

Floodplain Riparian Woodland

Threatened in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

88% of Floodplain Riparian Woodlands have been cleared. 51% of what remains is on private land.



Figure 1. A healthy example of Floodplain Riparian Woodland at Cobrawonga Island, with some habitat and diagnostic features noted.



Figure 2. Floodplain Riparian Woodland in healthy condition. Important to keep to existing tracks to minimise disturbance.



Figure 3. An example of Floodplain Riparian Woodland in good condition on the Goulburn River near Ghin Ghin.

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Description

Floodplain Riparian Woodlands occur along the banks of the regularly flooded terrace on larger, slow-moving rivers and major creeks, typically where flooding is relatively brief, and often with other floodplain and wetland communities. They occur at elevations from 100-300m with an annual rainfall of 400-700mm.

The tall woodland overstorey consists predominantly of River Red Gum. There is typically a medium to tall shrub layer of Silver Wattle, with Tree Violet and Blackwood, and occasionally Swamp Paperbark east of Seymour.

The ground layer varies between Common Tussock-grass on the drier elevated banks, and Common Reed and various rushes and sedges occur on the wetter, lower areas. Other species include Blue Devil, Goodenia and Common Sneezeweed.

Species To Look Out For

Flora: Common Joyweed, River Swamp Wallaby-grass (V) and Smooth Minuria (r).

Fauna: Squirrel Glider (e), Barking Owl (e) and White-bellied Sea-Eagle (v).



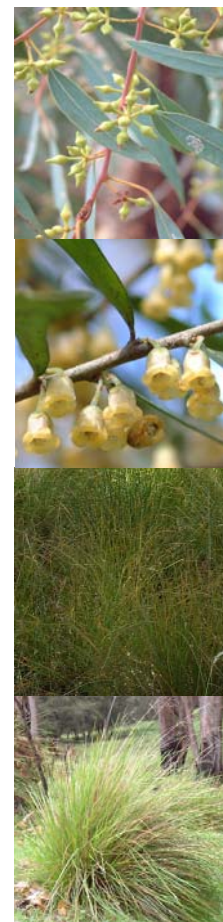
Figure 8. Squirrel Glider
Photo: Lindy Lumsden



Figure 9. Barking Owl
Photo: Natasha Schedvin



Figure 10. White-bellied Sea-eagle
Photo: Mike Carter c/o Viridans



Figures 4-7. River Red Gum, Tree Violet, Tall Sedge, Common Tussock-grass

Photos: Mary Titcumb

Why Floodplain Riparian Woodlands are Threatened

By its nature, riparian land is critical to the lifecycles of many native animals and plants, it provides wildlife corridors as well as being a refuge for animals in times of drought and fire. It is fragile, and its productivity also makes it vulnerable to over-use. It performs a vital link between land and water ecosystems.

88% of Floodplain Riparian Woodlands in the Goulburn Broken Catchment have disappeared since European settlement. Much of the remaining examples of this vegetation type are degraded. Many of the plants and animals that rely on this habitat are now also threatened, and some are extinct. Over 51% of what remains is on private land. Therefore, the support of private landholders is essential for the ongoing conservation of Floodplain Riparian Woodlands.

Current threats include, **changes to natural flooding** (changes floodplain functions, and can result in loss of native flora and fauna species and threatens the viability of remnants), **stock grazing** (causes pugging, erodes the bank, hinders native plant regeneration, increases nutrient levels, and causes loss of native species through selective grazing and trampling), lack of native **understorey** and **ground layer** (which attract insect eating birds helping keep the overstorey healthy, and improve soil health through fixing nitrogen), lack of natural **regeneration**, **weed invasion** and loss of **tree** and **ground habitat** (through timber harvesting, tidying-up of fallen timber and firewood collection).

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Management Tips



Install nest boxes

Encourage natural regeneration by:

- * controlling rabbits,
- * reducing competition from grasses prior to seed fall and
- * removing stock at least until seedlings are well established

Revegetate around remnants to buffer from introduced pasture and link to other remnants

Establish off stream watering

Grazing:

Fencing is critical. Avoid stock access when soils are wet, to prevent pugging.

#Weed control - develop an action plan.

Preclude chemical residue entering the waterway

Spot spray using species specific herbicide suitable for waterways to prevent seed set of target weeds (commonly Phalaris and Paspalum).

#Burning weedy, open areas in early summer immediately following exotic grasses set seed (many are too green to burn in spring), could be an option.

Soon after fire spot spray weedy grasses with a grass-specific herbicide, avoiding native grasses.

Photo: Mary Titcumb

Figure 11. Floodplain Riparian Woodland on private property in degraded condition, with pasture grasses, no shrub layer and no natural regeneration of the trees.

May require expert input in decision making and planning. See your local DSE, DPI or CMA representative for further advice.



Establish riparian buffer strip (well grassed area to filter run-off from surrounding landuse) where run-off enters stream

Fence out stock to help stabilise bank

Leave fallen timber for habitat both instream and on banks

#Restore native understorey by direct seeding and / or replanting

Restoring the native understorey will help keep existing trees healthy, improve nutrient cycling and provide habitat for a greater range of species

Photo: Debbie Colbourne

Figure 12. Floodplain Riparian Woodland on private property with some regeneration of trees and understorey.

