

Conservation

BULLETIN

BUSHFIRE FOCUS
Green shoots on fire-affected properties

How private land can help species adapt to climate change

Live away from a covenanted property?

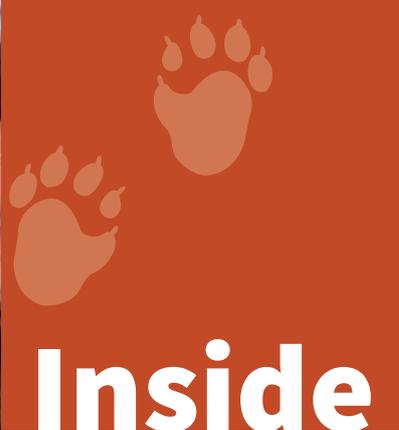
What you need to know





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TRUST FOR NATURE

Habitat forever

Trust for Nature (Victoria) is a not-for-profit organisation that works with private landholders to protect native plants and animals. Two-thirds of Victoria is freehold, making the protection of habitat vital in preventing extinction. We work with landholders to place voluntary conservation covenants on properties and buy and sell land which has conservation values through our Revolving Fund.

Patron: The Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria.

Trustees: Gayle Austen (Chair), Nina Braid, Dr Sandra Brizga, Geoff Driver, Binda Gokhale, Dr Dominique Hes, Matthew Kronborg, Dr Charles Meredith, Nadine Ponomarenko, Jennifer Wolcott.

Recognition of Traditional Owners: Trust for Nature recognises the continuing spiritual and cultural connection of Traditional Owners to Victoria's land, wildlife, freshwater and saltwater environments. The Trust is committed to helping Traditional Owners conserve, restore where possible and protect natural environments, wildlife and cultural heritage values.

Front cover: Landholder Stephen Hill, whose covenanted property in Corryong was badly affected by the 2019-20 bushfires.

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“Despite the challenges, support for private land conservation remained unwavering and we are proud to have added 30 new conservation covenants in 2019-20.”

Stories of resilience and hope

Welcome to 2021 and our 73rd Conservation Bulletin where we share the happenings in the private land conservation space over the last six months.

It’s been a challenging 12 months bookended by bushfires and a global pandemic. Despite this, we are delighted to share stories of resilience and hope in the people we work with and our environment.

The 2019-20 summer bushfires directly impacted 46 landholders with conservation covenants. Since those dark days, there are growing signs of recovery as nature takes its course. This tragedy brought the important role of privately protected areas as refuges into sharp focus and we thank those landholders even more for their ongoing commitment. In some good news for 2021, we are optimistic about a significant grant application which will augment the practical advice and support we can provide to landholders in fire-affected regions over the next two years. See page four for more.

As restrictions eased, our team took the opportunity to visit properties and we thank landholders for their understanding.

The numerous volunteers who manage some of Trust for Nature’s reserves have been able to be back on site. The volunteer Committees of Management and Friends groups are a crucial part of keeping reserves healthy and I commend them for their patience. Volunteer committees play a big role in some of the properties you can visit which are profiled on page 28.

We continued to keep inspiring each other through online forums. Hundreds tuned in for our webinars on innovation in land conservation, cultural burning and threatened species and a Kids for Nature webinar which was a highlight.

Our 10th annual Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast, run virtually in collaboration with Bush Heritage Australia, was also wonderful, featuring Bidjara woman and cattle station manager Keelen Mailman OAM, lawyer Melia Benn, a descendent of the Mamu and Gunggandii peoples, and Melbourne chef Elizabeth Chong AM.

Despite the challenges, support for private land conservation remained unwavering and we are proud to have added 30 new conservation covenants in 2019-20 – that’s over 1,770 extra hectares protected forever. I thank our generous supporters including the Victorian and Australian governments for enabling the Trust’s contributions to the bigger picture of Victoria’s biodiversity. See our achievements illustrated on page 27.

We are always deeply humbled by the generosity of those who put Trust for Nature in their will. A bequest by David Wakefield and Laurie Macmillan of their beloved property in Strath Creek is one recent example. David and Laurie spent their lives caring about and conserving the natural world and the passionate conservationists will continue to make a difference through this legacy.

I remain inspired by the commitment and support for conservation and hope you enjoy this issue. Stay safe and I wish you all a positive year ahead.

Sincerely

Victoria Marles
CEO, Trust for Nature



BUSHFIRE FOCUS

Rising from the ashes

Across the blackened landscape, bursts of colour appeared as spring brought the emergence of orchids, lilies and other wildflowers - signs of hope following the devastating 2019-20 summer bushfires.

Forty-six properties with conservation covenants, covering 1,400 ha of native vegetation, were burnt in the 2019-20 summer.

East Gippsland and North East teams have worked closely together to offer landholders support and practical help wherever possible, in surveying the ecological damage, understanding what needed to be prioritised post fire and commencing on-ground works. This has been crucial to the success of our significant efforts to secure post-fire recovery grants from the Victorian and Australian Governments, which will continue to roll out over the next two years. We expect to be in a position to provide further support to fire-

affected covenantors over the next two years and are planning field days, webinars, landholder visits and some priority on-ground works including weed control and nest box installation across the North East and East Gippsland.

Although many of our property visits and on ground works in 2020 were delayed by COVID-19 restrictions, to date, for fire-affected covenants, the management priority has been weed and deer control.

“Within recently burnt areas, there is often a higher prevalence of weed species due to the lack of competition and many weed species being early colonisers. Over time, with appropriate management and the natural return of native species, these weed species can be managed” said North East Conservation Officer Shae Brennan.

In East Gippsland, weed and deer control was undertaken supported by the Victorian Government. Weed works were undertaken over 13 properties covering 315 ha. Pest control has also been a focus, undertaking deer management that equates to removing deer impacts on over 4,380 ha of the surrounding area. We hope this program will expand onto other priority covenanted properties over the next six months aided by additional government funding.

Making a fresh start

Stephen Hill started 2020 undertaking fire protection works on his property ahead of a fast-moving bushfire. Conversely, he welcomed in 2021 with the soothing sound of rain falling on his tin roof.

Stephen’s sheep grazing property near Corryong in Victoria’s North East includes 88 ha of remnant vegetation he protected through a Trust for Nature conservation covenant in 2006. One hundred per cent of the covenant was severely burnt in the fires. “It looked bloody devastating... everything burnt,” said Stephen.

One year on, life is moving forward, and the landscape is starting to reflect this evidenced by green, healthy pastures and epicormic shoots on the eucalyptus trees. Over time and with assistance from the Trust, this healing will continue.

“I am very appreciative of the deer control organised by the Trust, the deer seem to have gone and it is giving the plants recovering from the fire a chance to grow,” said covenantor Max James.

2020 was a tough year for all Victorians, but perhaps hardest for those doubly impacted by the Black Summer fires also. We will never forget the devastation the fires caused, and we look forward to being able to scale up our landholder support in 2021.

Pictured: Green has returned to blackened hillsides, inset: Orchids are among the wildflowers that bloomed after the fires.

Wildlife haven regenerated and protected forever

Wombat Gully is a wonderland for wildlife. In fact, the 25 ha parcel of land Jane and Trevor Young bought in Heathcote Junction, on Taungurung Country, comprises mostly Herb-rich Foothill Forest, and is home to plenty of native animals —particularly wombats, which are Jane’s passion.

Jane said, “The property used to be a release site for wombats from Healesville Sanctuary and when my husband and I bought it they were just everywhere. There had been no clearing and no chemicals used on the property, hence there are abundant native grasses, and also there is a clay soil gully they built their homes in so it was perfect for them.”

But the marsupials weren’t the only thing that attracted Jane and Trevor to the property 35 years ago. “The fact that there was 15 ha of remnant forest on the property was the crown jewel for us. We fenced it off immediately. We wanted to protect it.”

Sadly, when the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires severely impacted the property, Jane’s much-adored marsupials were devastated. Jane and Trevor found and rescued one baby wombat, which lived with them for two years. Then, when its habitat began to slowly regenerate, it returned home to the forest.

While Jane and Trevor had been protecting the property for more than 30 years, after the fires they wanted to be sure the important habitat could return to the wildlife haven it once was—and remain that way.

“We can’t protect the forest from nature but we can protect it from humans,” Jane said. “When we found out about Trust for Nature and conservation covenants it was so wonderful to know we could protect this amazing range of flora and fauna forever.”

