

North Central Chat

Keeping you up to date with all the Landcare and Waterwatch news



August 2020

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

HAPPY LANDCARE WEEK!

I am so thrilled to kick off this month with a sense of celebration and reflection on the amazing work we all do with Landcare.

I am in awe, especially these past few months, of how adaptive, flexible and nimble Landcare is at keeping volunteers active. Groups are continuing project actions and enabling people to enjoy our natural outdoor spaces. These spaces are important to maintaining a sense of community, personal sanity and overall wellbeing during times of isolation and social distancing.

While we're currently in the process of gathering the most current Landcare Group Health Survey data, the past year has certainly been another incredible effort from Landcare support staff, committees, members and volunteers. Everyone has contributed time, knowledge and skill to improving their local landscapes, waterways, soils and communities. At last count, our regional volunteers reported \$2.4M worth of volunteer time donated to Landcare - simply amazing work!

Social media continues to be such a valuable tool which allows Darren and I to keep in-tune to the huge range of actions on the ground. While we can't get out and be on site which we'd like, we're thrilled to see everything online.

Highlights include soil moisture probes being installed across the Loddon Plains, mass plantings across the St Arnaud region, twitching updates from the Newstead bushland and results from the Regenerative Agriculture trials around the Mount Alexander region.

I wish to thank every group that has taken time to complete the 2019-20 Group Health Survey. I appreciate that the decoupling of the survey from the Victorian Landcare Grants process has been a bit confusing for some. There are also several concurrent environmental



We LOVE North Central Landcare! We share thanks and appreciation to every one of our 160+ groups and networks and their 5000+ volunteer members. Your work, passion and knowledge is immeasurably valuable to protecting and enhancing our catchment. We have so much to celebrate! *Happy Landcare Week!*

volunteer surveys out this month, which is demanding a lot from group committees. The Landcare Group Health survey is specific to Landcare and provides an annual snapshot of data for comparison regionally and statewide. We use the results to understand the impact, extent, health and priorities of Landcare. This survey data is used in so many ways; it's the basis for the annual North Central Landcare report card and it's collated within DELWP to share our state-wide story across many departments. It is a vital part of the data used to demonstrate the contribution Landcare makes to Victoria.

The Group Health Survey has been extended until Sunday 16 August. We would appreciate your group taking the time to complete the survey. Only one survey per group is necessary and it takes around 30 minutes.

Enjoy the read,

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News...

It's Landcare Week!

Get connected with the environment in your local community

The annual Landcare Week campaign celebrates and acknowledges the thousands of Landcare networks and groups, facilitators, and other environmental care community groups and volunteers across Australia and their work on conservation and sustainable land management activities in their local area. Connecting with nature improves your mental health and connection to place. With Australians having experienced drought, bushfires, and a global pandemic, people need social connections and to get outdoors.



Landcare is about the partnerships created by local communities to restore and protect their local environment on behalf of the community. You can support your local group activities and meet other people who have a shared vision for conservation and sustainable land management. No matter where you live there is a group near you managing a local environmental issue.

Kick start your Landcare Week by supporting Planet Ark's National Tree Day on Sunday the 2nd of August, and get your hands dirty. With the impacts of a changing climate, drought and biodiversity loss, Australia needs Landcare now more than ever. Speak to your local group about their events and whether there are any restrictions due to COVID-19. You can volunteer in a community event or get more involved to support the group with your skills or in kind support, or give a donation.

Groups can access branded digital assets for their website, newsletters and social media via the Landcare Australia website:
<https://landcareaustralia.org.au/landcareweek2020/?sourceLabanner>

Bob Hawke Landcare Award

Nominations are now open for the Bob Hawke Landcare Award and close on August 31.



The Bob Hawke Landcare Award is a prestigious, national award that publicly recognises an individual involved in championing Landcare and who inspires others to take action on their own property or through a Landcare group. The award acknowledges an individual's leadership and commitment to Landcare, natural resource management and sustainable agriculture. The award nomination is open to an individual who champions the uptake of sustainable agricultural practices and can demonstrate the adoption of improved practises among landholders as a consequence this action. They will be closely involved in Landcare, and can demonstrate an outstanding commitment to local communities and drive community activity.

The Bob Hawke Landcare Award recipient will be awarded a prize package to the value of \$50,000 for further development of their knowledge and skills in sustainable land management to enable an even stronger contribution to Landcare.

