



North Central chat

DECEMBER 2018

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

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

2018 is rapidly coming to a close but there is no slowing down for the Landcare community as the seasons change. The drier conditions mean a lot of watering of revegetation sites, while access becomes available for fencing in usually wet and boggy riparian areas, which is keeping groups busy.

Grant applications are open for the National Landcare Programs' Smart Farms Small Grants Program. Applications close at 11.30pm Friday 11 January 2019. All the details are on the Funding opportunities page.

Reflecting on the past year, highlights and achievements from across the region's Landcare community have been abundant. To mention a few, I personally enjoyed the Future Farming Expo at Donald in February, advocating for Landcare during the state-wide Biodiversity Response Planning process in March, attending the Macedon Ranges Intrepid Landcare Youth Leadership summit held in October and of course the on-ground action and achievements delivered during the 2017-18 Victorian Landcare Grants. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading through the reports, viewing photos and collating the mapped outputs submitted in October 2018.

I also love hearing of the partnerships and collaborations Landcare continues to make with corporates, Landcare Australia, local companies, government agencies, shires and other community groups to support local Landcare action, it is really inspiring. At a time when volunteers are very stretched to complete so many applications for funding pools that are often reducing, seeking out alternative partnerships and funding pathways is building resilience and keeping landcare alive in many areas, which is no easy feat.

The launch of the [Victorian Environmental Volunteering Plan](#) provides insight into the trends of environmental volunteering and what volunteers want, which is a key driver for the future of Landcare. I have certainly found the information on experienced based volunteering and reimagining the volunteer opportunities we provide, to be useful in planning out the 2019 regional program of events and

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Check out the newest editions to the catchment. These Bush-stone curlew chicks recently hatched in the Mid Loddon CMN area near Bendigo. Photo provided by Facilitator Judy Crocker.

activities. The year ahead will feature a *Northern Rivers Roundup* Landcare Network Facilitator professional development forum in partnership with Goulburn Broken and North East CMAs, as well as grant writing workshops, iMap mapping training and supporting grassroots Landcare at meetings, events and workshops across the catchment.

I wish you all a very safe and happy Christmas break surrounded by family and friends. See you in 2019!

Until next year,

Tess Grieves

Regional Landcare Coordinator

North Central Catchment Management Authority

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News...

Looking for nest boxes in Victoria

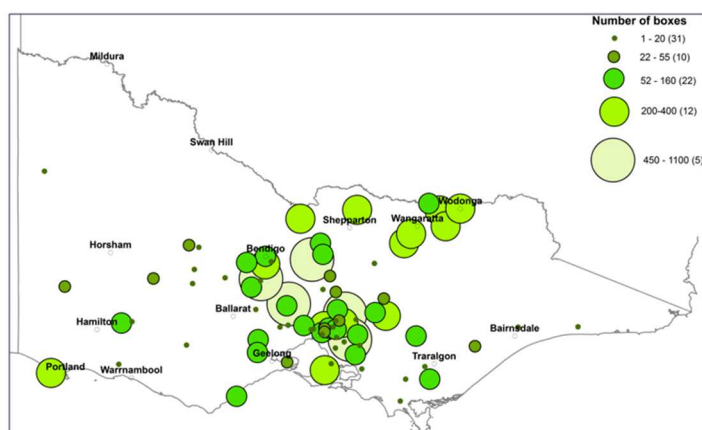
Phoebe Macak a scientist of Wildlife Ecology at Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research has shared some results from her recent research on nest boxes in Victoria.

The study received information about nearly 10,000 nest boxes across Victoria. Boxes are housing a variety of mammals and birds (not always the targeted species) and providing useful information. Their installation and monitoring represent a huge investment by people across the state.

Seventy-eight respondents provided information on behalf of 94 programs that support 9845 nest boxes across Victoria. The number of nest boxes installed per program ranged from 1 to 1100. Community groups had installed 57 per cent of nest boxes, including 20 Landcare affiliated groups. Respondents were primarily motivated to support wildlife, and to engage the community with nature.

