian Shoveller. Bird counts on the property have recorded 112 bird species and the site is well known amongst bird watchers. Local community groups such as Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, bird watching groups and individuals have been involved in monitoring the populations of native wildlife on the site.

Research staff from the Arthur Rylah Institute have found seven frog species on the site. This includes the Growling Grass Frog, which is endangered in Victoria. Coliban Water is in the process of enhancing and protecting habitat for Growling Grass Frog. Protecting and improving habitat for threatened species is a high priority for Land For Wildlifers.

The site also contains remnant Box Ironbark and Grassy Woodland vegetation which has been fenced to keep stock out.

DSE congratulates Coliban Water on achieving Land for Wildlife status and their commitment to providing habitat for plants and animals.



(from left to right)

Gavin Hanlon, Managing Director of Coliban Water; Lisa Cox, Coliban Water Environmental Coordinator; Peter Johnson, LFW Statewide Coordinator; and Peter Forbes, Group Manager Biodiversity Services DSE

Growling Grass Frog Habitat Project at the Bendigo Water Reclamation Plant

In October 2008 five populations of Growling Grass Frog (GGF) were recorded at Bendigo Water Reclamation Plant (BWRP). Prior to this, last confirmed recording of a GGF in Bendigo was 20 years ago. This frog is listed as endangered under the Flora Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 and as Vulnerable under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The BWRP, west of Bendigo, treats wastewater for the population of Bendigo. The site is a series of shallow lagoons used to 'polish' wastewater after biological treatment or to store excess treated wastewater. There are also several wetlands, flood irrigation areas and several farm dams across the property. These lagoons and wetlands attract a wide variety of birdlife and the BWRP is a well known birdwatching site.

Habitat Improvement at Bendigo WRP

After consultation with DSE, the following works were proposed to improve habitat conditions at three farm dams where Growling Grass frogs and 5 other frog species were recorded.

- Manual weeding around dams (avoiding the use of chemicals)
- Fencing to control stock
- Placement of rock for shelter
- Placement of woody debris for shelter
- Pipework to manipulate water levels in dams

Risk Assessment

The habitat improvement actions were chosen due to their low risk of transferring the Chytrid fungal disease to the frog populations. A high level of vehicle and equipment hygiene is being implemented by contractors.

Vegetation improvement through grazing and weeds management was chosen over active revegetation due to the risk of plants and soil harbouring chytrid fungus and introducing it to the site

Monitoring

Monitoring will be undertaken to determine the quality of the recycled water which is proposed to be piped to the dams. Currently the dams fill from paddock and road catchments. If the recycled water is of a lower quality than the existing water then it will not be introduced.

Photopoints will be installed to monitor vegetation condition and water levels. Water quality and community frog monitoring will also continue.



Photo: Nick Clemann

Peter Johnson
Statewide Coordinator

The Common Indian Myna

One of the worlds worst invasive species

13

Although not currently a declared pest species in Victoria, the Common (Indian) Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) was, in 2000, declared by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to be among '100 of the World's Worst Invasive Alien Species'.

The bird was introduced to Melbourne from 1862 onwards and was well established by 1883, but it wasn't until the 1950s that it was common throughout the metropolitan area. Competition with native birds and mammals for food and nesting hollows by the Common Myna is thought to threaten the breeding success and evolutionary potential of many native Victorian species.

The Common Myna competes aggressively with native wildlife for nest hollows by physically evicting nests, eggs or young of native bird species. Groups of mynas have also been observed aggressively mobbing other birds and mammals and have even been known to build their nests on top of the eggs or nestlings of native birds. In addition, the Common Myna at times builds several nests while only using one for breeding which further reduces the availability of nest hollows to native animals.

Common Mynas have been spreading across Victoria for many years since their introduction and are now thought to have reached the northern and far north western regions of the state where some threatened and rare parrots occur (Superb and Regent Parrots). This may add to the pressures already acting on these rare and threatened animals.



Photo: Peter Menkhorst

The Common (Indian) Myna

DSE would like to map these developments and hence is keen to receive all records of Common Mynas from regional Victoria, especially the north and west of the state.

Please send details of sightings using our standard data recording templates to biodiversity.info@dse.vic.gov.au. Data recording templates can be obtained from the above email address.

Take care not to confuse the introduced Common Myna with the native Noisy Miner and Yellow-throated Miner. The main distinguishing factor is that the Common Myna is brown and black, while the Noisy Miner (*Manorina melanocephala*) and Yellow-throated Miner (*Manorina flavigula*) are predominantly grey with a little black (see photographs below).



