

# North Central chat

JANUARY 2013

*Keeping you up-to-date with all the Landcare news  
& now with a splash of Waterwatch*

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

Happy New Year - I hope you all had a lovely Christmas break. It never seems long enough though, does it?

The start of the year means planning. Since returning to work in early January I have been busy trying to lock in what events we will be hosting in the next six months... and guess what we have some fantastic forums and field days for you. One of the biggest events will be the Annual Water Science Forum. This year the forum will focus on native fish, following on from the launch of the Fish Field Guide at Cohuna in late 2012. We have locked in a date for late March and also secured a venue in Gunbower. For those of you who aren't sure where Gunbower is, it is the northern part of the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) region and sits on the banks of Gunbower Creek. We are busy locking in guest speakers and some delicious catering of course so be sure to look out for more details in the next edition of the newsletter.

Keeping on the water theme, this edition marks the start of a new era for the 'chat' which will now feature a Waterwatch update every month! I am sure you will be keen readers of the update. This month we introduce the Regional Waterwatch Coordinator, Cass Davis, who gives us an insight into what she does.

As always I am keen to hear from you guys - the ones doing all the valuable on-ground works and up-skilling of volunteers. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter please email me the article ([jodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:jodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au)) or give me a bell and we can have a chat about writing an article. We always get a great response to the newsletter when we feature an article written by a Landcare Group.

Before I sign off the first edition of the 'chat' for

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2013, I would like to thank Anna Gooch-Andrew who has been working with me for the last four months - it has been an absolute pleasure. Some of you have been lucky to meet Anna as one of her tasks while here has been to write stories on groups which will feature in the newsletter. I am sure it won't be the last time we see Anna, I have a feeling that Landcare might be a bit closer to her heart after spending four months living it!

Take care,

**Jodie Odgers**

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## News...

### Fox bounty tops 133,000 scalps

The resounding success of the Victorian Government's fox and wild dog bounty continues, with more 133,000 fox scalps and 400 wild dog pelts handed in by the end of December 2012.

Agriculture and Food Security Minister Peter Walsh said the bounty had received an overwhelming response from farmers and hunters since commencing in October 2011.

"Over 15 months, collection centres have received more than 133,000 fox scalps and 400 wild dog pelts, and the total of bounties paid now exceeds \$1.3 million," Mr Walsh said.

Fox scalp collections handed in October 2011 to December 2012 in the north west of the state include Bendigo 19,754, Swan Hill 9,550 and Ouyen 6073.

The fox and wild dog bounty will continue over summer with some small changes to the collection schedule in regards to opening hours and frequency of collection days.

Applications for bounty over summer are traditionally at lower levels, so collections will be suspended between 1 January and 28 February.

Victorian landholders participating in the bounty are advised to check the amended details for collection days and opening hours over the summer period at [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/bounty](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/bounty)

The fox bounty is set at \$10 per scalp, and the wild dog bounty is set at \$50 per skin.

Article taken from 10 January 2013 edition of DPI's AgScience newsletter.

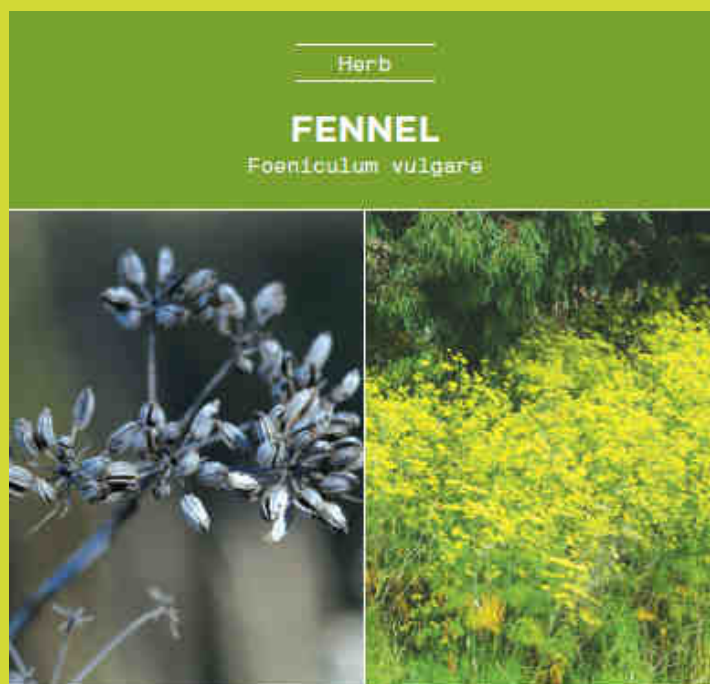
### Another Caring Attack on the Land...

