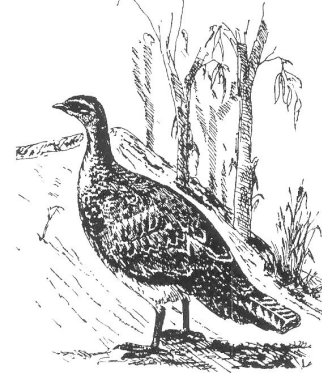




# Network News



Newsletter of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network – December 2009

## Conserving Biodiversity

### WCMN Members Visit Little Desert Nature Lodge

We arrived at the Lodge not long before the evening meal was served. The night spotlight tour was postponed to allow us to rest after the long journey of the day. But did we rest? No. We held a committee meeting to review all the activities of the WCMN during 2009. The activities were examined in such detail that we had to reschedule the planning session for 2010 until the following day.

On Friday we headed off on a four wheel drive tour of the Little Desert Park. The vehicle was a 1960's Series 1 Land rover which evoked nostalgia for some of our group, and wonder for others. Our guide, Ken did a sterling job of pointing out interesting vegetation and provided plenty of historical information relevant to the park, all the time while negotiating the sandy and sometimes rocky tracks. Our tour covered a surprising variety of soil, geology and vegetation types and gave us a good picture of the diversity of landforms. Areas that had been burnt in recent years gave us a view of regeneration after fire. We were able to examine numerous plants and flowers that are unique to the area. Bird identification was a little hampered by lack of opportunities to stop and spend time looking for them.



Some of the members of WCMN at the little Desert Lodge



Having a break in the desert - photo Annette Robertson

The afternoon was devoted to a WCMN planning meeting. It was a productive time that has identified a diverse calendar of activities for WCMN over the next 12 Months.

That evening we waited until the tremendous thunderstorm and heavy rain had abated before walking to the Mallee Fowl enclosure for the evening spotlight tour with Mark as our guide. We viewed bettongs, bandicoots, sugar gliders, and two bush stone curlews. It began to rain just as we moved in to the covered viewing platform where we saw a Malleefowl perched high up in a tree. The rain abated long enough for us to return back to the lodge before more entertainment with heavy rain

and power failures.

Saturday morning we returned to the Malleefowl aviary to view the Curlews in daylight as well as study the malleefowl in two areas with active mounds. Mark provided us with a most informative talk on the habits of the mallee fowl, and the history and activity of the birds we could see.

The visit to Little Desert Lodge was a most worthwhile experience, with opportunities to learn much about flora and fauna of the area and the unique history of Whimpey Reichalts involvement with Malleefowl conservation over the years. We were able to increase our knowledge and understanding of malleefowl in particular, which will be valuable for our ongoing involvement with this species in the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network.

Article and photographs by Annette Robertson

## The LPLN meeting of the 20th November - cruise, views and bbq's at the Serpentine Creek

The latest meeting of the Loddon Plains Landcare Network was held at the property of Stephen and Sally Maxted on the Serpentine Creek, Durham Ox, 20th of November. Thirty people braved the uncertain afternoon weather to attend an event which was designed to be a brief meeting followed by a get to know one another bbq and cruise on the Serpentine Creek.

The assembled company consisted of representatives from various Landcare groups, Friends of Kooyoorra and the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network (WCMN). Among the members present were

such veteran Landcare identities as Andy Hay from Kamarooka Landcare and NUFG, Bill Twigg from East Loddon Landcare and Jill MacFarlane a founder member of the WCMN. Matching up to all of these prodigious champions of the environment was four year old Noah Condcliffe, a member of the Salisbury West Junior Landcare group. It was also encouraging to see Christine Brooke of Loddon Vale Landcare group, not in her Mayoral role but among all others registering, by their presence, a concern and commitment to changing our environment for the better.

An efficiently conducted meeting chaired by Mal Brown of the Northern United Forestry Group began with the introduction of the recently elected executive of the network namely:

Mal Brown - Chair - Northern United Forestry Group (NUFG)

Penny Wall - Deputy Chair - North Central Landcare Group and NUFG

Michael Moore - Secretary - Wedderburn Conservation Management Network

Jean McClymont - Treasurer - Salisbury West Landcare Group

This done, various agenda items were discussed as follows:

- Voting rights for the network
- Network Membership Fees
- Draft Mission Statement
- Landcare Assets.
- Design of the LPLN Logo
- Setting up a blogspot/website
- The possible use of funds

The meeting declared closed, all assembled fell to enjoying the rest of the evening which consisted of a fine bbq meal presented in beautiful surroundings, much interesting conversation and a scenic cruise on the creek. Views on the creek were impressive, all with their own charm as light passed from dusk to dark.

Many thanks went to organizers of the evening especially Mal Brown and Laurie, Jo, Stephen and Sally Maxted.

Article by Michael Moore, photographs: upper - Phil Dyson, lower - Mal Brown

### Wedderburn CMN the Recipient of a CVGT Grant

The WCMN recently received a CVGT grant for \$750 to help in the purchase of a clipole display system. The display system will be used to exhibit the group's increasing collection of photographs, maps, newsletters and informational pamphlets. Peter Morison, WCMN facilitator, accepted the grant from Mrs Ann Jones, chairperson of the board of directors at a ceremony held on the 20<sup>th</sup> November at Long Gully. Many thanks go to Wendy Murphy for her efforts in securing the grant.



