

Conservation

BULLETIN

Rainforest retreat

Protecting an East Gippsland sanctuary

The big wet

Boom and bust after La Niña



Conserving cockies, protecting parrots

Meet some of our most endangered birds



TRUST FOR
NATURE
Habitat forever



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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 Charles Meredith, Jennifer Wolcott, Andrew Brookes BA, MAICD, Binda Gokhale, Dr Sandra Brizga, Sonya Rand, Jill Smith AM, Lisa Darmanin.

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 Trust for Nature East Gippsland team in the field at Flanagan Island. Image by Ben Williams.

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Late last year representatives from nearly 200 countries met in Montreal to thrash out a new deal to protect the world's biodiversity, a process happening alongside and increasingly linked to efforts to address climate change. The result: an agreement to protect a third of the world's land and sea areas by 2030, and to restore a third of degraded ecosystems. Protecting habitat on private land will be an essential part of this.

Australia has already endorsed the goals and last year we also saw some welcome proposals from the Federal Government, including a threatened species action plan, reforms to environmental law, and a proposal for a "nature repair market" to drive private investment into conservation. That's the big challenge ahead: finding the money to halt and reverse the loss of Australia's wildlife.

It's an exciting time to be part of this effort, and I am thrilled to be taking the reins of Trust for Nature. I look forward to getting to know our supporters, partners and the landholders who volunteer to protect habitat on their properties forever — you are making such a huge contribution to safeguarding Victoria's environment. I also thank Vic Marles for her 13 years of overseeing Trust for Nature and everything that she achieved in her time.

One of my first and most delightful tasks as CEO was to attend our 50th birthday party at Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne, where we had a wonderful afternoon of music, enlightenment and celebrating our state's unique wildlife. It was great to see so many faces young and older, and hear stories of Trust for Nature's history.

I was also pleased to highlight the role of women in our sector, through our Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast hosted with Bush Heritage in March. Thank you to all who made this event possible, including our guest speaker, Nicola Toki from New Zealand Forest and Bird.

Heavy rainfall over recent months has caused devastation for some landholders, and we extend our sympathies to those affected by flooding. Although higher rainfall has been good news for some ecosystems (read more on page 12), it leaves a lot to clean up in damage to infrastructure, businesses and livelihoods.

In the months and years ahead I'm looking forward to finding new ways to drive investment into conservation in Victoria, continuing and building on our partnerships with Aboriginal Victorians, and, of course, protecting and restoring more of Victoria's environment, guided by our Statewide Conservation Plan.

In the following pages you'll read about some of our recent efforts and the amazing people who are helping to ensure Victoria's wildlife and plants have homes to live in forever. Happy reading!

Sincerely

Corinne Proske
CEO, Trust for Nature



News & updates

Survey success

To all those that have responded to Trust for Nature's 2022 Supporter Survey, thank you! Your thoughts, comments and feedback on Trust for Nature, private land conservation, and looking after nature will help us improve the way we communicate with you, whether you're a landholder, donor, or someone who is passionate about protecting Victoria's native plants, animals, and habitats. Thank you!

Join like-minded landholders

Land Covenantors Victoria, founded in 2021, is an independent, not-for-profit, member-driven organisation. It was established to represent, support and connect landholders with conservation covenants and encourage more Victorians to protect habitat on their properties. Read inspiring stories, and join for free, on their website: landcovenantors.org.au.

Supporting the next generation of land managers

In December we celebrated the nine most recent graduates of our Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management for First Nations students. This is the fifth year Trust for Nature has run this course with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Narrap Rangers, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, and Holmesglen. Students gained accreditation in skills like weed control and chainsaw use, while learning on Country from Elders and land management experts. Thirty-five students have now graduated from the course. Thank you to supporters of the course, including the Victorian Government.



Graduates of the 2022 Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management. Image by Annette Ruzicka.

Thank you to supporters

Thank you to all who donated during our recent fundraising appeal. Your support helps us protect Victoria's native plants, animals and their habitat. With two-thirds of the state privately owned, and more than 80 per cent of this already cleared of native habitat, it is essential that we protect what's left to safeguard threatened species like the Plains-wanderer, Southern Bent-wing Bat and Matted Flax-lily. Your support makes an incredible difference, thank you!