#### Longlea and District Landcare Mosquito Creek Catchment Restoration Project

Saturday 5 May 2012, 0900 hours, members and relatives of the Longlea and District Landcare Group infiltrated a property on Axedale - Kimbolton Road. Armed with trowels, enthusiasm and smiles the troops set upon the land. The mission ahead was 1,000 native plants, guards and stakes.

### Weed of the month...

Weeds Identification Guide - North Central Victoria.



#### (Aniseed, Sweet Anise)

**Description:** An erect herb, 1.5-2.5 m tall.

**Flowers:** Branching from the top of the stem, in groups of 15 to 20. Flowers are 2-3 mm in diameter and yellow in colour. Appearing in summer.

**Leaves:** Stringy and up to 45 cm long, with a very strong aniseed scent when crushed. Often formed at the base of the plant, breaking down as the plant becomes mature.

**Stems:** Smooth, with faint ridges, heavily branched with a number of stems emerging from the crown. The stem is also filled with spongy, white pith.

**Note:** Usually spread by seed and can be spread by the movement of root particles. Often found in moist places; e.g. road edges; channel banks; depressions.

#### Restricted Weed



CONTROL OPTIONS

#### Perennial



VECTOR OF SPREAD





Also on the battlefield that day were our brothers in arms Dave Griffith and David Millsom, the hired help for soil preparation and insertion of additional revegetation via direct seeding.

Three of our wounded soldiers manned the food station, kept the workers hydrated and nourished them with provisions to enable maximum chatting and planting output. These included a BBQ (of course), salads, hot soup and most importantly the three C's: cuppa's, cakes and cookies. Throughout the day the regiment numbers remained steady as some troops moved on and reinforcements arrived. After a few hours of laughter, eating and planting the last soldiers departed.

During the weeks and months following, many more combats were had. Various troops returned to further do battle with more tubestock planting, watercourse fencing and environmental weed control. Further tubestock planting was undertaken on the adjoining property to the south to strengthen our revegetation stronghold on the land and support a previous Landcare waterway fencing battle on that site. Those of us that survived, live on to tell the tales. Passing on our knowledge to the rest of our Landcare members and surrounding community.

To put a serious note to things:

This site is a great way to showcase what a Landcare project can achieve. It has incorporated numerous aspects of environmental land restoration including, fencing off a watercourse, revegetation via tubestock planting and direct seeding and environmental weed control. Another benefit of the site is that it can be viewed by the

public from an elevated position on Axedale-Kimbolton Road.

This project was funded through the North Central Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) Victorian Government's Landcare grants program.

For more information about the Longlea and District Landcare Group, this and other projects undertaken by the group, or if you have any questions about plants and animals on your property contact Paul Somerville, write to C/- Post Office Junortoun 3551 or email [ps.kh@bigpond.com](mailto:ps.kh@bigpond.com)

*Article written by Kylie McLennan member of the Longlea and District Landcare Group.*

## Snaps of the month!

**Not exactly the best place to enjoy the warm weather... but unfortunately you see plenty of Eastern Bearded Dragons sunning themselves on the road this time of the year! The photo below was snapped by Anthony Sloan, North Central CMA Catchment Restoration Officer, when out in the field.**

A few quick facts about the Eastern Bearded Dragon (*Pogona barbata*):

- They are named for their distinctive flap of skin which lies below their jaw
- They eat small lizards and snakes, flowers, insects, fruits and berries
- They mate in spring; the males attract females with a series of frantic head bobs and arm waving.