Thirty-three native mammal and bird species were recorded using nest boxes. Sugar Gliders were the most common species recorded (49 programs). Over half (65 per cent) of nest boxes were monitored at least once per year. Barriers to monitoring nest boxes included difficulties coordinating volunteers, inaccessible nest boxes, and dealing with feral honey bees. Most programs (64 per cent) had curated and stored monitoring data, but few had completed statistical analyses or published results.

Where are the nest boxes?



What have ARI done with the information?

From the information provided by Landcare groups and others who took part in the survey, two facts sheets have been produced: 1. [A general guide to using nest boxes](#), and 2. [Monitoring and storing next box data](#). The latter fact sheet was prompted by comments made during the project about wanting to know more about what to monitor during nest box checks.

Australia's most important bird takes a step back from extinction

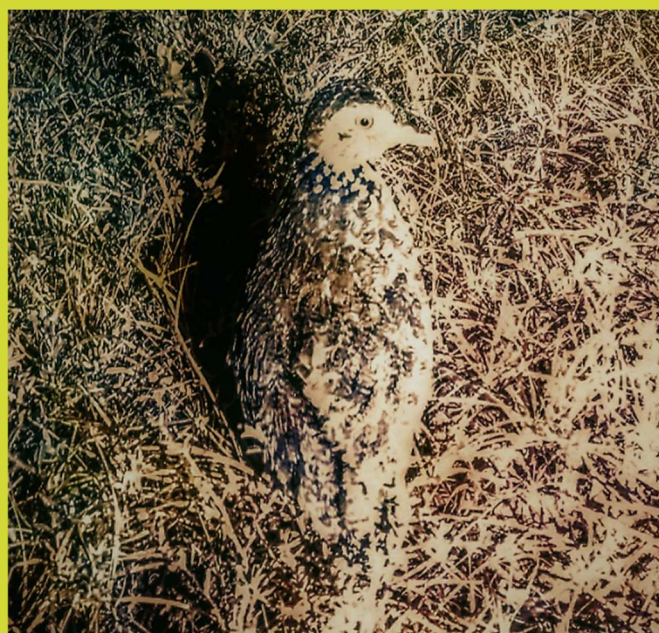
On November 20, [The Age](#) published a fantastic article on the successful captive breeding of four Plains-wanderer chicks at Werribee Open Range Zoo.

Hatched on November 4, these little fluffballs have been named Quagmire, Jane, Ramble and Clinton.



Four plains-wanderer chicks have been born in captivity in Victoria. Credit: Zoos Victoria

From 2015-2018, North Central CMA ran the Remnant Grassy Ecosystems project with Trust for Nature and other project partners to protect the Plains-wanderer's habitat in northern Victoria. A newly funded National Landcare Program project is being delivered over the coming five years by North Central CMA, aimed at protecting the Plains-wanderer habitat, titled 'Plains for wanderers' also being run in partnership with Trust for Nature and DELWP.



Adult Plains-wanderer. Photo; Nick Layne



Fancy a curlew for Christmas?

As the festive season approaches, the Mid-Loddon bush stone-curlew captive breeding and release program has a nifty gift idea.

Sponsorship is a fantastic way of supporting the curlews breeding and release program, the only one of its kind in Victoria. Initial sponsors will have naming rights. Each sponsor/s will be provided with photos of the birds and sign will be attached to their enclosure with the birds' name and current sponsor.

Annual food cost for a single bird is \$165.00 or sponsor a breeding pair for \$330.00. Single birds will begin to be released in 2019, if seasonal conditions are appropriate and final permits are granted. The curlews will continue to be fed at the soft release site for as long as necessary and with as much wild food as available. They will also be radio tracked with regular reporting on their positions as they spread out across the local landscape, for as long as their individual trackers remain attached.