A conservation covenant of 15.31 ha now ensures the habitat on the property is safe.

Trust for Nature Conservation Officer Shae Brennan said that land affected by bushfires is vitally important to protect. She said, “Areas that are regenerating following a fire are in a vulnerable state, which increases their need for protection.”

For information about projects in the north east region contact our Conservation Officer Shae Brennan on (03) 8631 5888 or shaeb@tfn.org.au

Funding is available to protect this property as a result of the Victorian Government’s Sustainability Fund which supports projects, programs, services or technologies that will benefit Victoria environmentally, socially and economically.

Pictured: Jane and Trevor Young’s property, which they protected with a covenant after the Black Saturday fires.





Conservation value a happy surprise

Until recently, Greg Hughes didn't know he owned valuable conservation land. The 152 ha property near Chiltern was passed down from his grandfather, to his father and uncle, and then to Greg.

"My grandfather ran sheep on the property and some of it was cleared," Greg explains. "When I inherited it I had no idea it was important for conservation. I don't live there so it was just vacant."

The property contains Grassy Dry Forest, Heathy Dry Forest, Granitic Hills Woodland and Valley Grassy Forest. The endangered Barking Owl, the endangered Lace Monitor and the rare wattle species Currawang have all been recorded on site.

Upon being contacted by Trust for Nature about a conservation covenant, Greg was only too happy to help. He said, "There's a lot of natural bush on the block. I thought it would be good to keep."

The covenant, which will cover the whole property excluding a small residential area, is important not just because of the species that call it home.

"Greg's property is one of the largest bush blocks in the Chiltern area," said North East Regional Manager Will Ford. "I applaud his ethos of land stewardship and his foresight in ensuring the conservation values of his land are protected in perpetuity."

The covenant, as well as on-ground work such as weed control and ecological thinning, is supported through the Victorian Government's Biodiversity Response Planning program and the Bush for Birds project, funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Will said the leverage gained from multiple projects was key to ensuring the site could be protected and managed.

"It goes to show how supporting the process of site identification, landholder engagement, covenant administration and active management can pay dividends in protecting high conservation value native vegetation on private land," he said.

Greg said it feels fantastic to be making a difference by protecting his land forever. "You see the amount of clearing people are doing and all that natural bush is lost. The property I've got is more or less as it was a few hundred years ago so it's good to keep it that way."

For information about projects in the north east contact our Regional Manager Will Ford on (03) 8631 5888 or willf@tfn.org.au

Pictured: Endangered Lace Monitors are one of the threatened species found on Greg Hughes's covenant.

Fire-impacted land protected forever

An ecologically significant area of land in far East Gippsland, which was severely impacted by last summer's fires, has now been permanently protected thanks to a new conservation covenant through Trust for Nature.

Virginia and Rob Fitzclarenc recently covenanted 146 ha of their 208 ha property, which is home to endangered and threatened plants and animals such as the Long-nosed Potoroo, Glossy Black-Cockatoos and Coast Grey-box. The area contains a range of depleted forest types and also borders part of the Genoa River.

Virginia and Rob, who bought the property in 2005, already planned to place a conservation covenant on part of their land before the fires.

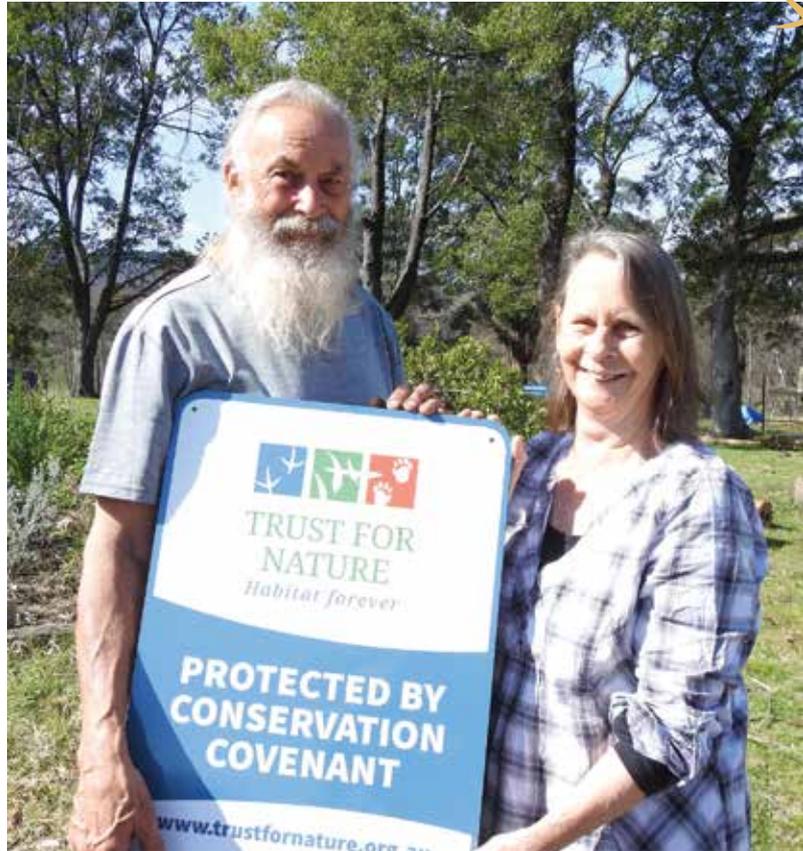
“Over time we've seen more and more destruction of the planet, so we decided we have to look after it ourselves,” Virginia said.

Then, when the tragedy of the 2019-20 bushfires struck, the couple knew protecting this precious habitat was more important than ever.

“The fires really reaffirmed the importance of looking after what we have,” Virginia said.

Many of the large, old Coast Grey-box trees were burnt and lost. However, some still remain and regeneration and recovery of the understory is progressing slowly.

“The covenant is a wonderful opportunity to protect what's left of an old forest,” Virginia said. “We encourage more people to take out a covenant to protect more wonderful places.”



The new covenant was secured through Trust for Nature's Iconic Estates Eastern Forests project, which works with landholders in East Gippsland to protect a range of forest types with conservation covenants, giving the habitat of native animals long-term security. The three-year project has protected more than 250 ha of land so far.

Robyn Edwards, Trust for Nature's Gippsland Area Manager, said the covenanted property is very diverse and rich, with a high number of threatened species, and provides an important link between state forest and the Genoa River.

“Due to the fires this land is in a vulnerable state for the next few years,” Robyn said. “Having a

covenant on the property means more protection for plants and animals while the slow recovery process takes place.”

This Iconic Estates Eastern Forests project has been funded by the Victorian Government's Biodiversity Response Planning program and is helping to ensure that Victoria's natural environment is healthy, valued and actively cared for.

For more information about projects in the East Gippsland region contact our Area Manager Robyn Edwards on (03) 8631 5888 or robbyne@tfn.org.au

Pictured: Rob and Virginia Fitzclarenc on their 146 ha covenant near the Genoa River.



Neds Corner Station in full bloom

After five years of low rainfall, dust storms and drought, good rainfall over winter and spring has seen Neds Corner Station, on Ngintait Country, come to life.

With low rabbit numbers and reduced herbivore pressure, native plants are flourishing. Some of the special plants like the endangered Slender Sunray and vulnerable Kneed Swainson-pea are in large numbers across the property. The cover of native grasses this year is much higher than has previously been seen, providing important food for insects and birds and protecting the structure of the soil.

It is not since big rains in 2010-11 that small flocks of budgies and cockatiels have been seen flying around. There are also large numbers of button-quail and Inland Dotterels around and the Australian Bustards, which are critically endangered in Victoria, returned for another visit. Station manager Peter Barnes said it's clear the rainfall has had a hugely positive effect: "Everything is breeding and taking advantage of the good season."

The rain has also benefited direct seeding undertaken as part of the 'Protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the Murray Scroll Belt' project, funded with the support of the Victorian

Government. In April 2020, 400 km of native trees and shrubs were direct seeded and with the recent La Niña rain they have germinated.

Peter said, "We are really hoping these good rains will continue as they will provide the optimum growing conditions for these seedlings to survive and continue to mature."

Working for Victoria crews have also been on the ground at Neds Corner helping with vital conservation work on the reserve.

At 30,000 ha, Neds Corner Station is Victoria's largest private conservation reserve. Our flagship Trust for Nature reserve provides important habitat for native plants and wildlife often not seen in other parts of Victoria.