The Bob Hawke Landcare Award will be presented at the National Landcare Awards gala dinner on Thursday 11 March, 2021 in Sydney. For more information and to submit a nomination, please visit the Bob Hawke Landcare Award website:
<https://bobhawkelandcareaward.com.au/>

If you would like to share information about the groups in your region and their activities, please contact Landcare Australia digital@landcareaustralia.com.au so they can share your story across their communications channels.

Supporting school based trainees

Despite the current restrictions and working from home mandate during COVID-19, I was very fortunate to be able to pop into the office to enjoy a socially-distant day with our school based trainees Chase and Ruby.

The students are completing a Certificate II in Horticulture at Bendigo TAFE during their high school studies, supported by the North Central CMA and Parks Victoria. These proud Aboriginal youngsters attend a day each week with the CMA and they sure do make Tuesdays a joy!

We recently completed a Rapid Rabbit Assessment together and skilled up in using RabbitScan to spatially record signs of rabbit activity within the Old Huntly Pound.



Community creek rename campaign

An article in the The Local (Daylesford) newspaper announced that after a decade-long community campaign, Jim Crow Creek at Franklinford is to get a new and Indigenous name.

Four authorities had to approve the change, including Mt Alexander Shire, into which the 22-kilometre long creek flows. The others are the traditional owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung, North Central Catchment Management Authority and Geographic Names Victoria, which is part of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

A petition sponsored by Daylesford's Michelle Clifford was backed by over 230 people with the aim of having the Dja Dja Wurrung and their culture more widely recognised out of respect for the history of what happened at Franklinford.



The creek following willow removal in 2005. Photo: North Central CMA.

You can read the full article online:

<http://readnow.isentia.com/ReadNow.aspx?EWTr37y2XQ5w>



We are the Elders of tomorrow, hear our voice

Our Children's Day 2020 theme: 'We are the Elders of tomorrow, hear our voice' honours our Elders – custodians of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional knowledge, passed down to our children through stories and cultural practice.

In 2020, you're encouraged to celebrate Children's Day on Tuesday August the 4th – [explore the website](#) for ideas and resources to help you celebrate this special day.

We encourage you to embrace the day and find innovative ways to mark this special day. It could be at your early years service or with your family at home.

Building a drought resilient Australia

As part of the Federal Government's drought response, the \$5 billion Future Drought Fund provides secure, continuous funding for drought resilience initiatives. It will help Australian farms and communities prepare for the impacts of drought. The Fund began with an initial credit of \$3.9 billion. Funding will be rolled out from July 2020. Read the Minister's press release [here](#).

2020 has been pretty fishy (*but in a really good way!*)

Article by Will Honybun, North Central CMA Project Officer.

Located between the townships of Torrumbarry and Koondrook in Victoria, the Gunbower Creek, off the Murray River, is a natural creek that is used to convey irrigation water to the Torrumbarry Irrigation Area and Mid-Murray storages from the Murray River.

Since 2013-14, the North Central CMA has been delivering water for the environment to the Gunbower Creek in an effort to support Murray cod spawning and juvenile development.

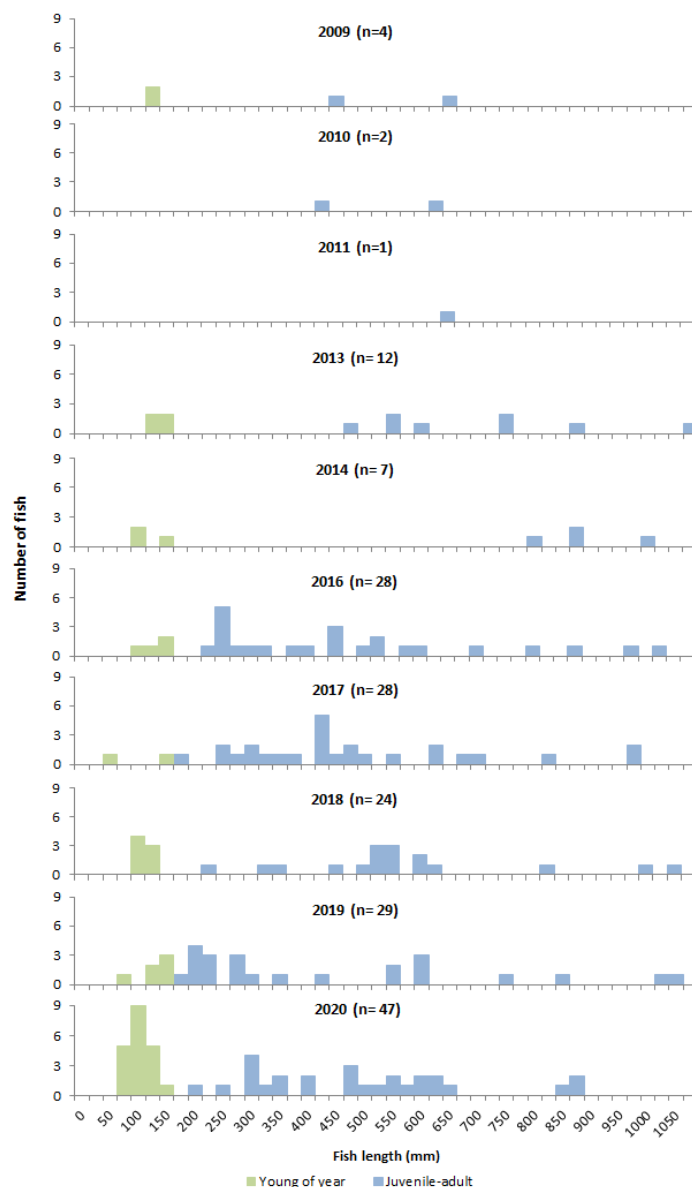
Environmental flow management in Gunbower Creek aims to support native fish populations by maintaining flow and access to habitat over the off-irrigation period (when flows were traditionally zero), providing stable flows over the breeding period from October to December, and maintaining access to high quality habitat to support fish development.

