



## **Community Network News**

*Mid Loddon-CMN & West Marong, Upper Spring Creek,  
Ravenswood Valley, Nuggetty, Baringhup, Eddington  
Landcare Groups & other community friends*



**NEWSLETTER VOL.20 . No. 10 November 2014 - Incorporation No: A0061417V**

**Contact information : c/- Secretary, PO Box 2197 Bendigo DC. Victoria**

### **MEETINGS & EVENTS - 2014**

**Mid Loddon Landcare Network Christmas social dinner** event will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November – at the Maldon Hotel

Time – 6.00pm socialising & 6.30pm Dinner which will be a two course meal at a cost of \$17 per person.

Please support this dinner which after a long period of celebrating our work in the northern area, will be held this year closer to our southern Network members.

**Agenda:** a brief update on current project achievements, followed by Prof. Linten Staples from Animal Control Technologies Australia. Linten will provide the latest information on how to eradicate our agricultural and public land pest animals and provide up to date information on any new technologies.

RSVP by the 8<sup>th</sup> November to Judy 5435 3412

#### **Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group**

**No general** meeting will be held this month and members are asked to join our other Network groups members at the Dinner at the Maldon Hotel. Agenda details above.

Notice of a brief committee meeting for final planning of the December event, will be sent out soon.

**Advance Notice:** Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group Christmas BBQ will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December at the Happy Jack Reserve.

**Special event** to Celebrate 20 years of Landcare at Lockwood South – so much to celebrate!

**West Marong Landcare Group** next meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at the Woodstock Hall.

**Baringhup Landcare Group - Christmas BBQ** will be held at 6.30pm on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December . at the Loddon River Reserve.

**Nuggetty Landcare Group** next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at the winery meeting room.

**Eddington Landcare Group-** meet in the Red Gum Forest seasonally. The Summer meeting date is yet to be announced

#### **Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group.**

Next meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November

**Mid Loddon Landcare Network Management Committee** meeting to be held at the Lockwood South Primary School at 7.30pm. Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

**Central Victorian Bio-link** meeting will be held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November – details following.

#### **Bush Stone Curlew Project Launch Update.**

Due to the failure to raise the balance of funds required to install a large protected area in the Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve, a variance has been agreed to by our corporate sponsors and a third breeding/promotional enclosure will be installed early in December.

Following a press release there will be a long awaited project launch (only seven years!) on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November when the press, Landcare Australia staff and our corporate benefactors will join us to view our first pair of captive curlews, and discuss future plans over tea and cakes.

**Note:** It's important to **not** wear bright colours as this can upset the captive birds.

**If you would like to provide support and join the event please let me know and I will forward final details about time and address. 5435 3412**

## Looking ahead to projects for 2015 – Judy

**Agricultural – Sustainable Farming:** Trials are already being organised and include - pasture, grazing grains, seed, a continuation of our Natural-keep trials, deep ripping, aeration and others.

**Save our Bush Stone-curlews:** our members current wildlife permits are being changed to allow for a joint program with a breeding and release permit (a mountain of paperwork but it is finally happening) A new pair of breeding curlews is being procured and hopefully we will begin a successful breeding program in 2015.

### **Fox Control:**

Funds for fox control baiting in the Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve have been withdrawn by Parks Vic for the next five years, and because this is vital support for our Save the Curlews project we will be fighting this decision all the way to the top. This has been the only financial support we have received from Parks Vic to date, as our Landcare Groups have raised all the funds needed for the ongoing forest restoration process.

Parks Vic is controlled by a Board answerable to the State Government. So a range of people will need lobbying! (the board, CEO & minister)

**Mid Loddon CMN:** This is the threatened species arm of our Landcare Network and has in the past been well supported by the agencies, but all funds and support have been disappearing amidst many staff changes, except for the occasional call back monitoring of our wild Curlews. I will be attending a meeting in Melbourne later this month to find out what the future holds, but I doubt if it will provide any joy!

### **Nest Box surveys and a possible new project:**

Bendigo TAFE student – Devi Shanty has been busy installing additional nest boxes in the Shelbourne NCR and monitoring them plus the boxes that were installed a few years ago. All nest boxes have shown signs of use with some still currently occupied by Sugar gliders and Tuans.