It's thanks to the generosity of supporters that Neds Corner Station is going from strength to strength.

If you want to support its continued restoration go to trustfornature.org.au

For more information about Neds Corner Station contact Manager Peter Barnes on (03) 8631 5888 or peterb@tfn.org.au



Working for Victoria is a Victorian Government initiative connecting jobseekers with employers.

Pictured top: Slender Sunray, inset: Rough Spear-grass providing great ground cover, and above: The thrill of seeing new life. Peter Barnes side by side with a germinated seed.



Collaboration leads to ‘cool burning’ success

Traditional Owners, firefighters, vegetation management officers and other stakeholders have come together to preserve culturally important traditions, habitat and threatened species in West Wimmera.

A partnership between Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Trust for Nature, CFA, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Greening Australia, Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, and Bank Australia, has resulted in a successful ‘cool burn’, which was led by the Wotjobaluk Nation at Minimay in July 2020.

Before the burns, Traditional Owners conducted a number of cultural heritage surveys on the 598-ha [Bank Australia Conservation Reserve at Minimay](#), protected under a conservation covenant. The reserve is home to culturally significant trees and many threatened species, including 13 threatened animal species, and 11 threatened plant species. These surveys, which found a variety of important cultural features including multiple scar trees, and a women’s only

area, were then used to inform the first of the planned traditional burns in the area.

While fire agencies conduct planned burns to reduce risks across the landscape, Aboriginal fire practice or cool burning uses low fire intensity with minimal flame heights that heals country (right fire for country), removes harbour for introduced species and improves diversity of native flora and fauna.

“Although the areas treated so far are small there are early signs the burn has had a dramatic and positive impact on the land,” said Trust for Nature South West Area Manager Adam Blake. “The reduction of exotic biomass encourages the perennial natives to seed and recruit, improving and increasing habitat for threatened ground-foraging bird species, such as the Diamond Firetail.”

Adam said the results of formal monitoring will inform future burns, which will likely be small, more frequent and conducted during winter when possible. As well as the ecological and cultural

benefits, this reintroduction of fire to the landscape will also reduce the risk and consequence of damaging unplanned bushfires.

The Trust is committed to working with Traditional Owners to conserve, restore and protect natural environments, wildlife and cultural heritage values. Adam said this project on the Bank Australia Conservation Reserve is a great example of working together to learn from one another.

“Engagement with Traditional Owners is critical in private land conservation because of the skills and knowledge they bring,” Adam said. “It’s great that through the use of fire we can support Traditional Owners to get back on country and be involved in land management so it goes full circle and continues. Private land also supports culturally important areas and grassy woodlands that are less prevalent in the public estate so this presents a starting point for similar activities in privately protected areas going forward, improving cultural and ecological values.”

For more information about projects in the Wimmera region contact our Area Manager Adam Blake on (03) 8631 5888 or adamb@tfn.org.au

Pictured: Aboriginal fire practice or cool burning uses low fire intensity that heals country.

Cattle business and bush grow side-by- side

On a recent family trip to Borneo, sixth-generation Princetown farmer Matt Bowker was devastated to see the way the jungle had been cleared for palm oil plantations, leaving orangutans without habitat. Arriving back to Victoria, however, he thought that the situation wasn't all that different at home.

"From Melbourne to Princetown, so much land has been cleared for agriculture," Matt said. "The environment has been decimated. We don't have orangutans but we have lots of native species struggling to survive in the same way. We need to protect their habitat while we can."

With this mission in mind, Matt and his wife Sophie recently agreed to place a conservation covenant on 260 ha of their 1,010 ha beef farm, Kangarooie, on the lands of the Eastern Maar People. The covenanted area is all remnant vegetation, from wetlands to dry eucalypt forest,

and is one of the largest private holdings of bushland in the region. It's home to an impressive array of birdlife, including threatened species such as the Great Egret and the Eastern Rufous Bristlebird.

Matt, an environmental science teacher, has a passion for the variety of diverse habitats represented on Kangarooie and nearby.

"I've always had an appreciation for the fact this was important conservation land," he said.

However, he said, there would be nothing to conserve if it wasn't for the generations that came before him deciding not to clear it either.

"It's a credit to my parents and my grandparents that the bush is still here."

Matt's great-great-great-grandfather established the Kangarooie farm more than 150 years ago, and the couple—who have three children, Lachlan, Christopher and Charlie—took over management of the land in the late 1990s. Matt

and Sophie continued the cattle enterprise, Kangarooie Meats, with a sustainable farming ethos and commitment to animal welfare. There are no pesticides, broadacre herbicides or hormones used on the farm.

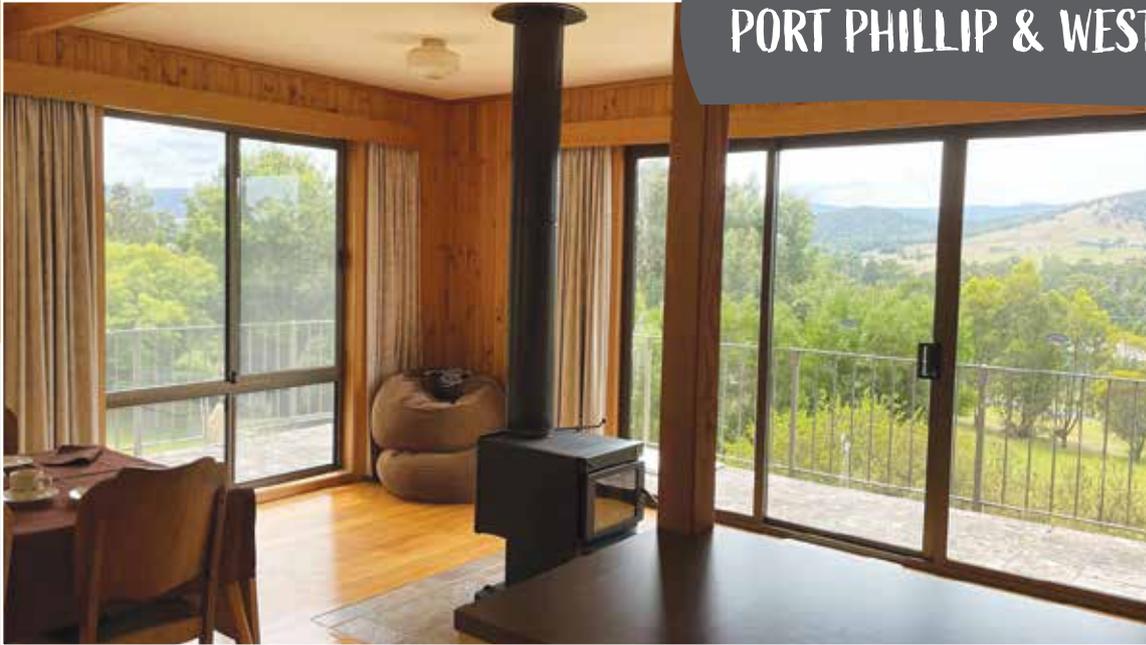
Matt said that leaving remnant bush intact means less erosion issues on the farm. But regardless of any upsides for his business, protecting the habitat for threatened species was an obvious choice for him.

"It's the way it is because of the generations before me and it will be this way for future generations now, too," he said.

For more information about projects in the Corangamite region contact our Regional Manager Chris Lindorff on (03) 8631 5888 or chrisl@tfn.org.au

Pictured: The Bowker family recently covenanted 260 ha on their 1,010 ha beef farm.





A generous gift of much-loved land

It was more than 40 years ago that Shirley Anders and her late husband Rudolf first laid their eyes on Wren Valley in Steels Creek, on the lands of the Wurundjeri People.

Shirley said, “We were both keen bushwalkers and were looking for a place to watch the seasons go by. We looked around for six months, driving county roads, and when we spotted Wren Valley we thought, ‘this is it.’”

The 18.5 ha property, which is in the heartland of the Yarra Valley and backs onto Kinglake National Park, is home to a range of ecosystems, as well as rare orchids and rich bird life.

“There is a gully up the middle with different vegetation types on both sides. It’s very beautiful,” Shirley said.

Shirley and Rudolf spent six years designing and building a house on the property. While they didn’t live there they visited on weekends and holidays, recording bird and plant species and watching the habitats change with the seasons, droughts and fires.