Monitoring of the fish population in Gunbower Creek has occurred annually since 2009 as part of the Living Murray project and after 10 years of results improvements to both Murray cod numbers and the diversity of ages and sizes is apparent. Prior to the introduction of water for the environment in 2013-14 Murray cod numbers were in decline and only rarely captured in monitoring. There was also a lack of successful breeding and fish were not commonly surviving to reach juvenile and adult age classes.

Since concerted efforts to deliver water for the environment in line with Murray cod life history requirements, we have seen an increase in abundance and also an improvement in age structure in the Murray cod population in Gunbower Creek. Murray cod abundance has increased 10-fold since the 2009 reference year, and there is now a diversity of age classes captured indicating there has been successful spawning and survival over multiple years.

Hundreds of thousands of fish also have been stocked into Gunbower Creek over many years, however before 2013 there was little evidence of survival. In addition to supporting natural spawning and recruitment, it's evident that flow management has also supported the survival of stocked fish.

The end result we see in 2020 is a stable and more resilient Murray cod population with increasing numbers and a range of sizes now present – which is a great outcome for our iconic Murray cod.



One of the gorgeous Murray cod juveniles found in Gunbower Creek. (C Bloink [Ecology Australia])

What's been happening with Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) renewal?

Article by Nina Cunningham, North Central CMA Project Manager.

First, a big thank you to those who completed the online survey and contributed to our interactive map on the Engage Victoria site. This was especially helpful, given we haven't been able to hold face-to-face workshops.

Over three months 79 surveys were completed 57 places pinned on the map and there were more than 1,700 visits to the site. A summary of results will be uploaded to the Engage Vic site soon. The top five challenges nominated in the survey for rural landholders and community-based NRM groups were:

- Climate change,
- Less water available for agriculture, recreation, environment,
- Decline in biodiversity (including Threatened species),
- Current dry conditions, and
- Declining population of rural community.

On the interactive map 32 favourite places were pinned. It was great to read about people's favourite places across our region. Four winners were selected, including Tanya Smith who posted this beautiful photo of pelicans on the Gunbower Creek, Leitchville with the caption *"Wildlife, fish, turtles, and countryside. Peaceful and relaxing place to be. My island home."*



Each of our winners nominated a local business to support for their \$100 voucher prize.

We also received 25 comments, some with more great photos, regarding our draft RCS priority places. These will be considered and discussed further as part of the next round of engagement.

We had hoped the next round of community engagement would include face-to-face workshops, and we will do so when we can, but this won't be possible. Instead we are planning a range of online engagement activities beginning late August through September. We'll provide details:

- In the next edition of the Chat,
- you can visit the RCS renewal Engage Vic site <https://engage.vic.gov.au/north-central-regional-catchment-strategy-2021-27> or If you would like to be added to our RCS renewal community contacts list, please email nina.cunningham@nccma.vic.gov.au

Eastern Mallee Bird Threatened Ecological Community: Public consultation period open

The Threatened Species Scientific Committee's, public consultation is underway for their conservation assessment of the *Eastern Mallee Bird Community*.

