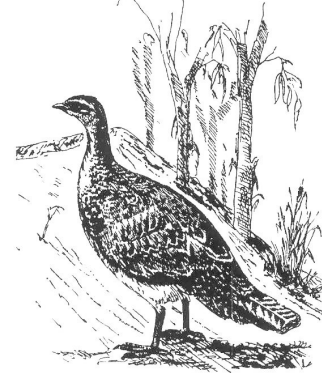




# Network News



Newsletter of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network – October 2009

Conserving Biodiversity

## Revegetation Works Complete – Wendy Murphy

Revegetation works on four properties in the Wedderburn area have been completed as part of the \$80 000 Caring for Our Country funding the Wedderburn CMN received last year. Close to 20km of direct seeding was done across the four properties after the sites were ripped and sprayed for weeds and red-legged earth mite. These revegetation sites create links between blocks of remnant vegetation and add area on to existing vegetation blocks. Each will provide food, shelter and protection for a wide range of bird species, reptiles and native mammals such as the Yellow-footed Antechinus.

## Fox Baiting Program – Wendy Murphy

Murray Tully, the acting Mid Loddon CMN Ranger, has picked up the Wedderburn CMN's fox baiting program. He is laying fox baits in the Wychitella NCR to continue on from where I left off in August. Parks Victoria are again looking to complement the Wedderburn CMN baiting by putting baits out in some of the other blocks of the Wychitella NCR in the coming months.

## Nature Notes for September / October - Wedderburn CMN "Observers"

So much is occurring in our natural environment during these spring months. The "Observers" have had a busy and most interesting time. The bright and varied colours of wildflowers are so visually stimulating. For example the hop bushes are spectacular at present ranging from vivid red through to orange and pale green. Lots of birds are nesting now and this is associated with quite a bit of defensive behaviour. We are well accustomed to magpies defending their young in the nest, but many birds can be equally as defensive towards other birds who venture near their nests. Wattle birds will chase away any other bird, large or small. It has been entertaining to watch the progress of construction of a white winged chough's nest.



Hop Bush - photo Annette Robertson

Over a few weeks a noisy team of workers have almost completed the project. The nest is made from mud and it appears that even though many birds contribute the nesting material, there is a foreman who supervises the construction. Masses of flowers have been observed on bull mallee trees and white gums. Small groups of lorikeets are in the area feeding on the flower nectar. **Cockatiels** have also been seen in several locations. After the hot and then rainy weather large flocks of wood swallows appeared, catching insects on the wing. The observers have been visiting other areas too. **Wyperfeld National Park** currently has masses of wildflowers (who needs to go to Western Australia)? An informative day was attended at the Trust for Nature **Kinipanyial Grassland** site – also lots of wildflowers, and an important example of the biodiversity of the region. At the **Friends of Kooryoora** Wildflower show the "observers" had a great opportunity to learn a lot more about our local flora. The Wedderburn Conservation Management Network bus trip was well attended and provided the community with an opportunity to view many of the WCMN work sites. Keep looking at your natural environment – following the rains, the wildflowers in our local area have really put on a spectacular show.

## Friends of Kooyoora Wildflower Show - Wendy Murphy

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> Sept and Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Sept the Wedderburn CMN were involved with having an information display at the Friends of Kooyoora Wildflower Show at Rheola. The Friends of Kooyoora must be congratulated on running such an informative and innovative event and thank-you to the Wedderburn CMN volunteers who manned the display. The Wedderburn CMN certainly appreciates being allowed to have a display at the Show to promote our group and show the wider community what we are about and the wide range of conservation works we do. On the Sunday I took 17 enthusiastic people on a bus tour of some of the Wedderburn CMN's work sites including past and present revegetation sites, a kangaroo exclosure plot and an ecological thinning trial. There was a lot of interest in what was happening and much discussion generated amongst the group as to why works were being done and what the outcomes would be. Thank-you must go to Suzie from Parks Victoria for her input and also to Howard for the use of his bus.



