



Newsletter of the  
Land for Wildlife Scheme Tasmania

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## Land for Wildlife News

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The Water Rat, *Hydromys chrysogaster*, is an old endemic species which is well adapted to its aquatic environment.

See from "The Coordinator" *Bugs, Birds, Bettongs and Bush*, page 2.

Photo: John Simmons



Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES,  
WATER and ENVIRONMENT



Natural Heritage Trust  
*Helping Communities Helping Australia*

The Land for Wildlife Scheme in Tasmania is delivered through The Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment in partnership with Wildcare Inc.

# From the Coordinator

I hope everyone is enjoying the winter this year. With full dams and overland water flows that haven't been seen for a few years now. Our rivers all benefit from a decent flood and as the water penetrates the ground our thirsty woodlands and forests can start to recover from the effects of drought. With feed short it is tempting to use the bush to top up. If you can avoid grazing the bush this winter and spring you will see the benefits in wildflowers and young native animals.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lynne Sparrow for her invaluable work as editor of the newsletter and helping to keep my head above water with the administrative load! As foreshadowed in the last newsletter we are also farewelling all the Bushcare Community extension officers who finished on June 30th. At least for the next 12 months Lee Harper will be compiling and editing the newsletter. Welcome Lee!

The Land for Wildlife Scheme in Tasmania is now on a secure footing for the future with the commitment by the Government to funding a full time permanent Community Biodiversity Coordinator. Managing the Land for Wildlife scheme will be one of the main responsibilities of this position.

The response to the call for Wildcare volunteers to help the scheme as property assessors was heartening with 29 people from all around the state coming forward for training. In addition I have enough interest to run another course in January. Two of our new assessors describe their experience of working for the scheme in a short article.

In this issue we are introducing a new regular feature. Our two sister programs the Protected Area on Private Land and Private Forests Reserves Program are going to provide an article each for the newsletter. We look at two of the States rarest Forest Communities and Jo Edwards has provided us with a story about a landscape approach her program is adopting for protecting the Mersey River Environs. Staff from both programs have now been trained as Land for Wildlife assessors so that their clients can easily join Land for Wildlife.

Rather than looking at threatened species in this edition we are looking at a threatened ecosystem – native grassland. For any of you who have native grasslands particularly lowland grasslands dominated by Poa's and Kangaroo grass I have an informative little brochure with some useful management tips.

As promised in Volume 3 we are keeping you abreast of the latest developments with the new NRM Framework. All three natural resource management regions are up and running with offices and staff rapidly coming on board. As a group with a self identified interest in Biodiversity conservation and land management I would urge you all to engage with these processes as they will have a major impact on the way resources are allocated within regions and how effectively environmental policy is implemented.

Peter's letter on Wildlife Caring has stimulated a lot of interest and so I have included articles from two other Wildlife Carer groups. James and Iris are members of the scheme who very kindly lent us their property for the day when we were training assessors in the NW. If you are happy to have your property available as release sites please contact Julia, Iris and Peter depending on where you are in the State. Remember that for properties to be suitable they should be of a good size with neighbours who are not actively controlling wildlife!

Finally you will have discovered when you opened your Land for Wildlife News envelope Bugs, Birds, Bettongs & Bush. This publication, the last in the Bushcare tool kit series should prove invaluable to you in managing your property's wildlife habitat some of you already have the rest of the Bushcare tool kit for anyone who doesn't it can be downloaded in pdf format from [WWW.Bushcare.tas.gov.au](http://WWW.Bushcare.tas.gov.au). The book will be provided as part of the induction kit for new members.

Please keep your contributions and thoughts coming in. Happy reading!

Sean Cadman

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## Extracts from:

## TASMANIA'S NATIVE GRASSLANDS RECOVERY PLAN DPIWE Threatened Species Unit

Native grasslands as well as other grassy ecosystems, were the most easily exploited vegetation type when Europeans first arrived in Tasmania. Very little remains in its natural extent or condition today and are the most depleted vegetation type in Tasmania. Most have been heavily modified or destroyed so that only remnants remain. Because of this many fauna and flora species which help comprise this vegetation type have also been in decline and 58 are on the Tasmanian and Commonwealth's threatened species lists. Many other native species are dependent on or associated with native grassland.

Tasmanian native grasslands have suffered a

- Marked decrease in geographic distribution.
- Marked alteration of community structure.
- Restricted geographic distribution and isolation such that the community could be lost rapidly by the action of a threatening process.
- Alteration of ecological processes to the extent that marked changes in community structure will occur.

To protect the remaining native grasslands, a Communities Recovery Plan has been written and submitted to the Commonwealth under the

Environment Protection and Bio-diversity Conservation Act 1999. This is part of a process which also involves the listing of native grasslands as threatened ecological communities (which is also in progress) under the above Act. This will give legal protection to the vegetation type and formalise actions to protect it.

