

Hi everyone,
My name is Camilla Osborn and I have been working as the Vegetation Technical Officer for QMDC based in Goondiwindi since January 2009.

It was a big move to Queensland from Port Augusta in South Australia for me and Mr Chops (my Bearded Dragon) where I worked as a Pastoral Land Assessment Officer for the South Australian Government.

Recently, I spent a year working for WWF in Laos as an Environmental Networking Officer, liaising with non-government organisations to minimise their environmental impacts when planning their development projects. I loved Laos and I dream about its food daily.

I am currently studying Rangelands Management part time so this should keep me entertained while I'm not working. Otherwise I can be found in the kitchen cooking. Sometimes it's culinary brilliance and other times it's compost.

The landscape and its uses are very different here from the southern rangelands I have recently been working in so I am spending time trying to learn the different plants and land systems of this region.

Looking forward to meeting you all around the traps.
Cheers for now
Camilla

Welcome to New Staff



New book

Rescued!

Recognition for Wildlife Carers around Australia

Avocado Press has just published a new 180 page book "Rescued!" with 43 stories about wildlife rescue and rehabilitation. Each story is illustrated, and there are eight pages of wonderful colour photographs. This is the first book of its type published in Australia, and is a mix of interesting, funny and sometimes sad stories of wildlife rescues, rehabilitation and release.

The stories are written by wildlife carers and vets across Australia (and even three from New Zealand) and compiled by Jodie Blackney.

Although the book retails for \$19.95, wildlife carers can buy it for half that price, and can sell it as a fund raiser. Single copies can be purchased direct from the author for discounted \$14.95.

Contact: jodie_blackney@hotmail.com



Did this newsletter reach you at your new address?

If you have changed your postal address, phone number or email address, please contact the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee to tell us your new details. Phone (07) 4637 6201.

If you would like to arrange for a Land for Wildlife assessment on your property, please contact the Land for Wildlife Representative nearest to you.

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Land for Wildlife online: via www.qmdc.org.au
(follow the links to 'get involved', then 'Land for Wildlife')

Land for Wildlife
in the Queensland Murray Darling Basin
is coordinated by the
Queensland Murray Darling Committee (QMDC)
on behalf of South West Natural Resource
Management Group (SWNRM) and Condamine Alliance.



LAND FOR WILDLIFE
VOLUNTARY WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

news news news

Summer—Autumn 2009

Hello all,

Welcome to this Summer & Autumn Edition of the QMDC Land for Wildlife newsletter. Where did the Summer go? Here's a brief summary of what's been happening during the past few months:

- Since last July, there have been at least 11 new registrations across the region adding more than 3,000 ha to the program.
- Alison Goodland has been wrapping up Round 2 of our LFW+PLUS funding program. Eighteen Land for Wildlife landholders are involved in undertaking on-ground nature conservation projects in the Border Rivers and Maranoa-Balonne catchments on properties totally 16,500 ha. Some cost sharing is included in the funding with grants between \$300 and \$9,000. The projects include – feral pig trapping; blackberry and rabbit control; various weed control projects; fencing off endangered remnant vegetation for grazing control; fencing off regenerating vegetation to create biodiversity corridors and protecting endangered flora species.
- We have employed a new biodiversity technical officer, Camilla Osborn, in the Border Rivers Office (Goondiwindi). Camilla has already completed a couple of property assessments around Stanthorpe. Read her brief profile on the back page.
- Another new biodiversity technical officer will commence in the Maranoa-Balonne office (Roma) in April. Matt Brown joins us from Emerald and we look forward to introducing him properly next time.

This edition provides an extra two pages of news and reviews – my attempt to make up for missing an edition. I hope you find the articles interesting and relevant, with a spread across different landscapes and communities. As always, your comments or input are welcome. Please contact me any time.

Kate Steel
Regional Land for Wildlife Coordinator,
QMDC.



Welcome to recently registered land owners at Ravensbourne, Andrew and Rebecca Mason.

In this edition...

- Weeping Myall Woodlands listed as Endangered
- Mistletoe and butterfly facts
- Recent brigalow research update
- Frogs in the Condamine
- What's the big deal about Box-Gum?

Contacts

For general information about Land for Wildlife, please contact the Queensland Murray Darling Committee on 07 4637 6201 or go to qmdc.org.au

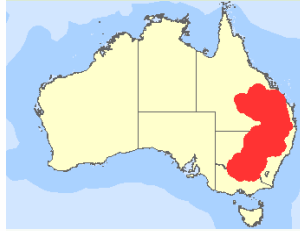
newsletter
for the Queensland Murray Darling Basin

Queensland Murray Darling Committee Inc.

Weeping Myall Woodlands declared Endangered Ecological Community

In January 2009, the Australian Government listed this community as “endangered” under the Ecological Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) as it has undergone a severe decline in geographic distribution.

The Weeping Myall Woodlands occur on the inland alluvial plains west of the Great Dividing Range from Townsville to south of Deniliquin in New South Wales. They generally occur on flat areas, shallow depressions or gilgais on raised (relict) alluvial plains. These areas are not associated with active drainage channels and are rarely if ever flooded. *Acacia pendula* (Weeping Myall) trees are the sole or dominant overstorey species in the ecological community. The understorey can include an open layer of shrubs above an open ground layer of grasses and herbs. In many areas, however, the shrub layer has disappeared and the woodland now has a primarily grassy understorey. The ground layer includes a diversity of grasses and forbs, and varies in species composition and cover depending on past and current management regimes and rainfall events.