Winners announced

Congratulations to Ruth Flowers and Emma Godden, the winners of our competition to celebrate 50 years of protecting Victoria's environment. Ruth has won a two-night stay at Boroka Downs in Gariwerd/Grampians and Emma won two nights at Boogoolum on Bunurong Country on the Mornington Peninsula. Thank you to both accommodation providers who generously donated the prizes. Both properties are protected with conservation covenants — check them out for an environmentally friendly weekend away and a chance to see conservation in action.

Pictured: Boroka Downs in Gariwerd/Grampians. Inset: Boogoolum on the Mornington Peninsula, Bunurong Country.



BOROKA DOWNS
experience the magic



Vale Richard Ferrier

Trust for Nature was saddened to learn of the passing of Richard Ferrier, who was an early adopter of conservation covenants and instrumental in helping the Trust for Nature team in the Mallee. A keen nature lover with a special interest in birds and an excellent farmer and steward of the land, Richard was a founder of the Birchip Landcare Group. He was an essential conduit in the community for any land management and conservation issues. When the Mallee pipeline replaced channels and dams, Richard and some other dedicated community members instigated environmental watering points in the now dry creeklines through the Wimmera Mallee Region. Trust for Nature extends our condolences to Richard's family.

Richard Ferrier.

News & updates



Celebrating 50 years

In November we marked our 50th anniversary with a glorious afternoon at Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne on Wurundjeri Country, where we shared stories of Trust for Nature's history. Thank you to all who came along, young and old, and thank you to special guests Jess Hitchcock, Sean Dooley and Reptile Encounters, who provided a wonderful showcase of some of Victoria's threatened species — including a Barking Owl who stole the show. Also thank you to Mabo Mabo who kept us fed during the proceedings.



Goulburn Broken Regional Manager Shelagh Curmi and CEO Corinne Proske cut the Gang-gang cake to celebrate 50 years. Image by Annette Ruzicka.

Guests learn about some of Victoria's special wildlife courtesy of Reptile Encounters, including this South-eastern Red-tailed Black-cockatoo. Image by Annette Ruzicka.



SUPPORTER PROFILE: Connecting to nature

Daniel Benincasa grew up in Melbourne's northern suburbs. Darebin Creek on Wurundjeri Country was a refuge where he'd explore and catch little fish. It was where he first discovered an appreciation of nature.

"These things were here well before we were here, and that's why they're special," he said.

These days the Dandenongs are his backyard and he works and volunteers in looking after the local environment, including with Traditional Owners. It was in the Dandenongs where he found connection to the land, through understanding local plants and how the ecosystem works. This appreciation led to a desire to help stop destruction of the natural environment.

"I realised that there's a bigger picture than me. For non-Indigenous people, who are we to come here and get rid of so much natural habitat in a flash of time? We have an obligation to give back."

Daniel is one of the many generous supporters of Trust for Nature.

"Trust for Nature for me enables a connection to ecology and raises awareness of the importance of nature. Importantly, it includes the human element, engaging people in the story of conservation from all walks of life, from farmers to dyed-in-the-wool conservationists to retirees."

Thank you to all our supporters

Our plan to protect Victoria's environment

Our updated 2021-2030 Statewide Conservation Plan identifies the areas of Victoria that are most important to protect. Based on the best available conservation science, we've identified 18 priority landscapes across the state that make the greatest contribution to conservation on private land. We've also identified the areas that are most important for threatened species, protecting waterways and coasts, and as climate refuges.

Read the plan on our website: trustfornature.org.au/resources/statewide-conservation-plan-2

Have you sold your covenanted property?

Conservation covenants are forever — that's the beauty and the power of what we do at Trust for Nature. They even remain in place when a property is sold to a new owner. It's important to let us know if you have sold a covenanted property, so that we can get in touch with new owners and discuss the responsibilities of managing land for conservation and provide assistance and advice. Call the Stewardship Coordinator on 0417 327 514 or (03) 8631 5888 to let us know if your land is changing hands.

