

Conservation

BULLETIN



**Raakajlim,
a Mallee
sanctuary**

**The ins
and outs of
nest boxes**

**Sun Moths
in the city**

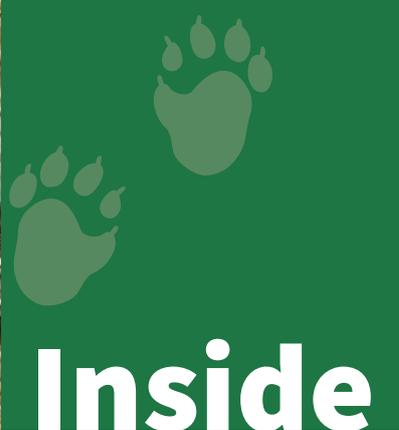




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TRUST FOR NATURE

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), Dr Sandra Brizga, Binda Gokhale, Dr Charles Meredith, 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: The Murdoch family on their 490 ha Mallee property Raakajlim, home to threatened butterflies and parrots. Read more on page 11.

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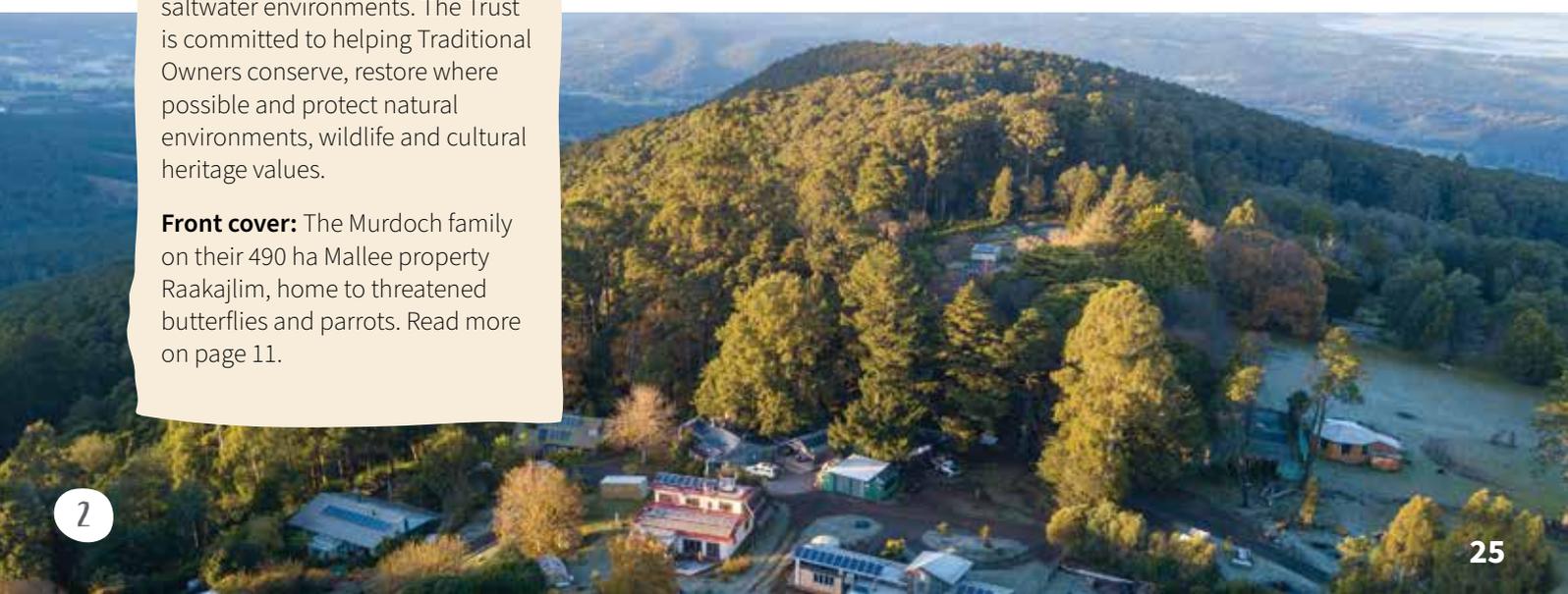
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The big picture

Welcome to our 75th Conservation Bulletin where we share the happenings in the private land conservation space in Victoria over the last six months.

“In 2020-21 we worked with landholders to place 41 new covenants on properties around the state. That’s an extra 2,830 ha protected forever.”

There’s much to be done to address climate change and loss of biodiversity, but we should pause and acknowledge how far we’ve come. 2022 marks a major milestone for Trust for Nature—we’ve now been working with Victorians to protect our precious environment for 50 years!

Back in 1972 we were the newly christened Victoria Conservation Trust, set up by then Premier Sir Rupert Hamer to enable people to donate land and money for conservation. The Trust’s charter proactively encouraged people to leave land as a legacy. Monies bequeathed were used to purchase more property. Some years later we were granted the legal power to partner with voluntary landholders to place conservation covenants on properties, signing the first covenant in 1986.

I’m thrilled that we’ve now worked with landholders of more than 1,500 properties—and counting—to protect nearly 110,000 ha. We hope you will join us as we look back and look forward, and celebrate these achievements with a number of activities this year, culminating with public events in spring.

Protecting habitat on private land is part of a global conservation challenge aiming to protect at least a third of the world’s land area by 2030. Last month the Australian Land Conservation Alliance, of which Trust for Nature is a proud member, launched a campaign to protect five per cent of Australia’s private land area by 2025. To achieve this organisations like ours will build a comprehensive network

of protected areas providing homes for wildlife and plants forever. Read more about the campaign on page 20.

Our work is always guided by the best science. We have now updated our Statewide Conservation Plan, which uses the latest conservation science to understand where best to target our conservation efforts. Find out more on page 23.

These achievements would not be possible without our supporters and partners, including Aboriginal Victorians and conservation groups. Some of you might have joined us recently for the 11th Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast, which we run together with Bush Heritage, where we were inspired by women leading on climate action.

This wonderful event would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors, NAB Foundation and the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation.

We are very grateful to all of you who are supporting our conservation work, whether donating to a fundraising appeal, making a monthly donation or putting a covenant on your land—thank you.

As always, it is the passion and dedication of landholders who volunteer to protect their land that drives what we do. You can read some of their stories in this edition.

Sincerely

Victoria Marles AM
CEO, Trust for Nature

News & fundraising

Landholders protect 2,700 ha

More than 2,700 ha of Victoria—15 times the size of Melbourne’s CBD—were protected forever in 2020-21. Working with Trust for Nature, landholders volunteered to permanently protect habitat on their properties with 41 new conservation covenants across the state. This includes 137 ha of habitat for critically endangered Plains-wanderer on Victoria’s northern plains. In Victoria’s central highlands, landholders protected 280 ha of habitat for endangered Leadbeater’s Possums. We have now protected nearly 110,000 ha of habitat forever on 1,567 covenanted properties and more than 40 reserves. Find out more in our annual report at trustfornature.org.au/resources.



