



Community Network News

*Mid Loddon-CMN & West Marong, Upper Spring Creek,
Ravenswood Valley, Nuggetty, Baringhup, Eddington*



Landcare Groups & other community friends

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MEETINGS & EVENTS - 2014

Mid Loddon Landcare Network Committee

The next meeting will be held at the Lockwood South Primary School at 7.30pm. Monday 26th May 2014.

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group meeting to be held at 7.30pm Tuesday 8th April at the

Lockwood South School. – Agenda: **Workshop with Alison Pouliot** - The Secret Lives of Eucalypts - The Importance of Beneficial Fungi Eucalypts are a defining part of Australian landscapes. The quintessential gum tree is deeply embedded in Australian culture, identity and life. Although highly resilient and adapted to the extremes of Australia's climate, large numbers of eucalypts in rural areas are in decline.

While some fungi can be problematic for eucalypts under certain conditions, many fungi support eucalypts through beneficial symbioses and protection from soil pathogens. Other fungi provide vital nutrients for eucalypts via the decomposition of organic matter. This workshop will examine the role of fungi in soils and their interdependencies with eucalypts. It will address the importance of encouraging relationships between beneficial fungi and eucalypts in local forests, farms and remnant vegetation. Participants are encouraged to bring along fungus specimens to the workshop.

West Marong Landcare Group meeting to be held on Tuesday 15th April at the Woodstock Hall.

Agenda: Workshop with Alison Pouliot - Saviours of the Soil - Understanding the Role of Fungi in Terrestrial Ecosystems

From creating soil structure to improving water retention, the value of fungi in soils is greater than we often acknowledge. Fungi also promote decomposition and recycling processes making nutrients available to other organisms. Looking after soil fungi is therefore vital in agro-ecosystems and forest ecosystems to ensure their health and resilience. Understanding the role of

Baringhup Landcare Group notice of a special event to be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 10th April – All welcome.

Speaker- Alison Pouliot - 'Visualising the Environment'

Bring along your cameras for this illustrated and interactive workshop

“How can photography help us document landscape changes on farms, in local forests and other environments? In particular, how can we visually communicate the decline of old growth trees and degradation of local woodlands to bring about positive change?”

Images provide not just snapshots and memories, but are also a powerful tool for recording landscape change over time. They also provide an ideal way to communicate with community groups, funding bodies, politicians and others who may want to visualise environmental issues or see the results of Landcare actions.

Understanding the basics of camera operation and photographic techniques can increase the quality and interpretative value of images. Knowing what to photograph and how best to represent environmental subjects determines the impact and influence of images. This introduction to environmental photography will provide an overview of the most important considerations to assist you to more effectively visualise and document environmental issues and change”

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group- meets last Wednesday of every second month.

Nuggetty Landcare Group – meets at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month

Eddington Landcare Group- meet in the Red Gum Forest seasonally as notified (note Maryborough Road signed entrance gate).

Interesting articles and promotions:

Don't forget to checkout new additions to the Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group 'blog' uslandcaregroup.org.au

Google the 'SWIFFT' website for threatened bird information, including our Curlews.

Google 'FUNGIMAP' for the latest contributions from Alison Pouliot.

Community Landcare & CMN Caring for our local Box Ironbark Forests:

The Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve Restoration Project has begun and although the project will continue for many weeks, the results are already promising with an almost instant increase in bird life. We hope they spread the word and we find the Curlews checking out their new improved habitat quite soon.

The Lockwood South State Forest 'Special Management Zone' along Boswell Road has also been approved for community management and use. We hope the additional ground litter that is being provided by Tafe work crews will be maintained on the ground and the community will value the new management of this area.

By increasing the ground litter this will increase moisture infiltration and produce bigger trees, increased blossom supply and a larger range of native plants. Apart from the obvious advantage of providing improved food and habitat for our local wildlife, the impact of storm water causing flooding and erosion in the forest, adjoining roads and associated private land will be lessened.

