



Network News



Newsletter of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network – June 2012

Conserving Biodiversity

Bird bath bird watching blitz

Who needs a television when you have a bird bath for visual entertainment? The beautiful autumnal weather had seen the observers sitting on the verandah a lot. The warm weather, a few brief showers, and the weather conditions seem to have brought on a flurry of bird activity around the bird bath.

What are the requirements? A bird bath placed in a strategic position, providing shelter for the birds and clean water filling the bath. Get a cup of tea, a comfortable seat on the verandah, binoculars and a bird book enhance the experience. Just sit and wait.

A very busy time at the bird bath seemed to occur at about the same time each afternoon.

For an exercise in observation we took 30 minutes (from 4.10pm – 4.40pm) one afternoon and recorded all the visitors to the bird bath.

First there were Superb Blue Wrens, and then bees were drinking at the water's edge. Next came the White Eared Honeyeaters, then a Grey Fantail, later joined by another. Very small birds followed, Yellow Rumped Thornbills, Silveryeyes (about 15 of them) and a small group of Weebills.

There were not as many birds on that particular occasion as on some other afternoons, but it was still great viewing!

What brought this on? Looking out the window one lunch time we sighted a bright yellow bird drinking at the bird bath. Checking the bird book we identified the visitor as a Golden Whistler. This would be a new addition to the bird list that we have been recording for over a decade. A previously unrecorded sighting to add to the list was quite exciting. The Golden Whistler has been seen twice more at the bird bath.

Article by Wedderburn Conservation Management Network "Observers"



A joint effort

Over the last few years wild European rabbits have been a major problem within the Mount Korong Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR) and surrounding farm land. One dusk survey revealed 46 rabbits per kilometre, however this has now reduced due to a united front from Parks Victoria and Public land holders.

Over the past few months fumigation works started on Freya Mathews' property to the west of Mount Korong. When this is completed the contractors will move to the north and complete fumigation of Mt Korong Nature Conservation Reserve. Free feeding from bait stations around Mt Korong has also been occurring, with 1080 poison oats laid in the middle of June for three days.

Wild European rabbits have had the upper hand throughout this area over the years, however, with Parks Victoria and public landholders joining forces over the next few months, rabbit numbers will drop



significantly. If we continue joint management of rabbits over the years rabbit numbers will again decline thus allowing native flora and fauna to thrive.

Article by Braden Pearce, Ranger, Western Goldfields

Volunteer weekends at Mount Kerang

This winter Bush Heritage Australia (BHA) is organising another series of working bees at their property at Mt Kerang to the NorthWest of Wedderburn. Teams of up to 5 volunteers per weekend will be tackling weeds, fence out rare plants and assist in the rabbit control program. All materials are provided, but volunteers need to bring sturdy footwear, comfortable but warm clothing and their own food for the weekend. The first working bee will be on the weekend of the 26th of May, with further weekends in the following months all the way through till October. The reserve at Mount Kerang is called "Nardoo Hills" and is BHA's largest property in Victoria. It was purchased in 2004 and the continuing weed and rabbit control works there have already resulted in the discovery of a range of threatened plant species. The volunteer weekends are the best opportunity to visit the reserve and see its special attractions. For more information contact the BHA volunteer coordinator Heidi Fisher on:

03 86109100 or visit the website at www.bushheritage.org

Article and photograph by Jeroen Van Veen



Alison Pouliot fungi workshops

The Wedderburn CMN again hosted the extremely popular fungi workshops run by internationally renowned fungi conservationist Alison Pouliot. There were two workshops held at the Parks Vic Depot Inglewood with 34 people attending two workshops held over two days. On Saturday 2nd June Alison ran the workshop: *Fungi – An Introduction to a Curious Kingdom*

Participants attending this workshop were given an introduction to the diversity and curiosities of the fungi kingdom. During morning tea participants were treated to an impressive display of fungal specimens and relevant texts.

This was followed by an enlightening, interactive and illustrated seminar addressing the major fungal groups, the basics of fungus identification, fungal ecology and the natural and cultural history of fungi. Participants then moved back to the display to put their new found knowledge into practice by examining and discussing the many fungal specimens from the local area. Participants were provided with supplementary notes to help with identification and future personal fungi ventures.