Dedication to Snape Reserve

Thank you to Leon Ryan for his tireless dedication to Snape Reserve. Leon started volunteering for the Thursday Work Crew at Snape Reserve in 2009, and over the past 11 years has given over 3,000 hours to looking after the reserve. He also donated equipment. Leon has recently retired from volunteering. He leaves a big hole in the work crew at the reserve and we thank him for his years of remarkable service.

Pictured: Leon Ryan on Snape Reserve.

But how much fencing?

In 2020-21, Trust for Nature improved nearly 3,000 ha of habitat, facilitated more than 9,000 ha of weed management, organised more than 37,000 ha of feral animal management and helped to install nearly 22 km of fencing (enough to fence 1,000 ha). Eighty per cent of the covenanted properties protect vegetation types that aren’t well represented in national and state parks, including plains grasslands and lower slopes woodlands. Six properties were sold through our Revolving Fund program, which has permanently protected 7,000 ha to date.

Another 35,000 ha by 2025

We’ve always been ambitious at Trust for Nature, which is why we are aiming to protect a further 35,000 ha of habitat for wildlife over the next four years. We will be working with landholders across the state to protect the most important remaining habitat, guided by our updated Statewide Conservation Plan (read more on page 23). We are also aiming to restore 5,000 ha of habitat. These goals are part of our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, which you can find on our website: trustfornature.org.au/resources.

Giving monthly to protect the bush

Did you know you can donate monthly to Trust for Nature?

This year, Trust for Nature is proudly celebrating its 50th year protecting and restoring Victoria’s precious native habitats. This work can only be made possible because of the generous support of the Trust for Nature community.

By joining the Bush Protection Program and giving monthly, you will provide Victoria’s most vulnerable species a stable home, the safe and secure future that they deserve and protect their habitats forever.

To read more about giving monthly, head online to trustfornature.org.au/campaign/bush-protection-program/

News & fundraising

Saving Australia's most endangered birds

The new Action Plan for Australian Birds, edited by Stephen Garnett and Barry Baker, finds that 216 species of birds now face extinction, up from 195 in 2011. While birds face numerous threats—from land clearing to introduced species—climate change is now the biggest. The 2019-20 bushfires, which were exacerbated by climate change, contributed to the listing of 27 species alone. The good news is that researchers found conservation action does work, with 23 birds improving their status over the last decade. At Trust for Nature we are working to protect threatened birds in Victoria such as the Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot and Plains-wanderer.

... and plants

Researchers at the Threatened Species Recovery Hub have identified the 50 Australian plants most in danger of extinction. Victoria is a hotspot for threatened plants due to the state's record of habitat loss; 11 of the species are found only in the state. Some, such as the endangered Charming Spider-orchid, have less than 50 mature plants left in the wild. Protecting habitat on private land is very important for many species. Nearly 90 per cent of the remaining habitat for the endangered Shepherd's Purse is found on private land. We are working with landholders to protect and improve habitat for Victoria's threatened plants.

Congratulations graduates

In November we celebrated the nine Indigenous students who graduated from the Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management, run by Trust for Nature in collaboration with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Holmesglen. In 2021 students gained experience through working on conservation projects on land with conservation covenants and by working with the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. Students worked on protecting midden sites on the Mornington Peninsula; participated in a cultural burn at Coranderrk Station with Uncle Dave Wandin—the first cultural burn on the property in over 160 years; and built a bush food planter box, now installed on a property donated to Trust for Nature by Helen McDonald and her late husband, comedian John Clarke, on Phillip Island.



Pictured: Graduates celebrated at Richmond Town Hall in November with Sheena Watt MP (far left).

News & fundraising

Bushfire recovery

Trust for Nature, with the support of the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Program for Wildlife and their Habitat, has been working with landholders in East Gippsland to improve ecosystem resilience and support recovery after the 2019-20 bushfires. Trust for Nature has worked with 47 landholders and completed on-ground works on 3,587 ha. This includes 2,200 ha of pest control, which will benefit nearly 20,000 ha of habitat, and 657 ha of weed control. Another 335 ha are in the process of being protected forever through conservation covenants. The project is helping 37 threatened species and communities, such as Southern Greater Gliders, Turquoise Parrots, and Superb Lyrebirds, which were badly affected by the fires.

Conservation driven by science

Research students funded through Trust for Nature's Scholes Student Scholarship have been making some interesting findings. Finella Dawling's research on Victoria's northern plains has shown thermal cameras are a better way to find threatened species like Plains-wanderers and Fat-tailed Dunnarts, which will make surveys more efficient. Also working on Plains-wanderers, Islay MacDougall modelled ideal Plains-wanderer habitat. The results will help organisations like Trust for Nature better target conservation efforts. Meanwhile in Victoria's woodlands, Jessica Chapman is researching how small, insect-eating birds help control pests on farms. Her results so far show that small woodland birds are more likely to forage in paddocks that have remnant trees and light grazing.



New orchid discovery

Covenantor Bill Kosky has published findings of a new species of clubbed spider-orchid, *Caladenia turneri*, from north of Briagolong in Gippsland. Named after eminent local field naturalist and covenantor James Turner who first found the plant, there are thought to be fewer than 500 left in the wild. It is threatened by disturbance. Bill and his wife Helen have been interested in orchids for more than 40 years. Their 54 ha covenant at Marlo Plains in East Gippsland protects grass tree wetlands, tertiary dune habitat and banksia woodlands, and is home to over 30 species of orchids. Bill's paper is published in *Muelleria*, the journal of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and is available at rbg.vic.gov.au/science/journal.

Pictured: Caladenia turneri, recently described by Gippsland covenantor Bill Kosky. Image: Bill Kosky.

♥ Thank you donors

Thank you to the supporters who donated during our most recent fundraising appeal. This appeal focused on some of Victoria's, shall we say, less photogenic wildlife. While koalas and wombats often get the lion's share of conservation attention, lots of other species are disappearing out of sight and out of mind. Take, for instance, five threatened burrowing crayfish found in Gippsland. These mud-loving troglodytes live in waterlogged forests, where they live at the bottom of burrows feeding on detritus. More than 85 per cent of their remaining habitat is found on private land; that's why we work with landholders to protect and improve habitat, and we couldn't do it without your support. Read more about another less well-known species on page 22.

News & fundraising

Congratulations Vic Marles!

Congratulations to our CEO, Vic Marles, who was recently appointed a Member of the Order of Australia. Vic has been recognised for significant service to conservation and the environment, and to the community. She said, “I am honoured to receive this recognition. The conservation work I am part of at Trust for Nature is so important and it is truly wonderful to work with landholders, supporters, partners and staff who are so passionate about protecting Victoria’s special wildlife and environment.”

Apart from steering the ship at Trust for Nature, Vic also sits on the board of the Australian Land Conservation Alliance and the steering committee for the International Land Conservation Network, both organisations that champion conservation on private land. Her contribution to the community can also be seen in her work for numerous legal and arts organisations, including the Arts Centre, Circus Oz, the Melbourne Writers Festival and currently the Abbotsford Convent Arts and Recreation Precinct and the Consumer Action Law Centre.