Keep sending your snaps, we would love to include them in the next edition of the newsletter. Email them to [jodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:jodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au).

## Events

### It's not too late to book in for the carbon farming information session

**The newly re-formed East Loddon Landcare Group is hosting a free carbon farming information session in Jarklin early in 2013.**

Guest speaker Ben Keogh, Managing Director of Australian Carbon Traders, will discuss the practicalities and realities of carbon farming.

Topics to be covered at the information session include:

- Creating carbon credits on farm
- Participating in the Carbon Farming Initiative
- Marketing and trading carbon credits.

There will also be plenty of opportunity for questions.

**When:** Wednesday 30 January 2013

**Time:** 7.00 pm—9.30 pm (Dinner provided)

**Where:** Four Posts Hotel, Loddon Valley Hwy, Jarklin, Victoria

**Cost:** Free event

**RSVP:** For catering purposes please RSVP to the North Central CMA by 5.00pm Monday 28 January on (03) 5448 7124 or email [info@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@nccma.vic.gov.au).

### Upper Campaspe Landcare Network wants to hear from you!

**The Upper Campaspe Landcare Network will be running two community workshops in March as part of the development of their Sustainable Landscapes blueprint.**

The workshops will be held on:

- Sunday 3 March at Richardsons Hall, Woodend, from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm.
- Sunday 17 March at Barfold Hall, Barfold, from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm.

All members of local Landcare groups in the Upper Campaspe catchment are invited to attend, and we hope to see as many of you there as possible, so that we can collect and document the valuable works that have been undertaken by our groups in the past, and to ensure that we collect as much valuable information about the natural values of our region as we can.

The Sustainable Landscapes blueprint will be a strategic plan that will guide and inspire the actions of the Network for the next five years, to 2017, and we hope that it will assist us in attracting funding for large 'landscape scale' projects across the Upper Campaspe catchment.

Our Blueprint aims, with the help of the Landcare community, to document the key assets of our catchment, be they vegetation, waterways, fauna, healthy soils and productive farmland etc. It will also document the threats to our assets, which could be pest plant and animals, salinity, poor farming practices or other threats. It will also document the key achievements of our Landcare groups in previous years and will collect the ideas and wishes of the community for on-ground works in their local areas. Data from a number of sources on vegetation, flora and fauna, pest plants and animals, on ground works undertaken by agencies and community, waterway health and vegetation covenants will be collected as part of the mapping component of the project. Data will be captured in a database for ongoing use.

For more information contact Mel Husada at the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network on 0402 811 162 or email [uclandcare@gmail.com](mailto:uclandcare@gmail.com)

*The success of this project relies on community input and participation, so save the date and please spread the word!*

### Hot off the press - 2013 Connecting Country Education Program

**The Connecting Country Education Program is on again from February to April this year. The 2013 program has the theme 'learning from experience and learning from each other'. As such, each event will include a local perspective on the issue at hand as well as presentations by specialists from near and far.**

It's shaping up to be a diverse and interesting program and that we hope you'll find enjoyable, inspiring, and of course - educational.

## The program will include the following events:

### Dja Dja Wurrung 'Welcome to Country' and Local Reptiles - From the Backyard to the Bush

*Sunday 10 February*

This Sunday afternoon event will launch the 2013 Education Program with a Welcome to Country from the Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprise. Following the welcome, Peter Johnson (Senior Biodiversity Planner with DSE) will give a talk on local reptiles, including those you might find in the garden through to some hidden away in special habitats that we don't often get to see.

**Location:** Ray Bradfield Room, next to Victory Park in central Castlemaine  
**Time:** 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm  
**Cost:** Free

### Forest Soils Workshop: The Science, Management and History of our Local Soils.

*Sunday 17 February & Sunday 24 February*

This workshop will be held over two consecutive Sundays. The first day will be on general soil science and classification, including simple methods of identifying and describing different soil types. The second day will focus on soil management and the history of soil in the Mount Alexander region since European colonisation.