Saving landscapes under threat

In the face of the biodiversity and climate crises, it's more important than ever that scarce resources are placed in the areas where they can have the most impact. Trust for Nature's Statewide Conservation Plan, released in 2022, identifies 18 landscapes across the state that will make the greatest contribution towards conservation on private land, helping to save vulnerable plants and animals.

The Western and Eastern Riverina encompass some of the most highly-cleared parts of Victoria where there is an urgent need to protect as much remnant habitat as possible to improve the survival prospects of the species that live there.

In the Western Riverina focal landscape, centred on the Patho Plains, the Murray floodplain and the lower Avoca and lower Loddon floodplains, the Trust's priority is to continue protecting and managing the nationally endangered Northern Plains grassland community, along with threatened woodlands and wetlands.

With a total area of more than 150,000 hectares, the landscape of Plains Grasslands, Chenopod Shrublands, Riverine Grassy Woodlands and Wetlands is an important home to animals and plants such as the Pale Sun Moth, Australian Painted Snipe, Striped Legless Lizard, Fat-tailed Dunnart, Red Swainson-pea, Cane Grass and Ridged Water-milfoil.

It's also the last stronghold for one of the planet's most critically endangered birds, the Plains-wanderer—a quail-like bird totally dependent on these grasslands and appropriate management.

With nearly 90 per cent of this landscape's remaining native vegetation existing on private land, landowners are critical to saving this special bird and the last of the grasslands.

Trust for Nature Conservation Science Advisor Doug Robinson said: "Working closely with landholders, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria, the Victorian Government and other partners, the Western Riverina is a landscape where there has been a huge increase in the extent of protected areas on public and private land over the last twenty-five years, totalling more than 7000 ha of habitat now protected forever."

Lace Monitors are one of the priority species found in the Eastern Riverina focal landscape. They depend on large old trees with hollows. Image by Blake Hose.

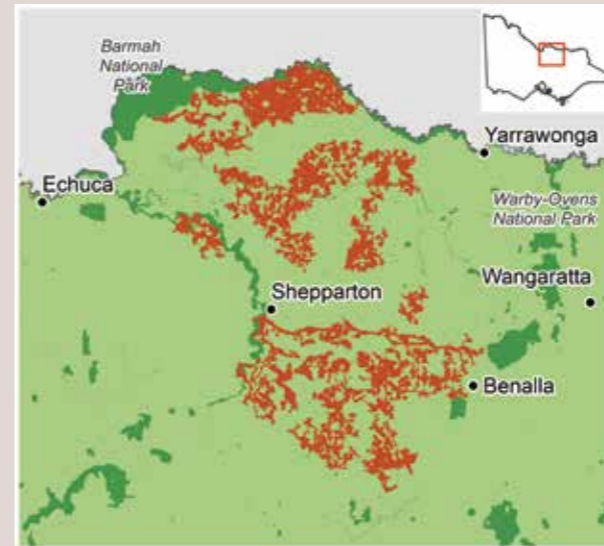


“However, it is critical to continue our protection program here to build on these existing protected areas and prevent further loss of these threatened ecosystems and species.

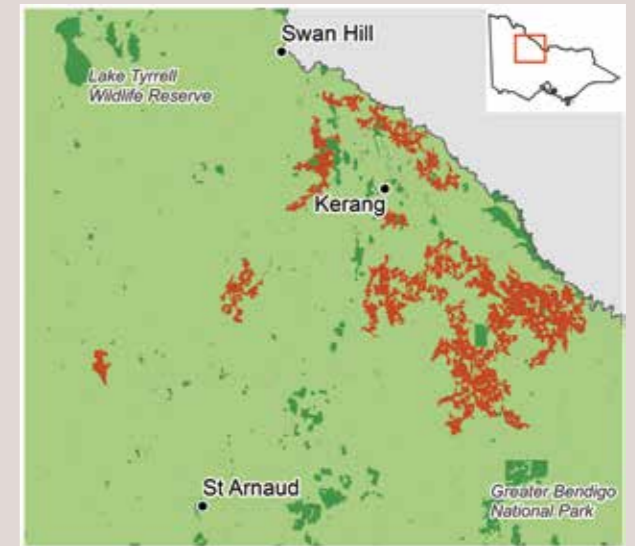
“We are optimistic that if we continue to have funding in place to support landowners to protect and manage their land for nature as well as for sustainable farming practices, we can keep making a huge difference there.”