Project facilitator Judy Crocker advised that there are also other ways the community can be involved:

- Breeding meal & earth worms
- Breeding crickets
- Restoring local habitat, especially close to the release site (lots of logs and litter).
- Assisting with the radio and visible tracking of released birds

The curlews available for 2018-19 sponsorship include:

- 3 breeding pairs
- 5 juveniles
- 3 chicks (with more on the way)



For more information, images and updates on the curlew program contact: Judy Crocker, Facilitator/Secretary
Mid Loddon Landcare Network & CMN
0428 506 525 or visit:
http://uslandcare.org.au/?page_id=221

Motivating the disengaged

The Weeds and Rabbits Project (DEDJTR) newsletter recently published an article focussing on one the biggest issues in NRM.

An innovative social science project has delved into one of the biggest issues plaguing community pest management: how to motivate disengaged landowners.

Funded by the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party through the Weeds and Rabbits Project, it focused on understanding the mindset of "don't know/don't care" landowners.

The research considered different types of landowners and the values that would be most likely to drive or hinder weed control.

Community Engagement Officer at VSTWP, Ivan Carter, said the findings were transferable to many environmental issues and challenges.

"The work provides us with more effective options and strategies to embed into our engagement activities and gives us a better understanding of the landowner groups we are dealing with and what exactly motivates them."

A report on the project is available on the [VSTWP website](#).

If you would like to subscribe to the Weeds and Rabbits project newsletter please [subscribe online](#) or email pestanimalsandweeds@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Events...

'Stock up: keeping pigs on small farms'

Producer-led project Stock Sense is hosting an interactive webinar for small landholders who own or are interested in owning pigs. This webinar will be free to attend, taking place on Tuesday 11 December 8pm AEDT. The program details are listed below.

Well known pig vet Dr Trish Holyoake will walk through what you need to know when it comes to owning pigs. The interactive webinar will give you an opportunity to ask questions and be part of the discussion.

Topics covered include;

- ▶ Responsibilities of owning pigs
- ▶ Biosecurity - keeping your pigs safe
- ▶ Pig husbandry on a small farm
- ▶ Pig health 101

When: Tuesday 11 December, 8pm – 9pm



Where: Online

RSVP: Online ([click here](#)), call 1300 020 163 or email stocksense@vff.org.au

Dry Season Workshops

Agriculture Victoria has the following dry seasonally focused farmer workshops scheduled in the approaching months.

SCA design and livestock management

Werrimull	10 Dec Time: TBC	Darryl Pearl Agriculture Victoria 0417 432 711 or email
Manangatang	11 Dec Time: TBC	
Birchip	12 Dec Time: TBC	Martin Hamilton Agriculture Victoria 0429 946 149 or email
Boort	13 Dec Time: TBC	
Inglewood	14 Dec Time: TBC	Heather Drendel Agriculture Victoria 0427 868 705 or email
Brim	18 Dec 9.00am – 1.00pm	
Paradise	TBC	

Soil moisture probes and risk management

When: Monday 17 December

Where: Rainbow. Time TBC

RSVP: Heather Drendel, Agriculture Victoria 0427 868 705 or [email](#).

Sustainable Ag Snippet...

Most farmers have made the decision to either cut their crops for hay or take them though to harvest. I have seen some harvesting occurring around the region, those farmers lucky enough to harvest their cereal crops and something back from a very dry year.

Hopefully they will get enough seed for sowing next year or to feed livestock. Farmers with irrigation still have a bit of harvesting to do with some nice-looking crops to be harvested in December. The farmers I have spoken with are still positive and talking about next year's sowing activities, which shows how resilient our farming community is. The farmers with sheep are still getting good prices for livestock

and it looks like this will continue in to the future. The lack of paddock feed and high hay prices mean farmers will be getting their calculators out to crunch some numbers, so they can make decisions on selling livestock or buying feed.

The biggest issue for our soils this summer will be wind erosion, with failed crops in some areas and low biomass in others is a likely scenario of those hot westerly windy days. No one likes to see their paddocks blown away and early decisions will be critical to ensure soil wind erosion is minimised. There is plenty of information out there on preventing wind erosion, so seek advice early and keep your top soil and nutrients on your farm.

I have had a few enquiries from PhD students seeking farmers to help them out with their projects, including studies on dung beetles, cape weed and grazing and compost trials. These students are dedicated in finding answers for agriculture so supporting these students is a high priority and hopefully the results from their research will assist farmers in years to come. I would like to thank the farmers I have contacted and provided support for these projects as they wouldn't be possible without you.