**Location:** Ray Bradfield Room, next to Victory Park in central Castlemaine  
**Time:** 9.00 am - 2.00 pm  
**Cost:** \$10 per person (for whole workshop)  
 Places limited - RSVP required

### Nature Discovery Afternoon for Kids

*Friday 1 March*

This special family event will include three nature discovery sessions in one afternoon for kids aged 9-12 years in the beautiful surrounds of the Vaughan Springs Reserve. Session presenters will be Parks Victoria, Elaine Bayes and Tooko Wildlife Displays, who will each be running an interactive native wildlife demonstration. Book soon to be part of this fun and educational afternoon which will finish with a barbeque dinner.

**Location:** Vaughan Springs Reserve  
**Time:** 4.30 pm - 6.30 pm  
**Cost:** \$10 per child, adults free  
 Places limited - RSVP required

### Environmental Weeds: Threatening Biodiversity from Maldon to Marrakesh

*Wednesday 13 March*

Find out why environmental weeds are not only a local threat but also a global biodiversity catastrophe from two interesting speakers. The first speaker on the night will be Geoff Carr. Geoff is a founding director of Ecology Australia and Vice President on the Board of the Invasive Species Council. His talk will be followed by local Wheel Cactus Warrior, Ian Grenda, who will share his experience of successfully managing Wheel Cactus in the Maldon district.

**Location:** Maldon Community Centre (48 Francis Street, Maldon)  
**Time:** 6.30 pm - 9.00 pm  
**Cost:** Free  
 RSVP requested for catering purposes

### Designing a Wildlife Corridor: What Works & Why?

*Wednesday 10 April*

Join us for an evening discussion about wildlife corridors; find out what works and why, with a focus on phascogales and gliders. Dr Rodney Van Der Ree, Deputy Director of the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology at the University of Melbourne will be the keynote speaker. In addition, the organisers of the community-based 'Superb Parrot Project' will share their experience and knowledge from 20 years of creating wildlife corridors in northern Victoria. This event is jointly presented by Connecting Country and the North Central Catchment Management Authority's Kyneton Woodlands project.

**Location:** Elphinstone Community Hall (Bendigo-Sutton Grange Road, Elphinstone)  
**Time:** 6.30 pm - 9.00 pm  
**Cost:** Free  
 RSVP requested for catering purposes



## Connecting Country Bus Tour: What Does Successful Landscape Restoration Look Like?

Sunday 28 April

Join Connecting Country staff on a bus tour of three properties that are undergoing landscape restoration projects. This will be a great opportunity to hear what landholders have to say about the work they're doing on their properties, why they're doing it and perhaps see what might be possible on your place. Lunch will be provided.

**Location:** meet at the Ray Bradfield Room, next to Victory Park in central Castlemaine

**Time:** 9.00 am – 1.00 pm

**Cost:** Free

Places limited – RSVP required

Keep a watch on the Connecting Country website for further details about the topics and speakers. There will also be registration forms for those events with limited places.

**Connecting Country's 2013 Education events are part of our 'Yellow Box Woodland' project. The project is funded through the North Central Catchment Management Authority by the Caring for our Country Initiative and the Natural Resources Investment Program.**

## Waterwatch update

Hi everyone,

My name is Cass Davis and I am the Regional Waterwatch Coordinator at the North Central CMA. Waterwatch like Landcare is a community program where we work with volunteers.

A large part of my role is working with 60 community volunteers who monitor the health of our waterways by collecting data on a monthly basis. The data is collated and allows us to pick up changes in waterway health over time - so we greatly appreciate the tireless hours our Waterwatch monitors dedicate to water testing!

The Waterwatch Program also supports eight primary schools in the region through the River Detectives program. The program educates kids about waterway health, why it is important to look after our waterways and what they can do to help keep our waterways healthy. We will be launching the new River Detectives resource booklet in March 2013 - it will be available to schools and community groups. If you or your Landcare/community group would like to work

with your local school and promote waterway health through the River Detectives Program please contact me on the details below.