**Perhaps a new project** can be devised to complement our Save our Bush Stone-curlews project, with Sugar gliders as a second focal species? I am looking at funding possibilities for a new supply of nest boxes to link the forest and farmland, with support from an ecologist to set up a monitoring program.

## Food Futures Brochure - CSIRO Food Futures Flagship

Future grains and plant oil production

**Aim:** To deliver premium grain, grain-based food and feed products increasing the value of returns to Australia by \$550m through enhancing productivity, product quality attributes and delivering benefits for human health.

We are developing novel, high value grains and oilseeds with substantiated health benefits.

Using new technologies in advanced genetics, we deliver premium value products based on new, differentiated grains, which can be used both in food and in feeds for livestock or aquaculture.

These new grain-based products deliver:

- tangible benefits for human health
- high value ingredients for food and feed
- increased yield and productivity
- new sources of omega-3 oils.

We are developing new varieties of wheat and barley containing carbohydrates with increased nutritional functionality. For example we are working to produce grains with increased levels of soluble fibre and resistant starch, which are important for gut health.

Through our oilseed research, we are creating new sources of long chain omega-3 fatty acids, which are normally only available from fish sources. Omega-3s are essential for brain development and have been shown to lower the risk of heart disease.

These novel grains address growing consumer demand for healthy foods and ingredients. These grains provide opportunities for Australian farmers and food manufacturers to capture emerging, high-value markets.

### **If nature is the ultimate supermarket, who is looking after its supply chain?**

Insects pollinate over 35 per cent of the food we eat or feed livestock – like fruit, vegetables, oilseeds, legumes and fodder. While bees didn't set out to fertilise food crops for the good of mankind, their urge to collect pollen and nectar for the good of the hive, by a stroke of luck, has provided us with an 'ecosystem service that's become indispensable to our way of life

Check out the October 'Ecos' Magazine on the web for the full story by Beth Askham.

**Conquest of the land through seven thousand years** - by W C Lowdermilk , *formerly Assistant Chief, Soil Conservation Service*

Dr. Lowdermilk's personal report of a study he made in 1938 and 1939. Despite changes in names of countries, in political boundaries, and in conservation technology, the bulletin still has significance for all peoples concerned with maintaining and improving farm production. He studied the record of agriculture in countries where the land had been under cultivation for hundreds, even thousands, of years. His immediate mission was to find out if the experience of these older civilizations could help in solving the serious soil erosion and land use problems in the United States, then struggling with repair of the Dust Bowl and the Sullied South.

He discovered that soil erosion, deforestation, overgrazing, neglect, and conflicts between cultivators and herdsman have helped topple empires and wipe out entire civilizations. At the same time, he learned that careful stewardship of the earth's resources, through terracing, crop rotation, and other soil conservation measures, has enabled other societies to flourish for centuries.

“Food comes from the earth. The land with its waters gives us nourishment. The earth rewards richly the knowing and diligent but punishes inexorably the ignorant and slothful. This partnership of land and farmer is the rock foundation of our complex social structure”.

**CSIRO - Biodiversity is the world's life support system.** It is the diversity of living organisms in terrestrial, marine and aquatic ecosystems and the ecological and evolutionary processes that underpin them. Australia is the custodian of a rich and unique biodiversity. Unfortunately biodiversity in Australia and around the world is in serious decline. Biodiversity is under increasing pressure from habitat change, overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species and climate change.

**What's missing and why?** - Judy  
It has been suggested to me by local farmers that even though our landcare members have established an enormous amount of vegetation across the mid-Loddon landscape in recent years,

in the form of wild life corridors and connective shelterbelts, which have certainly increased our small bird population, predator insects and increased soil, crop and stock shelter from our harsh climatic extremes, but there is still a large amount of biodiversity/wild life we are not providing for, **and their numbers are still declining!**

Our Bush Stone-curlews numbers have dropped sharply in the last few years since we began monitoring their numbers in 2007. It has been proved in NSW that most die from malnutrition not from fox predation – although foxes are still a problem for nesting birds and chick survival. Our remnant vegetation, roadsides and public land reserves are just not in good enough condition to provide good sources of food, especially during our long hot summers when insect numbers are low.