Much native grassland is in private hands, however, many of the property owners with significant remnants of lowland grasslands in good condition are proud of their natural and historical heritage and intend to maintain their present good management. Use of their

*continued on page 3*



native grasslands has a very long history, and is, in the case of fine wool production, compatible with nature conservation. However, changes in property ownership with time may result in changed management practices or land use. The present trend toward increased cropping may see a new wave of grassland loss if sites are not secured by management agreements or other forms of protection. Native grasslands which occur on public lands are also potentially under threat. The overall reduction in area has made the remnants extremely vulnerable. Coastal grasslands and high elevation grasslands in public ownership are often leased for agriculture.

The main threats to native grassland are as follows:

- Clearance of native vegetation. Clearance for the expansion of crops and improved pasture destroys grassland and grassy woodlands.
- Pasture improvement and fertilisation. Sowing of clover and application of super-phosphate and nitrogen rich fertilisers promotes weeds and kills many native species.
- Persistent overgrazing. Preventing flowering year after year eliminates plants that are easily removed by grazing and dependant on seed for regeneration.
- Dam building. Many dams have already inundated large remnants of lowland valley-bottom grassland. Again this process is irreversible.
- Exclusion of fire and grazing and invasion by shrubs and trees. This results in a decline in species richness due to the emerging dominance of just a few species.
- Urban expansion. Native grasslands are threatened by the subdivision of land for development and subsequent land-use changes.
- Exotic species invasion. Invasive weeds, such as gorse (*Ulex*

*europaeus*), have the ability to cover large areas of native grasslands.

- Offroad vehicles. The use of recreational vehicles contributes significantly to habitat degradation of native grasslands.

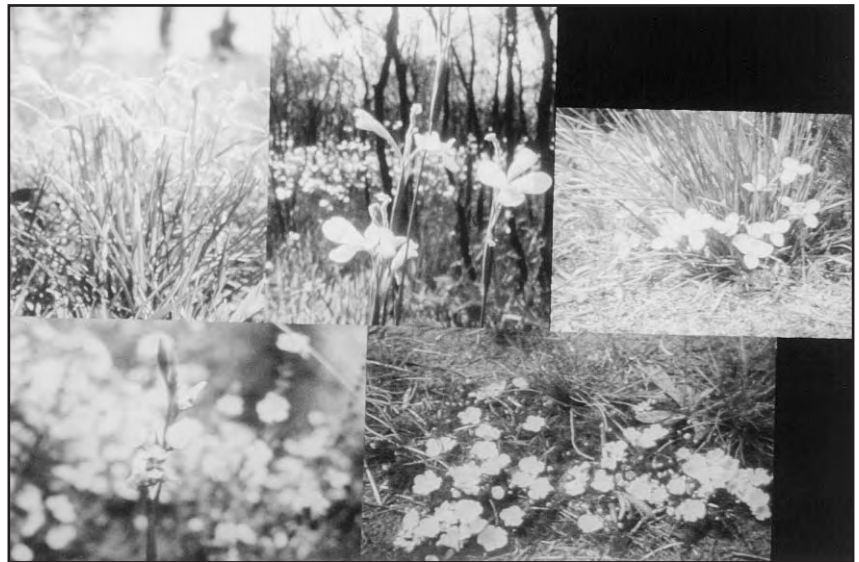
A Natural Heritage Trust funded grasslands recovery project has recently worked on protecting native grasslands in Tasmania. A major part of this was to map and survey grasslands and to prioritise areas of concern. The Recovery Plan was also a product of this project. The mapping has contributed to updating the data on the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment's Tasmanian Vegetation Mapping Program (TASVEG). This process is ongoing.

Protection of Tasmania's native grasslands will be achieved by a co-operative approach that is strategic, well managed and broadly accepted. This will provide for adequate and representative examples of grasslands to be conserved which is the most desirable outcome both ecologically and economically. Intact grassland

communities protect associated values, for example, reducing the impact of rural tree decline by requiring minimum stock pressure. Native grassland maintains drainage, reducing the need for irrigation and consequent salinisation impacts. Many of the grassland communities are closely related to the pastoral and cropping industries and provide pollinator and stock health services.

The path to native grassland conservation on private land in Tasmania must be perceived as beneficial and non-threatening by landowners and must lead to a cessation of the clearance of remnants. At the same time land managers generally, must be given an understanding of the significant values of grasslands as well as a mechanism to identify them. The Recovery Plan aims to promote this and in so doing, the conservation of native grasslands and threatened grassland flora and fauna species on all land tenures.

For more information, please contact DPIWE Threatened Species Unit 6233 6506.