It is being considered for possible listing as a threatened ecological community under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

A draft Conservation Advice that describes the bird community and outlines a case for listing is now available for public comment. A brief Consultation Guide for Landowners is also available to explain what listing might mean and includes an indicative distribution map of the ecological community. These documents are available on the [Department's website](#).

Documents will be open for comment until 28 August 2020.



The EPBC Act requires the Committee and Department to seek comments on whether the ecological community is eligible for listing under the proposed conservation status of Vulnerable, possibly Endangered or another category. Other relevant comments and information also are welcomed, particularly advice from experienced biodiversity and land managers on how to best identify

the community and manage its ongoing threats, and Traditional Owners about their knowledge and values regarding mallee birds. Questions are available online to help frame comments, though submissions do not need to be limited to these questions.

Please be aware that we are continuing to work on this assessment, adding further information during the consultation period. If you have any information to hand that can be quickly shared, contact the team to discuss.

What is the Eastern Mallee Bird Community?

- The proposed Eastern Mallee Bird Community is an assemblage of 52 bird species identified as being dependent on, or strongly associated with, mallee vegetation in south-eastern Australia. It is limited to larger, intact (native) mallee habitats within the Eastern Mallee region. A list of mallee bird species is in both the Conservation Advice and the Consultation Guide.
- The Eastern Mallee region is defined as the Eyre Yorke Block and Murray Darling Depression bioregions plus subregion Broughton (FLB02) of the Flinders Lofty Block bioregion that links the two bioregions. This covers the Eyre and Yorke Peninsulas, south-eastern South Australia, south-western NSW and north-western Victoria (where a similar bird community is listed under Victorian legislation).
- Many of the 52 bird species are listed as threatened species under national or State environment laws. Listing the bird community will not mean that other mallee bird species that are part of the community will become individually listed as threatened.
- The Eastern Mallee Bird Community will only apply to occurrences where: a minimum number of terrestrial bird species are observed from standard bird surveys and mallee bird species make up the main proportion of birds observed ; and they occur together in intact, larger mallee habitat areas (currently the draft advice suggests at least 50 hectares in size, but this figure is subject to change following further input and analysis). A diversity and abundance of birds that comprise this community is most likely to remain in areas set aside as conservation areas or large mallee remnants that serve as wildlife corridors between such areas.

For locations where the bird community does remain, listing would create new potential opportunities in the future for Commonwealth funding initiatives to support threat management and restoration projects, such as the National Landcare Program. This opportunity would also apply to land managers within the broader surrounding catchments where the ecological community occurs.

If you want more information or have questions about the draft assessment, please contact the Department of

Agriculture, Water and the Environment using the contact details on the website. If you wish to provide comments please send to: epbcnominations@awe.gov.au

What to do about rubbish dumping?

In the last few weeks, reports and requests for advice on what to do about illegal dumping on public land have come across my desk. This is a very frustrating and disappointing issue communities have to deal with, often occurring in bushland, roadside reserves and other areas of high value for Landcare Groups.

If there's doubt about the land tenure where the rubbish is dumped, then contact the DELWP general customer hotline on 136 186 and ask to speak to someone in the Land and Built Environment Team who should be able to identify the responsible land manager from internal mapping.

Most Shires and Councils have a rubbish dumping reporting tools online or avenues to discuss issues through their staff.

EPA has an online platform to report illegal waste disposal via. Call the pollution hotline on 1300 372 842. Its' available 24 hours. You can also [Register for and use the EPA Interaction Portal](#) to report illegal waste disposal.

EPA also provide the following information: "Illegal waste disposal is sometimes referred to as 'illegal dumping'. Not all illegally disposed waste has been dumped.

Illegal waste disposal means deliberately dumping, tipping or burying waste on private or public land that's not licensed to accept it.

It's against the law to illegally dispose of waste. It causes pollution, impacts our health and threatens wildlife. It costs Victorians around \$30 million a year."



Illegal concrete was recently dumped at Shepherds Flat Landcare Group's revegetation site and reported through to authorities. Photo via Jill Williams, Shepherds Flat Landcare Group.

Farm Safety Week- Follow up

There are too many deaths and injuries on farms. Changing the culture toward farm safety in agriculture needs to be led by industry.

This is why for National Farm Safety Week (July 20-25) Agriculture Victoria awarded a \$3 million 'Making our Farms Safer' grant for the Victorian Farmers Federation to strengthen the safety and wellbeing of Victorian farmers, farm families and farm workers.

The Victorian Farmers Federation will employ two farm safety officers, develop online tools and increase access to resources to promote and help make our farms safer for all. For tips on being farm safe visit <https://bit.ly/3dU6NfU>

Sustainable Ag Snippet...