“Rudy was a passionate conservationist and we made sure to protect it ourselves as much as possible,” Shirley said.

When Rudolf passed away it became too difficult for Shirley to access the much-loved land on her own. Recently she generously donated it to Trust for Nature.

Trust for Nature have assessed the property as being of high conservation value and so will sell the property to a new owner who will put a conservation covenant on it to ensure that the future owners protect the natural environment with Trust for Nature’s oversight and guidance. The proceeds of the sale will be used to further Trust for Nature’s conservation work.

Shirley said, “Rudy always wanted our property to go to someone who would look after it like we had. I think this is a wonderful way of making sure that happens.”

Trust for Nature Regional Manager Ben Cullen said Shirley’s generosity is humbling.

“Shirley’s property will play a vital role in conserving ecosystems in the Yarra Valley, and connecting with other conservation land such as Kinglake National Park.

This is an extremely generous gift and we are so grateful for it.”

Visit trustfornature.org.au to view this property’s upcoming listing.

For more information about projects in the Port Phillip and Westernport region contact our Area Manager Ben Cullen on (03) 8631 5888 or benc@tfn.org.au

Pictured: The view from the house on property donated by Shirley Anders.



Priority saltmarsh identified for protection

Trust for Nature, in partnership with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA), is protecting more vulnerable coastal saltmarsh on the Corner Inlet Ramsar Wetland and Nooramunga coastline.

More than a quarter of saltmarsh along the Victorian coastline is on private land, making the work in protecting these sensitive areas and dependent species very important. Rising sea levels, recreational and agricultural use, coastal development, water pollution, altered drainage and invasive species are some of the threats they face.

To date, four landholders in South Gippsland have placed covenants on their properties to permanently protect more than 72 ha of valuable coastal saltmarsh. This land provides habitat and resources for threatened species such as the Orange-bellied Parrot and Swamp Skink and for migratory shorebirds like the Eastern Curlew.

With more than 1,100 ha of saltmarsh habitats occurring on private land within Corner Inlet

there's still a lot of work to be done to build on the success so far and permanently protect it.

Recently, Trust for Nature identified priority saltmarsh habitats in the region through our Saltmarsh Scoping Project. The results of this scoping project have been used to inform three new projects. Two projects are being funded through the West Gippsland CMA and the National Landcare Program; the third project has been made possible by a generous donor who is funding most of its activities.

“The combined projects aim to engage landholders in the permanent protection of more than 150 ha over three years and provide opportunities for saltmarsh areas to expand inland to mitigate the threat of rising sea level due to climate change,” said Trust for Nature West Gippsland Regional Manager John Hick.

“Project works will control key current threats to saltmarsh and assist in buffering these threatened habitats and reliant species from the impacts of climate change.”

The projects will fund permanent protection through a covenant, fencing works and weed management. Landholders of priority sites will be eligible to receive stewardship payments to assist with changing land use to improve the protection, condition and extent of saltmarsh on their properties.

The Trust is seeking interest from landholders in the project area who have intertidal or buffering habitats on their land.

For more information about projects in the West Gippsland region contact Regional Manager John Hick on (03) 8631 5888 or johnh@tfn.org.au

This project is supported by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA), through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare program and a private donation.

Pictured: Saltmarsh (top) is important habitat for threatened species such as the Orange-bellied Parrot (inset).



Answering the call for conservation

If only these ancient plains could talk. George Pearse's property in Torrumbarry on Yorta Yorta Country in Victoria's north has been in the family for many years, enduring major natural events such as the recent drought and the "big floods" of 1973-74, just to name a few.

George's Grassland, as it's affectionately known, has never been cultivated and is one of the highest quality examples of Northern Plains Grassland remaining on the Patho Plains. It forms part of a much larger grassland property that was last cultivated about 45 years ago.

The family's decision to put a covenant on this rare parcel is a gift of foresight - this endangered Plains Grassland landscape is precious. Its high conservation significance comes from being only one of a handful of known remaining sites on the Patho Plains that have never been cultivated. The high quality red and grey soils support many threatened and uncommon grassland species in a rare, intact example of floristic diversity with wildflowers that paint vivid colour across the plains.

The covenant has been fenced according to soil type by a local farming community group (the Northern Plains Conservation Management Network) to facilitate more strategic grazing management. A spring flora survey recorded many threatened and uncommon grassland species such as the Basalt Podolepis, Annual Buttons, Slender Darling-pea, Red Swainson-pea and Silky Swainson-pea.

Significantly, the critically endangered Plains-wanderer has found a home on the property. With more than 90 per cent of known habitat on private land already lost, this unique bird needs every chance for survival. These quail-like birds are ranked number one in the world on a list of recognised bird species we could least afford to lose because of their evolutionary distinctiveness.

Plains-wanderer make a distinctive, deep 'oooom' call during the breeding season. A song-meter was installed on the property and detected Plains-wanderers calling, a significant

event for all those involved in the ongoing protection of this species.

George is still very involved in the management of his grasslands. He recently spent a day with Trust for Nature staff putting No Shooting signs up across his property to deter quail poachers. He doesn't want to see quail shooters coming onto his place ever again, because he's leaving it for the birds to sing once more...

For more information about projects in the north central region contact our Area Manager Deanna Marshall on (03) 8631 5888 or deannam@tfn.org.au

The Plains for Wanderers project is supported by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the North Central Catchment Management Authority.

Pictured top: George's Grassland is home to critically endangered Plains-wanderer, and inset: Landholder George Pearse with Trust for Nature Stewardship Officer Kirsten Hutchison.





Handmade homes to help Powerful Owls

The Powerful Owl, the largest of Australia's owls, is threatened in Victoria partly because of limited availability of mature forest and suitable hollows for breeding. A recent project in southwestern Victoria, on the lands of the Eastern Maar People, has trialled establishing artificial hollows to provide more breeding opportunities. The striking bird, which is listed as vulnerable in Victoria, now has the opportunity to use handmade nest boxes on covenanted properties and in Trust for Nature's own Ralph Illidge Sanctuary reserve near Warrnambool.

The nest boxes were installed at the Sanctuary, as well as three surrounding covenanted properties thanks to a community threatened species grant.

A consultant and arborists were engaged to design, build and place the nest boxes in suitable locations. As Powerful Owls can range over 5 km in search of their prey (mainly possums and other birds), the chosen covenants were all selected to be within 10 km of Ralph Illidge Sanctuary.



Although the large owls are yet to use the nest boxes, neighbouring Boobook Owls have been spotted checking out the new homes.

Trust for Nature Conservation Officer Adam Merrick said the boxes are an important insurance policy should old, hollow-forming trees be damaged by storms, fire or decay.

The nest box project is just one example of the important role that conservation on private land plays for many species of native wildlife.

Adam said that placing a conservation covenant on bushland habitats and protecting the land in perpetuity is the best way for landholders to help save the magnificent Powerful Owl. He also recommended leaving dead trees on properties for nesting hollows and roost sites, as well as limiting disturbance of known roost sites.

"Powerful Owls often roost close to the ground during the day in Blackwoods," Adam said. "Disturbance of owls and their young may expose them to increased risks because of being harassed by mobbing birds or attacked by dogs, cats or foxes."

For more information about projects in the Glenelg-Hopkins region contact our Regional Manager Adam Merrick on (03) 8631 5888 or adammm@tfn.org.au

Pictured: Young Powerful Owl on Ralph Illidge Sanctuary. Image: Kerry Vickers.

Stewardship from afar

Owning a covenanted property doesn't mean you need to live on site. Many covenantors reside in Melbourne or other urban centres, travelling to their regional properties when they can.

If your covenant is not your home, a little more consideration and planning is required so you can manage your property and implement important management plan actions across the year.

Here are some top tips on how to manage your beloved covenant from afar:

→ Schedule your visits

Your covenant management plan will list actions in priority order along with a works table noting the months most suitable for each task.

It's handy to review your plan and map out your visits to ensure you are on site for the high priority actions in the most suitable months.

→ Focus on weeds

Timing can be critical for keeping on top of weeds—they can easily get away from you if not dealt with regularly. Refer to your management plan for when and how you need to tackle the high threat weeds on your property. Add this to your considerations as you plan your visit schedule.

→ Secure your covenant

When you are not onsite full time, your property may be vulnerable to trespassers or vandalism. Having a good relationship with your neighbours helps to monitor unwanted activity. You can also install signage and security systems if necessary and, if damaging behaviour continues, report it to the police.

