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DEPARTMENT OF
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Western Wildlife



NEWSLETTER OF THE LAND FOR WILDLIFE SCHEME

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AUSTRALIAN BUSH HERITAGE FUND

by Cameron Gardiner

A SIGNIFICANT portion of Australia's wildlife habitat exists on privately owned land. Such land is often out of reach of government protection, but increasingly threatened by subdivision, clearing and development.

The Australian Bush Heritage Fund (*Bush Heritage*) has established a national approach to the raising of funds to buy and protect private lands of outstanding natural significance and high biodiversity value.

Bush Heritage aims to purchase land of high conservation value, to preserve this land in perpetuity as Australia's heritage. In doing this a range of criteria are used to select areas that are threatened by inappropriate development and/or poorly represented in the national reserve system.

The story of Bush Heritage started in 1990 when prominent environmentalist Dr. Bob Brown used his USA Goldman environmental prize money and borrowed from supporters and the bank to purchase two privately owned forest blocks beneath Dry's Bluff at the edge of Tasmania's Great Western Tiers. To raise money and pay back the loans, the Australian Bush Heritage Fund was created. Funded by donations nationally Bush Heritage has gone on to establish a diverse range of nature reserves around the country.



(Photo by Australian Bush Heritage Fund)

Presently Bush Heritage has 12 reserves nationally and land holdings of more than 2500 hectares and is continuing to buy and protect examples of our disappearing ecosystems. In the last eighteen months the number of properties has doubled and the area of land has more than doubled.

Some examples of protected reserves include:

- ◆ Redgum grassy woodland on the Brogo River in the Bega Valley, New South Wales
- ◆ Fan palm forest, habitat for cassowaries and threatened plant species in the Daintree, Queensland
- ◆ Erith Island being the first island to be managed solely for nature conservation in Bass Strait

Management plans for reserves are prepared by two professional ecologists on Bush Heritage staff. Emphasis is also placed on local voluntary land management committees, involving neighbours and local experts who may also contribute to land management planning. Cooperation is also sought with neighbouring landholders, to build awareness and a cooperative approach to land management that will benefit a wider area than simply the reserve itself.

In 1996 Bush Heritage purchased 333 hectares of wandoo woodland with mallee and ephemeral wetlands and over 200 species of flowering plants in southwest Western Australia near the town of Kojonup. Recently confirmed on the reserve is the existence of the shy feather flower. This species has been declared "Rare Flora" under the Wildlife Conservation Act of Western Australia. It is critically endangered and is listed as the rarest plant in the Katanning District.

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EDITORIAL

Greetings everyone!

WEEDBUSTER WEEK occurs in October, and there are a number of weedy articles in this issue, including good news for bridal creeper haters! Weeds are a major cause of degradation in bushland and I hope EVERY *Land for Wildlifer* will make at least one attack on weeds during this month.

People going north towards Geraldton in summer always remark on the way the fence posts are encrusted with snails; slugs are proving to be quite a problem in canola - did you know that there were no slugs in Western Australia before Europeans brought them in? Read Shirley Slack-Smith's article to learn more about these often overlooked creatures.

Land for Wildlifers in the Northern Agricultural Region will be sorry to hear that Robyn Stephens is leaving us. She is hoping to spend more time with her family. We will miss her knowledge, commitment and common sense, and hope that she keeps in touch. The position will be taken up by Fiona Falconer of Coorow, to whom we offer a big welcome. Fiona is one half of a farming partnership, and has been active in Landcare since its inception. She is also very knowledgeable about local flora and fauna. As someone who has designed several successful NLP/NHT projects, if your year 2000 grant application involves

revegetation, you might like to contact Fiona for help with species selection and project design.

Recently there has been a lot of interest in covenanting land for conservation purposes, so that as well as Agriculture Western Australia's scheme, which has been going for many years, both the National Trust and CALM have now commenced their own programmes. We will bring you more details of all of these when they are available. However, in this issue is an article about 'Bush Heritage', a national project which buys land to make into private nature reserves. They own a very nice piece of wandoo woodland at Kojonup.

Finally, is anyone else concerned about the dieback in flooded gums (*Eucalyptus rudis*)? Coming up through Moodiarrup recently, I thought they looked as though they had been hit by Agent Orange. I asked one of CALM's senior entomologists, Ian Abbott, what could be done but, as you can see from his article, the answer is 'not much, because we don't know much'. If you can help with information which might help lead to more understanding of the problem, please get in touch.

Best wishes for an excellent finish to the season,

Penny Hussey

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There is no shortage of places all around Australia in urgent need of Bush Heritage's protection. How much we can do depends on the support we receive and our success depends on the donations from the public. Land acquisition provides an excellent example of how Bush Heritage can achieve conservation outcomes in a way no other organisation can.

Bush Heritage is still not a household name, and important wildlife habitat continues to be lost

every day. With further community support Bush Heritage can offer huge scope in nature conservation through purchasing land of high conservation value. If you would like more information please telephone 1800 677 101 or visit our website at bushheritage.asn.au; mail GPO Box 101, Hobart Tas 7001.

Cameron Gardiner is Fundraising Manager for Bush Heritage, based in Hobart.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor,

I was pleased to see the story on nesting boxes working. It should inspire more of us to give it a go.

However, I must take issue with the naming of Port Lincoln ringnecks as "28s". They are a different race, although they do fly in mixed flocks. We find that the red caps also join the flock as they frolick in our bird baths together.

The ringneck has a black nose band, while the 28 has a red band. When they flock together, the 28 call loses much of its distinctive clarity, taking on an accent of its neighbours. Where they exist as separate communities, the "twen-tee-eight" is very clear.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Brand, Whitby.

Thanks Geoff - you raise an interesting point here, what should this common bird be named? We consulted the very newest birdbook, "Handbook of Western Australian Birds: Volume 1" by Ron Johnstone and Glenn Storr, published by the WA Museum in 1998. (For WA birds, this is 'the bible'!) The official name for this parrot is Australian ringneck, Platycercus zonarius (Shaw). However, it has two races, P.z. semitorquatus, the twenty-eight parrot, and P. z. zonarius, the Port Lincoln parrot. From Perth and across the Wheatbelt, they hybridise.



Distribution of Australian Ringneck - from Johnstone & Storr.