Celebrating the power of women in conservation

Our 11th annual Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast, run in collaboration with Bush Heritage Australia, was an amazing in-person and online event with women (and men) in conservation connecting through their stories and passion. Master of Ceremonies, Tanya Ha, led guest speakers Victoria McKenzie-McHarg, strategic director of Women’s Environmental Leadership Australia, and Linh Do from the University of Melbourne, in an inspiring forum of ideas with which to face our changing climate.

Meet a supporter: Janet Limb

Janet Limb has had a long association with Trust for Nature, beginning in the 1980s when she and her late husband purchased a very steep 15 ha property at Red Hill. Living off-grid, with their own water supply, they soon realised the importance of the property.

“It didn’t take us long to realise that our bush was full of treasure—one year I counted 15 species of orchid from the first Nodding Greenhood to the late summer Hyacinth Orchid,” Janet said.

They then approached Trust for Nature to explore the possibility of protecting habitat on the property forever with a conservation covenant—which remains even though the Limbs have since sold.

So began Janet’s interest in Trust for Nature. In 2000 she joined the board and her six years saw the organisation continue to grow, including the exciting purchase of Neds Corner Station in 2002.

Over the past 20 years, Janet has supported Trust for Nature through the Limb Family Foundation, which has supported a number of key positions in the organisation, contributed to the restoration of the homestead at Neds Corner Station and the establishment of a virtual herbarium, and supported the three-years Bays and Islands project.

At this time when the Foundation is being wound up, its board has generously chosen to make a final gift of \$1 million to Trust for Nature to help build the private land conservation network through the Leaving a Land Legacy project, which will enable the permanent protection of at least 30 high priority conservation properties with covenants.



“We believe the Trust’s regional managers are ideally suited to identify these properties. Their detailed knowledge of their regions and their ability to engage with landholders are exceptional,” Janet said.

“We see the covenanting program as crucial in protecting our native fauna and flora in the face of the devastating impacts of a warming environment. We also see this program as a tool to slow the effects of climate change.”

Thank you Janet and the Limb Family Foundation. If you or others are considering leaving a bequest or legacy, consider contributing to the Leaving a Land Legacy Project.

Read more about the project on page 12.

Pictured: Janet Limb with her late husband George at their Red Hill property.



Landholders helping threatened glider

Threatened Squirrel Gliders in Victoria's Lurg Hills and nearby areas on Taungurung Country east of Benalla are getting a helping hand from landholders. One of those landholders is beef and sheep farmer Andrew Marriott, whose 2,800 ha property in the Holland's Creek valley is home to red gum, yellow box and grey box woodlands—ideal habitat for gliders.

“We went through a period when agriculture over-cleared the land. Now we're recognising that we need to put trees back, as the old ones we currently have won't last forever,” Andrew said.

Recently Trust for Nature has been helping Andrew improve habitat on his property for gliders and other wildlife with fencing, weed control and tree planting. Lines of

nest boxes through his property are helping connect remnant patches of trees.

Squirrel Gliders are similar to more well-known Krefft's Gliders (previously known as Sugar Gliders) but larger and rarer. They depend on eucalypt woodlands and particularly old, hollow-bearing trees where they roost. The gliders are threatened by the loss of these old trees, many of which are now found along roadsides, and fragmentation of their habitat.

Surveys by Trust for Nature Senior Conservation Officer Bert Lobert are helping focus conservation efforts. Surveys at the end of 2021 found 18 Squirrel Gliders across 29 sites, indicating a significant population of the species in the Lurg Hills. Krefft's Gliders are also found in the area.

“Before we did surveys and habitat modelling we were really operating in the dark,” said Trust for Nature Regional Manager Shelagh Curmi.

“Now we have a better idea of which areas of habitat are most important to protect, where to plant trees and where to install nest boxes.”

Trust for Nature's work in the Lurg Hills is supported by the Victorian Government.

For more information about projects in the Goulburn Broken region contact Regional Manager Shelagh Curmi on 0407 521 154 or shelaghc@tfn.org.au.

Pictured: Squirrel Glider spotted in central Victoria during Trust for Nature surveys.

Sun Moths in the city

The surprise discovery of threatened Golden Sun Moths in Wangaratta in Victoria's north east has given new hope for the survival of the species.

Golden Sun Moths were once found on grasslands from Bathurst in New South Wales to Bordertown in South Australia, but have disappeared from much of their former range as their habitat has been cleared or altered for development.

Trust for Nature Regional Manager Will Ford was walking his dog in December 2020 in a Wangaratta park when he spotted a single moth. Sun Moths had not previously been recorded in the city. Surveys over more than 800 ha by Trust for Nature staff at the end of 2021 confirmed the presence of hundreds of the moths at the park which was previously a golf course.

"For a viable population of moths to persist in a small modified woodland within an urban environment is pretty remarkable," Will said.

Golden Sun Moths are considered dependent on wallaby grasses for their survival. Female sun moths

lay their eggs at the base of the grasses, and the larvae feed on the roots for perhaps two years. The adults emerge on hot, sunny days in early summer and live only for a couple of days. Only the male moths fly; the females, which have the golden hindwings that give the species its name, stay hidden among the grasses and are much harder to spot during surveys.

Now that surveys have confirmed the survival of sun moths in Wangaratta, Trust for Nature is helping to improve habitat for the moths. Introduced grasses like Kikuyu and Paspalum are a threat to sun moth habitat and are being controlled through spot spraying, while native grasses are being sown. Signs are being installed to educate the public about the special moths on their doorstep.

"Grassy ecosystems need careful active management otherwise they tend to go downhill. Managing biomass is really important and on this particular site we do that by slashing at the right times. Grasslands tend to be a bit underappreciated because often people don't understand their

natural values. That's why projects like this are important to increase awareness but also to protect and look after what's left," Will said.

Elsewhere in the north east Trust for Nature is working with landholders to improve Golden Sun Moth habitat on properties protected with conservation covenants. Eighty per cent of their remaining habitat is found on private land.

The Golden Sun Moth Project is supported by the Victorian Government through the Community Volunteer Action Grants – Biodiversity On-ground Action and Stewardship.

For more information about projects in the North East region contact Regional Manager Will Ford on (03) 8631 5888 or willf@tfn.org.au.

Pictured: Female Golden Sun Moth spotted by Trust for Nature staff in Wangaratta.



Refuge in East Gippsland

Jenny Starkey and Graeme Burrell were looking for a bush block on the southern NSW coast when they heard about Bonang, 100 km northeast of Orbost in East Gippsland. It was there in 2009 they bought their 184 ha property on Ngarigo and Bidhawal Country.

“Both Graeme and I are keen bushwalkers in our latter years and have a long association with the environment. Our priority is living lightly, and being as independent and sustainable as we can,” Jenny said.