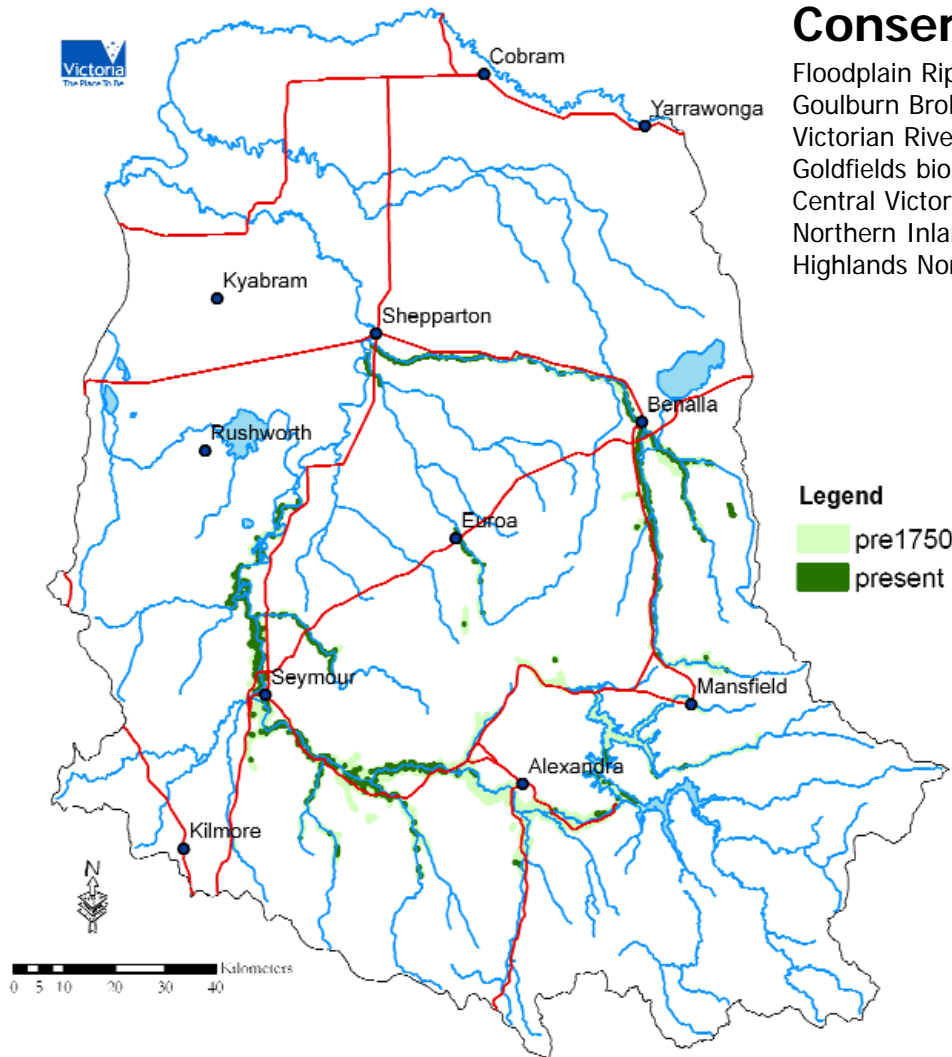
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Conservation Status

Floodplain Riparian Woodland is **Threatened** in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

- Victorian Riverina bioregion : **Vulnerable**
- Goldfields bioregion : **Endangered**
- Central Victorian Uplands bioregion : **Endangered**
- Northern Inland Slopes bioregion : **Endangered**
- Highlands Northern Fall: **Endangered**



Legend

- pre1750
- present

Figure 10. A representation of the pre-1750 and present day distribution of Floodplain Riparian Woodland and its mosaics and complexes in the Goulburn Broken Catchment. The boundaries of the vegetation have been exaggerated to allow for the small scale of the map. The map was produced from Base Data from DSE Corporate Library. The State of Victoria does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information on this map. Any person using or relying upon such information does so on the basis that the State of Victoria shall bear no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any errors, faults, defects or omissions in the information.

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Acknowledgments:

 This project was a partnership between the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and Department of Sustainability and Environment, and funded by NAP: *Australian Governments and local communities working together to prevent, repair and manage rising salinity and declining water quality across Australia*. Thanks to comments from Alison Oates, Biodiversity & Natural Resource Division, DSE and Glen Johnson, Water and Biodiversity Team, North East DSE; Jenni Nunan, GIS team, DSE, Benalla for producing the maps; for Salinity & Water feedback and comments from the Biodiversity Team in the Goulburn Broken and NorthEast, DSE; the DPI LINKS officers and CMOs, the AUSTRALIA GBCMA waterways and vegetation officers and to all who contributed photographs and support.

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ISBN 1-920742-11-5

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