Lastly I would like to let you know that I have some great events planned for the coming months. I will be advertising them in this newsletter!

Until next time,

**Cass Davis**

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator  
North Central Catchment Management Authority  
PO Box 18 Huntly, VIC 3551  
Phone: 03 5448 7124

## Frog pondering with the Groats

Can you be too old for a frog pond? Not according to John and Veronica Groat, North Central Waterwatchers, who live at Strathallan.

Inspired and enthused with information from the 2012 North Central Waterwatch Forum on Frogs, held in Newstead, the couple set about putting a frog pond in the paddock near their vegetable patch.

When the Groats moved into the area some ten years ago there was no sign of frogs on their property. This was not surprising as the area had been in drought for a couple of years.

At the Newstead forum they learnt that 15 species of indigenous frogs are known to the region, including two threatened species, the Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) and the Bibron's Toadlet (*Pseudophryne bibronii*).



*Spotted Marsh Frog. Photo provided by: Lydia Fucsko*



The North Central Waterwatch Frogs Field Guide published by North Central CMA, gave John and Veronica added ammunition and a handy resource for frog spotting. The guide is packed with good information and photos of the three species of Tree Frogs and 12 species of Southern Frogs occurring within the region.

The frog pond, a fibreglass affair, is now up and running, surrounded by rocks and clumps of native grasses, and of course seating.

Two distinct types of tadpoles have recently been metamorphosing at about 10 weeks or close to the halfway range for many of the local species.

After much scrutiny John and Veronica think (and hope) they may have Spotted Marsh Frogs (*Limnodynaste tasmaniensis*) and Pobblebonks (*Limnodynastes dumerilli*) enjoying their pond.

The pond has provided the Groats with what has now become a favourite pastime.

Each afternoon, after a hard day's work around the property they sit with a glass of wine or a beer and peer into the pond.

Discussions about the progress and possible lineage of the tadpoles provide a very satisfying and relaxing end to the day.

## Fishing around the Iconic Gunbower Island

The Gunbower Forest is a Ramsar-listed wetland and is a priority environmental asset in local, regional, national and international contexts. The Gunbower Forest spans 20,000 hectares along the Murray River floodplain near Cohuna, downstream of Echuca.

The Forest is one of the most significant remaining areas of River Red Gum forest in Australia. It is also Australia's largest inland island, bounded by the Murray to the north and Gunbower Creek to the south.



*The Iconic Murray Cod. Photo provided by: Arthur Mostead*

In 2012 a survey was undertaken which forms part of the annual Living Murray condition monitoring program for Gunbower Forest Icon site. Twenty six sites were surveyed in 2012, including seven wetlands within Gunbower Forest, seven reaches of the Gunbower Creek, nine Lagoons connected to Gunbower Creek and three reaches of the River Murray. The survey followed the natural floods of 2011 and 2012.

The results showed significant differences in the structure and abundance of the fish community compared to previous years of surveys. 14,888 fish from 16 species (11 native and 5 non-native) were recorded this year, the lowest abundance over the past five years of condition monitoring.

## Celebrating World Wetlands Day February 2, 2013

*Wetlands are classified as '... any area of temporary or permanently waterlogged or inundated and, natural or artificial, with water that is standing or running, ranging from fresh to saline, and where inundation by water influences the biota and ecological processes occurring at any time.'* (Boulton & Brock, 1999)

There are 1,619 wetlands within the North Central CMA region. 77% of these wetlands are considered to be of regional, national or international importance (North Central CMA, 2007).



*Great Egret. Photo provided by: Anna Chatfield*

Wetlands are important to us as they provide feeding and breeding places for waterbirds, native fish and many other faunal species, they often support communities of flora and fauna species listed under state, national and/or international legislation and contribute to the economy through agriculture and tourism. Wetlands quite often contain endangered and vulnerable Ecological Vegetation Classifications (EVC's) and are extremely valuable in terms of bird migration, wildlife corridors (landscape-scale 'stepping stones') and for providing habitat for many native species.