As the age and size of the trees in this area are not old enough to have formed large hollows, wildlife nest boxes will be installed in the near future.

This area is an important agency monitored area for Swift Parrots, who usually fly across to the mainland from Tasmania in May and stay until late September before returning back across Bass Strait for their nesting season.

So keep a watch out and report any sightings. They are true to their name so you will need to be very watchful to catch a glimpse. You can learn to recognise their call by googling Swift Parrot calls.

Bendigo Tafe 'Conservation and Land Management Course' students are being supported by the Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group again this year. Currently three students will individually be involved in reptile, regeneration and nest box research projects and several public land site Management Plans.

The 'Save our Bush Stone Curlews' project continues to create interest from a wide range of people and also attract funds from unexpected sources, such as a recent much appreciated gift from the Commonwealth Serum Laboratory (CSL) staff fund raising who have donated \$4,545.00 towards a Curlew protected habitat area fence

Books of the Month.

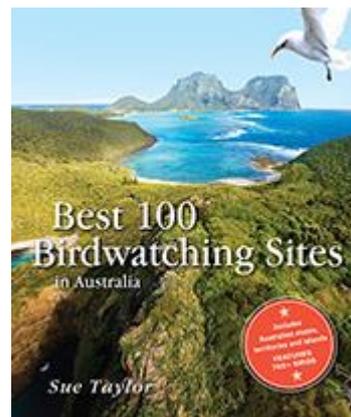
Climate Change Adaption Plan for Australian Birds. Edited by Stephen Garnett & Donald Franklin (Charles Darwin University)

This is the first climate change adaptation plan produced for a national faunal group anywhere in the world. It outlines the nature of threats related to climate change for the Australian bird taxa most likely to be affected by climate change, and provides recommendations on what might be done to assist them and approximate costs of doing so. It also features an analysis of how climate change will affect all Australian birds, explains why some species are likely to be more exposed or sensitive to it than others, and explores the theory and practice of conservation management under the realities of a changing climate. Available from CSIRO Publishers

Need a holiday?

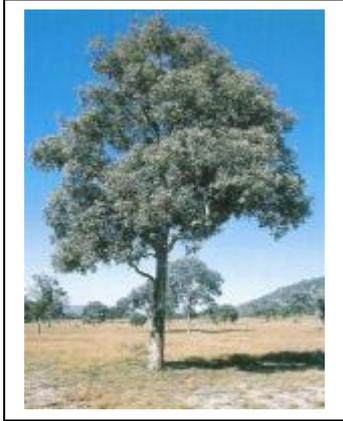
Best 100 Birdwatching Sites in Australia

by Sue Taylor



Where can you see 400,000 breeding pairs of rockhopper penguins? Where is the best place in Australia to observe Yellow chats and where is the only place in Australia you can have a close encounter with Lesser Noddies. Well known birder and author will make you pack your binoculars and hit the road as she takes you on a tour of her top 100 Australian bird watching sites from suburban parks to remote off-shore islands.

Know your Eucalypts -



Red Box - *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*

What it looks like:

Tree growing 7–30 m high with distinctive bluish-grey foliage

Bark variable, may be smooth over most of the tree, fine-textured pale grey to golden brown, or dark, rough and fibrous

Leaves roughly oval or broad lance-shaped; leaves on young plants are more rounded, with an inward notch at tip

Flowers tiny, white, in clusters of 7; buds diamond-shaped, 3–5 mm long, 2–3 mm wide; flowering September to January

Seed capsules 3–6 mm across; capsules and buds sometimes with a whitish, waxy bloom



Where it grows and why:

Occurs in grassy or sclerophyll woodland
Usually found on light, shallow soils on slopes and rises

Frost and wind tolerant; moderately drought tolerant.

Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions including both slightly alkaline and acid soils as long as they are well drained. Moderate to high tolerance for root disturbance/construction impacts. Transplants easily, and is generally free of any serious pests or diseases.