→ Reduce fire risk

Your covenant deed does not prohibit fire prevention activities in line with current regulations. If in doubt, call your regional staff member or stewardship coordinator for advice.

→ Plan your planting

Most new plants will require watering over their first summer so, before your plant, make sure you will be able to accommodate this. Contact your regional Trust staff member for planting guidelines and local species lists.

→ Capture on camera

Your property is an important haven for wildlife. Installing motion sensor cameras allows you to monitor wildlife activity—install them on dams, around nest boxes and on regularly used tracks.

Cameras also monitor pest animal damage so you can develop effective control measures. Set up cameras on burrows for rabbits and fox dens or deer trails. It's also handy to establish a relationship with a trusted local person or contractor to assist with pest control if needed.

→ Enjoy

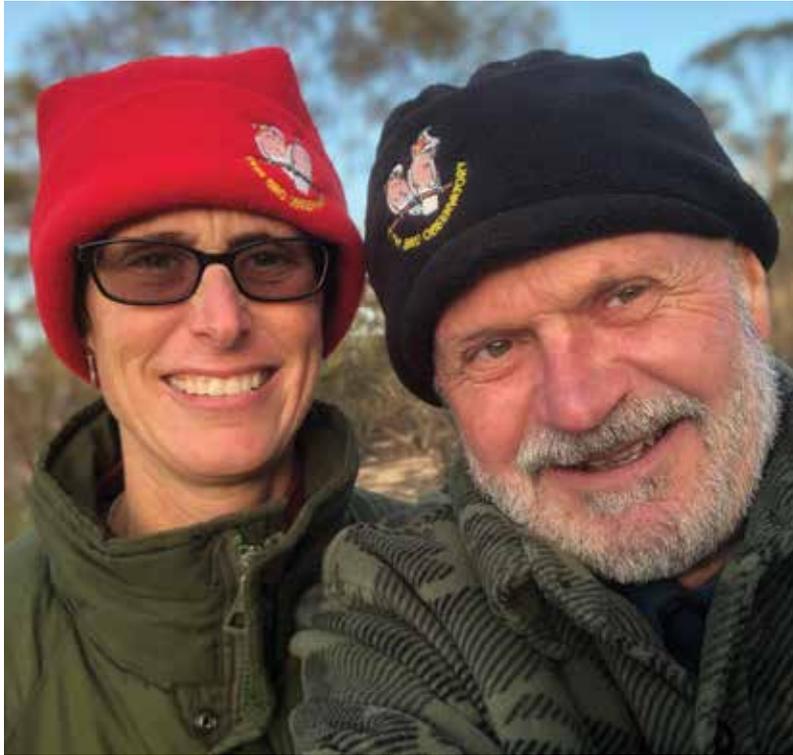
Plan some time to simply enjoy your special covenant—don't spend all your visits working.



All covenantors have a management plan detailing how to manage your covenanted land for conservation—most highlight the weeds and pests that need controlling.

*Pictured: If you don't live on your covenant, a little more consideration and planning is required.
Image: Annette Ruzicka.*

A lifelong conservation mission



When it comes to conservation, Eleanor and Albert Wright are sure of one thing. “Protecting habitat for threatened species is the single most important thing you can do for the planet in your lifetime,” Eleanor said.

The passionate environmentalists aren't just vocal advocates, however. They lead by example. Eleanor and Albert have recently signed their fourth conservation covenant—92.2 ha of rare remnant bush in Walpeup in the Mallee—personally ensuring that hundreds of hectares of valuable habitat are protected forever.

The couple's love for the natural world was born during their childhoods. Eleanor's parents are covenantors and avid twitchers, and Albert grew up bushwalking and hiking. “We're both serious bird watchers now and, over the years, our love for plants has developed too,” Eleanor said. “Seeing what is being done to so much valuable land, we began to realise the importance of protecting it forever.”

It was this realisation that led the couple to purchase a 400 ha property near Dunolly in Central Victoria back in 2002 and covenant 240 ha of it.

“It was a working farm but we could see its potential as important habitat,” Eleanor said. “We worked with Trust for Nature and did more than 100km of direct seeding. The change to the land was massive. It is our proudest achievement.”

The Wrights have now sold that property, but their conservation mission didn't stop there. They now own neighbouring properties in Maldon, one 40 ha and the other 16 ha, and have placed whole title covenants on both. They call one of these properties home, but it's the Walpeup land that holds a very special place in their hearts.

“We'd been looking for something like this for five years,” Eleanor said. “We wanted it for conservation purposes and our own enjoyment and hands on experience. When we found it, we contacted Trust for Nature to make sure they would be interested in a whole title covenant on it and they were.”

The property is home to Crested Bellbirds, Hooded Robins, Regent Parrots and Malleefowl, among other notable species. Eleanor and Albert spend one week per month at the bush block, searching for, recording and photographing all the plants and animals they can find. “We sleep in a caravan at night. It's so wonderful to be up there,” Eleanor said.

While the couple's generous nature is clear, it's Eleanor and Albert who feel grateful for the opportunity to make a difference.

“We want to thank Trust for Nature for covenanting these properties because it's an expensive process for them,” Eleanor said. “It's the single best thing I have done for the planet in my lifetime.”

Pictured page 17: Brush-tailed Phascogale on one of the Wright's covenanted properties at Maldon. Image: Albert Wright/wrightouthere.com.







The power and the passion

It may have started like a pebble thrown into a vast ocean, but the ripple effects of the growing commitment to private land conservation around the world are fast becoming a wave.

Each covenant, no matter how small, forms an important part of a much bigger global picture and supports a growing movement of change that is saving precious places forever.

Covenantors are special people - together they are helping our planet to reach global targets for protected areas. Research shows government-funded national and state parks cannot do this alone. With parks and protected areas insufficient to sustain global biodiversity, the role of private land in biodiversity conservation is recognised as increasingly significant.

Covenantors are conservationists in action – passionate individuals at the forefront of protecting land of high conservation value to help stem the loss of biodiversity. This ‘army’ of people from diverse backgrounds provides a much-needed injection of passion, innovation and entrepreneurial thinking into land management. Their privately protected areas also help complete the conservation picture, acting as corridors and buffer zones for national parks and reserves, as well as protecting habitats and species which rely on private land for their survival.

Trust for Nature’s Policy Advisor, Cecilia Riebl loves her work in Victoria and has recently taken on a separate role as Regional Representative (Australasia) for the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN). The ILCN, as its name suggests, connects organisations and individuals from all over the world who are working in different ways to support private land conservation. Her role will be to extend the reach of the ILCN’s impact in Australasia, and share success stories on-ground from Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

“I’m especially excited to bring together private land conservation experts who are working to finance conservation in innovative ways; work collaboratively across landscapes as part of a peer learning exchange; and designing a framework for meaningful biodiversity recovery under the Convention of Biological Diversity, including the target to protect 30 per cent of the globe’s biodiversity by 2030”, says Cecilia.

Bringing it home

In Australia, the number and area of conservation covenants has grown significantly in the past 10 years with more than 5,000 covenants on nearly 5 million ha of land.

In Victoria, covenantors are punching above their weight with 1,503 conservation covenants and more than 100,000 ha (including Trust for Nature reserves) permanently protected by Trust for Nature.

“I am really proud of Trust for Nature’s commitment to growing our Traditional Owner engagement, working with farmers to achieve integrated

management outcomes for nature, and finding innovative solutions to fund and incentivise conservation” Cecilia says.

Covenantors are role models of what it really takes to manage the land for conservation. This was recognised by the Victorian Government when it funded the Trust’s current \$2.75 million Iconic Estates program through its Biodiversity Response Planning process to create over 1500 hectares of new privately protected areas in Victoria.

With climate change and biodiversity loss making our future even more uncertain, the federal government is trialling an Agricultural Stewardship and Certification Program that would pay farmers to manage and protect the ecosystem services on their land.

“If successful, this program could be a real game-changer, recognising the importance of a ‘nature-based’ solutions approach where healthy ecosystems are protected simply for their biodiversity and sustainable-use values, along with addressing the need to retain rich carbon sinks and build resilience in natural systems”, Cecilia says.

In the meantime, Victorian covenantors can be proud of their commitment and important role in the mighty fight across the globe to achieve biodiversity outcomes.

Pictured page 18: Every year, Victorians join the global fight to conserve biodiversity on private land by placing conservation covenants on their properties.