## Courses and resources

### L.I.F.E - Free campaign resources are available

Landcare Australia has developed free group resources to support groups getting involved with the Landcare Is for Everyone (L.I.F.E) campaign. Resources include artwork for logos, posters, flyers, bumper stickers, email signatures, removable tattoos, stickers, letterhead as well as the collection of characters from the L.I.F.E CSA.



There are editable fields in the posters and flyers so you can add your own event details and your group logo. Head to:

[www.landcareonline.com.au/resources/life-csa-resources](http://www.landcareonline.com.au/resources/life-csa-resources).

### Sustainable Grain Production course

**A new or enhanced career in the Australian grains industry beckons students who undertake the University of New England's Sustainable Grains Production Course.**

Supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), the course aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills to fast track their career in the grains industry or advance their farm businesses. This distance education course, studied as part of a Masters, Graduate Certificate or Diploma, enables students to meet and learn from grains industry experts.

Applications for trimester one in 2013 close Sunday 3 February 2013.

Felicity Harrop, from the UNE, says the course offers two areas of study during trimester one. "One area is grains industry systems and this covers topics such as socio-economics of grain production, grain processing and products, marketing and finance, quality assurance systems, occupational health and safety, and human resource management," Ms Harrop said. "The other area is grains and the environment, and this looks at ecology and sustainability of grain systems, crop and pasture rotations, environmental impacts and management, native vegetation and soil conservation, legal issues and property management planning.

"During trimester two, the units cover grain production and crop protection."

Ms Harrop said UNE's Sustainable Grains Production course allowed students to study from home over a one to two-year period, depending on personal time commitments. Each of the four units has an intensive school which is held in a regional centre such as Wagga Wagga (NSW), Horsham (Victoria) or Adelaide (South Australia).

For more information go to [www.une.edu.au/grainproduction](http://www.une.edu.au/grainproduction)





## Invasive Animals CRC Update - January 2013

The Invasive Animals CRC (IA CRC) has recently embarked on a further five years of work under the Commonwealth Government's Cooperative Research Centres program. They are continuing their investigation into new methods of detection and management of the impacts of Australia's key vertebrate pest species such as rabbits, wild dogs and carp. The IA CRC also has a national NRM facilitation and engagement project that helps deliver this research and knowledge to on ground practitioners and land managers through all the NRM agencies. The NRM facilitation and engagement team can also offer technical advice regarding regional vertebrate pest strategies and facilitate coordinated group management across various land tenure.

In the last few months, some new PestSmart resources have been finalised and are now available on the web at [www.feral.org.au/pestsmart](http://www.feral.org.au/pestsmart). Some examples of the new products include the glovebox guide for managing rabbits, the working plan to manage wild dogs, guidelines for preparing a working plan to manage wild dogs, guidelines for planning carp fishing competitions, and many more.



Additionally, the 2012 'Feral Photos' competition was a great success with many entries being received and they can also be viewed online at

[www.feral.org.au](http://www.feral.org.au). 2013 calendars featuring images from the 2012 competition have been produced and are available while they last - if you would like a copy, pass on your postal details to [jessica.marsh@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jessica.marsh@dpi.nsw.gov.au). There will be another competition run this year so make sure you get out there and take some photos of those feral animals in your area.

Subscribe to the newsletters:

'NRM Notes' by emailing: [jessica.marsh@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jessica.marsh@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

'FeralFlyer' at [www.invasiveanimals.com/media-centre/subscribe/](http://www.invasiveanimals.com/media-centre/subscribe/)

## Funding news

### 2013 Coles Junior Landcare School Garden Grant now open

Since 2008 Coles has been providing School Garden Grants of up to \$1,000 to schools and youth groups to help create gardens in their grounds or community, such as bush tucker gardens, water wise gardens or veggie gardens.

These programs encourage students to learn about the environment through "outdoor learning" and interaction in developing their own school gardens.

Round 1 closes 5pm (AEDT) Friday 15 February 2013. For more information go to [www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2).

