Box-Ironbark Forest

VULNERABLE in the Goulburn Broken Catchment



Figure 1 A disturbed, but regrowing eg. of a Box Ironbark Forest west of Nagambie with important habitat and diagnostic features noted





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41% of this vegetation type remains uncleared, 18% (10,492ha) of which is on private land

Description

Box Ironbark Forests are open forests that occur on low hills at altitudes between 150-230m, with an annual rainfall between 500-650mm. The skeletal sandy loam to clay loam soils are often gravelly, and are of low fertility with a poor moisture holding The overstorey commonly (but not capacity. always) includes Red Ironbark (west of Goulburn River), Mugga Ironbark (Boweya and Killawarras), with Grey Box, Yellow Gum (Rushworth area), Red Box and Red Stringybark at higher altitudes. The scattered shrub layer includes Golden Wattle, Spreading Wattle, Grey Everlasting and Daphne Heath. The sparse ground layer includes Wallaby grasses, Rough Spear-grass, Silver Top Wallabygrass, Black-anther Flax-lily, Shiny Everlasting and Chocolate-lily.

Current Threats

- Inappropriate grazing regimes cause loss of native species (through selective grazing and trampling); hinder native plant regeneration; disturb the soil and increase nutrient levels.
- 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, which threatens the viability of the remnant.
- Loss of tree and ground habitat (through timber harvesting, "tidying-up" of fallen sticks, and firewood collection) threatens associated native fauna.
- 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.
- Weed invasion, (particularly Quaking Grass and Cootamundra Wattle, competing with native species).
- Mining, causing soil disturbance, disrupts natural drainage and encourages weeds.
- Pest animals (rabbits, foxes, cats, dogs and bees) cause vegetation defoliation, soil disturbance and threaten native fauna as predators and by competing for food and shelter.



Figure 2 Distribution of Box-Ironbark Forest in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Significant Species

Flora: Scented Bush-pea, Williamson's Wattle, Bitter Cryptandra and Velvet Daisy-bush.

Fauna: Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater (both rely on the winter flowering of Ironbark and White Box for nectar), Barking Owl, Turquoise Parrot (near Boweya and Killawarras), Tree Goanna and Tuan.

Management Tips

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

- Fence sites to exclude grazing, particularly in • spring and early summer to allow flowering and seed set of native plants.
- Develop and implement a plan for control of • weeds and pest animals.
- Encourage natural regeneration (fire may be useful, especially to encourage shrubs).
- Understorey planting for remnants with no native shrubs or groundlayer.
- Revegetate around remnants with locally native understorey to buffer from pasture management / improvement and to link with other remnants.
- Retain dead & hollow-bearing trees (for sites • without, 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).

Benalla NRE Office Sydney Rd (03) 5761 1611

Shepparton CMA Office 55 Welsford St (03) 5822 2288 © The State of Victoria, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, April 2002 This information note is part of the "Managing Your Patch of Bush" kit, Draft for circulation.

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