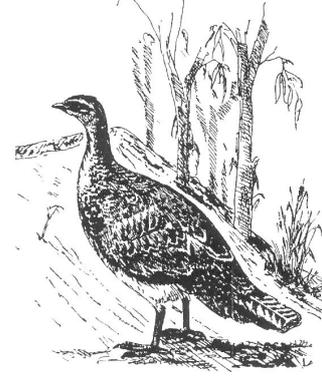




Network News



Newsletter of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network – August 2009

Conserving Biodiversity

Revegetation Project Showing Good Results – Doug Pocock

The earliest revegetation project in Old Boort Rd is showing encouraging signs that this project is bearing fruit in terms of its use by local birds for shelter and food foraging. This year the Spreading Wattle has already bloomed and the Golden Wattle, Wallowa, Grey Mulga, Mallee Wattle and Gold-dust Wattle are all heavily budded. These indigenous native plants were all part of the original vegetation of this land and all are regarded as important sources of seed for Mallee Fowls.

A variety of birds have been observed using this revegetated area including: the chestnut-rumped thornbill, the yellow-rumped thornbill, superb fairy wrens, willie wagtails, the restless flycatcher, jacky winter, variegated wrens, and the white browed babbler. Overall, these are very satisfying results to date.



Biolinks Forum – Wendy Murphy

On July 20th I attended a Biolinks Forum at Ballarat University. The topic of the Forum was “The importance of landscape scale conservation and the role of restoring connectivity in the landscape”. The guest speakers were Gavin McFadyen from the Wilderness Society Australia, Prof Michael Soule – Professor Emeritus of Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz and Prof Peter Gell – Professor of Environmental Science and Director of the Centre for Environmental Management at the University of Ballarat.

The general overall theme was the need to create biolink connections between existing remnant vegetation whether it be on public or private land to allow the movement of animal and plant species and help the flow of genetics. These biolinks aren't just on a local scale, but a whole landscape scale, which in ambitious cases involves state, country and even world scales.

The other theme was the need for whole of community support for connectivity projects. It's all well and good proposing a project, but if the local community aren't in favour then it is very unlikely to get off the ground. This is where networks are of great importance, whether they be CMN's, Landcare groups, Field Nat's groups, Friends Of groups etc or local landholders. Each group can be working on individual projects, but by linking up with other groups doing similar works the landscape scale biolinks can be achieved much more easily.

The one simple solution to protecting nature is connectivity and the need to overcome habitat fragmentation.

Land For Wildlife

You may have noticed green diamond shaped signs on some properties in the area with “Land For Wildlife” written on them. Land For Wildlife is voluntary wildlife conservation by landholders wishing to protect and enhance their properties for wildlife to use. Landholders can register their properties after which an Extension Officer will come out and assess the property before deciding whether it is suitable for approval and for a sign to be put up. Further information can be found by following the Land For Wildlife links on the DSE website – www.dse.vic.gov.au or by calling Terri Williams Land For Wildlife Extension Officer in Bendigo on 03 5430 4389.

Ploughshare Wattle Discovery— Jeroen van Veen

A healthy stand of the rare Ploughshare Wattle, *Acacia gunnii*, was discovered during the first week of July by Alison Jeavons of Greenhouse Balanced. The stand included some 12 individuals of which two were flowering prolifically. Alison was busy seeding the new Greenhouse Balanced block wedged between the Skinners Flat and Woosang blocks of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve when she noticed the creamy colours of the flowers of the rare plants out of the corner of her eye.

The flowers look very much like the flower of the Spreading Wattle, *Acacia genistifolia*, which is also present at the block in large numbers. However, Alison noticed that the prostrate growing habits of the Ploughshare were very different and on closer inspection made the exciting identification.

There have only been two previous recordings of this species in our district, both in the Korong Vale block of the Wychitella NCR. Wedderburn is on the furthest north-western edge of the natural range of this plant, which occurs in all Eastern States but in very low numbers. The newly discovered stand will be protected as the revegetated Greenhouse Balanced blocks in Wedderburn are all covenanted through Trust for Nature. Good news for the long term survival of this species in our region.



Stop! It Might Not Be A Rat – Wendy Murphy

In recent months there have been a number of reports from people finding what they believe to be rats living in and around their homes. On closer inspection some of these rats turn out to be native Yellow-footed Antechinus, (*Antechinus flavipes*). Winter and early spring is the breeding season for these little creatures, which is why locals are reporting them more now. The Yellow-footed Antechinus can be distinguished from common rat species in the fact it has a sharply tapered snout, rather short ears and a fully, (though sparsely), furred tail has pale eye-rings, a black-tipped tail and a distinction between the slate-grey colour of the head and the orange-brown underparts. It is a nocturnal predator feeding on small rodents, birds and insects, but it also feeds on flowers and nectar. The males mate when about 12 months old, but put so much effort into pursuing mates they usually die shortly after mating from exhaustion and starvation. The females can have as many as eight young, which will stay with their mother for about ten months.



So before getting the rat traps out, take a closer look at the creature and you may see you actually have a little native friend living with you.

(Descriptions taken from [A Photographic Guide to Mammals of Australia](#) by Ronald Strahan)

Use of Caring For Our Country Funds – Peter Morison

The Wedderburn CMN has received Federal funding via the NCCMA as part of the Caring for our Country money. The funding is to be spent on fencing and improving remnant woodlands.

Landholders in the Wedderburn, Mt Korong, Mt Brenanah areas, with woodlands wishing to have works done on their properties are encouraged to contact the CMN Ranger Wendy Murphy on 0438384053.

Works could include fencing for stock management and or understorey replanting.