Busstrippers being shown an exclosure plot

## Bird camp – Doug Pocock

Recently the Bird Observation and Conservation Australia Club (BOCA) held a five day camp on a property in Old Boort Rd. This property is one which has had revegetation work carried out by the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network. The camp was a huge success with 103 species of birds seen, 68 species were seen on the block alone. Trips were made to Skinners Flat, Mount Egbert, Old Boort Rd Gravel Pit, and Korong Vale reservoir. Some of the more unusual birds seen were Black, Tawny-Crowned and Black Chinned Honeyeaters, Budgerigars, Cockatiels and Blue Winged Parrots, Zebra Finches, Hooded Robins and Mallee Fowl. There were large numbers of Rufous Songlarks and Brown Treecreepers noted. Also seen on the property were Sugar Gliders. It was noted that many birds were making use of the Wedderburn CMN revegetated areas for feeding and shelter, a great triumph for the group. Apart from shopping in Wedderburn, the coffee shop was patronised and 30 members enjoyed dinner at the hotel on Monday night. Some members hired cabins at the camping ground whilst others (though camped at Old Boort Rd) were glad to be able to use the showers for a fee. This sort of camp makes a welcome financial contribution to the town and is also a great stimulus for eco-tourism in the area.



Hooded Robin - Annette Robinson

## Native Orchid Talk – Wendy Murphy

On October 5<sup>th</sup> the Wedderburn CMN were lucky enough to have Geoff Neville from DSE Bendigo come and talk to a small group about the native orchids of the Wedderburn and surrounding areas. Numbers were a little disappointing for someone with such knowledge as Geoff presenting, but I'm sure those who were there found the talk very informative and learned something from it. Geoff introduced us to the 12 native orchids which have received funding for him to carry out conservation works on and where each could be found, some of the conservation works that were happening for the orchids and perhaps most interesting of all, the works being done on trying to



Purplish Beard Orchid - Photo Lynton Schriever

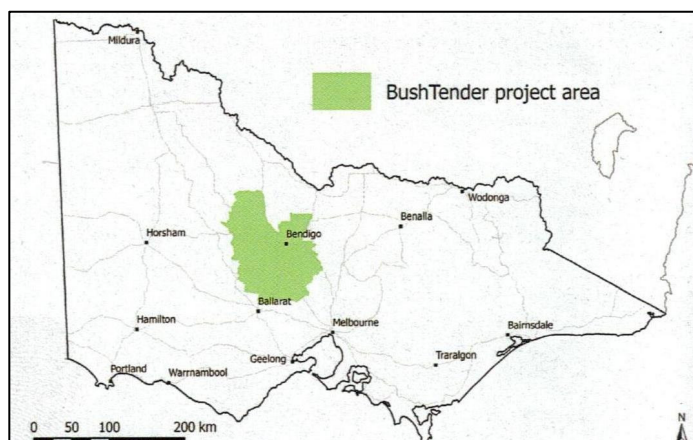
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discover and learn more about the pollinators for each orchid species. Thanks to Geoff for giving up his evening during a very busy time of the year for his work and thanks also to Dave & Deanna from the Wedderburn Milk Bar who provided the group with a beautiful array of sandwiches, slices and fruit platters.

## **Bush Tender Programme** - Summary of a publication by DSE – Michael Moore

The Bush Tender programme is a programme designed to protect and enhance native vegetation by paying for landholder services that better manage native vegetation on private land. This scheme has proved very successful in various parts of Victoria and has been extended to include the area shown in the map given. Approximately \$1 million dollars is available for landholder payments across this Bush Tender bidding round in the project area. The scheme provides the opportunity for landholders to generate alternative income and benefit the environment at the same time. Landholders who have native vegetation on their land can nominate their own price in a competitive tender in return for providing services to protect such vegetation. Services can include such things as fencing off remnant vegetation, controlling of pest species threatening the wellbeing of native vegetation and the planting of native understory. Bids submitted for payment for services will be judged upon the basis of best value for money in environmental terms i.e. the lowest bids may not always be successful. More information on this environmentally valuable programme can be obtained by contacting the Department of Sustainability and Environment – ph 136186



## **Landscape Connectivity Talk** - Michael Moore

There has been much attention on habitat fragmentation and the need to 're-connect landscapes' if we are going to conserve biodiversity. This topic of remedying fragmentation of habitat has been at the heart of many of the actions carried out by the Wedderburn CMN over the last six years of its existence and is also of concern to the members of the newly formed Loddon Plains Landcare Network. It seemed appropriate then to invite Dr Jim Radford, of Deakin University and Bush Heritage Australia, an acknowledged expert in this field to give a talk on the subject. The talk, held at Serpentine Bowls club, was attended by members of various landcare groups and members of the Wedderburn CMN.