Raywood Regenerative Farmer Group Paddock Walk – Winter Feed

It has been a magnificent start to the season so I thought it would be a good opportunity to catch up with some of the Raywood Regenerative Agriculture farmer group to see and hear what they have been doing this year.

The paddock walks were over three properties, firstly Dusty Pascoe's property, where he had sown a summer multi-species crop in November and a winter mix in April. Dusty initially became interested in multi-species when he saw a crop in a paddock near Elmore and was intrigued by what it was. After several discussions with farmers he knew in the district, he was able to identify that the paddock was sown to a bird seed mix consisting mainly of summer active species, it was then he decided to try this mix in a small paddock as the cost was quite low. The paddock was sown early November 2019 prior to about 20mm of rainfall. The rain virtually stopped except for a couple of minor rainfall events until mid-January, surprisingly the crop held on with only some species not surviving and was able to be grazed by sheep in February, providing feed through the summer period. Dusty was happy with the result and the feed it provided, he decided to sow another multi-species crop in March using a mix of cereals and canola into the same paddock. This was the crop we saw, which was being grazed by 460 ewes with lambs since the end of June, even though we were there for about an hour I didn't see any sheep due to the amount of feed in the paddock.

The next property was Fraser Lourie's, he had sown a multi-species crop using a mix of 13 species. The paddock had areas of compaction, so he used tillage radish in the mix to see if it would assist in breaking the hard pan. He also used three different fertiliser variants

but couldn't see any visual differences in the crop. The crop was heavily infested with red legged earth mite, which were particularly attracted to the tillage radish. Fraser decided not to spray an insecticide and looking at the crop on the day there was no visual impact. Almost 800 ewes and lambs were introduced to the pasture in mid-June, they preferentially grazed the cereals and slowly started eating the radish and tubers in early July.

The final paddock walk was at Tim Demeo's, he had planted a long season canola, which he had been thinking about sowing for several years and with the good start to the season he thought it was a good opportunity to give it a go. Tim had some twin bearing Merino ewes he put in to lamb down in this paddock at a stocking rate of about 10 ewes per hectare. The ewes entered the paddock the first week in May and taken out first week in July. He said he would have liked to get the ewes in there a bit earlier because it was ridiculously tall, which made it difficult to monitor the ewes while lambing. Tim was very happy with the amount of feed the crop produced and is hoping to harvest the crop late in the year, but he did say it will require some good spring rains to get it through.

Felicity Harrop, who manages the Regenerative Agriculture project and I were able to get a good understanding of what these farmers were doing and it provided an opportunity to listen to their experiences and issues first hand. Even with a great start to the season there are many decisions these farmers need to make to have a successful year. Lets hope we see some good spring rain to make all their efforts worthwhile



Raywood Regen Ag farmer group inspecting a multi-species crop.

Darren Bain

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Agriculture Jobs Boost For Regional Victoria

Country Victorian communities will benefit from the creation of nearly 60 full time jobs over the next six months as part of the Agriculture Workforce Plan – supporting our farming community and keeping Victorians working.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes announced the further investment of over \$3 million towards new jobs with Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) as well as the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DELWP).

The Corangamite, North Central and North East CMAs will join five others already benefitting from the program.

New team members will undertake a range of work, including improving local land health through revegetation and fencing of important environmental areas such as waterways, weed control, soil sampling and water quality monitoring on private and adjacent public land.

This work addresses concerns raised by many farmers by helping to control rabbits, wild dogs and other pests and weeds that affect soil health and crop productivity and kill livestock.

New projects with DELWP will target critical action on pests. Projects in Loddon Mallee and Grampians will support three teams to implement measures protecting public land and adjoining private land and farmland from invasive species such as weeds and rabbits.

Two additional teams will help manage wild dog populations and their impact on livestock, including activities like baiting and trapping.

The new wild dog controllers will be supported with training and supervision to ensure their health and safety while implementing best practice wild dog management.

Register now through the Working for Victoria website and you will be matched with these positions when they are advertised: www.vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria - click on "I'm Looking for Work" and follow the link to the Sidekicker app and complete the registration.



Communities Caring for Catchments

Hello all,

Our last month of winter, hooray! I'm anticipating seeing the Seasonal Climate Update with Dale Grey coming up on 12 August to see what's in store for the fast approaching spring. Let's hope for a wet one to keep the catchments damp and get our waterways flowing even more.