WCMN's Fox baiting Program – Wendy Murphy

The Wedderburn CMN has been conducting a fox-baiting program for close to five years now in the Skinners Flat block, Wychitella block and Wedderburn block of Wychitella NCR and also some on private property. This has been done in conjunction with DPI and Parks Victoria baiting programs in the adjoining landscape.

The baiting program has been successful in reducing fox numbers especially around areas used by breeding malleefowl. Some young birds have even been observed suggesting the reduced predation by foxes is allowing some recruitment of young malleefowl in to the population.

In the recent months though there seems to be an increase in fox numbers with more baits than usual being taken from right across the baiting area, and quite a few foxes have been seen moving around the area. This is probably due to the beginning of the fox breeding season and the fact that because so many foxes have been removed from the Reserve, more foxes from outlying areas are coming in to the vacant territories.

The baiting program will continue on a monthly basis over the summer months, as this is a critical time for malleefowl breeding and young dispersal. Wendy is hoping to organise a more in depth community talk on the Wedderburn CMN's fox baiting program in the near future for those who are interested.

Nature Notes – Wedderburn CMN Observers

The continuing damp weather has created interesting changes in the local vegetation. Green rock ferns are prolific in places and the small white flowers of early Nancy plants are out now. The flat scented sundews are almost overshadowed by the large white flowers they are currently displaying. Orchids are beginning to emerge now, particularly the Dwarf Greenhood.

An increasing variety of wattles are now flowering. In parts of the Wychitella nature conservation reserve stands of Bent Leaf wattle are flowering well, the widespread golden wattle is also very visible at present.

The native twining parasite plant Coarse Dodder – laurel (locally known as snoddy gobbler) is increasing in mass and vigour at this time of year. Examples of this can be seen on trees lining the Calder highway.

Echidna activity seems to have increased judging by the amount of disturbed soil and ant nests in some forest areas. Rabbits also continue to disturb the ground. The increase in moisture has encouraged the proliferation of many weeds such as oxalis, bridal creeper and Patterson's curse.

Observers of nature can expect to see different wildlife at different times of day. Late afternoon wanders in the bush have resulted in sightings of the Australian owl Nightjar. Early morning and late afternoon are the times that kangaroos and wallabies are most commonly sighted. This month the WCMN has been involved with setting up sites to monitor kangaroo numbers. The sites are in bushland and open country. There is a sense that spring is not far away with many plants getting ready to flower and birds increasingly active around nesting areas. Another member of our group reported sightings of forty different species of birds over a period of two days including: a hooded robin, a flame robin, a collared sparrowhawk, a tawny crowned honeyeater, a white fronted honeyeater, a black chinned honeyeater and a brown tree creeper. Keep your eyes open for nature's indications of the changes in season and weather.



Tall sundew - Annette Robertson

The Newly Formed WCMN Observers Group – Michael Moore

The recently formed WCMN Observers group is a subgroup of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network. The group has the declared aim of raising awareness of the overall biodiversity of the focus area within the general community. One of the main aspects of communication chosen by the group to achieve this aim is that of photography and the incorporation of such photographs into environmentally based articles for publication in local news media and one of the group's websites - the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network News – the group's blogspot. The group has managed, so far, to publish articles in the Loddon Times entitled 'Nature Notes'. These articles are a result of observations of the environment made by members as they go about their normal work or relax in their environment. It is also the intention of the group to make available to the general community a gallery of biodiversity – a collection of nature photographs of the focus area. Members of this group enjoy participating in 'hands on' activities. Over a period of a few weeks in August members have been involved in planting various species of plants in the Korong Reserve, kindly donated by fellow member Doug Pocock, which is located just off the Calder Highway between Wedderburn and Inglewood and laying out transect lines for monitoring kangaroo numbers in the northern part of the focus area. More about this on the blogspot!



FRIENDS OF KOOYOORA



For Further Details or Tour Bookings

The Bakehouse Gallery

7 Main Street, Bridgewater-On-Loddon, Vic. 3516: 10.00am - 4.00pm Sat.& Sun

Phone: 0427 190 339 Email: cvosrr@inet.net.au Web Information: www.loddon.vic.gov.au

What is the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network?

The WCMN is a network including interested individuals, both public and private land managers who come together to promote a shared aim. That shared aim is to work with the community in general to promote profitable, productive and sustainable human enterprises while conserving and indeed enhancing the biodiversity of their area of interest.

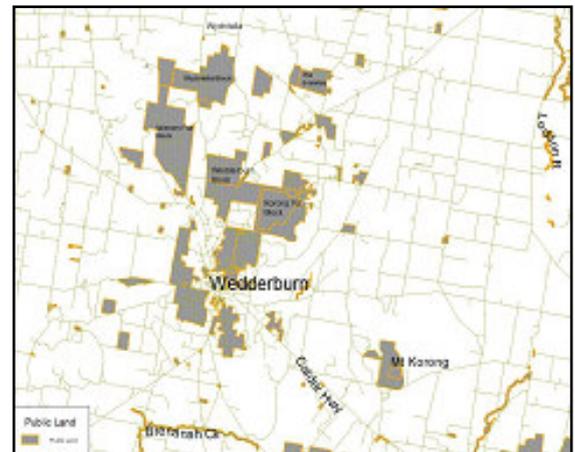
For further information concerning any items in this newsletter or other aspects of the WCMN contact
WCMN ranger, Wendy Murphy - 0438384053
WCMN Secretary, Michael Moore – 54943542
Website addresses

<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/january/web/index.html>

<http://wedderburncmnnews.blogspot.com/>

Saturday and Sunday 10.00am - 4.00pm 19th - 20th September Rheola Hall

Guided and Self-Guided Wildflower
Tours
Static Displays of Local Indigenous Flora,
Botanical Drawings and Photographs.
Photographic Competition.
Books, Maps, Reference Materials
and Native Plants for Sale.



The WCMN Area of Interest