After the property was left unscathed by the 2019-20 bushfires, protecting the land and surrounding unburned areas became even more important. Recently, Jenny and Graeme volunteered to protect the property forever with a conservation covenant.

“As we are ageing and will one day have to move, the covenant makes sure that the property continues to remain and restore itself,” Jenny said.

The property is home to vulnerable Grassy Montane Woodland, and numerous threatened species including Yellow-bellied and Greater Gliders.

Previously used for grazing, the main threat to the property now is Blackberry infestation, which Trust for Nature will work with Jenny and Graeme to control.

“Protecting properties like Jenny and Graeme’s is critical after the bushfires,” said Trust for Nature Area Manager Robyn Edwards. “It will serve as a refuge and corridor for species to move and recolonise burned areas as East Gippsland recovers.”

Through an Australian Government Bushfire Recovery grant, Trust for Nature has been working with East Gippsland landholders to protect and improve unburnt habitat, and help burnt areas recover.

Already 335 ha are in the process of being covenanted. Trust for Nature has also completed over 2,900 ha of pest and weed control, helping 37 threatened species and ecological communities, including Gang-gang Cockatoos, which suffered major declines due to the bushfires.

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



Pictured: Jenny and Graeme, who recently protected habitat on their property forever with a conservation covenant through Trust For Nature.



The draw of the Mallee

For Fiona Murdoch, it is the unassuming nature of the Mallee that makes it so appealing.

“It’s so under-recognised—people see the Mallee as bland and boring and don’t look beneath the surface,” she said.

Although she grew up on the coast, Fiona found herself drawn to Australia’s arid zones. It was this that led Fiona and her husband Phil to purchase their 450 ha property Raakajlim near Colignan in the state’s north west, protected forever by a conservation covenant through Trust for Nature since 2009. Recently they added another 40 ha by taking on a conservation licence over unused road reserves adjoining and within the property.

“Being able to protect the property with a covenant means that the hard work we’ve done has the chance to continue beyond us. We can be sure that even if the property is sold it will never be developed.”

Surrounded on three sides by Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, Raakajlim is a haven for Mallee wildlife and threatened species such as Regent Parrot, Pink Cockatoo and the Arid Bronze Azure Butterfly.

Habitat on the property includes mallee woodlands, riverine

woodlands, and threatened semi-arid woodlands dominated by Slender Cypress Pine. Since purchasing the property, which was partially cleared and previously grazed with sheep, Fiona and Phil have put in years of work to remove old netting and barbed wire fences, control rabbits and weeds and restore vegetation.

Beginning in 2014 they began to fence the entire property to reduce grazing pressure from goats, pigs and overabundant kangaroos. They will complete the 13 km fence in early 2022.

“The Mallee is tough, but the combination of drought in 2019, and over-grazing by kangaroos resulted in soil erosion from wind, and then water when it did rain. This set us back many years,” Fiona said. “We realised we would have to fence the entire property to manage total grazing pressure.”

The fence will help protect plants that wildlife depend on, such as the critically endangered Pink Cockatoos which feed on Slender Cypress Pines, and the endangered Regent Parrots which use the property as a corridor between the national park and the Murray River.

Perhaps the most unusual inhabitant is the Arid Bronze Azure, which tricks sugar ants into raising its caterpillars underground.

Raakajlim protects the largest remaining population of these critically endangered butterflies.

“Fiona and Phil are such inspiring covenantors, they plan for conservation far into the future,” said Trust for Nature Senior Conservation Officer Louise Nicholas.

“They’re always finding a new threatened species, trialling a different planting method, or starting a massive project like this fence. To the north, the area has been heavily developed for horticulture, so their property is an important buffer to Hattah-Kulkyne National Park and adds to the area of protected land in the region.”

Fiona and Phil’s fencing project has been supported by the Australian and Victorian governments, Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Landcare Australia, the Jesse-Chaplin Burch Trust and Bio.R.

For more information about projects in the Mallee region contact Senior Conservation Officer Louise Nicholas on (03) 8631 5888 or louisen@tfn.org.au.

Pictured top: Fiona and her family on their 450 ha property Raakajlim. Inset: Threatened Pink Cockatoos feed on Slender Cypress Pines on the property. Images by Fiona Murdoch.



Woodland haven

Endangered cockatoos, rare wetlands, old red gums: Anne and Andrew Craig's 267 ha Benayeo property, on Wotjobaluk Country west of Horsham, is a special place.

"Once you start looking around you realise how much diversity there is and how many things there are to be intrigued by," said Anne. Even after owning the property for 10 years she recently found a new species—the bright red and green Harlequin Mistletoe.

The property, which Anne and Andrew have volunteered to protect forever with a conservation covenant through Trust for Nature, is home to a diverse range of habitats, from Desert Stringybarks and banksias growing on sand dunes to Yellow Gum and Grey Box growing in wildflower-rich grassy woodlands.

Endangered Buloke trees are food for endangered Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, with fewer than 1,500 birds of the south-eastern subspecies thought to be left in the wild.

Both Anne and Andrew are avid birdwatchers, and particularly enjoy the small woodland birds like threatened Hooded Robins and Diamond Firetails. After both growing up in the city, they bought the property in 2011 while looking for a bush block, and have looked after it ever since.

"On a personal level protecting the land with a conservation covenant means that the work we do won't be undone in the future. On the bigger scale we need more land and bush protected in Australia because national parks just aren't enough," Anne said.

Once protected, Trust for Nature will work with Anne and Andrew to look after habitat on the property. One threat is the pasture grass Phalaris, which Anne and Andrew have been removing from wetlands. Already native wildflowers are returning.

Trust for Nature Senior Conservation Officer Fiona Copley said the Craigs' property has very high conservation significance. "It sits close to Tallageira Nature Conservation Reserve, in a

landscape patchwork consisting of farming and bush blocks, and so helps species move around," she said.

The Craig's covenant has been supported by the Limb Family Foundation through a generous gift to establish the Leaving a Land Legacy project.

"We're very grateful to Janet Limb and the Foundation for enabling this work, which will allow us to engage with landholders across the state. It takes a long time to build relationships and trust with landholders that can eventually lead to protecting more habitat for Victoria's special wildlife," Fiona said.

For more information about projects in the Wimmera region contact Senior Conservation Officer Fiona Copley on (03) 8631 5888 or fionac@tfn.org.au.

Pictured: Anne and Andrew are protecting their 267 ha Wimmera property with a conservation covenant through Trust For Nature.

Healing Wadawurrung Country

Trust for Nature has been getting a hand from Traditional Owners to look after Dog Rocks Reserve on Wadawurrung Country near Geelong.

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation has been doing weed control to help improve the 15 ha reserve, which was donated to Trust for Nature to be protected and managed for its geological, cultural, historical and landscape values. Although now mostly cleared, it would likely have once been covered in Grassy Woodland.

“It means a lot to me to be working on Country,” said Wadawurrung NRM Manager Chris Fagan.