Finally, and importantly, the Australian Government has recently announced round two of the Smart Farms Small Grants. This is a great opportunity for farmers and groups to apply for funding to assist adapting to change, innovate and become more sustainable. I would strongly encourage any of the North Central applicants to contact me during preparation of, and prior to submitting their application.

It is important to note that any Landcare group that **are operating solely under LVI incorporation will need** LVI or another incorporated GST registered entity, such as your Landcare Network, to act as the lead organisation and apply on your behalf. The earlier you notify us of your intention to use LVI as the lead organisation and send the application through the better, so we can ensure it is able to be approved and submitted on time.

All the details can be found online via: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/natural-resources/landcare/national-landcare-program/australian-government-investment-in-landcare>

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

Darren Bain

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North Central Catchment Management Authority
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2018 SHINE Award Winners and Finalists



The Weekly Times, supported by Harvey Norman, award the annual Shine Awards which celebrate the achievements and contribution of women across rural and regional Australia.

It was wonderful to read the inspiring stories, agricultural and community work the women featured are undertaking. The Shine awards featured both finalists and winners of the six categories in the special lift out in Weekly Times (November 21).

What a delight to see the familiar face of Di Bowles, dairy farmer at Mead and former North Central CMA Board member as a finalist in the 'Courage' category. In response to the milk price crisis of 2016, Di started the Show Some #dairylove, a social media group that promotes the industry and now boasts more than 18,000 members. Well done Di!

Overall, lamb bacon pioneer Toni Barton of Nulla Vale, Victoria, was the 2018 Shine Award winner.

If you have an online subscription to the Weekly Times you can read more [here](#) otherwise try and track down an edition at your local newsagency, it's well worth a read.



Hello everyone,

Can you believe it's that time of the year again? It comes around so quickly. Britt and I have been focussing on lots of exciting programs now. Did you know Waterwatch now has four Citizen Science programs? Bendigo Creek Citizen Science project, A healthy Coliban Catchment monitoring program, RiverScan and Birch's Creek Citizen Science Project. You can read more about these projects in this update.

Over the past month, we hosted a workshop with Bendigo Creek Citizen Science community volunteers. The aim of this workshop was to design a program with our volunteers and to assign their monitoring sites. Our volunteers are excited about being involved in the program and learning new skills and knowledge about waterway health and have a personal interest/connection to Bendigo Creek, they are keen to be involved in the future development of the creek.

Peter Rose, Nicole Bullen and I headed out with Bendigo TAFE students and RiverScan volunteers to undertake the annual macroinvertebrate survey of Native Fish Recovery Plan project area. Data from this assessment will be used in the third annual River Health Report Card for the RiverScan project.

Registrations are now open for the 2019 River Detectives program. If you've been thinking about getting involved – now's the time. We limited place so get in quick.

Britt and I are off Melbourne for the statewide Waterwatch Coordinators meeting on the December 3 and hosting a River Detectives Coordinators summit workshop on December 4.

We will also take some leave over the Christmas period, please if you need anything during this time, contact reception on (03) 5448 7124 or info@nccma.vic.gov.au

Enjoy the read,

Cass and Britt

Cass Davis

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator
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Birch's Creek in the spotlight

I am really excited to share another wonderful demonstration of how Citizen Science is helping North Central CMA projects to tell a wonderful story about the work that we do to protect our regions precious waterways.

Over the past 12 months, I have been working with Lang, Project Manager for the Birch's Creek Priority Waterways project to engage community volunteers and train them so they can undertake water quality and macroinvertebrate monitoring on Birch's Creek.

The information collected will help us to understand the ecological health of this system in response to the work that Lang has undertaken over the past couple of years.

To read the report [click here](#)

What is Citizen Science?

Citizen Science is about working with the community to collect important information and can include developing project ideas together, collection of data and telling a story.

North Central Waterwatch program focuses on supporting community volunteers to collect important local and ecological information about waterways.