The same approach also applies in the Eastern Riverina focal landscape, located in northern Victoria between Barmah, Shepparton, Euroa, Benalla and Yarrowonga. The almost 170,000 hectares of Plains Woodlands, Riverine Grassy Woodlands, Box-ironbark Forests and Dry Forests remaining within this landscape is critical habitat for Squirrel Gliders, Swift Parrots, Grey-crowned Babblers, Lace Monitors, Yarran Wattle, Small Scurf-pea and Euroa Guinea-flower.

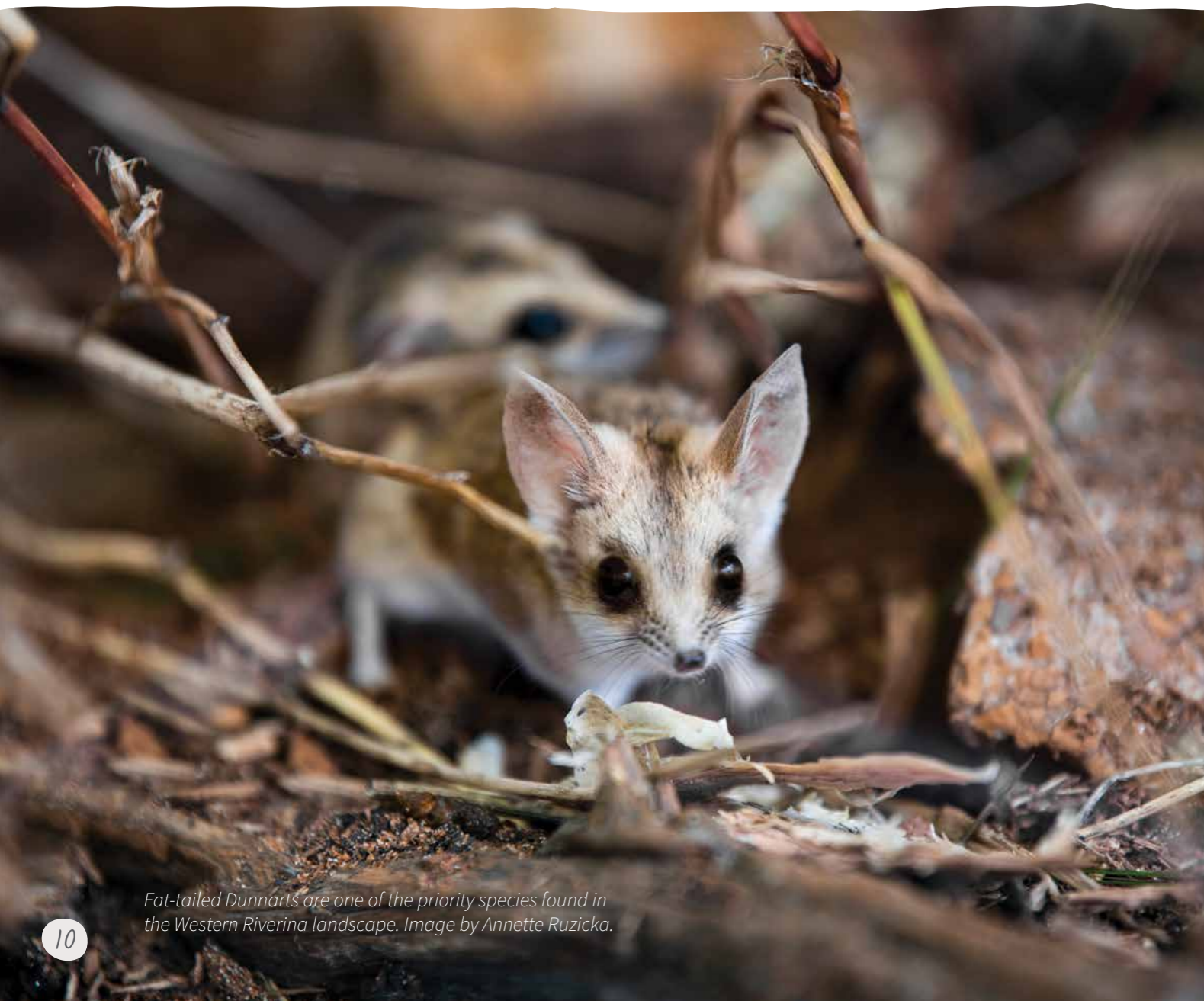
“There is a real urgency in protecting and looking after what’s left of this landscape before it gets transformed into more intensive land uses,” Doug said. “In the thirty years or so that I have been working in this area we have seen Bush Stone-curlews plummet in numbers to a point close to extinction; and populations of