Management significance:

Useful medium level cover in windbreaks and for salinity-control recharge plantings

Good shade tree with a large spreading crown when open-grown; attractive ornamental for parks and large gardens

Excellent wildlife habitat providing nectar, seed and breeding sites for native birds, mammals and insects

Wood is hard, strong and moderately durable; used for fencing and firewood.

Heavily harvested locally in the mining era, so few big trees have survived. Plan to plant some this season

Red-browed Finch



The Red-browed Finch is highly sociable, and is usually seen in small flocks of 10 to 20 individuals. Flocks are sedentary or nomadic in their local area. Flocks prefer semi-open woodland, especially edges of forests, where brushy scrub meets cleared areas, especially near creeks..

The finch makes short, piping high-pitched cheeps. When disturbed, the whole flock will disperse, cheeping, and re-congregate near-by.

The finch is a seed eater, living mostly on grass and sedge seed, but will happily feed on many non-natives. The Red Browed Finch, like other weavers, builds a large domed nest with a side entrance, out of grass and small twigs. Nests are usually built 2–3 metres above the ground in dense shrubs. Nesting is communal. Both parents share nest building, incubation of the eggs, and feed the young together. Small flocks of these happy small birds seem to be increasing in the local area

The importance of our SOILS:

Soils literally underpin our ecosystems, but historically their importance has been undervalued. Secretary of the European Soil Bureau Network, Dr Luca Montanarella, explains the Network's vital work providing policy-shaping research results and their mission to raise public awareness about the importance of maintaining soil quality

Soil is a limited, non renewable, natural resource. Policy makers, as well as the general public, are starting to realise soils are limited and that if we do not manage them in a sustainable way we will not have enough soils left for future generations. As a result, there is a surge of interest to gather updated data and information on soils for local, regional, national, European and global assessments

Rapidly progressing soil degradation processes, like erosion, organic carbon depletion, salinization, contamination and compaction, together with massive urbanisation expanding especially on the most fertile areas of the world, is already seriously threatening the available fertile soil resources.

With a growing population, a changing climate and on-going land degradation we need to develop a common vision to preserve the available soil resources for future generations.

There needs to be a common approach to global soil resources, assuring that all humans have much needed food resources and nations lacking sufficient soil resources of their own, need to be regulated in order to prevent massive displacement of populations as well as emerging conflicts.

We need to recognize that soil resources are a common natural capital sustaining the lives of all of us on this planet and need to be shared by all humans if we want to feed the world.

WISE WORDS:

Buying fertile soils is certainly one of the most safe and remunerating forms of long term financial investment, given that fertile soils are a limited, non-renewable natural resource that will be more and more scarce in the future.

Luca Montanarella

National Soil Strategy released last week -

The National Soil Research, Development and Extension Strategy - 'Securing Australia's soil for profitable industries and healthy landscapes' (soil RD&E strategy) will ensure soils research becomes more targeted and collaborative and that research will better meet the needs of farmers. There will also be better information and tools available on soil use and management.

What are the goals of the strategy?

The soil RD&E strategy goals include:

- improved co-investment
- improved access to quality soil data and information
- improved communication and sharing of soil knowledge
- adopting of a national approach to building future skills and capacity
- collaboration on the development and use of physical infrastructure such as laboratories, equipment, long-term field sites and soil archives.

Supporting these goals are a set of soil research and development strategic directions that will consider:

- how to improve soil management to increase productivity and profitability
- how to improve the mapping, modelling, monitoring and forecasting of soil-related issues
- finding ways to manage soil and sub-soil constraints
- improving our understanding of soil's role in delivering ecosystem services
- determining how soil can be better managed across the landscape to deliver outcomes for farmers and the broader community.

Comment: All sounds wonderful but unless there is funding available to support these high ideals I am not sure if it will provide support to even well planned Landcare projects? *Judy*

If you would like to receive regular updates on the implementation of the national soil RD&E strategy, please send an email to soilsRDE@daff.gov.au with 'subscribe' in the subject line.