By working closely with our communities, we enable projects that aim to improve waterway health.

Our Citizen Science programs, provide many outcomes including creating an environment that people enjoy and benefit from; healthy water leads to healthy communities and this is the heart of creating cities that are healthy places for people to make their home, grow with their families and enjoy abundant and thriving water resources.

North Central CMA has several citizen science projects that people can get involved in.

RiverScan: This project works to understand the outcomes of work delivered through the Native Fish Recovery Plan. To find our more [click here](#)

Birch's Creek: This project aims to understand what the effects of environmental works are having on the water quality of Birch's Creek. To find our more [click here](#)

Bendigo Creek: The Bendigo Creek will be undergoing some transformative remedial works in coming years and we aim to engage the community to establish baseline data about the health of the creek and to monitor changes over time, to find our more call us on 03 5448 7142 or email us info@nccma.vic.gov.au

Implementing citizen science through our projects directly links us together and enables communities to take action.

Together, agencies can support communities to gather and share information and knowledge that will help us make informed and collaborative decision about waterway management now and in the future.

For more information about how to get involved in citizen science programs check out our website [click here](#)



River Detectives 2019 – Registrations NOW OPEN



Are you wanting to get outside with your students and learn more about local waterways and why they are so precious?

If so please APPLY online and tell us why your school would like to get involved in the River Detectives program. If accepted into the program you will have access to:

- Professional learning workshops on monitoring habitats, water quality and macroinvertebrates
- Loan of a water quality testing kit and macroinvertebrate monitoring kit
- A login to the River Detectives portal (for data recording)
- Activity booklet relating to catchments and your curriculum
- Invitations to be involved in special events
- Online learning opportunities

Exploring local waterways with students



Apply online now!

Proudly supported by:



www.riverdetectives.net.au

To find out more about the program visit www.riverdetectives.net.au or email: riverdetectives@nccma.vic.gov.au

To apply to be a part of the River Detectives program 2019 [click here](#)



Courses and Resources...

Victorian Rural Womens Network seeking Leadership Course applications

Are you a rural Victorian woman in agriculture who wants to be a better leader? Do you want to drive change, gain board experience or make a difference in your rural or regional community?

The Victorian Rural Women's Network, alongside four partnerships, is offering funded places for rural Victorian women on a range of established leadership and mentoring programs from 2019 to 2021.

These programs are available to rural and regional Victorian women involved in agriculture or the agriculture supply chain. They are tailored for women at all stages of their leadership journey, from emerging to experienced leaders and include opportunities to begin and boost board experience.

Take advantage of this exciting opportunity today or tap someone on the shoulder who would benefit from these programs. A limited out-of-pocket allowance is available on a case-by-case basis. Terms and conditions apply.

For more information on the range of programs and to apply, go to <https://extensionaus.com.au/VRWNetwork/all-about-victorian-rural-womens-leadership-and-mentoring-program/>

Who are our representatives at Landcare Victoria Inc?

Landcare Victoria Incorporated Members Council

The Members Council of Landcare Victoria Incorporated (LVI) has been established to provide feedback to the Committee of Management of Landcare Victoria Incorporated, the peak landcare body in Victoria.

The following members have been appointed to help represent the interests of landcare in the North Central Catchment Management Region to LVI. They would welcome any contact from groups and members on issues facing the landcare community to assist LVI to advocate on behalf of landcare.

- Christine Kilmartin
0418325350 christinekilmartin01@gmail.com
- Kevin Spence
0408 353966 BNGLandcare@bigpond.com
- Phil Burnie 0455 833947 flipper@westnet.com.au

- Michael Mason
0429 549184 happyewes@gmail.com

Committee of Management Representatives:

- Christine Brooke
0428 192335 brooke0111@bigpond.com
- Asha Bannon
5472 1594 asha@connectingcountry.org.au

For further information on the work of Landcare Victoria Incorporated, contact via Web:

<https://www.landcarevic.org.au/lvi> ; Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/landcarevictoriaincorporated/>



FarmBuild- A unique distribution model for agricultural science

When farmers have access to up-to-date agricultural data, delivered through easy-to-use online tools, they can make better operational decisions for their farm. FarmBuild makes it easier to build useful farm management tools based on Agriculture Victoria science.