“It means I’m doing my bit for future generations, honouring Elders and repairing Country to somewhat like what it would have been.”

The distinctive granite boulders on the reserve date back to the Devonian period, over 360 million years ago, when large mountain ranges formed in what is now southern Australia. In the last 15 million years, Dog Rocks was an island surrounded by sea, and marine fossils have been found in the area.

“One of the main things we are pushing towards is co-management anywhere on Country, so it’s good to start working on it at Dog Rocks,” said Chris.

Trust for Nature Conservation Officer Chelsea Cooke, who also works at Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, said having Traditional Owners working on Country is an important part of making the reserve healthy again.

“We were here for thousands of years and the Country was pretty healthy. With colonisation came weeds and other introduced species that wiped out all the native ones. Healthy Country means bringing back the flora and fauna,” she said.

“In the future we hope to engage Elders to do cultural surveys on the reserve and see what’s there.”

For more information about projects in the Corangamite region contact Regional Manager Jo Day on (03) 8631 5888 or jod@tfn.org.au.

Pictured: The granite boulders which give Dog Rocks Reserve its name. Image: Susan Maree Maher.



Introducing Kimbarly Dulemerrin Reserve



Kimbarly Dulemerrin, “return of the grasstree” in Bunurong, is the new name for Trust for Nature’s reserve on Bunurong Country in south east Melbourne, determined by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

The name refers to the Austral Grasstrees which are found in the area and will soon be planted on the reserve by Traditional Owners.

Trust for Nature is also working with Traditional Owners to develop a co-management plan, including installing new walking tracks and sign posts that connect to adjacent Lysterfield Park.

“As a Board member and an Aboriginal person living in Victoria on Bunurong Country, I am deeply proud of this naming initiative. I am looking forward to seeing more of this across Victoria in the future. Acknowledging our Traditional Owners and sharing language is just one step towards a reconciled

Australia,” said Trust for Nature Board member Nina Braid.

Kimbarly Dulemerrin Reserve was acquired by Trust for Nature in 1995 as part of a subdivision and was only ever informally named. The 7.1 ha property protects a range of habitats from forests with granite boulders to vulnerable Grassy Forest and Riparian Scrub.

The reserve protects critical habitat on the edge of Melbourne, for vulnerable Powerful Owls which use the mature forest habitat in the reserve for their food and nesting needs. Green Scentbark, Cobra Greenhood and Dandenong Wattle are some of the special plants found in the reserve.

Trust for Nature Area Manager Ben Cullen said the naming is one step towards working more closely with Traditional Owners.

“I’m really looking forward to working with Bunurong Traditional

Owners to look after this place. Kimbarly Dulemerrin is important because it protects habitat for threatened species and helps connect other protected areas in Melbourne.

“It’s a great spot to get a glimpse of a beautiful patch of forest and see birds, and is an interesting stroll for the more adventurous walkers.”

Trust for Nature will be holding an open day at the reserve in spring, and in the future hopes to invite school students onto the property to learn about nature conservation.

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

Pictured: Kimbarly Dulemerrin means “return of the grasstree” in Bunurong.



A win for coastal conservation

Threatened coastal species have a more secure future thanks to the protection of 220 ha of saltmarsh at Corner Inlet and Nooramunga on Gunaikurnai Country in south east Gippsland.

Saltmarsh is a threatened ecosystem in Australia found on land inundated by the tides. Home to salt-tolerant succulents, grasses and sedges, it provides important habitat for migratory shorebirds, critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrots, fish and numerous invertebrates.

Up to half has been lost in Corner Inlet and Nooramunga, largely due to damage from livestock

and changes to tidal conditions through draining and construction of sea walls.

Trust for Nature will protect 220 ha of saltmarsh property at Manns Beach forever through Trust for Nature's conservation covenant program. This project is delivered by Trust for Nature, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, in partnership with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Part of the property has been purchased by Trust for Nature through its Revolving Fund program thanks to a generous donation. The property will be sold to a suitable buyer on the condition that it is protected forever.



Another part of the property will be covenanted by Esme Rash, the current landholder, who has worked with conservation groups for several decades. The property was purchased in 1877 by her great grandfather and she took it over in 1972. She has worked with conservation groups since 2011.

“The beach was always somewhere special for us. I visited as a child particularly at Christmas, and later brought my grandparents, children and now my great-grandchildren. It has never been my intention for it to be built on as it will be the only open space my family will ever have,” Esme said.

“Covenanted the property will preserve it. Whoever takes over will have to abide by the covenant which is a good thing.”

As well as providing habitat for wildlife, saltmarsh protects coasts from erosion and removes large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, storing it in plants and sediment. Protecting saltmarsh avoids this carbon being released back into the atmosphere and contributing to climate change.

Now that the Manns Beach property is being protected, Trust for Nature is working with the landholder, Traditional Owners and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority to maintain and improve the habitat.

Trust for Nature Regional Manager John Hick said improvement and permanent protection of habitat on properties like Manns Beach will help coastal ecosystems adapt to climate change.

“One of the key things we're trying to do here is give coastal ecosystems a chance to move inland as sea levels rise. Protecting a range of habitat within and buffering the saltmarsh ecosystem will allow plants and wildlife to adapt,” John said.

“We're thrilled to be able to protect such a large, high quality area of saltmarsh. Much of the remaining saltmarsh is found on private land, and we are always keen to hear from other landholders who are interested in protecting this special and important habitat 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.

Cows for conservation

Victoria's Patho Plains, on Yorta Yorta Barapa Barapa Country west of Echuca, are home to some of the last remaining native grassland habitat for critically endangered Plains-wanderers. Thanks to Audrey and John Dickins, 45 ha of this grassland will be protected forever with a Trust for Nature conservation covenant.

"It's a special place out on the plains," said Audrey.

Audrey and John bought the property in 2017, and use it to graze young dairy cows. Under the conservation covenant, they will continue to graze cattle at the right time of the year to maintain the ideal habitat for Plains-wanderers and threatened grassland plants like the endangered Red Swainson-pea and vulnerable Long Eryngium.

"I like the idea that the block will never be ploughed up and cropped and I can still do most of the grazing that I want. The beauty of the plains is that I just let it grow what it wants and then I can use it for my stock," said John.

"I can see that there's less and less of the native grasses. Crop farmers are starting to move in and buy land that was traditionally used for grazing. It's nice to think that at least that won't happen on this block."

Unlike most other threatened species, Plains-wanderer and the grasslands they depend on benefit from low-levels of appropriate grazing. Particularly, this means making sure there is grass cover in summer, and grazing early in wet years to keep spring growth down.

Audrey and John have another property on the Patho Plains where Plains-wanderers have been recorded, and sound monitors have been installed on their covenanted property to listen for the birds.

Trust for Nature is working with landholders on the Patho Plains to permanently protect more habitat for these birds. Found from Queensland to South Australia, and once abundant on the Victorian Volcanic Plains, Plains-wanderers have declined significantly in recent decades and rapidly in recent years due mainly to the ongoing extensive loss of habitat.