Grassland Species

Photo: Conservation on Tasmanian Farms - Education Kit DPIWE



Well managed and poorly managed grasslands

Photo: Conservation on Tasmanian Farms - Education Kit DPIWE



Grasslands in flower

Photo: Conservation on Tasmanian Farms - Education Kit DPIWE

# Caring for Wildlife & Wildlife Release

## Property Profile - Albion Wombat Rescue

Situated on over 40 acres of paddocks and natural bush just outside Sheffield, James and Iris Ellis have for the last twelve years, specialised in the care and rehabilitation of orphaned wombats. They operate their own rescue vehicle, a 25 year old Land Rover which is mostly used for promotional work and transporting wombats. The Land Rover usually takes part in three local Christmas Parades per year, and other events if requested in an attempt to raise public awareness. The vehicle is a favourite with the children, being dressed up with wombats (soft toys) and decorations.

Young wombats arriving at Albion Wombat Rescue can spend up to two years in care before they are able to be released back into their natural environment, and usually begin their stay by living permanently in the house in an artificial pouch.

Sometimes they are lucky enough to be paired with another wombat of similar age and size. This "buddy" system is better for the wombat and less demanding on the carer, but care must be taken when making the decision to put two wombats together. Generally there should not be more than a 2 kilo weight difference between the animals, and if the wombats are more than 4 kilo in weight it is usually too late to form a lasting bond, in fact they can be a danger to each other.



*James and Iris Ellis and friend*

From between 1 - 2 kilo the wombats are moved into converted baby cots in the laundry where it is cooler, (wombats do not like being too warm). From there they begin spending time outside in a nursery pen, and by the time they are 4 - 5 kilo they are happily digging and whiling away the days in their outdoor pen, returning to the safety of an indoor pen in the shed, for the night. By the time the wombats are 7 kilo they are living permanently outdoors in their pen. However it is vital that they remain on a bottle, weaning is not commenced until they are a minimum of 10 kilo in weight, and even then, the longer the wombat will accept a bottle the longer it should be offered.

Wombats are particularly susceptible to stress and should never be taken out into the bush and left, there will only be one outcome - death! For release purposes wombats need to be around two years of age and as near the 15 - 20 kilo mark as you can get. Even then a "soft release" is important to their successful return to the bush.

The need for a strong suitable outdoor pen, and the long term commitment required to care for these animals means that there is a shortage of wombat carers. There is even a more desperate need for release sites for these amazing creatures. The aim of release sites is to provide food and water once a day for 3 - 4 weeks prior to release, and sometimes support for a short time after release. Unlike that of a carer, this is not a long term commitment, you do not need to be home all day, or have large amounts of free or spare time to offer your property for a release site.

Any Land for Wildlife Member interested in becoming a wombat release site can discuss their concerns or ask any questions by contacting:

Albion Wombat Rescue - Tel: (03) 64912463 or Email: [albion@southcom.com.au](mailto:albion@southcom.com.au)

## Central North Wildlife Care & Rescue Inc. - Julia Butler, Ross

Central North Wildlife Care & Rescue Inc. members rescue and care for injured and orphaned wildlife, mostly in their own homes. The group is developing an ethical and structured approach to wildlife care. They are training beginner carers, and run public information sessions on wildlife rescue and talk to school kids about impacts on our wildlife.

From August onwards they are busy with an influx of wildlife, usually road or shooting victims. These orphans stay with volunteer members until about March next year, when they are ready to move on to be rehabilitated into the wild. The "SOFT RELEASE" is the preferred approach to releasing the animals. This involves taking the animal to where it is to be released, and maintaining it in a pen. It is maintained in a pen close to the bush, human contact is withdrawn, the animal is weened off milk and 'human' food, it gets to meet the neighbours who come to the fence for sniffs, and wild instincts kick in. Then the door is opened and the animal can come and go until it finally takes off into the wild. This method applies to wallabies, wombats, possums, bandicoots, bettongs, potoroos, sugar gliders etc and some birds.

Central North Wildlife Care & Rescue Inc. is always short of suitable properties and people who are prepared to take on this last stage of care. If you are able to assist and have a property that would be suitable please contact

Alistair & Julia Butler - Ross, Central North Wildlife Care & Rescue Inc.  
Ph: 040 997 8064. Postal address: 71 Wilmot Street, Port Sorell 7307.



## Living with Wildlife - Brushtail possums



Photo: L. Brown

Brushtail possums: “street kids of the bush” - lovable but exasperating!

Possums are irrational animals/humans should be rational – we should use our intelligence to observe and manage possums.

Our aim has been to maintain a stable population of possums: trapping for relocation, shooting (the “12 gauge solution”) and poisoning destabilises the local population by removing dominant older possums. There is then a surge of juveniles to fill the “feed/power” gap. Research shows that continuous destabilisation of mammal populations in a sub region means an overall increase in numbers.