Agriculture Victoria advise that it is ultimately our primary producers out on the land who benefit from this technical initiative, but the immediate interface with FarmBuild usually comes from agriculture service businesses. The FarmBuild project works with industry bodies and software developers to help them develop new tools and utilise our science in evolving and innovative ways. Most agriculture businesses will need to collaborate with software developers to be able to use FarmBuild effectively.

The products and tools that are developed out of FarmBuild will then be used by farmers, land managers, consultants and advisors making decisions on farm. Application of the science is essential to support end users and meet the demands of growing markets, as well as to demonstrate responsible management of natural resources.

Current online functions available through FarmBuild include mapping, farm nutrient balance models and soil information. New functions and data delivery will be developed for FarmBuild over the coming years.

For more on this emerging online tool visit:
<http://farmbuild.github.io/farmbuild/index.html>



Funding opportunities...



National Landcare Program – Smart Farms

Australia's soils, water, vegetation and biodiversity underpin the productivity and sustainability of agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. But pressures on Australia's natural resources can limit the viability and productivity of food and fibre businesses.

The Australian Government's National Landcare Program aims to protect, conserve and provide for the productive use of Australia's water, soil, plants and animals and the ecosystems in which they live and interact, in partnership with industry, communities and other governments.

As the managers of about 61 per cent of the Australian landmass, farmers have an essential role in protecting and rehabilitating natural resources. Sustainable natural resources management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, water, vegetation and biodiversity also assist farming, forestry and fishing industries to adapt to significant changes in climate, weather and markets.

Smart Farms

The principal component of the National Landcare Program administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is Smart Farms. Smart Farms will run to 2022–23. It is made up of three elements:

Smart Farming Partnerships—will invest \$55 million through two rounds of competitive grants into medium to large scale projects to encourage the development, trial and roll-out of innovative tools and farm practices

Smart Farms Small Grants—is a \$55 million competitive small grants program to support the adoption of best practices that improves the management and quality of our natural resources and increases on-farm productivity.

Building Landcare Community and Capacity—will invest \$24 million to support the sharing of knowledge and achievements and promote community leadership.

Smart Farms Round one outcomes

The successful applicants for the first round of funding for

both Smart Farming Partnerships and Smart Farms Small Grants were announced on 26 June and 31 July 2018 respectively. The outcomes were:

- More than \$27 million invested in 15 projects funded through round one of Smart Farming Partnerships grants
- There were 77 successful projects for the first round of the Smart Farms Small Grants valued at almost \$5 million.

Further information about the grant outcomes, including a list of successful projects can be found at the department's website at: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/natural-resources/landcare/national-landcare-program/australian-government-investment-in-landcare>.

Round 2

- Up to \$9.2 million is available for round two of the Smart Farms Small Grants, with grants of between \$5,000 and \$200,000 to assist farmers and groups to adapt to change, innovate and become more sustainable.
- **Applications for Smart Farms Small Grants round two are now open and close at 11.30pm AEST Friday 11 January 2019.**

Applications for the second and final round for Smart Farming Partnerships is expected to open in the first half of 2019.

Please note all Landcare Groups that are operating solely under LVI incorporation will need LVI or another incorporated GST registered entity, such as your Landcare Network, to act as the lead organisation and apply for this grant round on your behalf.

Local History Grants Program

The Victorian Government recognises that local and community history is an important part of Victoria's memory. The Local History Grants Program encourages and fosters community activities that preserve, record and share the local, social and community history of Victoria and Victorians.

Before starting, it is strongly recommend that you read the [Application Guidelines](#) which provide important information about the eligibility criteria. A list of the **Frequently Asked Questions** is also available [here](#).

Applications close midnight, Tuesday 18 December 2018.

Late submissions will not be accepted. Visit:

<https://prov.vic.gov.au/community/grants-and-awards/local-history-grants-program>