Photo: Ian McCann

The Noisy Miner

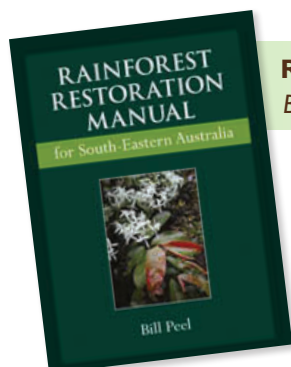
The Common Myna can be excluded from artificial nest boxes using a "baffle", allowing native species to occupy them.

A baffle is made using 19mm exterior grade plywood, fixed with two 90° angle brackets attached to the roof eave or overhang (approx. 100mm overhang is needed to create the required gap).

To stop it from swinging, attach a short length of fencing wire as a stabiliser to the bottom of the baffle and to the side of the box.

Source: *Excluding Common Myna From Nest Boxes* (LFW Newsletter Vol. 4, No. 8 page 4, March/April 2001)

Recent Publications



Rainforest Restoration Manual for South-Eastern Australia

Bill Peel

"Empowers individuals or groups to be able to restore, manage, protect and conserve our magnificent rainforests."

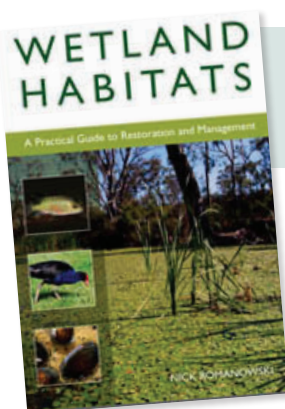
CSIRO PUBLISHING - 352pp - Colour photographs
Paperback & CD - 9780643094710 - \$120.00

Restoring Natural Areas in Australia

Robin A Buchanan

TAFE teacher and author Robin Buchanan returns with her updated book.

NSW Industry & Investment - 264pp - Colour illustrations
Paperback - 9780731306213 - \$44.00



Wetland Habitats

A Practical Guide to Restoration and Management

Nick Romanowski

A practical and easy to use manual for wetland restoration and conservation of diverse animal species.

CSIRO PUBLISHING - 216pp - Colour photographs
Paperback - 9780643096462 - \$49.95

Frog Calls of Melbourne. 2009

Ed McNabb (Ninox Pursuits)

Frogs have long been recognised as indicators of habitat purity and many species have suffered serious decline since colonisation. It contains calls of 16 species of frog recorded near Melbourne and surrounding area including the introduced Eastern Dwarf Tree Frog (AKA "Banana Box Frog").

The CD can be purchased via Ed's website: www.ninoxpursuits.com.au or mail a cheque/moneyorder for \$25 each plus \$2.50 postage in Aust., to Ninox Pursuits, PO Box 135 Gembrook, Victoria, 3783. For multiple copies, please email Ed via his website to enquire about postage.



Properties for Sale

Golden Pond

60 acres of privacy and seclusion - situated approx 2 hrs from Melbourne in the Pyrenees foothills and a short drive from the township of Avoca.

A blend of cleared areas and natural bushland, the 60 acres comprises of red stringybark, ironbark, red, grey and yellow box, cherry ballart, hedge wattle, golden wattle and wallaby grasses. Abundant with native fauna and birdlife, the property also features a dam and a spring fed pond. The acreage abuts a Bushland Reserve to the east and farmland to the north and south boundaries.

There are superb views from the granite strewn northern fenceline across towards Mt Avoca and close by are the Waterfall Track, the Pyrenees Ranges walking tracks as well as wineries such as Mt Avoca and the Blue Pyrenees. The property has access to mains power and potential as a new homesite (STCA) or weekend retreats.



Price: \$145,000

If you're interested in this property and want to know more, please contact;

Christine Elsworthy
Ph: (03) 9806 1578

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A Little Piece of Paradise

8.1 ha - 20 Acres.. 5 km from Wedderburn township.

Mudbrick cottage with a recently attached double carport, family/guestroom which features a mezzanine bedroom.

This unique home has been redecorated/renovated throughout and is in an excellent condition. It comprises a large open living area, with exposed beams, pine ceilings and polished pine floors, as new kitchen, gas cooker and pantry. There are three bedrooms, two with built-in robes, bathroom and a large laundry. Numerous features include, mudbrick walls, leadlight doors, split system air conditioning, front and back verandahs – entertaining areas, great views of the valley, excellent established native garden – a little piece of paradise.

