

Red-tail NEWS



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Merry Christmas

Welcome to our 'Christmas Edition' of Red-tail News for 2010. This edition features a suite of good news stories from habitat and nest tree protection/conservation to education and winter wonder hatchlings. There is also a couple of quick reminders about the upcoming 2011 Annual Count and our SERTBC Poster which is available to organisations and interested members of the public.

Red-tail Winter Wonders

Five functioning South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo nests have been found in winter whilst undertaking maintenance of artificial nest boxes north of Dergholm. Tim Burnard, Dick Cooper and Dave Williams were surprised and fortunate enough to find an assortment of chicks, eggs and even a fledgling during routine nest box maintenance conducted in late June 2010. Red-tail nests were confirmed

by watching the birds return to the nest sites at dusk. One pair was observed using a plastic nest box, which is very exciting given the low use of these in the past. A sixth nest was also observed but couldn't be confirmed as there were no adult Red-tails observed leaving or returning to the nest during nest watches. Given that both a chick and an egg were found in this nest site it is

more than likely that the nest belongs to a pair of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, as Red-tails only lay one egg.

This is not the first time Red-tails have been found to breed out of season. Nests have been recorded in all seasons, but those started in January to autumn are likely to be re-nestings after failures. Red-tails usually pair and breed in spring, between September and December. One egg is laid and incubated for around 30 days. The chick remains in the nest for 70 – 100 days, and may continue to be fed by the parents for a further six months after the chick leaves the nest. The relatively high number of artificial nests used in June makes us wonder how many natural hollows are currently occupied by nesting birds during winter, and why the birds may be choosing to nest during this time. This nesting behaviour may be the result of current climatic conditions and/or an abundance of their stringybark seed resource. The Recovery Team will be keeping a close eye on this over the coming months. If you see signs of nesting activity by Red-tails the Recovery Team would love to hear from you. Please contact the Project Coordinator, Bronwyn on 1800 262 062 or email rtbc@birdsaustralia.com.au.

Bronwyn Perryman



A South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo chick observed in a plastic nest box whilst undertaking maintenance operations. Photo: Tim Burnard.

Red-tail NEWS

Collaring nest trees and CVA Volunteers

Protection of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo nests both in natural hollows and artificial hollows is a time consuming and physical job that was made easier with the assistance of Conservation Volunteers Australia in November this year. Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project Officer Dave Williams was thankful for the help with the job of completing the ongoing maintenance to insure the best possible chances of successful reproduction for the cockies.

The ravages of time and weather had left some of the corrugated iron collars around the trunks of trees, which keep competitors for hollows and nest raiders at bay, in a state that suggested they had seen better days to say the least. Volunteers from all over Australia and the world lent their brawn and brains to the repair and replacement of the nest collars as part of their time with Conservation Volunteers Australia.

The rattier of the corrugated iron collars were removed and replaced with a plastic material kindly donated by Mitchell Water while some of the less damaged corrugated iron collars were repaired. In all about 50 collars received the loving attention of the group who enjoyed the day out in the warm weather. The nests hollows were located on private land and have been protected with the permission and assistance of enthusiastic

land owners who hope to enjoy having the birds breeding on their properties for years to come.

The Conservation Volunteers Australia volunteers also completed some work removing pine wildlings from public lands to help preserve the habitat and stave off the pine invasion! Many thanks to all who participated in achieving these on-ground results.

David Williams



Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) assisting Dave Williams, our SerTBC Project Officer, to replace a tin nest collar with a new plastic nest collar on a South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo nest tree in south-western Victoria.



Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) volunteers assisting Dave Williams, our SerTBC Project Officer, to repair a tin nest collar on a South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo nest tree in south-western Victoria.

Kalangadoo Primary School SeRtBC Education & Planting Day



Kalangadoo Primary School Year 3/4/5 Students planting a tree as part of the Kalangadoo Primary School SeRtBC Education and Planting Day.

On the 22nd October 2010, Kerry Gilkes and I spent a lovely day at Kalangadoo Primary School in the South East of South Australia, educating the students about the ecology and conservation needs of the South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo. Forty-five students from Reception to Year 7 participated in education sessions about the species, and then gained hands-on experience about the Red-tail's key food requirements by planting stringybark food trees and associated understorey habitat in several areas of the school grounds under the guidance of Kerry. Students learned how to identify adult males and females/juveniles birds; about the species food and nest tree requirements; and threats to the species and the actions taken to recover the species. Kerry then assisted the students to plant and guard stringybark and understorey plant species in several areas on the school grounds. We had a fantastic day with the kids, who were all very keen and enthusiastic to learn about our colourful cockies. The students didn't leave empty handed, taking home our Red-tail stickers, fridge magnets, posters and factsheets. A very big thank you to Kerry for her involvement in the day and for kindly donating the stringybark seedlings. Also a big thank you to all the teachers involved in the day and to Graham Starks for allowing us to talk to the students.

