Riparian Forest
 Threatened in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

27% of Riparian Forests have been cleared. 10% of what remains is on private land.

Figure 1. An example of Riparian Forest on the Rubicon River, Thornton, in good condition with some indicative and habitat features highlighted.

Figure 2. An example of Riparian Forest on the Rubicon River, Thornton, in good condition with some indicative and habitat features highlighted.

Figure 3. An example of Riparian Forest in good condition with some indicative and habitat features highlighted.

Figure 4. An example of Riparian Forest, in good condition with some indicative and habitat features highlighted.
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Threatened in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

Description

Riparian Forest grows along river banks, the larger creeks and associated alluvial terraces in areas with an annual rainfall of 900-1800mm.

The alluvial soils range from cobbles to silts, but are mostly deep silty loams, rich in organic matter which are regularly inundated.

The overstorey forms a tall forest and typically consists of Manna Gums, with a mixture of species such as Narrow-leaf Peppermint. Eurabbie (Blue Gum) is sometimes present.

Blackwoods, Silver Wattles, Hazel Pomaderris and Tree Lomatia typically occur as a well developed secondary tree-layer.

The understorey is typically dominated dense patches of Prickly Currant-bush with a ground layer rich in grasses, ferns and herbs.

Species To Look Out For

Flora: Slender Tick-trefoil (k) and Grey Rice-flower (v).
Fauna: Spotted Tree-frog (Ec), Long-footed Potoroo (Ee) (upper reaches) and Powerful Owl (v).

Why Riparian Forests are Important

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.

More than 27% of Riparian Forests in the Goulburn Broken Catchment have disappeared since European settlement. While only 10% of this remains on private land, private land is often adjacent to it, and has significant impacts upon it. It is important to protect the remaining area for the continued survival of the species that rely on it and for the continuation of ecological services these forests provide. The support of private landholders is essential for the ongoing conservation of Riparian Forests.

Current threats include, poor timing of stock grazing and overgrazing (erodes the bank, causes loss of native species, hinders native plant regeneration, disturbs the soil and increases nutrient levels), stream bank erosion, soil disturbance (eg. ploughing and pugging, favouring weed species), weed invasion, pest animals and loss of tree and ground habitat (through timber harvesting, tidying-up of fallen timber and firewood collection).
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Management Tips

- Weed control - develop plan for action
  - Concentrate on small infestations first
  - Preclude chemical residue entering the waterway
  - Use water-sensitive herbicides

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

- Install nest boxes

- Establish off-stream watering

- Fencing is critical.
  - Retain access since occasional crash grazing for weed control or fire fuel reduction may be necessary. Avoid stock access when soils are wet to prevent pugging and in spring and early summer to allow flowering and seed-set of native plants

- Leave fallen timber for habitat both instream and on banks

- #Restore native understory by direct seeding and / or replanting

- Encourage natural regeneration by:
  * controlling rabbits
  * reducing competition from grasses prior to seed fall and
  * removing stock at least until seedlings are well established

Some additional tips for erosion control
- Stabilise bed with rock or woody debris and allow beds and bank to be colonised by grass
- Use range of species - grasses, reeds, shrubs and trees
- Establish vegetation as far down bank as possible as well as on the bank top
- No grazing

Figure 11. An example of Riparian Forest that has been invaded by Blackberries.
# May require expert input in decision making and planning. See your local DSE, DPI or CMA representative for further advice.

Figure 12. An example of Riparian Forest in degraded condition with willows, Fleabane and exotic grasses.
# May require expert input in decision making and planning. See your local DSE, DPI or CMA representative for further advice.
Conservation Status

Riparian Forest is **Threatened** in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

Central Victorian Uplands bioregion: **Vulnerable**

Highlands Northern Fall bioregion: **Least Concern**

Victorian Alps bioregion: **Least Concern**

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