After lunch the group moved off to enjoy a fungal foray held locally at the Melville's Caves area where intrepid fungi fossickers discovered, discussed and photographed the specimens found.

On Sunday 3rd June Alison ran the workshop: *The Bizarre & the beautiful – A Deeper Exploration of a Curious Kingdom*

This workshop which followed the same format as the previous one led participants deeper into the fungi kingdom with a closer look at the major characteristics used to identify fungi in the field. Also explored were some of the evolutionary peculiarities that have resulted in fungi being such a strange and intriguing group.

Photographs aside show participants enjoying a cup of tea while admiring the fantastic display of local fungi and literature and foraging for fungi in local bush.

Article – Michael Moore, photographs – Terri Williams



**Loddon Plains Landcare Network
Community workshops**

The LPLN community workshops designed to gather and share natural resource management information between the LPLN Committee of Management and interested members of the community have been completed. These workshops form part of a landscape restoration project known as the GOANNA project.



LODDON PLAINS LANDCARE NETWORK

Each workshop followed the same format involving speakers from the LPLN and the North Central Catchment Management Authority i.e. a presentation on the progress of the LPLN’s blueprint for landscape restoration followed by presentations concerning Victorian Landcare Grants and the North Central Catchment Management’s 2012 - 18 Regional Catchment Strategy. Participants were then encouraged to sit in groups around large maps of the area and discuss their ideas for possible landscape projects.

Attendance at the Wedderburn workshop, held on the 2nd May, although somewhat disappointing saw representatives from three local groups, Friends of Kooyoora, Mt Korong Eco – Watch Group and the Wedderburn CMN, present their ideas and projects with respect to landscape restoration in their areas of concern.

The Serpentine Workshop was held on the 9th May. There were 24 members from the local area who attended, a very pleasing turn out. There was a great atmosphere, with people sharing dinner and getting into discussion about priority areas and projects for the network. The large maps provided were a great tool for initiating discussion of possible landscape restoration projects.

The Dingee Workshop was held on 16th May. There were 8 members who attended, with representation from most of the local groups in that area. Again the workshop was fruitful in delivering project ideas and enthusiasm for conservation projects across the Loddon Plains. Ideas have been gathered and collated from the three workshops with approximate project locations mapped. There have been approximately 27 projects collated.

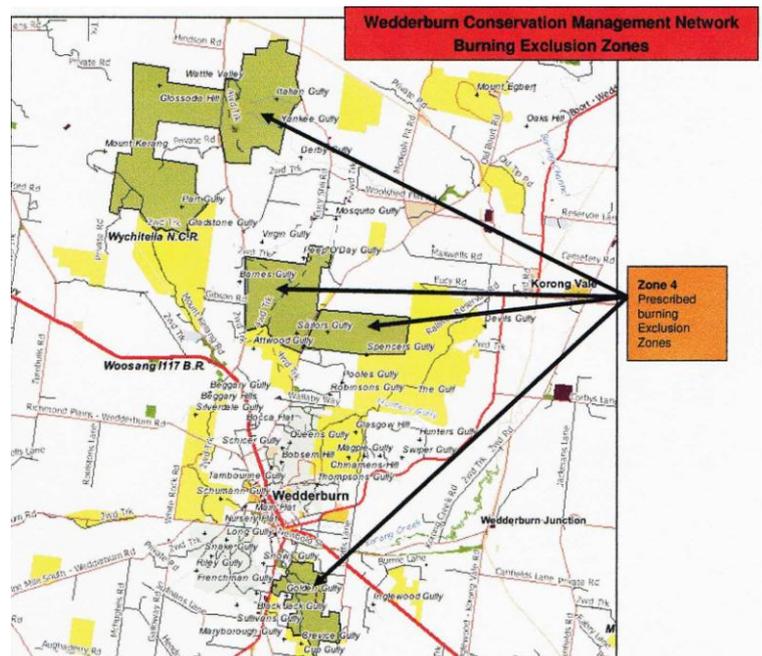
The Norman Wettenhall Foundation has approved a grant of \$30,000 for the next stage of the GOANNA project which will involve the employment of a project officer to research and develop complete plans for ongoing projects. These funds will be available in July 2012.