I'm pleased to see so many of our dedicated Waterwatch volunteers have been undertaking their water quality testing again since COVID-19 guidelines have changed; so much data is being entered I'm having a hard time keeping up with approvals!

Most of our sites are away from the crowds, but please continue to be aware of and follow Victorian Government guidelines at all times before heading out. If your site is on an urban waterway or busy public space, please consider wearing a mask and taking your sample home to test. In such teetering times, we need to keep up to date to ensure we all do our bit to keep the community safe. If in doubt, don't go out. Your water testing can wait.

Our River Detectives program continues to be delivered in the classroom, and the wonderful Nicole Howie has been carefully curating an awesome monthly matrix of activities for teachers to use. I have been really pleased to see how well our schools have adapted and continued to incorporate the River Detectives program in a variety of innovative ways.

Read on for a story from one of our River Detectives schools in the North East CMA region.

Stay well and enjoy the read.

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A River Detectives School Story

The River Detectives program is coordinated by the North Central CMA but delivered in five regions across the state. Today we will hear from a school in the North East CMA region.

Katie Pallot is a science teacher at St Patrick's Primary School in Wangaratta. She teaches the science program school wide and also leads an extension program for students who have shown a particular aptitude, giving them a place to shine when they may have difficulty in other areas.

"St Patrick's has a sustainability team and student sustainability leaders. Previously they were focused on changes the school community could make on school grounds to improve sustainability including increasing biodiversity and reducing waste."

With her science background, Katie could see the River Detectives program provided a great opportunity to look outward to the broader community and environment.

"River Detectives is run with students from Grades 1-6 involved in the extension program and offers them a chance to be involved in real life community action. The Wangaratta area is blessed with many waterways. Rivers and streams play an important role in community life and the life of families in their recreation time."

Katie comments that one of the best parts of the program is its versatility. The three different groups she's worked with have been able to pull out different aspects and run with it.

"The Grade 1/2 extension students participated in the program first. They gathered data at three monitoring sites; One Mile Creek, King River and the Ovens River. Each week they visited one site to complete water quality tests and waterbug sampling."

When the Grade 3/4 students participated in the program they were challenged to look at data more deeply, consider patterns, why they might be occurring and what they meant for the waterway."

At the beginning of this year, before COVID-19 struck, the Grade 4/5 students were involved. They were really loving the macroinvertebrate sampling so this had become a huge focus of their work."

Katie reflects on some of the highlights of their River Detectives experience;

"The Grade 1/2's were involved in a webinar by Dr Peter Rose from the North Central CMA on native fish. They learnt about Mosquito Fish and became very concerned about the impact of this introduced specie on native aquatic life. They completed research, developed a PowerPoint presentation and delivered it passionately at a whole school assembly."

The Grade 3/4's, after analysing water data produced fantastic written reports summarizing their results and the impact of their water quality findings. Their work really demonstrated the level of confidence students had in their learning and how much they'd enjoyed it."

Seeing students share their knowledge and report back to school assemblies is one of the most significant changes Katie has observed of her students' participation in the program.

"This generates quite a lot of interest among the rest of the school. I often have students approach me around the school asking, 'can I be a River Detective too?'"

Katie comments on the impact the program has had on the school, her own teaching and the students;

"Schools often manufacture situations to create learning opportunities. The River Detectives program shows that as citizens in Wangaratta, surrounded by rivers, it's our responsibility to find out about them and share what we know about looking after them. We have a chance to participate in real citizen science to understand how water quality affects things, how our agricultural industry relies on good quality water and how everything in our environment is linked."

Katie has experienced evidence of student learning outcomes firsthand;

"Apart from the work students have produced we have a lot of parents that provide great feedback about the conversations that are happening at home. One particular student struggled with engagement at school but loved being part of the extension program. His parents were amazed to hear him talking so passionately in the evenings around the dinner table about the waterbugs he'd discovered."

The River Detectives program is supported by the Victorian Government's \$222 million Water for Victoria investment to improve catchment and waterway health across the state.

August activity matrix, out now

This month our River Detectives have the opportunity to immerse themselves in activities around the theme of Urban Stormwater/Rural Runoff. Multi-age, cross-curricular activities catering to a variety of learning styles will explore;

- What is urban stormwater/runoff?
- Where does it come from?
- How does it enter our waterways?
- What pollutants can enter waterways?
- What impact do these pollutants have?
- How can we reduce the impact of stormwater/runoff?
- How can we reimagine urban stormwater as a valuable resource?

The August matrix is the fifth in a series being developed to complement the River Detectives program and support schools to utilise the many wonderful resources found on the website. For more information visit www.riverdetectives.net.au or contact riverdetectives@nccma.vic.gov.au.

