



June 2004

Red-tails and Bulokes

by Martine Maron

The Recovery Team has recommended to the Department of Environment and Heritage that wherever possible, the removal of critical Red-tail habitat be avoided. The Red-tail is threatened primarily by ongoing loss of its food supply—the seeds of Stringybark and Buloke trees. Sadly, the removal of this critical habitat continues. As young Buloke trees can take over 100 years to provide food for the Red-tail, the loss of Buloke feeding habitat is a major threat.

A study undertaken as part of the Ecologically Sustainable Agriculture Initiative of the Victorian Department of Primary Industries looked at the loss of paddock Bulokes in five feeding areas of the Red-tail. Over a fifteen-year period, an average of 26% of trees were lost. In areas dominated by cropping, this was as high as 39%. However, in one area, only 4% of paddock trees had been lost, indicating that under favourable conditions, Bulokes can exist in harmony with agricultural practices, resulting in minimal tree loss.

Protection of this important food source for the Red-tail requires a two-pronged approach. Because Buloke trees grow very slowly, it is important to protect as many existing mature trees as we can. However, we must also support and encourage the efforts of landholders and community groups who are working hard to regenerate and revegetate areas of Buloke.

Although they may take a long time to provide Red-tail feeding habitat, the efforts of the community to restore Buloke habitat are extremely important, because conservation is a long-term proposition. And while those trees are growing, they will be providing habitat for a whole suite of other animals, several of which are also threatened. Buloke has been found to be especially important habitat for birds, and planting Bulokes on your property will encourage threatened species like Diamond Firetail finches and Brown Treecreepers to visit and perhaps move in for good!



Scattered buloke.

Farm Planning Project

by Vicki Mack



Vicki Mack, Project Officer for Farm Planning.

The 2003 land-holder survey found that while 76% of farmers had a farm plan, and 45% had attended a farm-planning workshop, most revegetation activities (91% of replanting) was reportedly made to enhance farm productivity - shelter belts/windbreaks/alleys, combat land degradation/salt and fodder and forage. The message to increase the level of replanting, and protect existing remnant vegetation, clearly needs to be based on improving farm productivity and the promotion of species relevant to RtBC, rather than conservation values alone. Hence, the Farm Planning project was developed to make strong and credible links between farm productivity and management and best environmental practice and land stewardship.

Victoria Mack, based in Hamilton, commenced the project in March and is currently designing and delivering a number of workshops which will commence in July across the habitat region for:

- Key landholders and community leaders;
- Farm planning advisers and farm management consultants;
- Extension officers;
- NRM advisers and officers;
- Other authorities which advise landholders and farmers about land use issues including industry organisations;
- Local government and other relevant government advisers;

Vicki is also developing a resource kit or workbook, which will address:

- Issues of identification of the South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo compared to the more abundant Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

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Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo



- Practical locally relevant species and habitat protection information including issues relating to:
 - Nesting and breeding
 - The protection of feeding trees, and the need for landholders to understand the link between the South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo and stringy bark and buloke;
 - Remnant native vegetation protection and replanting;
 - Fire management;
 - Regulations relating to the clearance of existing vegetation;
 - Other relevant regulations;
- A list of current incentives and grants available for fencing and vegetation works for each sub-regions of the habitat region and the names of key contact people who can support land-holder applications;
- Farm Productivity information to support farm-planning activities, including the names of farm planning advisers and consultants;
- Information linking farm productivity with biodiversity conservation.

Annual Count

Our major population survey for the year was undertaken by 86 volunteers, who travelled about 2,200 kms in stringybark, to find 736 RtBC in quite windy conditions. From the reports that were sent in, it looks like everyone had a great day, even though there are lots of areas that need to be checked, where there were no RtBC.

It seems like the greatest guarantee of finding birds is to be named Dick Cooper, who was again the Volunteer Who Counts the Most!!! Congratulations to Dick!

Farewell by Wendy Beumer

Dear Readers,

This is the last edition of Redtail News, which I will be editing. After two wonderful years working on the RtBC Recovery Team, I have resigned as of 28 May, 2004 to take up a position as a Faculty Manager at the South East Institute of TAFE. I'll still be in the region and looking for redtails, helping where I can and spreading the message of conservation – just like all of you do!!! I have especially enjoyed the Field Days and meeting so many people who are keen to conserve our environment. Although it still a big task, so much interest must give us all hope that this region will be able to sustain our grandchildren.

Until the appointment of a new person, Richard Hill will be the main contact.

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Cheers, Wendy



Larissa Mark (right) with the model of a male Red-tail which she made as a part of the art program at Naracoorte High School, supported by the Art Teacher, Deb Kloedin (left). The bird's first outing was flying over the display at the South East Field Days 19-20 March. **THANKYOU LARISSA and DEB.**

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