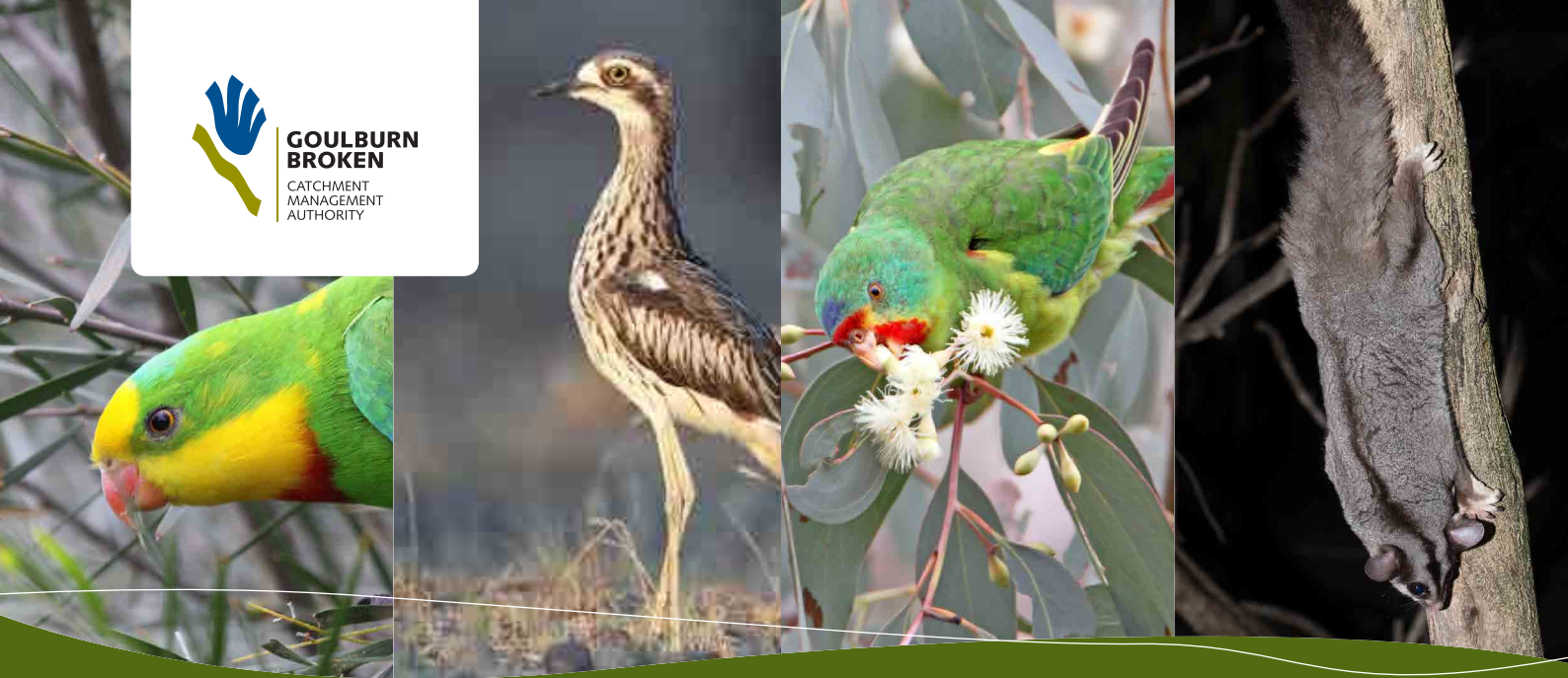




**GOULBURN
BROKEN**
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY



Wildlife Conservation in Farm Landscapes

Conserving wildlife on your farm can add value by increasing profitability, sustainability and enjoyment of your land.

Nature adds value by providing free services such as pollination, seed dispersal, erosion control, healthy soils, native pest control and the decomposition of wastes. Management interventions such as fencing, weed control and establishment of plantings can and do make a significant contribution to the conservation of wildlife on farms.

This brochure is to help you identify the natural values on your farm and how you can protect and enhance them for conservation and productivity.

Managing wildlife friendly farms

Three general approaches are needed to conserve farm wildlife.

- 1. Protect** - what is left, such as remnants, paddock trees, logs on the ground and rocky outcrops.
- 2. Restore** - what is missing through revegetation and natural regeneration.
- 3. Take advantage** - of protection and restoration efforts that integrate wildlife conservation and agricultural production: for example, planting shelterbelts can also act as wildlife corridors.

This project is supported by the Goulburn Broken CMA and Longwood Plains CMN through funding by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



**National
Landcare
Program**



Protect what is there

Protect existing patches of regrowth

Regrowth woodland provides habitat for many native animals including species of ecological concern in the Goulburn Broken catchment such as the Swift Parrot, Grey-crowned Babbler, Bush Stone-curlew, Squirrel Glider and Superb Parrot. Regrowth is not rubbish!