Plains-wanderers share a physical resemblance to quail, but they are not related to them at all. In a recent study examining evolutionary distinctness combined with extinction risk Plains-wanderers were ranked first amongst all the world's birds. They are of global significance.

"We're so grateful to landholders like Audrey and John who have volunteered to protect their land, and for the ongoing support from all our partners. We would also like to thank the donors who have funded the protection of grasslands through our appeals, securing more habitat for Plains-wanderers forever," said Trust for Nature Area Manager Deanna Marshall.

In 2021, 16 Plains-wanderers bred at Zoos Victoria and Taronga Zoo were released on covenanted properties, Trust for Nature reserves and public reserves as part of a trial reintroduction program. Trust for Nature has worked with Yorta Yorta Traditional Owners to monitor released birds with radio trackers.

This project is supported by the North Central Catchment Management Authority, through funding from the Australian Government's [National Landcare Program](#). The Plains-wanderer trial release is a partnership between Trust for Nature, Zoos Victoria, Northern Plains Conservation Management Network, North Central CMA, Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Parks Victoria and members of the Plains-wanderer National Recovery Team.

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

Pictured: Two critically endangered Plains-wanderers released on a covenanted property on the Patho Plains. Image: Zoos Victoria.

Last refuge for endangered orchid

The plains of south west Victoria used to be covered by vast grasslands. But since the arrival of Europeans, much of the plains has been extensively cleared for farming, and now less than one per cent remains.

Which makes what's left, often highly fragmented, even more precious.

Several of the grassland remnants are found on Sally and Robin Jackson's family's farm, Lake Repose, on Eastern Maar Country east of Dunkeld.

"We bought the farm in 1972 and became interested in the whole idea of covenanting it thanks to Bill Middleton who was formerly at Trust for Nature. We also had some friends who were into conservation who influenced us," Sally said.

In 2001 Sally and her family protected 29.4 ha of grasslands on their property forever under three conservation covenants. The covenants protect critically endangered Plains Grassland and are home to threatened species like the purple-flowered Clover Glycine. Swamps on the property are stopovers for Brolgas.

One particularly special species found on the Jacksons' farm is the critically endangered Gorae Leek Orchid (read more about this species on page 22). The covenants protect two of only four known populations of the species.

"The orchids were discovered by chance by a student from Ballarat who was doing a thesis on grassland plants. They are growing on a corner of the property cut off from the rest by a swamp. It's very exciting that they are hanging on," said Sally.

Weeds are the main threat to the grassland plants on the property, which Trust for Nature has worked with the Jacksons to control.

"The covenants protect nearly 90 per cent of the remaining Gorae Leek Orchid population in the world, demonstrating how important it is to protect habitat on private land," said Trust for Nature Conservation Officer Adam Merrick.



The Victorian Volcanic Plain, which the Jackson property is part of, stretches across 2.3 million ha from west of Melbourne to the South Australian border.

In just four generations, more than 99 per cent of the plains vegetation has been lost. It contains now critically endangered temperate grassland and grassy woodland, among other habitats such as ephemeral wetlands and lakes.

Trust for Nature, funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, has protected over 201 ha of grassland, grassy woodlands and a large wetland. That's on top of another 36 covenants protecting more than 1,270 ha of the Victorian Volcanic Plain in the Glenelg-Hopkins region.

For more information about projects in the Glenelg-Hopkins region contact Conservation Officer Adam Merrick on 0458 965 333 or adamm@tfn.org.au.

Community of conservationists

It was luck that brought Jean and David Nicholls to their property at Cottles Bridge on Wurundjeri Country near Hurstbridge.

They were visiting a colleague for a work function in 1990 when they spotted the beautiful bush block across the road. They bought it the same day. Ten years later they protected the 12 ha property under a conservation covenant with Trust for Nature, for which they receive a rates discount through the Nillumbik Shire.

“It’s just a delightful place to live. Hearing the birds in the morning is wonderful. We got into our car this morning and had phascogale tracks all over the windscreen,” said David.

Jean and David both grew up in the country—Jean in Healesville after migrating from Scotland; David in the Wimmera—to which they attribute their love of nature and open spaces. David worked as an oil engineer all over the world until he and Jean settled in Melbourne. In 2021 they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Before the Nicholls bought it, the Cottles Bridge property was set up as a pig farm after an unsuccessful attempt at broadacre farming which contour ploughed the three hills on the property.

About half the property was cleared pasture when they brought it and Jean and David have let it recover over the years. The property connects to a large patch of remnant forest, and protects vulnerable Valley Grassy Forest and Creekline Herb-rich Woodland. It is home to several dozen very large, old trees and threatened species such as Powerful Owl, Brush-tailed Phascogale, Barking Owl, Grey-headed Flying Fox and Common Dunnart have all been observed on the land.

Jean and David have fenced two one-hectare enclosures to keep out kangaroos and allow native grasses to flourish, and pump water up hill to a wetland they call the ‘Frog Bog’. They’ve successfully controlled weeds such as Blackberry and Sweet Pittosporum.

David has been an active (and founding) member of the Dunmoochin Landcare Group. Much of the original vegetation in the local area was kept intact by artists who were drawn to the area’s natural landscape in the 1950s and the movement pioneered one of Australia’s first artists’ communes. The community remains very active in conservation. The Nicholls have maintained the property’s original buildings and brought in an architect to design their mudbrick house.

Part of the Landcare group’s work was developing a management plan for the Cottles Bridge area’s 30 properties.

“People here wouldn’t have it any other way. Nobody is a thorn in the side who wants to be clearing. We’re a very cohesive community—more than half have been here for 30 years. Everybody knows everybody,” David said.

Now retired Jean and David enjoy watching and painting all the wildlife passing through their property.



Pictured: David Nicholls in front of a very old Red Box.

Ambitious goal for private land conservation

In 2021 governments around the world recognised the inherent value of nature conservation, with more than 70 countries, including Australia, committing to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and oceans by 2030.

Responding to this commitment, and the opportunities it presents, the Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA—of which Trust for Nature is a member), together with the Pew Charitable Trust, has formed Our Natural Legacy, a broad coalition of conservation, farming and land management organisations.

Our Natural Legacy seeks to drive a significant increase in the number of Privately Protected Areas (PPAs) across the country—from less than two per cent of private land (or nine million ha) currently, to five per cent (or around 23 million ha) by 2030.

ALCA and Pew have recently launched the Our Natural Legacy website (ournaturallegacy.org.au), which profiles the important work of private landholders as custodians of their land and experts in its management and regeneration. It highlights that conservation landholders come in many forms—including farmers, Indigenous groups and conservation organisations—and all have a vital and unique role to play in extending our protected area network. A number of Trust for Nature covenantors, and conservation reserves, have been profiled.