### Managing possums

- Plan on excluding them from the actual area they are not wanted
  - e.g. small orchard/vegetable area using floppy top, electric or metal fencing
  - e.g. from individual high value trees - our chestnuts have expandable metal sleeves
  - e.g. short term deterrent methods used include blood and bone around trees or empty chestnut burr mulch.
- Use tree species selection by planting commercial species which possums ignore
  - e.g. hazelnuts, waratahs, red currants, elderberry, etc.
- Tree varietal selection
  - e.g. one variety of chestnut appears particularly vulnerable and this is progressively being regrafted by top working to an improved commercial and less vulnerable variety.
- Sacrificial trees
  - e.g. manage production allowing for a small (say 5%) loss of crop potential. While possums in small group of trees near the bushland then they are leaving the main orchard alone.

For further information on management of your bushland refer to the Tasmanian Bushcare Toolkit.

*Colleen & Daryl Dibby  
Preolenna Chestnuts  
LFW Members*

## Wildlife Volunteer LFW Assessors



Being a Wildcare Land for Wildlife assessment officer began with a two day training course held in Hobart where we were introduced to Wildcare, the Aboriginal Relics Act, the Private Forests Reserve Program, the Protected Areas on Private Land Program, threatened species, environmental weeds (like the one in the photo!) and of course, the Land for Wildlife history, philosophy and property assessment process.

The second day involved a practical exercise where we headed to a property at Collinsvale and went through the process of assessment. This great day out in the bush was followed by a theory examination to make sure all of what we had learnt in the two days had sunk in (can't pretend we enjoyed the exam!). A lot of information was provided in a kit for the volunteer officers for future reference just in case we needed to refer to it again.

Something that stood out for us was that due to cuts to NHT funds, various positions that previously existed to conduct this valuable work, had been lost. To their credit and good nature, the previous Land for Wildlife assessment officers contributed to the training programme and made it a fantastic and inspiring two day course.

The best part of the course was the realization that although Tasmania has a high incidence of clearing on private land resulting in pristine habitat loss, programmes such as this one and the two mentioned above, provide a mechanism that allows property owners to sustainably manage their land and protect habitat for future generations. It's great to know that volunteers can contribute towards such a good cause.

Since the course we've conducted our first two assessments. Reminding ourselves that we can't be experts in everything (as much as we'd like to be), we've not only spent enjoyable time with some interesting and passionate people, we're learning more along the way. It's refreshing to be part of an extensive network of people, so keen to share information.

What a great excuse to spend the day in the bush, meet new people and contribute to a worthwhile cause!

*Deb Miller and Natalie Conod*

# NRM meets LFW - Acronym M

## North NRM

NRM (or Natural Resource Management to use the full title) is a fairly new concept that's been bandied around in the press a fair bit lately. As it's something of a new development in community environmental management, I'd like to take a few minutes of your time to present an overview, and an invitation for you to participate.

### What is NRM?

NRM stands for Natural Resource (ie. water, plant and animal life, air, soils, and geodiversity such as cave systems) Management (how all parts of our society from individuals to industry and government interact and affect those natural resources).

It's a cooperative process that aims to involve all stakeholders who have an influence on our natural resources in setting long condition targets (in what condition and by when) for our natural resources, along with action and investment planning to achieve those outcomes.

### What's the task?

Three Tasmanian NRM regions (the 62/63/64 phone regions) have been established under legislation, with a community body in each region endorsed to develop a Regional NRM Strategy and ongoing investment plans.

The Regional Strategy, subject to accreditation under nationally agreed criteria, will be used to guide ongoing investment plans. These investment plans will then be used to access funding programs such as the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, as well as investment from industry, local and state government and the community.

The deadline for the initial draft strategy is March 1st 2004 so we have to get cracking!

### Interesting process but what's it got to do with LFW?

In Land for Wildlife we are passionate about those natural resources that combine to form native fauna habitat. Issues such as the extent and condition of native vegetation, the state of our waterways, as well as the management of threatened species, aquatic and bushland recreational activities and coastal developments all affect various forms of wildlife habitat.

To take one example, let's look at native vegetation:

A Regional NRM Strategy might establish targets for how much and what sort of native vegetation we want to have in our region. It might also establish targets for how that vegetation should be distributed (ie. patch size and vegetation corridors) and what sort of management practices should be in place (eg how much of the riverbanks should be fenced, how we approach firewood collection, off road vehicle use and so on). It would also identify where the greatest need for action is.

The Investment plans would identify the most cost and resource effective ways of addressing those priority actions.

For example, in some cases it might be far more effective to fence off some remnant vegetation that's at risk of being lost, whilst in another situation the most effective approach might be a large scale rehabilitation exercise linking several critical but fragmented remnants.

As Land for Wildlife members our patches of habitat are important parts of that planning process. The knowledge we have of our local conditions and trends is also vital to the process.

This strategy development process needs all stakeholders, including Land for Wildlifers, to help set condition and management targets, and to help determine the most effective ways of getting there!