Australian Magpie

Craticus tibicen



Their calls and comical antics may represent one of the simple pleasures of urban backyards and bush alike, but did you know the Australian Magpie has one of the most complex of all bird songs and lives a strict family lifestyle? Magpies are found across most of Australia's cities, farms and bushland reserves – any area with suitable tree canopy for nesting.

Otherwise known as

Magpies are known as Booroogong, Garoogong, Brookong in some Aboriginal languages in Australia. They also go by the following names: Maggie, White-backed Magpie, Black-backed Magpie and Piping Shrike.

Communal living

Magpies maintain very strict family groups of up to 25 comprising one or two dominant males and the rest females.

The full breeding swoop

The female takes charge of choosing the nesting site and incubating her one-to-five eggs in a bowl-shaped stick nest which she lines with items such as hair, feathers and shredded bark. She feeds the chicks for a month. The males' job is protecting the chicks and a small percentage may aggressively swoop intruders.

Don't make me beg

Australian Magpies forage on the ground using their strong beaks to feed on insects, worms, small lizards, frogs and beetles. They can 'hear' the insects moving underground. Being used to humans, they take hand outs and will often beg for food. Please do not feed wildlife.

Keep them common

Many young magpies die in the first few months due to road hazards, predators and starvation. You can help by keeping your cat inside, leaving water out in summer and planting trees.

Did you know?

Magpies have four toes - three facing forward and one backwards and can live up to 25 years.



Hot tip

It's best to avoid nesting areas during the breeding season. If you can't, some swear that wearing a hat with sunglasses or images of eyes works. You can also hold a stick above your head or attach stiff plastic strips at least 15 cm long to your bike helmet.



Helping local wildlife populations adapt to a changing climate

By Doug Robinson, Trust for Nature Conservation Science Advisor

Many of us are concerned about the impact of climate change on animals and plants. One way to assist them is to ensure there is plenty of genetic diversity within their populations. This will help them adapt to changing environmental conditions, such as warming temperatures.

But across Victoria, extensive habitat loss and habitat fragmentation mean that many populations of native plants and animals are small and isolated, and do not have much genetic diversity nor opportunities for regular gene flow between populations. Conservation geneticists suggest that populations need to be greater than a thousand individuals to maintain high levels of variation.

I thought about this issue a lot during 2020 while working from home and walking around our covenanted box-ironbark property. Thanks to good autumn and winter rains, we had the best wildflower season for nearly ten years but many of the emerging wildflowers and native grasses got eaten by feral and native herbivores before they flowered and produced the next generation of young. In effect, we lost some of our potential genetic diversity

because of this grazing impact. Consequently, we put up multiple, small fenced exclosures for many grazing-sensitive species of plants, including Blue Pincushion, Grass Trigger-plant, Yam Daisy, Sweet Bursaria and Cane Spear-grass.

In one 30 m x 30 m exclosure, I counted 394 flowering Yam Daisies, compared with only four in the equivalent area of land outside the fence. In the 30 m x 40 m exclosure we erected to protect the rare Cane Spear-grass, there were 24 individual plants inside when the fence was built, compared with 3 plants outside. Two months later, the number inside had increased to 41 plants thanks to regeneration of small plants, while there were still only three plants outside. While these numbers do not meet the recommended population size threshold on their own, they show the benefits of this conservation action in helping to maintain or improve genetic variation.

Conservation geneticists are also increasingly urging conservation managers to be proactive and consider ways to supplement the genetic diversity of local populations. For plants, these genetic rescue actions might include protection of existing

populations from grazing pressure, supplementation of the local population with plants from nearby, larger populations and supplementation with individuals from more severe climatic conditions (subject to expert advice). For animals, we should aim to increase the quality or extent of habitat so that each property can support additional breeding units and increased genetic diversity.

Working with the local community to facilitate movement of individuals and their genes across the landscape by establishing habitat corridors is also valuable. What is most clear from the research is that inaction will not help these small populations and we all need to take some steps to help our local plants and animals persist and adapt.

Further reading: Frankham, R. et al. (2019). A Practical Guide for genetic Management of Fragmented Animal and Plant Populations. Oxford University Press.

Pictured top: Exclosure protecting blue pincushions and inset: Trust for Nature Conservation Science Advisor Doug Robinson.

Nature bites



Protect the Platypus

Platypus have recently been listed by the Victorian Government as vulnerable due to substantial decreases in abundance and distribution over the past thirty years. The devastating news that this unique mammal may be on the brink of extinction was supported by a long-term action plan to try to arrest their decline. Trust for Nature will continue playing its part in saving the Platypus by working with covenantors to protect waterways habitat.

Peninsula power

Mornington Peninsula Shire is now giving landholders a rate discount if they have a conservation covenant on all or part of their property. Under the new concession, landholders receive 65 per cent off their rates on the area of land protected under the covenant. This acknowledges the long-term commitment to protecting biodiversity and is automatically applied by the Shire. Many of Victoria's 48 local councils offer some sort of rebate or concession to people with conservation covenants. To find out if yours does, contact your local staff member or call Cecilia Riebl on 8631 5819.

Celebrating the Power of Women in Conservation

Nine hundred people registered to attend our 10th annual Celebrating Women in Conservation breakfast, run in collaboration with Bush Heritage Australia. The amazing online event connected women and men through stories and passion. Master of Ceremonies, Tanya Ha, led guest speakers Bidjara woman Keelen Mailman OAM and Melia Benn, descendent of the Mamu and Gunggandii peoples, in inspiring conversations exploring how connection to Country and each other can help us stay resilient through crisis recovery. Melbourne chef Elizabeth Chong AM whipped up a delicious breakfast recipe for guests to cook at home – yum!

The Bustards are back!

It's great to see the Australian Bustards returning to Neds Corner Station again this year. They are common in northern Australia but have become critically endangered in southern areas. Three birds were recently spotted which is fantastic news, as it suggests there is now enough habitat and food to support them here as part of their annual life cycle. Their repeated use of Neds Corner Station is testament to how far this former sheep station has come in its rehabilitation to be able to support bustards and many other species survive - once again demonstrating the power of private land conservation.



Nature bites

Website refresh

Take a peek at our new-look website trustfornature.org.au. We hope you agree that it captures the passion and stories of how Trust for Nature plays a unique role in Victoria's biodiversity conservation by protecting the diverse range of native plants, animals and habitats found on private land. Your feedback on the new-look site is welcome, so log on!

Living the dream

We are happy to say that the sale of the last block at High Camp has now been settled through our Revolving Fund program. One more happy family will move onto the property and into a new life of conservation amidst like-minded neighbours. The High Camp property took the unique approach of subdividing a large farm into seven parcels of land, all of which are part of a critical conservation network within the landscape around Kilmore and feature huge old eucalypts with hollows for wildlife, and a wide variety of plant and bird species, including the nationally threatened Golden Sun Moth which was recently recorded here by some of the landowners. To see other conservation properties for sale go to trustfornature.org.au.

Empowering a global community for land conservation

We are proud to announce that Trust for Nature's Policy Advisor, Cecilia Riebl, has recently taken on the role of Regional Representative (Australasia) for the International Land Conservation Network. The Network's core mission is to connect organisations and individuals from all over the world who are working to accelerate the protection, and strengthen the management, of land and natural resources. Cecilia's role will be to extend the reach of the network's impact in Australasia while sharing Victorian and Australian success stories with the world. Find out more at landconservationnetwork.org

Kids online for nature

More than 1,000 people tuned into our three most recent webinars on innovation in land conservation, cultural burning and threatened species in late 2020. A highlight was the Kids for Nature webinar, which saw young hosts inspire others to become curious about our natural world. Thanks to all involved, including Zoos Victoria, Melbourne Museum and Wurundjeri Elder Uncle David Wandin.

Working for Victorian conservation

One highlight of the past six months has been the contribution to conservation through the pool of talent supplied by the Working for Victoria program, a Victorian government initiative connecting jobseekers with employers. Our North East Regional Manager Will Ford said, "Looking after the land never stops, there is always work to do and the Working for Victoria crew have been a huge help supporting landholders with conservation work like fencing, removing barbed wire and cutting out woody weeds." The crews have provided incredible help at some of Trust for Nature's own properties and properties with covenants across Victoria.





Another 9 properties in Victoria protected!