An important part of the Our natural legacy campaign is to demonstrate the inherent as well

as financial value of increasing our PPAs. The project aims to illustrate and quantify the costs, benefits and economic impact of increasing PPAs in Australia to five per cent. We know that nature provides us all with 'ecosystem services' – such as through trees providing carbon storage and coastal mangroves providing storm surge protection. Nature also provides us with social benefits, including recreation, health and wellbeing, education value and cultural value. However the monetary value of those services can be hard to quantify, as they are not generally tradeable in the marketplace, and tend to accrue to society as a whole. These are therefore called 'non-market benefits'.

ALCA is engaging with government, including through pre-budget submissions, to make the case that public investment in environmental protection is needed to ensure these non-market benefits are realised, while also unlocking the market benefits that do exist but are too small to induce private investment.

As well as government funding, Our Natural Legacy will require co-contributions from philanthropic donors, and private landholders willing to establish and maintain covenant agreements.

Trust for Nature will be doing its bit to reach the national five per cent target by continuing to work with Victorian landholders. Under our new Strategic Plan, Trust for Nature's goal is to protect another 35,000 ha of habitat on private land by 2025.



Pictured: Trust for Nature is one of the organisations around Australia working to raise the amount of protected private land to five per cent.

Gorae Leek Orchid

Prasophyllum diversiflorum

The critically endangered Gorae Leek Orchid is so named for the town where the species was first found in western Victoria—and then promptly lost when its habitat was cleared for farming. The orchid was rediscovered on a nearby roadside in the 1980s.

What's in a name?

Leek orchids take their name from their fleshy green leaves, which sprout from an underground tuber in autumn and winter. In spring, the orchid produces up to 40 white, green and reddish flowers on stems up to 60 cm high. Their sweet scent attracts pollinators such as native bees and wasps.

Swamp-dwellers

Gorae Leek Orchids are found in damp areas alongside creeks and streams in native grasslands, and depend on seasonal flooding to trigger their growth. Like other native orchids, Gorae Leek Orchids form symbiotic relationships with particular soil fungi, which provide nutrients to the orchid, particularly when it is germinating. This makes them difficult to grow in captivity and reintroduce into the wild.

Lost and found

The Gorae Leek Orchid was first discovered in 1941 at Gorae West in south western Victoria, but this site was developed for agriculture in 1948. It wasn't until 1983 that the orchid was rediscovered growing on a nearby roadside. Only four populations are currently known.

Shrinking home

Gorae Leek Orchids may once have been found throughout Victoria's western grasslands. Grassland once covered about a third of the state but over 95 per cent has been lost to development. Like Gorae Leek Orchids, many grassland species are highly threatened and much of their remaining habitat is found on private land and poorly represented in the public reserve system.

Huge family

With nearly 30,000 species known worldwide and more than 400 in Victoria orchids are one of the most diverse groups of plants. While many are still common, others are extremely rare including Victorian species that Trust for Nature is working to protect such as the Purple Diuris and five species of spider orchids from western woodlands.



Securing a future

The most important thing we can do to protect Gorae Leek Orchids now is protect their remaining populations from further habitat loss, weeds and activities that disrupt creeks and streams. More than 90 per cent of the orchid's remaining habitat is found on private land. Fortunately two of the remaining populations on private land have been protected forever with a conservation covenant through Trust for Nature, which is working with the landholders to ensure the survival of this species.

Planning for the future

Trust for Nature has developed a new, 10-year Statewide Conservation Plan.

The plan identifies the most important parts of Victoria to protect on private land to ensure that the state's most threatened wildlife and ecosystems have the best chance in the future. Since we developed the initial Statewide Conservation Plan in 2013, the imperative to protect and restore habitat for Victoria's plants and animals, in the face of continuing habitat loss, species decline and accelerating climate change, has only become more urgent.

In 2017, the Victorian Government released its 20-year conservation strategy, Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037, which included a concrete target of 200,000 ha of habitat on private land to be protected by 2037. The strategy also resulted in the preparation of many new government datasets relating to the natural environment. It made sense to update the Trust's conservation plan to encompass this new information.

The new plan focusses on adaptive conservation planning and conservation actions which can help address threats on private land and ensure that sufficient land is protected to

ensure the viability, integrity and resilience of ecosystems and species in a changing climate.

A fundamental conservation aim through this plan is to identify those locations on private land where we can best help maintain healthy ecosystems and thriving populations of native plants and animals. For example, we know that nearly 90 per cent of the remaining Plains Grassland and Chenopod Shrublands is found on private land, so prioritising the protection of these ecosystems is critically important. We need ecosystems to be functioning as well as they can, and we need common species to stay common so that we continue to have plants and wildlife performing fundamental ecological roles and 'ecosystem services'.

So how does the new plan compare to our previous one?

First, we refined our methods to focus as tightly as possible on important areas on private land which form part of large, ecologically significant landscapes or habitat patches. These areas will provide the best chance of maintaining ecosystems and

species. This work was done with help from RMIT University and DELWP's Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research (ARI).

Second, we did a range of analyses to identify areas on private land where the Trust can help mitigate the impacts of climate change on the natural environment. These include: protecting climate change refuges, protecting coastal saltmarsh habitats above expected sea-level rise and protecting land which provides opportunities for restoration of degraded habitat.

Third, we updated our analyses of the plants and animals most dependent on private land for their ongoing persistence, using large datasets and habitat models provided to us by ARI. We also established concrete targets for every conservation objective and goal to help inform our planning, delivery and evaluation of this 10-year plan.

The plan will soon be available at trustfornature.org.au.

Pictured: Trust for Nature's updated Statewide Conservation Plan identifies the habitat on private land that is the most important to protect, such as this grassland in northern Victoria.

The ins and outs of nest boxes

Many wildlife species depend on tree hollows for roosting and breeding, but many hollows are lost when forests and woodlands are cleared. Nest boxes can be a substitute.

In Victoria, around 14 threatened species such as the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Squirrel Glider, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo and Powerful Owl rely on tree hollows.

Hollows take a long time to form—small hollows start developing when a tree reaches around 70 years old; large hollows only develop over centuries. The loss of hollow-bearing trees to development is an ongoing threat to many species such as critically endangered Leadbeater's Possums.

The best hollows are the ones already on your property. The next best are those that will form over decades as trees age. By protecting your land with a conservation covenant, you have already taken a huge step to ensuring there are homes for wildlife in the future.

Nest boxes can be useful when natural hollows are in short supply. Here are some key things to think about if you're keen to put up a box:

- **Every species has its own preference when it comes to hollow size, depth and shape.** The size of the entrance hole is particularly important – even a few millimetres can make a difference. Some wildlife will supply its own nest box linings, but wood shavings can help some species such as parrots feel at home.
- **Boxes should be made from non-toxic materials.** A rough surface can help wildlife get in and out. Thick wood or insulation material and avoiding gaps will keep out drafts and reduce extreme temperature fluctuations.
- **Boxes should be positioned to minimise wind, rain and overheating.** They should be placed higher than three metres to deter people and dogs. Attachments should be secure and allow for tree growth.
- **Boxes should be placed in locations that maximise their benefits for the target species** – for example along creeklines or gullies where the habitat is naturally more productive.
- **Working in trees can be dangerous** – an arborist could help you install boxes.
- **Nest boxes should be inspected regularly** to make sure they are safe and functional, but try to avoid lifting the lid too often and disturbing the inhabitants
- **Keep a record of who's using your nest boxes and when.**
- **Introduced species like bees, mynas and starlings can move into nest boxes** and should be monitored.
- **Be patient** – it can take years for nest boxes to be used.