Where to from here?

Following on from our successful education and planting day, the students of Kalangadoo Primary School are participating in a SeRtBC habitat propagation and revegetation project in partnership with the SeRtBC Recovery Program, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), South East Cockies helping Cockies helping Cockies Project and local landholders. During this project students will continue to learn about the conservation needs of the SeRtBC and gain hands-on experience through participation in a propagation project focusing on growing and replanting key local stringybark and Red-gum tree species together with associated understorey species at three locations within the SeRtBC range.

The key objectives of this project are to:

1. Educate local primary school students and participating landholders about the conservation needs of the SeRtBC;
2. Educate local primary school students about the propagation and revegetation process for Desert Stringybark (*Eucalyptus arenacea*), Red-Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis* var. *camaldulensi*) and associated understorey species.
3. Revegetate Desert Stringybark to ensure a long-term, viable food resource for the SeRtBC;
4. Revegetate Red-Gum to ensure future nest resources for the SeRtBC;
5. Monitor the outcomes of revegetation activities and under-take follow-up weed control.

In the last weeks of school students in Years 3, 4 and 5 attended an excursion to Reedy Lagoon Reserve, near Penola to collect seed and learn more about the ecology and revegetation of the site. DENR Senior Ranger, Don Mount, provided the students with a very informative, guided tour of the lagoon that was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Seed was also collected the

previous day from Desert Stringybark and a number of key associated understorey species in the Penola and Lucindale area. Thank you to Noel Stratman and Kerry Gilkes for assisting in seed collection at Penola and Lucindale.

During the last week of school the students, under the guidance of Peter Feast, Mimosa Farm Tree Owner, teacher Judy Arney and myself planted all the seeds collected in seedling trays. A diverse range of plant species were planted, which will be grown and monitored by the students and later, planted at Reedy Lagoon Reserve and two landholder's properties in the Kalangadoo and Lucindale District. Thank you to Peter Feast who has kindly offered to take care of the seedlings over the summer holidays. Upon the students return next year the seedlings will be transferred into tubes, and their growth rates monitored by students on a weekly basis until planting in winter/spring 2011. I will continue to provide an update on progress in future editions of Red-tail News.

Bronwyn Perryman



Kerry Gilkes and Bronwyn Perryman together with Year 6/7 Kalangadoo Primary School students at a Desert Stringybark as part of the Kalangadoo Primary School's educational activities.

the glossy black plumage with stunning, bright red tail panels. Females are quite different

Kowree Farm Tree Group

Report by A Bradey.

The Kowree Farm Tree Group had a busy year in 2010. It continued with its three on-ground projects and has embarked on another two.

The first is the management of the MECU 'Land-bank'.

MECU is a credit union, based in Melbourne, which provides carbon off-sets and biodiversity off-sets for the home loans and car loans it sells. These off-sets are currently occurring in the South-west Wimmera and being managed by Landcare Australia and the Kowree Farm Tree Group.

Planting at the 200ha Minimay block has been completed. The patchy Buloke establishment from direct seeding in 2009 has been beefed up with the planting of 11,000 extra seedlings across 70 ha. In addition a further 4,000 seedlings of other species were planted.

Planning for activity at the second Land-bank property at Ozenkadnook (about 240ha) is well underway. About 80 ha will require replanting, and half will be done in 2011. This property is a mix of stringybark heathy woodland and eucalypt grassy woodland.



Langadoo Primary School Students planting
SeRTBC Education and Planting Day.

Our second project is Buloke conservation on private land.

Eight sites of roughly 2ha each were prepared and planted to Bulokes. Similar work done in 2009 was sprayed for weeds. This work was funded by a Caring for Our Country Community Action Grant of \$20,000. We have succeeded in gaining another of these grants to continue this work in 2011. This latest project is titled: "Fattening Red-tailed Black Cockatoos: Buloke conservation in the Southwest Wimmera."

The third project is Bush Stone Curlew conservation.

Of our four established fox-proof nesting areas none managed to raise young in 2010. Inundation was probably the main cause of failure. Establishing fixed sites for nesting has its shortcomings. We would welcome suggestions of ways to improve the reproductive performance of these birds.

Regional Landcare Facilitator.

Also, we were partners with Project Platypus (lead applicant) and Hindmarsh Landcare Network for three part-time Regional Landcare Facilitators. This application to Caring for Our Country was successful and runs for three years. The Kowree Farm Tree Group now hosts Ms Bindi Lees for two days per week. Bindi's territory is the South-west Wimmera. Her roles include community engagement, raising levels of adoption of sustainable farm management practices as well as farm and cross-farm planning.