Adding to Victoria’s protected landscape

More landholders across Victoria have volunteered to put a conservation covenant on their property. It can take up to 12 months from the time a landholder agrees to a covenant to when the covenant is negotiated, approved by the Minister and finally placed on the property’s title.

Putting a conservation covenant on a property is one of the single most important things a landholder can do to protect plants and animals. It truly gives them a home forever and helps to fight extinction.

Properties eligible for covenants can be big or small. They have important plant and animal species or have the potential to support them. Commonly they are in regions that have been identified in Trust for Nature’s *Statewide Conservation Plan* as priority habitat for protection. Trust for Nature covers the costs of covenanting.

If you have a property that you think is worth protecting call us on (03) 8631 5888 and ask to be put in touch with our local staff.

Here are some of the properties that have been covenanted in the last six months. Congratulations to the landholders!

East Gippsland	
Flannigan Island	77.84 ha
Marlo	44.23 ha
Wangarabell	146.76 ha

North Central	
Trentham East	64.75 ha

Goulburn Broken	
High Camp	51.31 ha
Heathcote Junction	15.31 ha

Wimmera	
Fyans Creek	143.46 ha
Kaniva	546.16 ha
Kaniva	242.79 ha

Image: Trust for Nature staff at High Camp.



Middlegate 546 ha *Kaniva, NW Victoria*

Achieving a vision of connecting desert habitat just got one step closer in the covenanting of this important property in Victoria's Wimmera.

Middlegate's landscape is like stepping back in time. Large, old stringybark trees stand guard to a community of rare and threatened flora and fauna, including the South East Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo and Coloured Spider-orchid.

One of two properties that make up Conservation Volunteers Australia's Salvana Conservation Reserve, Middlegate's 546 ha protect rare areas of old growth and long unburnt native vegetation. The property also functions as an important biodiversity corridor linking the West and Central blocks of Little Desert National Park.

This covenant will contribute to maintaining the conservation value of the region and provide biodiversity and climate change resilience for threatened species like the Malleefowl and Silky Mouse.

Protecting and enhancing large areas of habitat like Middlegate is important because it helps animals and plants move across the landscape, conserves enough habitat to support many individuals, and preserves the function of ecosystems at large and small scales. This doesn't just help species on the property: it helps keep the broader environment healthy too by contributing to local habitat connectivity.

We look forward to supporting the owners in managing this property and working towards this vision.

Image: Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos are one of the rare species found on Middlegate.

Covenanted properties in high demand

With more city-dwellers searching for a tree change and an increasing understanding of the urgency of protecting threatened habitat, Trust for Nature’s conservation properties have been in high demand in the past year.

There are usually more than five properties for sale through the Trust’s Revolving Fund, but now these precious parcels of land are being snapped up as soon as they’re advertised.

“Normally Trust for Nature would buy and sell four properties a year through the Revolving Fund, but last year we sold seven,” said Revolving Fund Coordinator Michael Fry. “One property even had three parties competing for the sale, with another four who had expressed interest.”

Trust for Nature’s Revolving Fund is used to buy and sell private land with high conservation values. Located within an area identified by Trust for Nature as a priority for conservation, these properties contain important habitat for threatened species. The property is protected and on-sold with a conservation covenant to a new owner. Conservation covenants are legally binding agreements which protect a



property’s ecological values, even after it changes hands. Sale proceeds are returned to the Revolving Fund to purchase more property, creating a continuous conservation investment cycle. So far, the Revolving Fund program has purchased more than 70 properties, sold 61, and protected more than 6,880 ha.

“I think we can assume this increase in demand is a result of the coronavirus because fewer people need to base themselves in the city for work,” Michael said. “But I think this is also part of a trend that’s been going for some years now, particularly as Melbourne becomes more populated and people are looking to get away from the pressures of inner-city life. 2020 has just supercharged that trend.”

More awareness of the importance of private land conservation could also be a factor, Michael said, especially after events such as last summer’s bushfires. “Surprisingly, the bushfires didn’t affect the sales of bush properties.”

Trust for Nature is currently looking for properties to buy, protect and sell through the Revolving Fund. “While some landholders donate their properties, sellers can get a fair market price for their property through Trust for Nature while knowing that the land will be protected forever,” Michael said. “It’s a win-win.”

Read about a property that was donated to the Revolving Fund on page 11.

Trust for Nature has been **HARD AT WORK** protecting Victoria's most vulnerable habitats and species.

Here's a snapshot of what we achieved in 2019-20

30

new conservation covenants – more than 1,770 extra hectares **protected forever**



1,503

conservation covenants registered since 1972



60

different types of vegetation protected – 65% are rare or threatened in Victoria



48,109 ha of **feral animal management**

100K+ ha

of our state is **permanently protected** under conservation covenants and reserves owned by Trust for Nature

129 ha

of Plains-wanderer **habitat protected**, as well as more habitat protected for threatened animals and plants such as the Leadbeater's Possum, Swift Parrot, Spiny Rice-flower, and Purple Diuris



130

conservation management plans put into action



17,854 ha of **weed management**



255

ecological surveys done



\$354,350

raised to **protect and manage habitat** on our 30,000 hectare conservation property Neds Corner Station

\$57,000

raised to help restore habitat on **fire-impacted properties** with conservation covenants



We worked with more than **75 volunteers** and **15 community groups** who helped us make a difference – **thank you!**



Discover our reserves

Trust for Nature is proud to own 44 diverse conservation properties across Victoria. You can explore many of them at scheduled open days, but some of them are always open to be visited and enjoyed (subject, of course to weather emergencies, total fire bans or essential maintenance works).

So, put on your hiking boots, grab your hat, get out into nature and feel the power of private land conservation in action beneath your feet...

Uralla Nature Reserve

Contingent Street, Traralgon

This reserve offers 60 ha of fragrant, natural bushland on the northern slopes of the Strzelecki Ranges and is an accessible and delightful nature experience.

Choose from walks along the 3.5 km of tracks with wheelchair friendly sections (all-terrain wheelchair recommended). You'll be rewarded with a variety of wet forest and dry forest wildlife, and a diverse range of habitats, including some rainforest elements.

Uralla is managed by the Baw Baw Shire Council and the wonderful Friends of Uralla Nature volunteers who protect the area's biodiversity and wildlife. The team has recently been monitoring visitor numbers and reported an increase in visitation during the recent restrictions as locals enjoyed discovering their own backyards.

- Dogs allowed on leash.
- Small car park on site.
- Nearest toilets at Traralgon – 2.5 km away.
- Closed on days of Total Fire Ban or Severe or higher fire danger.

Ralph Illidge Sanctuary

Corner Cobden-Warrnambool Rd & Halfords Rd, Naringal East

This is a peaceful, relaxed and scenic reserve providing a safe haven for wildlife and significant flora. Enjoy native animals from the many walking tracks, visit the information centre or have a picnic or barbeque.

Ralph Illidge donated this property to Trust for Nature in 1975 and additional land has since been acquired and added through public fundraising programs. It is an example of bushfire recovery after being severely burnt in 1983.

A dedicated volunteer Committee of Management look after the reserve on behalf of Trust for Nature, which provides habitat for threatened Long-nosed Potoroos, Powerful Owls, Rufous Bristlebirds and Grey Goshawks.

- Guided walks and group bookings can be arranged on 5566 2319.
- Admission by gold coin donation to the Committee of Management.
- Closed on days of Total Fire Ban or Severe or higher fire danger.

Pictured: Look for threatened Long-nosed Potoroos at Ralph Illidge Sanctuary.



Discover our reserves

Uambi Reserve

26/36 Allens Rd, Heathmont

Loved by the local community, this urban reserve is a treasure amidst suburbia protecting a precious four hectares of remaining bushland.

Also known as 'Harpers', Melbourne's Harper family generously donated the property to Trust for Nature in 1988. It protects a very significant remnant of mixed stringybark forest, and is also habitat for over 170 indigenous plants and a wide range of birds and insects - notably butterflies.

Follow the 'self-guided walk' signs which tell Uambi's stories of its landscapes, frogs and how volunteers replanted the old horse paddock.

- Rough bush track unsuitable for wheelchair users or those with challenged mobility.
- Please keep to tracks and leave your dog at home.
- Closed on days of Total Fire Ban or Severe or higher fire danger.

Kopelis Reserve

95 Ryans Rd, Lysterfield

A significant area of bushland amidst Melbourne's continuing urban sprawl, Kopelis is buffered by Lysterfield Lake Park.