The talk focused on landscape connectivity, and aimed to stimulate discussion on some key questions such as: What is landscape connectivity and why is it important? How can we increase connectivity at the large spatial scale?

Dr Radford provided much insight into possible answers to questions such as these and others raised by members of the audience. Significant comments included - more emphasis needs to be placed on restoring resilient ecosystems - improving ecosystems may take many forms including revegetation - concentration should be upon building and connecting habitats – we should conserve and enhance what we already have. The talk also highlighted the danger of efforts which only added vegetation to the environment without adequate thought for actual habitat building. This was an educational experience.

## **Visitor from Malleefowl Preservation Group WA** – Michael Moore

On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October members of the Wedderburn CMN attended an informative presentation on the work of the Malleefowl Preservation Group based in Ongerup WA. Susanne Dennings who is the group's environmental projects coordinator shared her group's experiences in their efforts to conserve malleefowl in that part of the country. We were informed that this grass roots group which prides itself on getting things done boasts a membership of over six hundred with the majority being farmers. There are however



members from many other walks of life. The group have participated in a number of activities akin to those carried out by the Wedderburn CMN such as fencing off of native vegetation, the creation of wildlife corridors, fox baiting to reduce predation by foxes and monitoring of malleefowl mounds. The group has developed a novel means of surveying areas of bush for malleefowl mounds which involves up to twenty five people in a line moving through the bush in a coordinated fashion. The group has surveyed large tracts of bush using this *human chain* method. Raising public awareness has been achieved by means of displays and activities at their community owned environmental centre, which has proved to be a great tourist attraction, and a primary school education programme which has to date involved over one hundred schools in WA. It has been decided that both groups will at least maintain contact in the future through exchange of information and ideas via websites and newsletters. The possibility of exchange of personnel was also discussed. The fine results achieved by this group in conservation of malleefowl is attributable to the tremendous work done by a concerned, committed and enthusiastic community.

## WCMN “Observer” attends Box Ironbark Ecology Course - Annette Robertson

In early October I attended this intensive five day course at Nagambie. A considerable amount of valuable and most interesting information was provided by presenters, who willingly shared their extensive knowledge and experience in their field of expertise. The majority of sessions were held in the field which was a most effective learning environment. The introductory sessions covered the broader aspects of geology, soils, flora and fauna of the box ironbark area.



Participants were provided with an opportunity to move through elective areas of interest and learn further skills such as soil sampling, vegetation assessment, fauna habitat assessment and invertebrate sampling. Participants were encouraged to identify and understand natural

patterns in the landscapes of different Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) – Creek line, Grassy Woodland, Box Ironbark Forest, Heathy Dry Woodland, Hillcrest/Granitic Hills and herb-rich woodlands. Opportunities were also provided to consider the impacts of human intervention over time, such as extensive mining that has occurred, and the management of ecological burning in forest areas. Having completed the course I have gained valuable knowledge relevant to observing and recording the biodiversity of our area. I am looking forward to putting all this new found knowledge into practice.

### 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

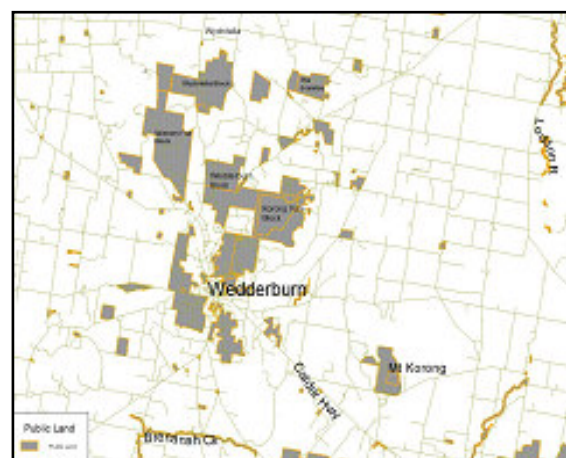
**WCMN ranger, Wendy Murphy - 0438384053**

**WCMN Secretary, Michael Moore – 54943542**

**Website addresses**

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

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



The WCMN Area of Interest