Outdoors – 3 paddocks, good fencing, 3 dams, tanks – 10,000 gallon capacity, American Barn – 20' x 30'. Concreted. Classified Land for Wildlife- great bird life.



Price: \$297,500

If you're interested in this property and want to know more, please contact;

Loddon Real Estate - John Donaldson
Ph: (03) 5494 3493
and quote listing ID #345

Nooramunga Dairy Farm and Island

Nestled in "the sheltered waters of Nooramunga and Corner Inlet Marine and Coastal Park, where an intricate network of waterways and islands of outstanding environmental significance and scenic beauty are framed by the beauty of Wilsons Promontory".

Two freehold titles available, consisting of: Mainland title of 73ha (181 acres) and Island title of 168ha (414 acres)

2.5 hours drive from Melbourne, 10 minutes off South Gippsland Hwy. Property is divided into dairy, house & shedding, grazing area (155ha) and protected (Trust for Nature covenanted) woodland and coastal habitats, RAMSAR wetlands (85ha) Fully-fitted dairy farm, including 3br house and shedding



Price: \$2.6m (Island could be sold separately)

If you're interested in this property and want to know more, please contact;

Gary Wallis
2180 Promontory Rd.,
FISH CREEK 3959
Ph. (03) 5683 2252 or Mob. 0429 427 656

Land for Wildlife Extension Officers and contacts are at the following Department of Sustainability and Environment Offices:

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elsbeth.swan@dse.vic.gov.au

Bendigo, Swan Hill and Mildura areas

Terri Williams
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Kate Hill
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kate.hill@dse.vic.gov.au

DSE Freecall

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News, Events and Field Days

Field Naturalists Club of Victoria

For all FNCV events Phone (03) 9877 9860
Email: admin@fncv.org.au
Website: www.fncv.org.au

August event:

Sat 14th & Sun 15th - Fauna Survey Group
Field Trip – Survey near Cape Liptrap.

September event:

Sat 11th & Sun 12th - Biodiversity Symposium
– International Year of Biodiversity

Sunday 12th - Fungi Group Fungal Foray
10:30am Bunyip State Park (Gembrook)

Winter Swift Parrot & Regent Honey-eater Survey

7th – 8th August

If you wish to participate in the survey, to receive further information, or to report sightings, please contact Chris Tzaros (Swift Parrots) c.tzaros@birdsaustralia.com.au or Dean Ingwersen (Regent Honeyeaters) d.ingwersen@birdsaustralia.com.au, or call (03) 9347 0757.

Grey Box (Eucalyptus microcarpa) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-eastern Australia Listed under EPBC

The Australian Government has listed the Grey Box (Eucalyptus microcarpa) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-eastern Australia as a nationally threatened ecological community under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). For more information: www.environment.gov.au

Chilean Needle Grass -

See Slasher Cover for Reducing Chilean Needle Grass Spread:

<http://new.dpi.vic.gov.au/notes/weeds/restricted-weeds/ag1312-chilean-needle-grass-slasher-cover-for-reducing-chilean-needle-grass-spread>

Statewide Coordinator

Peter Johnson
DSE Bendigo
(03) 5430 4358
peter.johnson@dse.vic.gov.au
www.dse.vic.gov.au/landforwildlife

Rescued!

is the latest book title in a new wildlife series from Avocado Press, publishers of the best selling range of Smarter than Jack animal books. The book is being produced specifically for fundraising purposes, to benefit individuals and organisations involved in wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

www.wildliferescuebooks.vpweb.com

Box Ironbark Ecology Course

Nagambie, 4th October – 8th October

The Box Ironbark Ecology Course brings together leading researchers and experts to share up to date knowledge and thinking about this landscape. It is field based and participants will work in small groups. It emphasises ecological understanding and relationships and techniques that improve observation and data collection skills which can then be applied to other areas.

Participants will gain:

- a better understanding of the distribution, natural values and ecological processes of Box Ironbark landscapes, past and present;
- an understanding of the impact of human use on the ecosystem, past and present;
- practical skills in observation, description, survey, analysis, interpretation, map reading and ecosystem monitoring of flora, fauna, geomorphology and soils;
- opportunity to apply new skills and to collate and communicate information collected from the field; and
- resources to help plan for enhanced ecologically sustainable management outcomes for Box Ironbark remnants on private and public land.

For more details and to obtain an application form contact:

DSE Benalla

Phone: (03) 5761 1611

Email: kate.stothers@dse.vic.gov.au

Bird Observation and Conservation Australia

PO Box 185, Nunawading, 3131
(03) 9877 5342 or 1300 305 342 (country)
www.birdobservers.org.au