Although the species *Acacia pendula* occurs widely in Queensland, the Weeping Myall Woodlands ecological community is restricted to small patches that occur within two regional ecosystems in Queensland. These are:

- 11.3.2 *Eucalyptus populnea* woodland on alluvial plains; and
- 11.3.28 *Casuarina cristata* ± *Eucalyptus coolabah* open woodland on alluvial plains.

Both are categorised as ‘Of Concern’ under Queensland’s *Vegetation Management Act 1995*.

Listing under the EPBC Act provides for priority conservation attention to alleviate further loss or degradation of the remnants.



Weeping Myall woodlands on alluvial plains, near Roma

Understanding ecosystem complexity: Mistletoe

At least 30 species of butterflies and moths feed on mistletoe in southern Queensland. About half are moths - including two large emperor moths (*Opodiphthera loranthe* and *O. engae*) the Mistletoe dayflying moth (*Comocrus behri*) the Mistletoe stem-borer (*Xylorycta heliomacula*) and the Mistletoe browntail moth (*Euproctis edwardsi*).

Small to medium-sized butterflies commonly called “azures” include 12 Australian species. Ten of these are obligatory mistletoe feeders and many also require the presence of specific ants. In these cases, butterflies and ants have co-evolved in the presence of mistletoes. The butterflies provide a variety of compounds (amino acids) secreted from glands on the larvae to the ants, and in return the ants provide protection to the larvae. Some azure larvae prefer to hide under bark pieces or in borer holes. The widespread mistletoe stem-boring weevil (*Metyrus albicollis*) provides excellent “hidey holes” for azure larvae, and the larvae of a few longicorn beetles, jewel beetles, pinhole borers and moths are also known to bore into mistletoe stems. Genoveva azure larvae and pupae are attended by sugar ants (*Camponotus* spp.). Butterfly larvae hide in the ant nest during the day, and at night in the company of ants travel sometimes up to a 40m return journey, to mistletoes high up in eucalypts.

Landholders are sometimes faced with decisions whether to eradicate mistletoes over large areas, or not. Such destruction, however, could cause the loss of rarer mistletoes and specific mistletoe fauna. Mistletoe, like anything in our environment, can tilt beyond equilibrium. Where some dieback has occurred, tree failure is seldom due to a single factor, rather the cause is often attributed to a combination of several factors.

From: Murdoch De Baar, *Between The Leaves* (QDPI Forestry) 1993, pp. 14



Amyema cambagei on belah



What’s the big deal about box-gum grassy woodlands?

Article by Kate Steel

Recently, more than 80 landholders in the Traprock region, Eastern Condamine and SEQ catchments expressed interest in bidding for payments to assist them to protect remnant and regenerating Box-Gum woodland communities on their properties.

The program, called the “Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands Large High Quality Sites” project is backed by \$42.5 million of funding for on-ground conservation action across yellowbox/whitebox and blakely’s redgum woodland ecosystems of Southern Queensland and NSW. Successful land managers will be paid to provide environmental outcomes above and beyond their responsibilities through on-ground actions.

But why Box Gum?

Box-Gum Woodlands are critically endangered. These woodlands once predominated the western slopes of NSW from Victoria to Queensland on moderate to highly fertile soils. In landscapes commonly known as the wheat-sheep belt in NSW, the Queensland Traprock and Eastern Darling Downs, Box-Gum Woodlands have been extensively cleared and modified by thinning, clearing, grazing, pasture improvement and cultivation.

Remaining stands of Box-Gum Woodland are generally just fragments of the former range. Less than 5% of the pre-European extent is estimated to remain in the south and up to 10% in the north. Less than 0.5% is estimated to retain pre-European levels of diversity and species composition.

The loss of the Box-Gum Grassy Woodland community has impacted heavily on native plants and animals that rely on this ecosystem for their survival. Sadly, the small areas that are left may be quite neglected and continue to be threatened by poor use of fire, grazing and weed invasion. The loss of these remnants may signify the loss of a piece of Australian cultural and natural heritage, akin to bulldozing the Sydney Opera House or the Australian War Memorial. Imagine an Australia without the landscapes of Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton.

Stewardship – public payment for private nature conservation

The Box-Gum project is part of a larger initiative of the Australian Government called “Environmental Stewardships Programme”. Its aim is to provide conservation stewardship payments to private land managers to actively manage parts of their properties for environmental benefits.

The priorities for funding are being set at the national level and land managers will be invited to enter into common law contract agreements with the Australian Government to achieve conservation goals.

Upcoming priorities relevant to the QMDB region may include:

- Brigalow-Belah woodlands;
- Native bluegrass grasslands;
- Semi-evergreen vine thickets;
- Weeping Myall woodlands; and
- Whitebox-Yellowbox-Blakely’s Redgum woodlands.

This form of delivering funding to private land managers is tipped to be a significant way of doing business in the future. It’s about recognising the good management of private land for a public good. As managers involved in Land for Wildlife, if you have nationally endangered ecosystems on your property you may be well placed to receive Stewardship rewards.

Stayed tuned!



Some of Australia’s most threatened species occur in the Box-Gum woodlands, including the Tiger Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*), Regent Honeyeater (*Xanthomyza phrygia*), Squirrel Glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) and Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*). Amongst the grass tussocks many wildflowers may be found providing a colourful spring display. Yam Daisies (*Microseris lanceolata*), Milkmaid lily (*Burchardia umbellata*), Australian Trefoil (*Lotus australis*) and Purple Donkey orchid (*Diuris punctata*) are examples of the grazing-sensitive indicator species.



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