



**GOULBURN
BROKEN**
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY

Biodiversity conservation in the Box-Ironbark goldfields region

The Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Network (CMN) focuses on biodiversity conservation within the Box-Ironbark Goldfields region. Community education and engagement activities are the key to the network's success.



Breakfast with the Birds

Breakfast with the Birds was held in April 2012 at the Whroo Forest near Rushworth. Ecologist Chris Tzaros gave a talk on the woodland birds of the forests, including the endangered Swift Parrots and Brush-tailed Phascogales, which rely on these forests. Sixty-three people attended the event, 36 of them new faces to the Whroo Goldfields CMN:

"We always had these rat-like creatures around the place, but we never really knew what they were until we came to (the breakfast)... and then we realised they were brush-tailed phascogales"

The landholders quoted now have nest boxes on their property.

Continued ...

Project background:

The Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Network (CMN) currently has 248 members and a committee of landholders and agency staff, who work hard to engage and inform the community about the Box Ironbark environment, and implementing projects to help preserve these precious natural assets.

The Whroo Goldfields CMN initiated the *Yellow Gums & Goldfields* project, funded by the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Communities for Nature program.

The main aims of this project are to:

- engage the community and landholders through education and events;
- increasing the presence of Yellow Gums (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*); and
- improve habitat quality and abundance for woodland birds and marsupials.

To date fourteen landholders have undertaken 7.55km of fencing, and 160 ha of revegetation (direct seeding) on their properties.

Collaboration is a strong theme of the CMN, and working with existing programs in the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and other agencies such as Parks Victoria and Trust for Nature has highlighted several other potential sites for environmental works on private land to be undertaken as part of the *Yellow Gums & Goldfields* project.



Nest box monitoring

Each year 350 nest boxes are monitored in the Whroo Goldfields region, indicating to date a 54 per cent occupancy rate. Excitingly, several Brush-tailed Phascogales – an endangered species – have been spotted, as well as many sugar gliders. Many nests also exhibited signs of occupancy by sugar gliders.



Walk & Squawk

Held at Tooborac No2 Forest, the *Walk & Squawk* event was again led by ecologist Chris Tzaros, and focused on the habits of birds, the way they use the environment and practical bird watching information. A bird survey was also conducted. The event attracted 30 attendees, 18 who were new to the Whroo Goldfields CMN and have since attended similar events.



Other Whroo Goldfields CMN activities...

- Production of the *Broken Boosey and Whroo Goldfields Reptiles & Frogs* booklet, featuring over 70 pages of information, colour photographs and a frog call CD. This has proved to be a popular engagement tool, and has recently been reprinted.
- Production of an annual calendar featuring photographs (accompanied by explanatory text) of the local environment sent in by people of the region. Two and a half thousand copies are produced annually and distributed around the Whroo Goldfields district.
- Annual fox baiting program – landholders receive a fox bait kit, and can gain free fox baits at a local produce store. This coordinated approach streamlines the process of fox baiting.
- Held an 'En-raptured in Heathcote' evening which focused on the many species of raptors in the district.
- Held a *Plant Plonk* planting day at a disused mining site in Costerfield, as part of the Biodiversity Month activities. Fifty-five people attended the morning, to plant 400 shrubs and native grasses. This activity was partly sponsored by Mandalay Resources.

For more information about Whroo Goldfields CMN projects contact Janice Mentiplay-Smith on 5764 7506 or janicem@gbcma.vic.gov.au or visit www.whroogoldfieldscmn.com

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