

# Riparian Forest

**VULNERABLE** in the Goulburn Broken Catchment



Photo: Sue Berwick

Figure 1 An example of Riparian Forest in good condition, with important diagnostic and habitat features noted.



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## VULNERABLE in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

72% of this vegetation type remains uncleared, 11% (1,856ha) of which is on private land.

### Description

Riparian Forest grows along river banks and the larger creeks in areas with an annual rainfall of 900–1800mm, and elevations of 600–1000m. The soils range from cobbles to silts, but are mostly deep silty loams, rich in organic matter. The overstorey typically consists of Manna Gums, with a mixture of species such as Narrow-leaf Peppermint. Eurabbie (Blue Gum) is sometimes present. Blackwoods and Silver Wattles typically occur as a well developed secondary tree-layer. The understorey is typically dominated by Hazel Pomaderris, Tree Lomatia and Prickly Currant-bush with a ground layer rich in grasses, ferns and herbs.

### Current Threats

- Alteration of natural water flows and temperature regimes can result in loss of native species (both plants and animals), and disrupts the delicate balance of the system, threatening the viability of the remnant.
- Inappropriate grazing regimes can compact the soil, erode the bank, hinder native plant regeneration, increase nutrient levels and cause loss of native species (through selective grazing and trampling).
- Loss of tree and ground habitat (through timber harvesting, firewood collection, and "tidying-up" of fallen sticks), threatens associated fauna.
- Weeds, particularly Blackberries and Willows, compete with native species.
- Pest animals cause defoliate native vegetation, disturb the soil and threaten native fauna as predators and by competing for food.
- Isolation of remnants makes it difficult to maintain a healthy gene pool and to recolonise with native species following disturbance, and restricts the movement of native fauna.
- Lack of native understorey and groundlayer plants, which: attract insect eating birds, helping keep the overstorey healthy; and improve soil health through fixing nitrogen.
- Lack of natural regeneration of plants, threatens the viability of remnant.



Figure 2 Distribution of Riparian Forest in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

### Significant Species

**Flora:** Slender Tick-trefoil and Grey Rice-flower.

**Fauna:** Spotted Tree-frog, Long-footed Potoroo (upper reaches), Long-footed Myotis and Powerful Owl.

### Management Tips

Management which maintains and enhances the remnant vegetation / habitat, including:

- Maintain or restore the natural flows and temperature regimes.
- Fence sites to exclude grazing, particularly in spring and summer, to allow flowering and seed-set for native plants. Retain access for controlled grazing to manage weeds where necessary.
- Develop and implement a plan to control weeds and pest animals.
- Encourage natural regeneration by controlling rabbits, reducing competition with grasses prior to seed fall and removing stock until seedlings are well established.
- Understorey planting for remnants with no native shrubs or ground layer.
- Revegetate around remnants to buffer from pasture and link to other remnants.
- Retain dead & hollow-bearing trees (where absent, erect nest boxes) and leave fallen timber and branches.
- Monitor your site and adapt management practices as required (help is available to assist and set up monitoring).