Upcoming events and special days

August	
National Tree Day	2 Aug
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day	4 Aug
International Day for World Indigenous Peoples	9 Aug
National Science Week	15-23 Aug
Keep Australia Beautiful Week	17-23 Aug
World Humanitarian Day	19 Aug
September	
National Biodiversity Month	Sep
National Wattle Day	1 Sep
National Walk to Work Day	4 Sep
National Threatened Species Day	7 Sep
National Bilby Day	13 Sep
Sustainable House Day	20 Sep
World Car-Free Day	22 Sep

Sources:

www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels
www.coliban.com.au/about-us/reservoir-levels

October	
Australian Wildlife Week	5-11 Oct
World Habitat Day	7 Oct
National Ride 2 Work Day	21 Oct
Aussie Backyard Bird Count	19-25 Oct
National Water Week	19-25 Oct
All Energy 2020 conference	21-22 Oct

Water Storages update

Region	Water Storage	% full at 25 June	% full at 30 July
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	51.06	↑53.30
	Hume Dam	35.47	↓48.46
	Torrumbarry Weir	95.37	↓94.95
	Third Lake	96.06	↓94.48
	Reedy/Middle Lake	89.07	↑94.68
	Kangaroo Lake	91.47	↑91.98
	Kow Swamp	80.86	↓80.69
	Lake Boga	80.60	↓79.80
Loddon Storages	Lake Charm	91.92	↓91.22
	Cairn Curran Res	39.08	↑40.13
	Tullaroop Res	60.25	↓58.87
Bullarook Storages	Laanecoorie Res	38.25	↓36.63
	Newlyn Res	56.63	↑64.91
Goulburn Storages	Hepburns Lagoon	67.48	↓66.98
	Lake Eildon	47.73	↑51.37
Campaspe	Waranga Basin	85.70	↑91.67
	Lake Eppalock	37.28	↑39.48
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	83.9	↑87.70
	Lauriston Res	82.5	↑86.6
	Malmsbury Res	19.6	↑25.4

Events ...

Atlas of Living Australia, Train-the-Trainer Course

The much anticipated Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) and BioCollect training will now be delivered via a series of free webinars.

Agriculture Victoria are providing the training as an interactive train-the-trainer format and is not being offered to everyone in the first instance. The expectation is for people trained in these sessions to deliver training and user support within their local communities.

When: 2nd week of August to 3rd week of September 2020

Format: Four on-line webinars. There will be several options to attend all modules

Facilitators: Peter Brenton and Matilda Stevenson from the CSIRO.

Selection Criteria

Preference will be given according to the following criteria:

- a) Occupy a volunteer or professional role which would enable them to deliver training to community members;
- b) Have the capacity to deliver training and provide support to community members within areas of Victoria affected by serrated tussock or gorse (infestation maps attached);
- c) Have at least a basic to moderate experience in computers and web-based applications.

Course Outline

Module	Duration	Date & time
1 – Preparation & Overview	2 hr 00 min	TBA
2 – Creating Projects and Surveys	2 hr 45 min	TBA
3 – Sites, Data and Membership	2 hr 45 min	TBA
4 – Everything else	2 hr 45 min	TBA

Application Form

If you would like to take part please follow the link to complete the application

<https://forms.gle/oCvHQC5e6SZuxfPCA>

Further Opportunities

Once the initial train-the-trainer course is complete, participants can apply for a \$500 grant to assist in delivering an on-ground training workshop in their community.

About Atlas of Living Australia & BioCollect

The [Atlas of Living Australia](#) is Australia's national biodiversity database and is the largest mapping database of invasive species in Australia. [BioCollect](#) is a field data collection tool in which users can freely set up and collect data for their own projects, as well as enabling data to be easily copied into the ALA and be made accessible to others who need to use it.

This project is coordinated by the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) with support from the Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT).



Wild by Nature screening event postponed

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made the decision to postpone our Wild by Nature Short Film Festival screening event until Saturday 7 November 2020.

Wild by Nature Short Film Festival celebrates everything we love about Victoria's incredible natural environment. From your local park or creek, to your favourite wild place to escape the busy city, nature plays an important role in all of our lives.

The festival team says "We're still open for film submissions! In fact, we're extending the submission deadline to Sunday 13 September to give you more time to make and submit your films."

Spending time in nature can be really important during difficult times like these. We encourage you to get outdoors, enjoy nature and make great films about it. But we ask you to be responsible in doing so – head to the [health.vic](https://www.health.vic) website for the latest recommended measures to keep yourself and those around you safe.