The Eastern Riverina encompasses nearly 170,000 ha of northern Victoria, over 90 per cent of which is found on private land.



The Western Riverina landscape encompasses 155,000 ha of central northern Victoria.



Fat-tailed Dunnarts are one of the priority species found in the Western Riverina landscape. Image by Annette Ruzicka.



Red Swainson-peas are a vulnerable grassland wildflower found in the Western Riverina. Image by Kirsten Hutchison.

many threatened plants have declined due to drought, weed invasion, over-grazing by herbivores and a lack of appropriate biomass management. Like most of our focal landscapes that are located in agricultural landscapes, time is running out for these species and their habitats unless we massively scale up our protection and active management efforts with willing landholders and partners.”

Trust for Nature’s Statewide Conservation Plan provides goals and targets for strategic conservation of ecosystems and species on private land across Victoria over the next decade.

“For any organisation to be effective it needs to know where it’s going and where it wants to have the most impact,” Doug said. “This plan aims to do just that. The challenge now for all of us is to help make it happen at scale and soon, while we still have the chance to improve the health of these priority places and species.”



Trust for Nature team members Jiarra Atkinson and Shelagh Curmi with a large River Red Gum on Tomlinson's Swamp Reserve.

Big wet brings big benefits to nature

Victoria's above average rainfall in 2022 resulted in devastation for many people due to widespread flooding, however this extended La Niña period has also brought some significant benefits for the natural world.

Water is essential for the health of ecosystems whether wetlands or woodlands. More water stimulates plant growth which in turn provides food for invertebrates, and the animals that eat them. Three years of La Niña has resulted in extensive inundation of wetlands, creeks, floodplains and terrestrial habitats, meaning a vital injection of energy and food back into these ecosystems, leading to successful flowering, seedset and breeding events for many species.

Trust for Nature's Tomlinson's Swamp Reserve in the Goulburn Broken catchment is one place that has benefited enormously from Victoria's wet weather. The reserve is a breeding site for threatened Brolgas and also provides habitat for other threatened species, including Intermediate Egret, Sloane's Froglet and wetland plants like Slender Water-ribbons.

Trust for Nature's Goulburn Broken Regional Manager, Shelagh Curmi, said Tomlinson's Swamp Reserve has seen an abundance of life and diversity over the past two years, thanks to the increase in rainfall.

"The reserve usually only fills about every five years," she said. "But it's now been full for two whole years, which is so wonderful. There are tadpoles everywhere, as well as frogs, snakes and waterbirds like Pacific Herons and spoonbills in good numbers. We even recently saw an Australian Hobby fishing for frogs. This isn't a water bird, but this kind of abundance in the wetland allows animals to be opportunistic like this. There's so much food for everyone — it's fantastic."

Another area benefiting from the high rainfall is Trust for Nature's Long Swamp Reserve near Maryborough in north central Victoria on Dja Dja Wurrung Country, which has filled for an extended period for the time since the 1960s. The 178-hectare reserve is at the heart of a cluster of wetlands on the Moolooroot Plains.



Trust for Nature's Long Swamp Reserve filled in 2022 for the first time in over 50 years. Image by Kirsten Hutchison.



In the 1960s the swamp was drained as part of a plan to stop salinity. Recognising its conservation significance, Trust for Nature purchased the property in two parts: 40 hectares in 1992 and another 138 hectares in 2016, both with thanks to generous donations and support of the local community in particular the Murray family, along with support from the Victorian Government and North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA). The drain was filled in at the end of 2020 with support from NCCMA, allowing the wetland to fill again at last.