### Where is the process up to and how do I get involved?

Each region has set up a Regional NRM Committee, under the umbrella of a community organisation. In the North and South, community NRM Associations have been formed, combining broad representation from all levels of regional stakeholders, such as industry, community groups, individuals and the various levels of government. In the North West the Regional Committee operates with assistance from the Cradle Coast Authority.

Each regional committee in turn combines broad and balanced membership from all walks, with the need for balanced membership stipulated in the supporting state legislation.

In the North, the Committee has developed a discussion paper outlining the anticipated structure for the Strategy and the process they plan to follow. For copies of this discussion paper or to register your contact details for updates and invitations to planning events, please contact:

Howard Colvin  
Executive Officer, NRM North  
Phone: 6336 5219, Fax: 6336 5365  
or [nrmnorth@bigpond.net.au](mailto:nrmnorth@bigpond.net.au)

So that's it in a nutshell folks. A process that has enormous potential, but will only achieve what we in the community push it to, so please, get in touch your regional NRM Committee and get involved.

Howard Colvin  
LFW Member and Northern NRM Coordinator

### NRM NORTH COMMITTEE

<b>Mr Harry Galea (Chair)</b>	Mr Graeme Gardner
Mr Scott Anderson	Dr Alan Harradine
Mrs Maureen Bennett	Geoff McLennan
Mr Richard Buchorn	Mr Paul Rosevear
Ms Mandy Carter	Mrs Debbie Seale
Ms Anne Duncan	Dr Leigh Sparrow
Mr David Elliott	Mrs Janet Wallace
Dr Joanna Ellison	

## Southern NRM

The Southern Regional Committee (NRM South) has developed a methodology and a consultation framework for development of the Southern regional NRM strategy

# Madness or a Promising Future?

and has held a first regional stakeholder forum. There will be a number of opportunities for Land for Wildlife members to participate in the strategy development process. People unable or unwilling to attend meetings are welcome to write to the Coordinator. Please let me know if you wish to be added to our stakeholder mailing list.

Vanessa Elwell-Gavins  
Executive Officer, NRM South  
Email: nrmsouth@nht.tas.gov.au  
c/o GPO Box 44, HOBART TAS 7001

## **SOUTHERN NRM COMMITTEE**

<b>Mr Ollie Hedberg (Chair)</b>	Mr Roger Howlett
Mr Andy Baird	Mr Andrew Livingston
Mr Bark Bryce	Dr Christine Mucha
Ms Christine Coughanowr	Ms Helen Pryor
Mr Andrew Downie	Mr Alex Schaap
Dr Hans Drielsma	Dr Isobel Stanley
Mr Tony Ferrier	Ms Maria Weeding

## ***Cradle Coast Regional NRM***

The Cradle Coast NRM Committee held its inaugural meeting in January and has met on a monthly basis since then. In addition to monthly meetings, the committee is currently operating five sub-committees. These committees are working on the themes of Sustainable Production, Water Issues, Biodiversity and Social Issues. The fifth sub-committee is considering NRM issues on King Island and integrating all themes being considered by the other sub-committees.

The sub-committees have invited a limited range of stakeholders to help them produce a discussion paper on

their respective theme. The discussion papers are intended to identify key issues and background material on given themes and will be released for broad stakeholder consideration in September. The discussion papers are not designed to be definitive or prescriptive statements about given NRM issues, but rather are intended to inform and stimulate valuable stakeholder contributions which will be collected during a subsequent public consultation process. Draft strategy development will begin once this initial phase of consultations is complete. The draft strategy itself will pass through at least one phase of stakeholder comment and input.

The committee is very aware of the need to fully engage, inform and incorporate stakeholder inputs during strategy development. To this end, the appointment of a team of facilitators is keenly awaited and should be in place by September. Their primary task is to strengthen communication channels between stakeholders and the committee during the development of the NRM strategy.

Meetings of the Cradle Coast NRM committee are currently being held at 6.30pm on the third Thursday of the month at the Chancellor Inn, Wilson Street, Burnie and are open to the public. Prior notice of attendance is required by ringing 6431 6285. A website is being developed from which minutes of committee meetings will be available. The website will be operational in the near future.

Anyone wishing to be put on the committee's stakeholder list and who would like to receive future progress updates from the committee's work, such as dates of the stakeholder consultations, should contact the NRM co-ordinator.

David McCormack, NRM Co-ordinator  
PH: 6431 6285.