Adult tickets are \$10, child (under 18) and concession tickets are \$5.

Proceeds from ticket sales will go towards creating short films about three community groups who work hard to care for the Dandenong Creek corridor – First Friends of Dandenong Creek, Friends of Dandenong Valley Parklands and the Greater Dandenong Environment Group.

Read more about the submission categories and criteria online: <https://www.rememberthewild.org.au/wild-by-nature/>

Tricky birds with Geoff Park and Chris Tzaros

Connecting Country is excited to host an all-star lineup for a workshop on identifying tricky bird species of central Victoria.

Two highly-regarded birdwatchers and ecologists, Geoff Park and Chris Tzaros will present at our online workshop on identifying tricky birds on Monday 24 August 2020 at 7 pm.

Geoff will be speaking on identifying raptors and Chris on identifying thornbills, followed by an interactive panel discussion and a chance to ask the experts your bird watching questions. This workshop is suited for our experienced bird watchers and focuses on birds in central Victoria, but everyone is welcome

When: Monday 24 August 2020. 7 PM – 9 PM

Online Event: <https://www.trybooking.com/BKQLH>



Our newsletters namesake (the White-fronted Chat) as photographed by Geoff Park via his popular 'Natural Newstead' blog.



With National Tree Day public planting events cancelled for the first time in 25 years, this year we're celebrating trees a little differently. Plant Ark is asking people to get involved by:

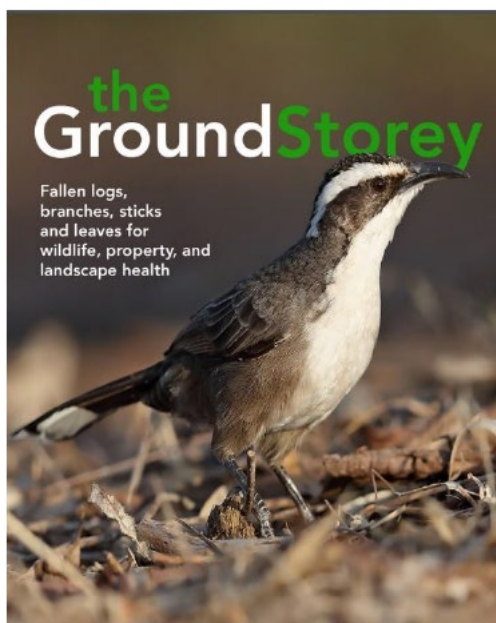
🌱 Planting a tree in your backyard or if you don't have a backyard why not plant a new 'Pet Plant'

🌱 Share a photo connecting with nature or hugging a tree using the hashtag #HugaTreeforNTD

Conference reminder...



Courses & Resources...



Published by the Goulburn Broken CMA, this booklet explores the role of - and need for - fallen logs, branches, sticks, and leaves as habitat.

It explores the benefits and addresses some of the issues landholders may have when considering leaving fallen logs, branches, sticks and leaves – ‘the ground storey’ - on their rural property

The booklet highlights the importance and benefits of retaining and managing the ground storey on a rural property for land and soil health and native wildlife habitat so it may contribute to an overall healthier environment.

If you would like to receive a copy, contact Conservation Management Network Coordinator at the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority Janice Mentiplay-Smith via janicem@gbcma.vic.gov.au

You can also download a PDF version via https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/our-region/land_and_biodiversity/resources_publications/the-ground-storey



Do you want to improve your leadership skills or gain hands-on board experience? Perhaps you are an experienced leader looking for opportunities to extend yourself further?

Now is the time to apply for a funded place in the 2021 Victorian Rural Women's Leadership and Mentoring Program (the Leadership Program).

The Leadership Program aims to provide funded places for Victorian-based rural women connected to agriculture or the agriculture supply chain who want to improve their leadership skills or gain board experience.

The 2021 Leadership Program is offering 14 funded places on established leadership programs commencing later this year and in 2021. This includes opportunities to gain senior leadership or board experience with four additional funded places on offer across two existing programs – the Williamson Leadership Program (two funded places) and The Observership Program (six funded places).

Applications from women with disabilities and those from culturally diverse and Indigenous backgrounds are encouraged. Until restrictions are lifted, programs will be delivered online. For information on opening dates, eligibility criteria and how to apply, see the Victorian Rural Women's Network website.

If you have a question, please email vrwnetwork@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

The Leadership Program is supported by Agriculture Victoria and the Victorian Rural Women's Network.