“Long Swamp Reserve is the only deep freshwater marsh in the Moolort Plains wetland complex, so it’s really significant,” said Trust for Nature Senior Conservation Officer Kirsten Hutchison. “It protects a large area of cane-grass wetland vegetation and is habitat to so many threatened and vulnerable species.”



Since being inundated, the endangered Growling Grass Frog has been recorded on the property for the first time. Threatened Hardhead and Australasian Shoveler ducks were also recently seen, as well as Whiskered Terns, White-winged Black Terns and many Australian Shelducks and Black Swans.

Likewise at Neds Corner Station on Ngintait Country. Growling Grass Frogs were recorded at multiple locations in the flooded wetlands that had filled for the first time since 2016 while wildflowers were abundant across the property, including some endangered species such as Milkwort Sunray recorded in the thousands.

“Obviously,” said Doug Robinson—the Trust’s Conservation Science Advisor—“the rain has also benefited weeds and pest animals, but I would take an abundance of nature in all its forms any day rather than what we are seeing more and more in the dry periods between these La Niña events where ecosystems, native plants and animals are under constant stress due to the lack of moisture and food.

Top: Growling Grass Frogs are one of the threatened species that has benefited from rain — and were recently found for the first time on Long Swamp Reserve. Image by Annette Ruzicka.

Left: Flooding at Neds Corner Station in December 2022. Image by Bert Lobert.



“What is now critical for us as land managers is to give these recovering ecosystems and species’ populations the best chance possible by reducing other threats from weeds, pest animals and so on as much as possible.

“Every time you help a plant or animal population on your property survive to raise another generation of young, it is a small but vital step in keeping that species and its natural environment healthy.”

Rains at Neds Corner Station triggered impressive flowering of Noon flowers. Image by Doug Robinson.



Ecological thinning

Now is the perfect opportunity to build on the gains made in ecological health over the past three years and aim to keep improving the prospects for habitats, plants and animals before the next dry spell. One positive action in many dry forest and woodland ecosystems is thinning unnaturally dense stands of regrowth eucalypts. Dense stands of young, similarly-aged trees reduce the cover of ground-dwelling plants, prevent development of the hollows that so many forest and woodland animals depend on and lead to slower growth rates of trees. In general, where ecological thinning takes place it has been found to have mostly positive or neutral effects on different plant and animal groups. If you think habitat on your land might benefit from thinning, chat with your local Trust for Nature team member for advice: [trustfornature/about-us/our-people](https://trustfornature.org.au/about-us/our-people)

For information and suggestions about other useful actions you can take to help mitigate the impacts of climate change on your native animals and plants check out our resources: [trustfornature/what-we-do/climate-change](https://trustfornature.org.au/what-we-do/climate-change)



Native woodland before thinning in 2020.



The same woodland after thinning in 2022. Note the renewed growth of groundcover plants.

Conserving cockies, protecting parrots

Of Australia's nearly 60 species of parrots and cockatoos, more than half can be found in Victoria. One of the reasons is that Victoria is a diverse state, with ecosystems ranging from rainforests and alpine environments in the east to arid habitats in the west.

Unfortunately many species in this much-loved group of birds have become threatened with extinction since European colonisation, principally because of habitat loss. Twelve of Victoria's parrots and cockatoos are at risk of becoming extinct in the near future.

Under our Statewide Conservation Plan, we've identified four threatened species of parrots and cockatoos — the Red-tailed Black-cockatoo, Swift Parrot, Orange-Bellied Parrot and Superb Parrot — where conservation on private land can have the biggest impact on the survival of these species. But protecting and restoring our remaining habitat on private land will be a big help for other species too.

For Richard Hill, it was the cockatoos that came first.

In the late 1990s he began working on the endangered south-eastern population of Red-tailed Black-cockatoos in south west Victoria, which has an estimated population of around 1,500 birds.

"It was just an awesome job really, to spend my time working on a rare bird," Richard said.

These large, charismatic birds have become threatened with extinction due to the loss of their favourite food trees and the old, hollow trees where they nest.