## **CRADLE COAST NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### ***Membership Summary - Name, Locality, Interest, Occupation***

Sharni Radford	Moriarty - Community, Industry, Conservation - Farmer
Andrew Nichols	Sisters Creek - Industry, Conservation - Farmer, Fine Food Business, Commercial Forestry
Paul Smith	Burnie - Public Lands - Forest Manager Forestry Tasmania
Casey van Eysden	Ulverstone - Local Government, Public Lands - Chief Executive Officer Cradle Coast Water
Wendy Horniblow	Turners Beach - Community, Coastal, Conservation - Teacher, Coastcare
Steven Fleming	Gowrie Park - State Government, Public Lands - Manager Hydro Tasmania
Jenny Whiting (Deputy Chair)	Forth - Community, Conservation - Catchment Coordinator, Committee Member Tasmanian Landcare Association
Geoffrey Coles	Ulverstone - Public Lands, State Government - District Manager NW Parks & Wildlife Service
Brian Mansell	North Hobart - Aboriginal - Manager Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council
Geoff King	Marrawah - Conservation Industry - Farmer, Wildlife Tour Operator
David Henderson	Preston - Community, Conservation - University of Tasmania Lecturer/Tutor, Organic Farmer
Tess McNeill	Rosebery - Community, Industry, Conservation - Environmental Assistant Mining Industry, Laboratory Technician
Rick Rockliff (Chair)	Sassafras - Local Government, Industry, Community - Field Operations Manager, (Tas Alkaloids), Farmer, Deputy Mayor Latrobe
John Pauley	Hobart - State Government - General Manager, Food, Agriculture, & Fisheries, DPIWE
David Robertson	King Island - Industry, Community - Farmer, King Island NRM Group



# FORESTS IN DANGER

Tasmanian property owners are being urged to protect endangered forest communities on their land by joining the Private Forest Reserves Program.

The Private Forest Reserves Program (PFRP) is a voluntary scheme that targets forest communities not well represented in existing reserves such as national parks. Landowners who place a conservation covenant over their forest under the PFRP receive a financial consideration that is usually around one-third of the market value of the land. Several councils have implemented rate rebates as an added incentive.

“We’re thrilled with the partnerships we’ve developed with many landowners across the State,” said PFRP Manager, Dr Steve Smith, “but there are some forest communities where more work needs to be done”.

## **Communities in danger**

Two endangered communities that are a focus of the PFRP are wet white gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) and black gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*).

These communities are so endangered, that all that remains in the State requires protection. “We are not just talking about the forest trees, but all of the organisms that are found there - the plants, the animals, the birds, the invertebrates,” said Dr Smith. “Many of these communities are also home to threatened species”.

## **WHITE GUM**

Wet white gum forest is one of the most extensively cleared forest communities in the State. Of an estimated 78,000 hectares present in Tasmania prior to European settlement, less than 4000 ha remain. Of this, only 140 hectares is classified as old-growth forest. This highly endangered vegetation community occurs mainly along river systems in the North and North West of the State. It thrives on deep well-drained soils in areas of high rainfall.

An extensive study of the distribution and conservation status of *E.viminalis* wet forest released last year found that there is now only 1132 ha of wet white gum present on public land and 2233 ha on private land. “This was less than previously thought,” said Dr Smith. “The study also found that this forest community occurs mainly in scattered remnants, most of them less than 30 ha in size”. The scarcity of extensive patches of wet white gum added to the importance of a purchase of 404 ha of forest at Kimberley in the North West earlier this year. The PFRP bought two forested areas of the property *Armitstead*. Known locally as Shadyside and Cresswells, these areas were two of the largest remaining stands of wet white gum forest in the State. “But this forest community is so endangered that all of the remaining patches need to be reserved,” said Program Manager, Dr Steve Smith. “We can only do this with the cooperation



*Eucalyptus viminalis* - wet forest



of private landowners. Long-term conservation of this forest community can only be achieved by protecting what is left”.

Wet *E.viminalis* forest is recognised as important habitat for fauna such as the endangered grey goshawk and the wedge-tailed eagle which nests in forest on steep gullies. This forest community also tends to be associated with extensive karst systems where basalt overlays limestone.

### BLACK GUM

Another under-reserved forest community - black gum (*E.ovata*) - has been reduced to less than 3% of its original distribution in Tasmania. This endangered community is found primarily on the broad, wet flats in the central North, although it was once widespread in the Midlands. Some remnants can still be seen in the area around Tunbridge. Around 7200 ha of black gum forest is left in the State and almost all of it occurs on private land. Threatened species including the drooping sedge (*Carex longebrachiata*) and the south esk pine (*Callitris oblonga*) have been found in black gum forest. Black gums also occur alongside streams that are home to the endangered swan galaxias (*Galaxias fontanus*). This native freshwater fish prefers rocky streams that have abundant shelter from stream-side vegetation

“We want to stress to landowners that forested areas that contain these endangered communities do not have to be pristine wilderness and that small patches are still valuable for conservation purposes,” said Dr Smith.