If you would like further information, please contact Trust For Nature staff or the Stewardship Coordinator Karen Tymms on 0417 327 514 or karent@tfn.org.au

Pictured inset: Brush-tailed Phascogales depend on hollows, and left: Nest boxes can be useful when natural hollows are in short supply. Images by Peter Hanson.

Another
784 ha
in Victoria
protected!

Adding to Victoria's protected areas

Conservation covenants are one of the recognised mechanisms for protecting land in Australia as part of the formal system of protected areas. Putting a conservation covenant on a property is consequently one of the single most important steps a landholder can take to protect plants and animals. It truly gives those species 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 areas that have been identified in Trust for Nature's *Statewide Conservation Plan* as priority habitats and landscapes 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 voluntarily covenanted in the last six months, thanks to the generous commitment and vision of those landholders.

Pictured: Moora Moora Cooperative Community near Healesville protected 183.6 ha of habitat for critically endangered Leadbeater's Possums. Image: Moora Moora Cooperative Community.

Corangamite

Hexham	9.2 ha
Durham Lead	24.2 ha

Glenelg-Hopkins

Dunkeld	197.1 ha
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Goulburn-Broken

High Camp (Cooee Park)	36.4 ha
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North Central

Gunbower	2.8 ha
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North East

Glenlyon	20.5 ha
Killawarra	51.4 ha
Chiltern	155.5 ha
Bonegilla	19.5 ha

Port Phillip

Yellingbo	5.7 ha
Toolebewong	183.6 ha
Macclesfield	1.1 ha
Toolangi	48.6 ha

West Gippsland

Inverloch	9.2 ha
Port Albert	4 ha

Wimmera

Antwerp	19 ha
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Protecting rare wetlands

‘Chain of ponds’ waterways systems, strings of deep ponds often linked by grassy shallow channels, were once common across south-east Australia, but many have been lost through historic land management practices.

Trust for Nature’s Revolving Fund recently purchased 55 ha at Stockdale on Gunaikurnai Country, including 600 metres of the Providence Ponds waterway within the Perry River/Providence Ponds and Gippsland Lakes catchments. The property will be sold to a suitable buyer on the condition that it is protected forever with a conservation covenant. Proceeds from the sale will be used to purchase additional properties that will be protected forever. The ponds are home to threatened vegetation types and a variety of animals including Common Long-necked Turtles and vulnerable Flinders Pygmy Perch, a small fish confined to river catchments in eastern Victoria and north east Tasmania.

The property is home to forests that are under-represented in public reserves, dominated by White Stringybark. Victoria’s largest reptile, the endangered Lace Monitor, is also found on the property. Nearly half of the monitor’s remaining habitat is found on private land.

“It’s a beautiful property with scenic views across the ponds, waterways and woodlands,” said Trust for Nature Revolving Fund Manager Michael Fry. “We’re thrilled to be able to play a part in protecting this special ecosystem.”

The Trust is working closely with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) to protect and improve the health of the ponds and adjoining habitats on the property through the Protecting Our Ponds project. This project is supported by Trust for Nature and WGCMA through funding from the Victorian Government’s Our Catchments, Our Communities Program. The current project will fund further aquatic surveys and specific weed control works until mid-2024.

Once sold, Trust for Nature will work with the new landholder and partner organisations to continue improving habitats on the property.

The proposed conservation covenant will protect the significant ecological values of the property at the highest level. A smaller area will allow for other activities such as hobby farming, with the potential for a greater level of protection and habitat restoration depending on the future landholder’s wishes. There are several options for a house site subject to council approval.

To register your interest in any of our Revolving Fund properties for sale, contact Michael Fry on 0418 107 413 or revolvingfund@tfn.org.au.

Visit trustfornature.org.au/properties-for-sale to view other listings.

Pictured: Unique ‘chain of ponds’ are habitat for threatened freshwater species.

Marj Lite and Dave Cameron tell us about the thrill of finding threatened Powerful Owls on their Grampians property, protected forever with a conservation covenant.



It was the call of the Powerful Owl that excited us the most though, as we knew how important hearing that call was. We heard them quite a few times over the years but it wasn't until October 2021 that we actually saw them for the first time and it was quite by accident. We were looking for orchids when we saw some whitewash under a black wattle. We looked up and were amazed to see a family of four glaring down at us. It's wonderful to have observed them on our place. Their range will extend well beyond our fence, but it's good to know the habitat we have protected enables them to breed and raise young.



The slow, "whooo-hoo" of a Powerful Owl certainly got our attention as we slept under the stars on our newly purchased property, Bushlands, back in 2007. We spent quite a few weekends camping there in those early days discovering what it had to offer. Most nights we heard something calling. Usually, a Southern Boobook, a Tawny Frogmouth, or the "yip yap" of Sugar Gliders. The tinging of bats were also common calls during the night.



Our 40 ha Trust for Nature covenanted property comprises mostly Plains Grassy Woodland with its fields of Bulbine Lily in the spring. It has other vegetation classes too all of which add to the diversity of the property. Some 75 bird species, 30 species of orchid plus lots of other flora and fauna can be found on Bushlands.

Weeding and controlling the feral animal pests is really all we need to do to preserve the property's diversity. Lots of big redgums and other eucalypts with multiple hollows provide great nesting and perching for Powerful Owls and the other native wildlife that inhabit our little bit of bush in the western Grampians. We are proud to have protected it forever.

TRUST FOR NATURE **STRATEGIC PLAN** AT A GLANCE

OUR VISION

A future in which Victoria's nature is valued, protected and thriving.

OUR PURPOSE

We work with Victorians to protect nature on private land forever.

STRATEGIC CONSERVATION

1. PERMANENT PROTECTION IN PRIORITY LANDSCAPES

Add 35,000 hectares of priority conservation land on privately owned land to Victoria's protected area network

2. RESTORATION IN PRIORITY LANDSCAPES

Work with partners to restore 5,000 hectares of private land in priority areas

3. MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING HABITAT QUALITY

Maintain and improve the quality of Trust for Nature's protected habitat

4. ENGAGEMENT FOR GREATER OUTCOMES

Increase our partnerships, reach and impact to help Victorians protect nature on private land

5. FINANCE AND INNOVATION

Substantially grow our annual revenue from the public, private and philanthropic sectors to support private land conservation

6. OUR PEOPLE

We have a safe and inclusive workplace, and our people are motivated and supported to achieve strategic conservation