Manage your patches

Size matters – bigger patches of habitat support more species and larger populations of individual species. Small patches also have value, but consider expanding their size by altering grazing regimes to promote natural regeneration and revegetation.

Maintain and increase numbers of paddock trees

Paddock trees provide shade for stock and play an array of critical ecological roles, including storing carbon, providing habitat and food for many species, and acting as stepping stones for animal movement through cleared landscapes. But the old trees won't live forever and need to be replaced with new trees before they die.

To avoid future bare paddocks, allow natural regeneration; plant new trees; protect them from grazing; and take care during prescribed burns and when applying chemicals.



Don't Forget!

Old dead trees can be extremely valuable for many species of birds such as the Superb Parrot.

Main key structural features of native vegetation

Farms with different vegetation assets – remnants, regrowth, plantings and paddock trees – will support more species than farms that lack one or more of these important attributes.

The quality of native vegetation is also important. Key vegetation characteristics that positively influence its suitability as habitat for animals include:

- Presence of large logs
- Large amounts of native vegetation cover including native grass cover
- Presence of mistletoe
- Abundant understorey shrubs and natural regeneration
- A diversity of native plant species
- Healthy overstorey trees without dieback

Conserve logs on the ground for species including reptiles, dunnarts, echidnas, insects and fungi. Resist 'cleaning up' fallen timber.

Don't remove mistletoe.

Manage rocky outcrops. Rocky outcrops are often small, but provide valuable environments for an array of native plants and animals. Retain rocks; do not overgraze



Restore what is missing through revegetation and regeneration



Some past land management practices have led to soil erosion, increased salinity and loss of biodiversity. Replanting and re-establishing areas of woodland, and allowing woodland to regenerate naturally by fencing it off and managing grazing pressure can help restore the landscape.

Revegetate

It is far cheaper to let areas regenerate naturally but often there is not a seed source so replanting shrubs and trees and restoration plantings around paddock trees or remnant patches of trees will be necessary. Fencing to control stock grazing and prevent young plants from being trampled or eaten before they are established is also required.

For species to plant in your area use this link to view our revegetation guidelines.
www.revegetation.gbcma.vic.gov.au

Putting it all together

Consider the combined contribution of natural assets on your farm and surrounds

The combined effect of different vegetation elements – remnants, regrowth, plantings and paddock trees – will lead to a strong collective benefit for biodiversity. Planted sites typically support more species when they are next to, or connected to, patches of remnant woodland or plantings. The value of rocky outcrops for reptiles is enhanced when the surrounding landscape contains paddock trees and native tussocks to facilitate animals' movement through the landscape.



Over time the bird species that first colonise young plantings are replaced by bird species that prefer older plantings. Plantings of a range of ages will maximise the number of bird species.

Develop a Farm Plan

There are many kinds of management actions and options available to create more wildlife friendly farms. Start by identifying what natural assets you have such as waterways and remnant vegetation. Design a plan that will suit your production goals and finances, and over time will protect, restore and re-create native vegetation.



An example of a farm plan that considers waterways, stock movement, remnants and paddock size.



Manage grazing pressure

Management of grazing pressure can lead to significant natural regeneration, fewer areas of bare ground, more native plant species, and greater understorey vegetation cover. These improvements in habitat lead to enhanced communities of woodland birds. Planted areas should also have appropriate grazing management so grazing-sensitive species are not lost.

Keep a record of the changes associated with management interventions

Sometimes it can be hard to remember what things used to be like, and how much change you have made. Keeping photo records is a valuable way to do this, especially if the images are taken from the same place at repeated intervals over time ('photo points'). Written accounts including management information, measurements and detailed biodiversity surveys are strongly encouraged.

Changes on farms can be very satisfying for a farmer as well as inspiring for others embarking on new management interventions on their properties.



Concluding comments

Many things can be done to better integrate agricultural production and wildlife conservation and help farmers make decisions about where, when and how to best implement different management interventions to meet their particular objectives. Incentives may be available to carry out environmental works.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact admin@gbcma.vic.gov.au or your local environmental group.



Over 300 species of invertebrates are dependant on large hollow-bearing trees for nesting, roosting and other key ecological functions.

Much of the information in this flyer is drawn from *Wildlife Conservation in Farm Landscapes* by David Lindemayer, Damian Michael, Mason Crane, Sachiko, Daniel Florance, Philip Barton and Karen Ikin 2016.

Thanks to Chris Tzaros for permission to use his photographs of a bush-stone curlew and a swift parrot in this brochure.