It was this work that inspired Richard and his family to find and purchase a 40 ha property near Bahgallah on Gunditjmarra Country within the cockatoo's range. Richard protected the land, home to riverside forest and grassy woodland along the Glenelg River, with a conservation covenant through Trust for Nature shortly after. They built a house and moved onto the property in 2003.

The property had been grazed and Richard and his family spent the subsequent years improving habitat on the property, including planting several thousand trees and grasses, controlling weeds, fencing areas, and adding fallen logs and woody debris to provide habitat for wildlife.

For the cockatoos, trees with hollows are essential for breeding, and Richard has been part of a project planting scattered trees across their range, in windbreaks and as isolated paddock trees. Given enough time, those trees will form hollows that cockatoos and other wildlife can use.



Richard Hill and Suzie McManus's property protects important woodland habitat in south west Victoria.



More pressing is the cockatoos' dependence on the seeds of only three trees — Brown and Desert Stringybarks, and Bulokes — and high quality seeds at that.

"The birds need very high quality seed crops. Most of the best land has been taken for farming, and we now also think that climate change is having an impact, both by making the seed crops poorer quality and more variable," Richard said.

He runs autumn population monitoring each year which assesses how successful the breeding season has been.

Protecting the cockatoos's remaining habitat, much of it on private land, is essential for the bird's future. But it doesn't just help the cockatoos. Richard's property also provides habitat for numerous other species, including Brown Treecreepers and Diamond Firetails.

"It's our home and we love it, and we want to ensure it's protected. The covenant provides that peace of mind. We're not going to be here forever, and when we go we'll know the place is protected," Richard said.

South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoos are dependent on the seeds of only three trees.



Priority species: Superb Parrot

Brilliant Superb Parrots were once found throughout southern and central Victoria, but these days they are confined in Victoria to the River Red Gum forests and adjacent box woodlands around the Murray River in northern Victoria. An estimated 80 per cent of their habitat occurs on private land, much of it in the Eastern Riverina focal landscape where supportive landholders have helped protect and restore habitat for this species over many years; including through permanent protection of habitat patches near Barmah and along the Broken Creek.

SPOTLIGHT ON ... VICTORIA'S PARROTS AND COCKATOOS

Priority species: Swift Parrot

Critically endangered Swift Parrots spend their winters in Victoria and other mainland states after breeding in Tasmania. They're thought to make the journey across the strait in one, non-stop flight. Feeding mostly on the nectar and pollen of gum trees, Swift Parrots need healthy stands of mature woodland with lots of flowering trees. They particularly prefer the box-ironbark woodlands and grassy woodlands of central and northeastern Victoria (read more about these woodlands on page 8), where multiple eucalypt species provide nectar resources during autumn to spring. With half of their estimated habitat remaining on private land, and records of them on 90 covenants, they are one of Trust for Nature's priority species to target for conservation. In the North East, in partnership with the North East Catchment Management Authority and funded by the National Landcare Program, Trust for Nature has worked with 64 private landholders in north east Victoria, to conserve habitat for Swift Parrots; leading to an additional 200 ha of permanently protected habitat and 1,968 ha of improved habitat through management or restoration.



Swift Parrot enjoying eucalypt blossom. Image by Chris Tzaros.



Priority species: Orange-bellied Parrot

One of the most endangered animals in the world, Orange-bellied Parrots also breed in Tasmania and overwinter in southern Australia. In Victoria they spend the coldest months in coastal saltmarsh, feeding on the plants that have adapted to this salty environment. With around 70 birds left in the wild, conservation efforts in recent years have focussed on releasing captive-bred birds to increase the wild population. The small size of their population, with reduced genetic diversity, is now a major threat to their survival. In Victoria, their favourite winter feeding sites have been fragmented, cleared and degraded for development and agriculture, and rising sea levels due to climate change pose a major long-term threat. In West Gippsland we're working with landholders to protect saltmarsh habitat to give the ecosystem a chance to adapt to rising seas, and on the Bellarine Peninsula we're working to restore the parrots' favourite winter retreats.