Our network of corridors/shelterbelts is still increasing both in numbers and growth and our small bird life is increasing, but there has been no evidence that our small mammals and reptiles are moving though the landscape and their sparse numbers are certainly not increasing, in fact like our Curlews they are disappearing at a very fast rate.

We have a serious shortage of large old trees with hollows and our revegetation corridors have not reached a height or strength to add nest boxes, unless we attach them to posts and raise the boxes as vegetation size increases - a possible scenario ?

Wildlife is a fundamental part of Australian Bush culture, and for many people it contributes significantly to their enjoyment and overall quality of life. Sadly few Australians are aware of the extraordinary diversity of our mammal fauna, most being able to recognise only a handful of high profile species. Perhaps this is because so few of our mammals a large and many are uncommon and nocturnal which makes them difficult to see and very hard to identify. The maintenance of biodiversity is crucial for the sustained productivity of Australia's environment-based industries such as agriculture. Many species of our wildlife are major ecosystem service providers, contributing to farm productivity and improving the profitability of farm enterprises. Birds and marsupial gliders are a

good example, pollinating many plants and helping to control insect pests.

A sugar glider can eat 25 Christmas beetles per day. These beetles are serious pests on eucalyptus trees, causing dieback, and a colony of sugar gliders (up to eight animals) can consume more than 200 kilograms of these beetles each year. Tree loss leads to soil erosion, salinity and other land degradation problems. Honey-eaters and other birds also eat insect pests. Larger reptiles such as goanna or lace monitors and the carpet python eat pests such as the introduced house mouse and European rabbit.

Includes extracts from 'On Borrowed Time' by David Lindenmayer.

Sugar Gliders- very cute but also very important.



Photo © Steve Parish Publishing

Sugar gliders live in large groups during winter to conserve energy and these large groups disband during the summer months. The sugar glider is also one of the largest marsupials that have been confirmed to enter torpor. They can enter torpor daily for 13 hours at a time on days that would require large amounts of energy to maintain body temperature - such as in severe cold events, so they need warm hollows (or a nest box) which they fill with leaves, feathers and wool. They feed at night, mainly on insects found in trees, but also the sap from trees such as the eucalyptus and black wattle.

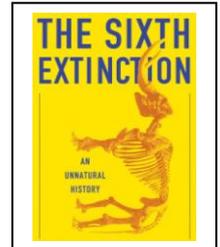
### Book of the Month:

[\*The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History\*](#),

In her new book Elizabeth Kolbert describes traveling the world to document the mass

extinction of species that seems to be unfolding before our eyes. There have been five comparable crises in the history of life on Earth, she writes, but this one is different: It's being caused by us.

A major book about the future of the world, blending intellectual and natural history and field reporting into a powerful account of the mass extinction unfolding before our eyes.



Over the last half a billion years, there have been five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us. In *The Sixth Extinction*, two-time winner of the National Magazine Award and *New Yorker* writer Elizabeth Kolbert draws on the work of scores of researchers in half a dozen disciplines, accompanying many of them into the field: geologists who study deep ocean cores, botanists who follow the tree line as it climbs up the Andes, marine biologists who dive off the Great Barrier Reef. She introduces us to a dozen species, some already gone, others facing extinction, including the Panamanian golden frog, staghorn coral, the great auk, and the Sumatran rhino. Through these stories, Kolbert provides a moving account of the disappearances occurring all around us and traces the evolution of extinction as concept, from its first articulation by Georges Cuvier in revolutionary Paris up through to the present day. The sixth extinction is likely to be mankind's most lasting legacy; as Kolbert observes, it compels us to rethink the fundamental question of what it means to be human.

**Wise Words:** "As we lose species to extinction, whether local or total, we lose not only their diversity of structure and function but also their genetic diversity, which sooner or later results in complex ecosystems becoming so simplified they will lack the productivity and resilience to sustain us as a society." Chris Maser 2010