**To find out more about the Private Forest Reserves Program call 1300 660 062 or visit the web-site at [www.pfrp.tas.gov.au](http://www.pfrp.tas.gov.au)**

*Dr Richard Barnes, Senior Conservation Officer  
Private Forest Reserves Program, DPIWE*



**Work with us to protect the State's endangered forest communities.**

**The Private Forest Reserve Program can provide management advice and financial incentives to participating landowners in your area.**

**Please contact us on 1300 660 062 or visit [www.pfrp.tas.gov.au](http://www.pfrp.tas.gov.au)**



*Eucalyptus ovata* - shrubby forest

# BEGINNING OF A NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS ON THE MERSEY RIVER

At Weegenah this month two landowners formally reserved their property on the Mersey River, the beginning of a new network of protected areas. The property is home to four rare species including the Nationally vulnerable South Esk Heath (*Epacris exserta*). The state listed rare Flat-leaf Southern Grevillea (*Grevillea australis* var. *planifolia*) is also found on the property.

The owners, Gary Warner and Anne Hillman reserved their property through the Protected Areas on Private Land program with a covenant under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*. This adds significantly to protected areas in Weegenah by adjoining a property covenanted earlier this year by John and Lynette Hayward. The Haywards' property also contains the rare South Esk Heath along with wet white gum forest, one of Tasmania's most threatened forest communities. Both covenants protect riparian vegetation, which is especially important for the protection of river banks from erosion and protection of water quality. Bushcare assisted both owners by providing reports and management advice for long term protection of the important natural values.

Both owners are keen to see others in the area contribute to the protection of the natural environment by formally reserving their properties, and nearby owners may also be interested in joining. Conservation covenants will ensure that any future owners also protect the area, as increasingly surrounding areas are being converted to plantations.

The Protected Areas on Private Land program is funded by the National Reserve System Program in joint partnership with the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, the Australian Bush Heritage Fund and the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment. The Conservation of Freshwater Ecosystem Values Project has also funded the program.

Joanne Edwards

Coordinator, Protected Areas on Private Land, DPIWE



Leigh Walters, Gary Warner and Anne Hillman



**The Protected Areas on Private Land program provides covenants for landowners with important natural values. Landowners interested in covenants should contact the Protected Areas on Private Land Program Coordinator Joanna Edwards on 6233 6210.**

**Contact can also be made to Leigh Walters, at the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association on 0409 004 228 or Jim Mulcahy at the Australian Bush Heritage Fund on 0419 365 532.**



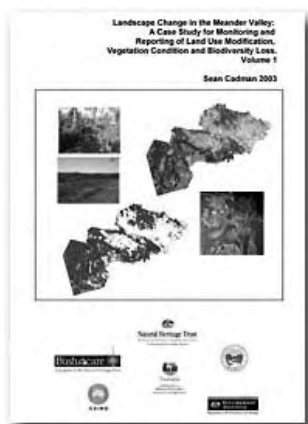
# Books, Reports and Web Sites

*I was recently asked to facilitate a biodiversity forum for the NW NRM Committee to identify some preliminary priority issues for Biodiversity Conservation within this region I was very heartened when monitoring and baseline condition was raised as a priority. This has been a personal bug bear for me for the last five years – how can we make progress if we don't actually know where we are coming from!*

*I have just completed work with Meander Valley Council, Environment Australia, CSIRO and DPIWE. Looking at these issues using Meander Valley as a case study. This work and a number of websites which contain information about the condition of Tasmania's Biodiversity are reviewed below.*

Sean Cadman

## ***“Landscape Change in the Meander Valley: A Case Study for Monitoring and Reporting of Land Use Modification, Vegetation Condition and Biodiversity Loss”***



Information about native vegetation loss in Tasmania and declining condition has been difficult to access and figures that have been reported have been widely divergent. The study sought to see whether a robust remote sensing (using satellite data) approach to determining native vegetation loss was possible. In order to do this some new approaches were tried and a range of different

vegetation data sets was reviewed. The report found that woody native vegetation loss could be accurately determined using the techniques described in the report. However it was not possible to separate out woody weeds like gorse or determine whether these weeds were present in understoreys. Most native vegetation has enough woody component that it is amenable to this approach however non-woody systems like native grassland will require a different approach. Critical to the success of the techniques were high quality data inputs and the establishment of trends. The study found that nearly 3000 ha of woody native vegetation was lost to plantations, agricultural clearing and urbanisation in Meander Valley between 1995 - 2000 and a further 1945 ha was cleared but allowed to regenerate back to native vegetation. Using a mapping approach it was also possible show that the distribution of the loss of native

vegetation is concentrated in lowland and highly productive parts of the landscape.