Keeping common species common

It's not just these threatened species of parrot and cockatoo that we care about. As shown by the recent listing of Gang-gang Cockatoos as threatened, as a consequence of extensive devastation of their preferred habitat from the 2019-20 mega fires, we cannot take any species' survival for granted. Our work aims to help conserve habitat for all native species, especially those which depend on private land for most of their habitat.

The 2019-20 bushfires decimated Gang-gang Cockatoo habitat. Image by Ben Williams.



Significant patch of East Gippsland protected forever

Rob Richards believes in the power of nature. As a former ecologist turned evidence-based researcher in the environmental and sustainability sector, he knows—both firsthand and through the science—about the profound impact interaction with nature has on our physical and mental health.

This knowledge led him to start a wellbeing business based around connecting people with nature, and, in 2019, to purchase a property containing Warm Temperate Rainforest and Riparian Forest in far East Gippsland with his wife Karen. And now, the couple has chosen to protect 200 ha of this ecologically significant land forever with a new conservation covenant.

“I’d known about Trust for Nature and the great work that they do for years, and we’d also been looking for a property that could create opportunities for people to experience the benefits of nature that we had researched for over a decade,” Rob said.

“When we found this really special place, we knew it was a great chance to protect this piece of East Gippsland as well as foster that human-nature connection.”

Ben Williams, a Senior Conservation Officer at Trust for Nature, said Rob and Karen’s property, which borders

the Bemm and Goolengook rivers, is extremely important from an ecological perspective.

“This is a huge area to be able to protect in East Gippsland and this land fulfills all five objectives in our Statewide Conservation Plan, which is very rare,” explained Ben.

“Its vegetation includes warm temperate rainforest and riparian forest, which are listed as Rare and Depleted respectively, and we’re expecting to find many vulnerable and endangered plant and animal species on the property like Masked Owls, Sooty Owls, Lace Monitors, Dendy’s Toadlets, Tangle Orchids and Wallaby-bush.”

Rob has already set up camera traps on the property and identified Yellow-bellied Gliders, Dusky Antechinus and Platypus. He’s also confident they will discover Powerful Owls in the area.

While the property has a logging history, and was affected by the 2019 bush fires, large areas of vegetation are still in very good condition.

“A month after we bought the property in 2019, the fires came through,” Rob said. “However, we were extremely lucky that the fire on our land was not nearly as intense as it was further up the valley, and most of the very precious warm temperate rainforest patches were left intact. It has been a privilege to witness nature’s recovery on the rest of the property, where I have established a network of monitoring sites.”



Rob setting up a camera trap on his property.



As well as being so ecologically significant, Ben said Rob and Karen’s property is ‘very pretty’ and an ideal place for people to foster the kind of connection to nature that leads to a more sustainable world.

“What’s really exciting is the growing global realisation that nature is not separate to humans,” said Rob, who plans to run retreats on the property through his business, It’s Naturally You. “We have a new perspective on why our interaction with nature is important and understand that it’s critical to human health.”




Rob said that as well as exploring the benefits of his land to people, he’s so grateful to know that the rainforest will be protected past his lifetime.



Top: The property protects rare Warm Temperate Rainforest.

Right: Parts of the property affected by the 2019-20 bushfires are recovering.

New covenants in 2022

-  Covenants registered in 2022
-  Private land
-  Public land

Another 3,052 ha of precious habitat for wildlife protected forever.

Thank you to the landholders who have voluntarily committed to safeguarding your properties — you are making an incredible contribution to conservation.



Leaving a land legacy

Thanks to a generous donation from the Limb Family Foundation, Trust for Nature has been able to permanently protect nearly 2,100 ha of habitat through 25 conservation covenants. The Leaving A Land Legacy project is working with landholders across the state to safeguard high-priority areas. Thank you to Janet Limb for enabling this essential program.



**Do you have a story idea for
the Conservation Bulletin? Feedback?**

We'd love to hear from you!

Get in touch at communications@tfn.org.au

Trust for Nature relies on the generosity of supporters to help protect Victoria's biodiversity. To make a donation, go to trustfornature.org.au/donate

The critically endangered Barking Owl, one of Trust for Nature's priority species. Image by Annette Ruzicka.