Follow an informal walking circuit to experience Lowland Forest strewn with granite boulders and an open eucalypt canopy of Bundy, peppermints and Messmate. Pockets of tall Manna Gum grow in the gullies with Red Stringybark on the upper slopes surrounded by shrubs, grasses, lilies and ferns.

Threatened flora and fauna recorded here include Dandenong Ranges Wattle, Cobra Greenhood and Powerful Owl.

Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Council and their Narrap Team, have assisted Trust For Nature in weed control here, facilitating knowledge sharing while protecting this important landscape together.

- Signage at Kopelis reserve is currently very limited, and the circuit track has several very steep sections and is unsuitable for wheelchair users.
- Limited roadside parking only, on dirt road.
- Closed on days of Total Fire Ban or Severe or higher fire danger.
- Improvements at this reserve are happening regularly, follow our social media channels for updates.

Harbury Reserve

Gembrook Rd, Upper Beaconsfield



This much-loved 21.5 hectare property near Gembrook was generously donated to Trust for Nature in 1977 and provides an oasis of wet and damp forests. Three permanent creeks flow through the steeply sloping reserve comprised of dry forest and lush fern gullies. Harbury is an important sanctuary for wildlife and vegetation in an environment which has been radically altered by subdivision and urbanisation.

The Friends of Harbury Reserve Group is dedicated to protecting their patch and contributing to the future of Victoria's biodiversity. Harbury boasts a wide variety of fungi and sightings of wallabies and lyrebirds are all part of a visit to this precious patch of bush.

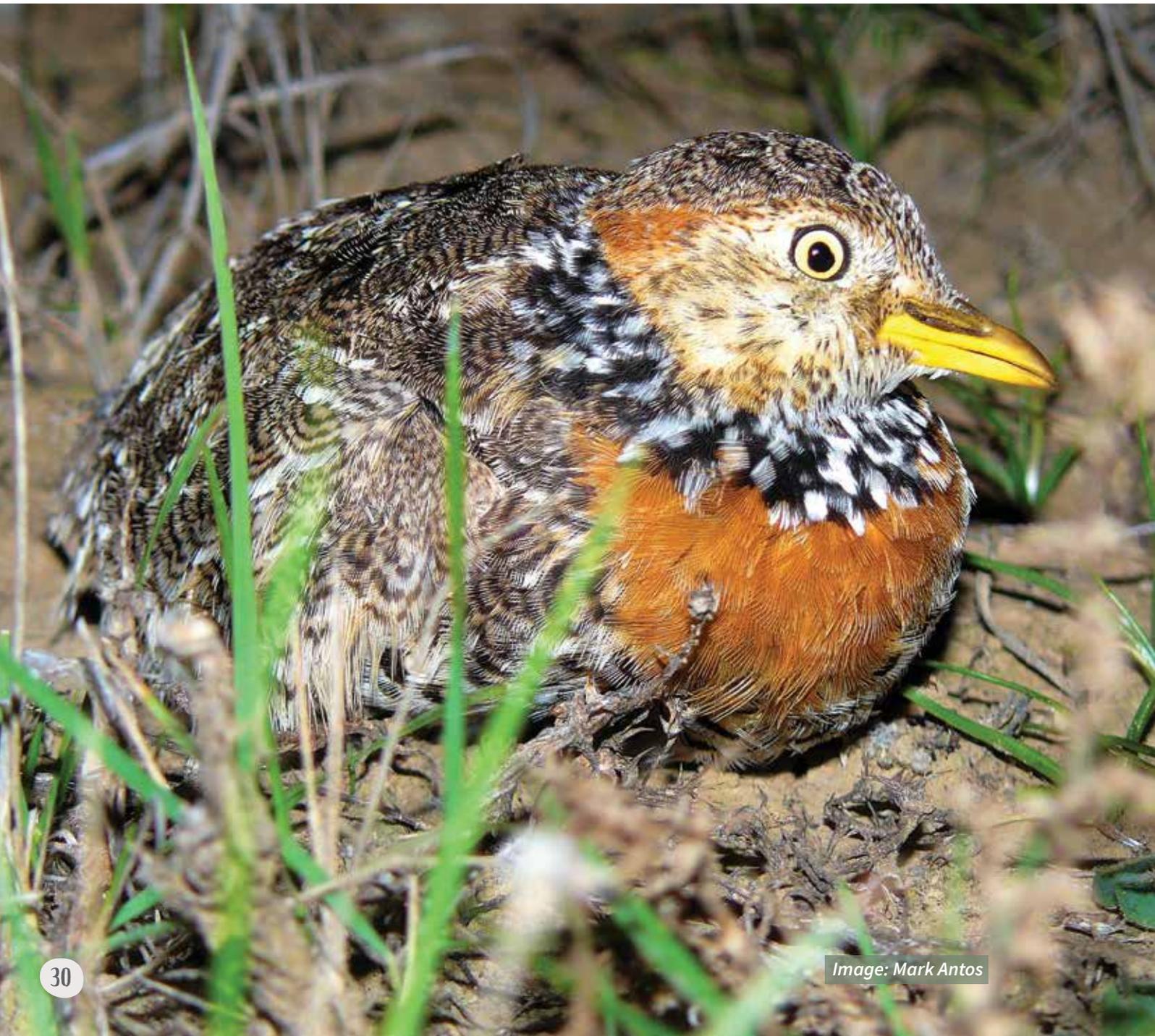
- Access at this reserve is limited to a steep and rough bush track without wayfinding markers. Experienced and prepared walkers only.
- For that reason, Harbury Reserve is best accessed during working bees or open days. Follow our social media channels for updates.

Pictured: Spot Superb Lyrebirds, or listen out for them, at Harbury Reserve. Image: John Manger.

THANK YOU

A big thank you for your support for nature

To find out more about how you can help support Trust for Nature or to make a donation towards our conservation work, call (03) 8631 5888 or visit trustfornature.org.au



Thank you

Plains-wanderers make the cover

Thanks to *Australian Geographic* for featuring Trust for Nature's work about saving grasslands for the critically threatened Plains-wanderer. We were very proud that this special species appeared as a feature story in this iconic magazine. The Australian Geographic Society is raising funds to help us continue protecting the Plains-wanderers by partnering with local landholders to protect precious grasslands and give this unique bird a place to live forever. RM Williams *Outback Magazine* also put the birds in the spotlight.

It's a wrap for the Christmas Appeal

We are delighted to report that our recent Christmas holiday appeal raised an amazing \$36,626. Your incredibly generous response helps us to continue supporting landholders with conservation covenants to protect their properties. Conservation never takes a holiday and the real gift recipients will be our most vulnerable and precious wildlife species and their habitat including critically endangered birds such as the Plains-wanderer, Helmeted Honeyeater and many more. Thank you!

Lasting legacy

For passionate conservationists David Wakefield and Laurie Macmillan, nothing was more precious than their covenanted 41 ha property in Strath Creek, which they both had nurtured since 1981. The generous bequest of this important habitat was their final gesture in a lifetime of caring about and conserving the natural world. The covenant ensures that this special place will continue to provide habitat for native birds and animals such as the Brush-tailed Phascogale and gliding possums. If you would like more information about including Trust for Nature in your will see trustfornature.org.au or call us on 8631 5888.

Squirrel Glider study flies into second phase

We were honoured to be able to play our role in protecting Squirrel Gliders, whose survival is under threat, through research and management. Generous funding of \$35,000 from the Urquhart Charitable Fund will enable the second phase of a monitoring study on the Longwood Plains, near Euroa. This crucial next step includes targeted actions to protect habitat and help us understand how landholders can create suitable habitat for Squirrel Gliders. We are dedicated to giving the best chance of survival to these incredible animals that can glide up to 50 m between trees.

Enduring partnership

We are grateful for the ongoing support from the Paul Family Foundation, which enabled Trust for Nature to host the John Paul Memorial Lecture "Innovation in land conservation" in September 2020. Speakers included Dr Katherine Moseby, Dr Debbie Saunders, and Professor David Bowman, who as leaders in their field, presented virtually on a range of topics from threatened species conservation and novel ways to control feral animals, using drones for radio tracking, and fire in our human landscapes. Trust for Nature is grateful for the ongoing support of the Paul Family Foundation.

*Pictured: Former and current covenantors and sisters Robyn and Barb Miles on protected land near Dereel.
Image: Annette Ruzicka.*