A very limited number of reports were printed but the report is available to download at

<http://www.ea.gov.au/land/nlwra/condition/meander/index.html>

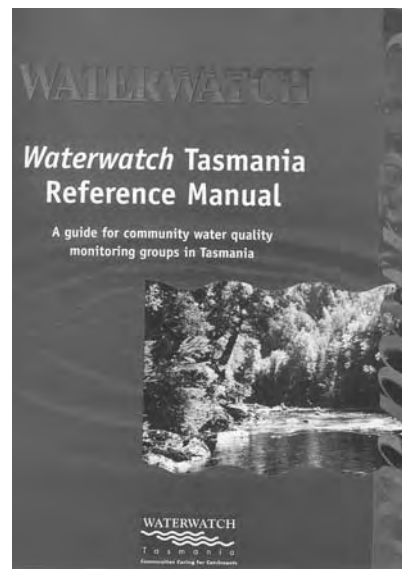
## ***“Australian Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment 2002 Case Study Tasmanian Northern Midlands”***

This publication forms part of a major assessment of the state of Australia's Biodiversity. Australia is broken up into bioregions. The Northern Midlands is one of these. This area is one of the areas in Australia identified as at the highest level of stress. The whole web site is worth checking out but the Northern Midlands report makes sober reading. The report is not based on spatial trends as is the Meander Valley case study but looks at the loss of species and ecosystems and the factors that are driving these declines.

[http://audit.ea.gov.au/ANRA/vegetation/docs/biodiversity/bio\\_assess\\_contents.cfm](http://audit.ea.gov.au/ANRA/vegetation/docs/biodiversity/bio_assess_contents.cfm)

[http://audit.ea.gov.au/ANRA/vegetation/docs/biodiversity/bio\\_assess\\_tasnormidlands.cfm](http://audit.ea.gov.au/ANRA/vegetation/docs/biodiversity/bio_assess_tasnormidlands.cfm)

## ***Waterwatch Tasmania Reference Manual***



Michael Cassidy Tasmania's highly respected State Waterwatch co-ordinator is retiring and leaving the program. The position is not being maintained. However Mike is leaving a great legacy behind which is this manual and the Waterwatch website. One of the keys to Waterwatch monitoring is the collection of information about the composition of

Macro-invertebrate populations. While the principal focus of the monitoring is water quality the biological information being collected tells us a great deal about the State of aquatic biodiversity in Tasmania. If you are already involved with Waterwatch monitoring then this reference manual will be invaluable if not then it will provide the basic tools for you to get a new group started!

Waterwatch has a great website

[www.tas.waterwatch.org.au](http://www.tas.waterwatch.org.au) and the 2003 manual can be downloaded at <http://www.tas.waterwatch.org.au/manuals.htm#Reference>

# Land for Wildlife

## Contacts

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## Land for Wildlife Program: Vision, Mission and Goals

### 1. Vision

- Land owners and land managers integrate the principles and practices of nature conservation into overall land management.

### 2. Mission

- Land for Wildlife encourages and facilitates voluntary nature conservation by:
- building on existing community networks;
  - sharing information and learning;
  - supporting and recognising land owners and managers; and
  - having nature conservation principles put into practice on unreserved land.

### 3. Goals

#### Long term and medium term

- Nature Conservation principles are applied and practices are integrated with overall land management.
- Land for Wildlife contributes to ecologically, economically and socially sustainable property management.
- Land for Wildlife contributes to a healthy and diverse ecosystem.
- Information is gathered and shared, learning about managing for nature conservation on unreserved land is facilitated.

#### Immediate

- Existing community networks are involved and expanded.
- There is broad community participation in Land for Wildlife.
- Adequate resources are provided to the Land for Wildlife program.
- Land owners and land managers are given support and their voluntary contributions to nature conservation on unreserved land are recognised.
- The numbers of land owners and land managers participating in Land for Wildlife increase.
- There are adequate distribution of and connections between native habitats managed for nature conservation to ensure viability of populations of native plants and animals.
- A comprehensive, integrated database of information is established, maintained and is accessible.

Source: *Land for Wildlife (Tasmania) Implementation Plan 1998*

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## Courses, Field Days & Events

August 18-25

Landcare Week

November 22

Birds Tasmania Northern Walks

Black Sugarloaf, Birrale

A 2km walk to Ron and Sarah's place. Meet at the letterboxes at the end of Denmans Road, 9.00am.

For more information contact:

Sarah Lloyd (03) 6396 1380 - Email: sarahlloyd@iprimus.com.au

Anne Booth (03) 6331 8342 - Email: annegbooth@yahoo.com.au

December 11

Birds Tasmania Northern Walks

George Town Mudflats

Meet at the Wader sign on the road to Low Head. (Meeting time will depend on the tides.)

For more information contact:

Sarah Lloyd (03) 6396 1380 - Email: sarahlloyd@iprimus.com.au

Anne Booth (03) 6331 8342 - Email: annegbooth@yahoo.com.au

Back issues (volumes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) of the Land for Wildlife News are now available. If you would like a copy of these early editions, please contact Sean Cadman at the address provided.



If undelivered return to:  
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