### **Film Footage of Nationally Endangered Malleefowl Obtained**

Peter Watts has been monitoring malleefowl activity for a number of years in the Wychitella area. His patience and efforts were rewarded on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November this year when the camouflaged camera setup that he had rigged up near an active malleefowl mound recorded the activity of a breeding pair of these rare and endangered birds. The particular mound that these birds were using had not been active for approximately twelve to fifteen years according to Peter's records. Peter's three separate pieces of film, totalling approximately forty minutes, showed the breeding pair preparing the mound (mainly the male) for egg laying, the female inspecting the laying site and laying an egg and finally the male covering up the mound. This behaviour has been seen with birds in captive breeding programmes but never in the wild in this area. The incubation time for the egg is approximately fifty days and Peter would love to capture the moment when the chick emerges from the earth after digging its way out, fingers crossed. A new surveillance camera purchased by the WCMN has been undergoing testing before being set up on another active mound monitored by Peter. A total of four breeding pairs have been located in the WCMN's area of interest.

Article by Peter Watts and Michael Moore



### **Introducing the WCMN's Temporary Replacement Ranger**

Hi All, my name is Murray Tully, I live at Huntly next to the Greater Bendigo National Park with my partner Gen and two children, Eve 6yrs and Izak 5yrs. We have 23 acres of ex farm land that I am slowly revegetating with seedlings grown from seed I have collected locally.

When Graeme Tennant the Mid Loddon CMN ranger had a very unfortunate accident with a chainsaw severing the tendons on the back of his left hand and while he is rehabilitating from this accident I have been temporarily taking his place. With Wendy Murphy having her baby (Congrats Wendy) I now find myself temporarily looking after some of her projects as well.

In 2006 I enrolled at BRIT in the Diploma of Conservation & Land Management for two years where I participated in such things as:

- Flora and Fauna Surveys including Malleefowl mound surveys
- Sustainable water management including catchment management, water monitoring of the Bendigo lakes and the writing of a management plan for the Bendigo Creek
- Best practice NRM management including writing and implementing plans for revegetation, pest flora and fauna and protection of threatened species
- Pest flora and fauna management including practical techniques for integrated pest control

I was a founding member of the newly formed Northern Bendigo Landcare Group where I have enjoyed the positions of Project Officer and currently that of President of the group.

### **WCMN Members Visit Seeding Victoria Inc**

On a devious route to the Little Desert Lodge members of the WCMN paid a visit to the Ballarat Region Seed Bank at Creswick, now named Seeding Victoria. Upon arrival we were invited in for a cuppa and a general chat about the valuable work that goes on at this facility. We were informed of the business' fifteen years of experience in the seed industry and its consistently demonstrated ability to deliver appropriately sourced indigenous seed for revegetation work throughout most of Victoria. Selecting seed with respect to the appropriate provenance (place of origin), genetic variability and



viability of germination is a vital part of the success of the facility and the projects that rely on their seeds. Once finished with the general chat we were then shown along to that part of the facility that deals with testing the seeds for viability of germination and storage of the final product. We spent a good half hour observing the process and obtaining answers to the many questions asked by members. A short visit to the cold room revealed the thousands of seeds being stored there ready for use at suitable times of the year – there were even wattle seeds from Wychitella, just around the corner from Wedderburn. The revegetation projects run by WCMN have made extensive use of seed from Seeding Victoria and will continue to do so.  
 Article by Michael Moore

### Nature Notes for November / December 2009

The weather over the past month has influenced local nature. The very hot weather brought on massive numbers of hoverflies and blowflies, then after some rain, termites took the opportunity to increase the size and height of their mounds. On a damp morning the observers noticed a very strong smell of liquorice in the bush. This unusual odour came from the flowering broom honey myrtle. This year the sweet bursaria is also flowering strongly and has a beautiful smell. You may notice it flowering on many roadsides, a spindly and very spiny bush, with small delicate creamy, very perfumed flowers. The yellow gum trees are flowering too and it is possible to catch the smell of honey from them.



Masses of snowy white flowers can also be seen on Heath Tea Tree and delicate mauve bottle brush flowers are known as Totem –poles. Many plants and grasses have finished flowering during spring and are now producing seed. This in turn has led to increasing numbers of seed eating birds seen. WCMN observers have recorded observations of the endangered Northern Golden moth orchid in a previously unknown location. Their identity has been confirmed by DSE and is an important addition to known locations of this rare orchid. Even during the hot weather, Orchids continue to bloom. In this area slender onion orchids have been quite abundant. The soft chirping sounds that have filled the sky for an unusually long time belongs to large flocks of wood swallows. They are currently nesting and white browed wood swallows have been observed feeding young in a nest located in the precarious broken end of a tree branch. A newly refurbished and very large stick nest noted in the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve has been identified as the nest of a pair of little eagles. A stimulating month, there is always something interesting to observe.  
 Wedderburn Conservation Management Network “Observers”

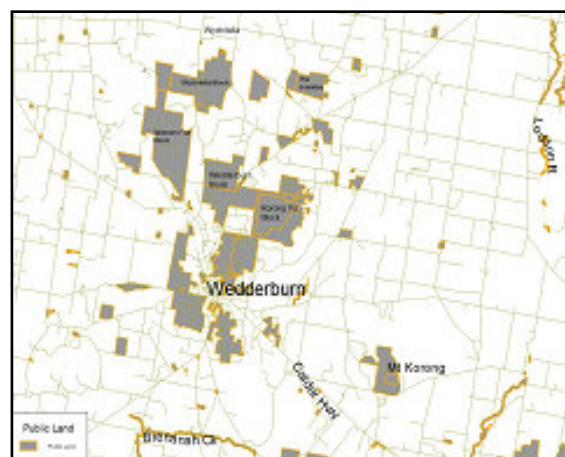
### What is the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network?

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  
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**WCMN Secretary, 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