Article by Michael Moore and Anthony Gallacher

Burning the bush / the malleefowl

The Wedderburn CMN Committee recently had a guest speaker, Jeff Wilkie, present to the group the current situation regarding DSE planned burning. Mr Wilkie invited the WCMN to submit a map showing areas that the group believed should be excluded from burning by being classified as a Zone 4. The map attached is the response to Mr Wilkie’s invitation.

The CMN is very concerned that the small resident population of malleefowl remaining in the Wedderburn area will be pushed to local extinction should planned burning commence in this area. The Malleefowl is a species requiring long unburnt mallee vegetation in which to breed ie unburnt for greater than 50 years. As such, it is not appropriate to be burning any mallee vegetation that is zoned for ecological purposes.



There can be no ecological reason to burn. The CMN is also concerned at the large tracts of land already burnt around Inglewood in the last ten years or so. The Committee believes that there is no ecological reason to burn any further mallee vegetation in that area. The committee would like to stress that they are not opposed to planned burning where township protection is concerned but that ecological burning should only be conducted where ecologically justifiable. An analogous map of malleefowl habitat in the Inglewood area was also submitted to the Fire and Land Division of DSE. Article by Peter Morison DSE on behalf of the Wedderburn CMN

Welcome to the world Rhiannon

We at the Wedderburn CMN were all delighted to hear of the arrival of Rhiannon Denise Murphy. We wish the Murphy family all the best.



Brazilian Tobacco Bush

WCMN recently received a report from Malcolm Cousland of Boort who has noted a progressive infestation of the weed Brazilian Tobacco bush (*Solanum mauritianum*) from the 'Granites' into nearby private land over the last few years. This information was in turn then passed on to Parks Victoria. Unfortunately, Parks Victoria is only provided with funds to control either Schedule 1 or 2 weeds which are the Government's highest priority and Brazilian Tobacco Bush is not included on these schedules and therefore is not a priority for Parks Victoria's weed control program. At the last monthly meeting of the WCMN the situation was discussed and a further report of the weed at Mt Korong was noted. It was decided after discussion to consider the possibility of using WCMN funds in the control of this weed.



Solanum mauritianum can form dense stands that inhibit the growth of other species through overcrowding and shading. This is apparently a weed to be avoided as all parts of the plant are toxic to humans, especially the green berries. The fine hairs on the leaves can be an irritant.

Article – Michael Moore

WCMN membership fees and new financial members

A short note sent out with the last newsletter seeking new financial members for the WCMN has resulted in a great response from readers with over twenty new recruits to the network. We can now go ahead with our application for Tax Deductible Gift Status. Annual membership fees of \$5.00 will be due for the period 2012 – 13 as of 1st July 2012. **Please note that this does not apply to members who responded to the request for new financial members previously mentioned.**

The WCMN is a network including interested individuals and 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 President, Michael Moore – 54943542

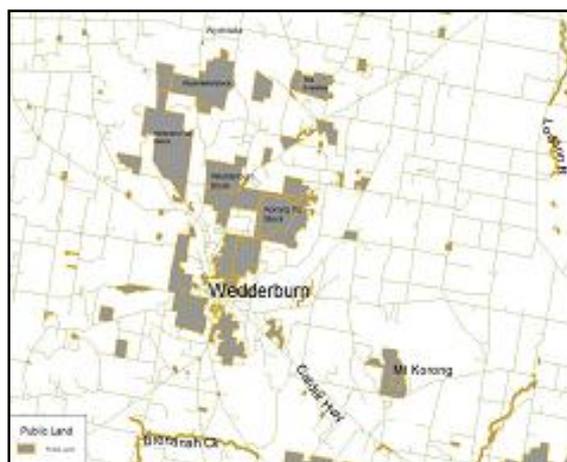
Website addresses

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

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

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

LPLN- Loddon Plains Landcare Network



The WCMN Area of Interest

'Proudly supported by the Victorian Government Landcare Grants Program'.



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People



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FOR
OUR
COUNTRY