Linking Landscapes and Community in Wimmera's Buloke Woodlands and Biolinks

Finally, the Tree Group was a partner in yet another successful application to CfOC. This time the lead applicant was Trust for Nature, together with Grampians to Little Desert Biolink and MECU. The three year project (Linking Landscapes and Community in Wimmera's Buloke Woodlands and Biolinks) focuses on Buloke Grassy Woodland conservation in

the South-west Wimmera. The grant is for \$600,000 with a contribution from MECU of a further \$700,000 via its Land-bank. It runs for three years. The mechanisms to be used for conservation include land purchase, conservation covenants on private land, remnant protection (unsecured) on private land and cross-property planning. This project fits neatly with most of the Kowree FTG activities. The conservation oriented cross-property planning component should be of interest

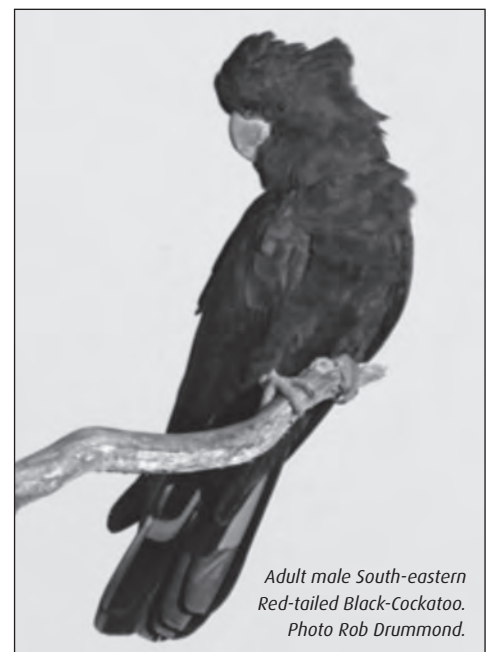
to the RtBC Recovery Team.

Both the partnership for this project and the project itself arose from conservation planning carried out as part of Habitat 141^o.

"Linking Landscapes" can most certainly be counted as an early and significant success of Habitat 141^o.

Most of the current focus of the Kowree Farm Tree Group has been squarely on Red-tailed Black Cockatoo conservation. However, without the continuing generous support of the Federal Government's Caring for Our Country initiative together with our alliance with MECU and Landcare Australia we would have achieved very little.

This latest project is titled: "Fattening Red-tailed Black Cockatoos: Buloke conservation in the Southwest Wimmera."



Adult male South-eastern
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo.
Photo Rob Drummond.

but equally spectacular...

SeRtBC Recovery Program Update

Another year has again flown by with Red-tails continuing to be a focus for conservation and education across the South-eastern region in 2010. The South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo (SeRtBC) Recovery Program has continued to deliver and implement key recovery activities across the range in Victoria and South Australia throughout 2010. Some of our major milestones have included:

- **2010 South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo Annual Count:** The Count was held on the 1st May 2010. A total of 680 birds were counted by 66 groups comprising 159 volunteers. More than 2,800 kms of stringybark forest was searched by volunteers for SeRtBCs. This event generated significant media interest with 7 radio interviews, 2 WIN TV interviews and 7 print articles.
- **2010 Flock Counts:** Flock counts were also conducted in May 2010. Again, the proportion of adult males was high, around 45% from a sample of 677 birds. There has been a sustained run of low recruitment of juveniles since 2007, with the proportion of males ranging 45 – 46% during this period. In the coming months the Recovery Team will be looking at long term trends in this parameter, and how it compares to data from other species of Black-Cockatoo.
- **Nest Incentive Trial Project:** Due to past difficulties in locating new nest sites, the Recovery Team has prepared and finalised a project proposal to deliver a nest incentive trial project to assist and encourage the location of new nest sites across the species range in South Australia and Victoria. It is anticipated that this project will generate significant media/stakeholder attention and provide a new and exciting community engagement exercise for 2010/11. This project was successful in obtaining \$13,000 through the Nature Foundation SA Research Grants and will be launched during autumn/winter 2011. More information will be provided to our readers in the next edition of Red-Tail News.
- **Defining SeRtBC Habitat:** The SeRtBC Project Officer has also been working closely with Department for Sustainability

and Environment (DSE) to develop a more rigorous and consistent approach when defining SeRtBC habitat for native vegetation clearance applications. A submission prepared for the Victorian Native Vegetation Policy Technical Steering Committee to review the application of NV policy to the habitat of nomadic threatened species has assisted in the clarification of 'best and rest' habitat for nomadic species and advice on how scattered trees can be protected as offsets.

- **Kalangadoo Primary School SeRtBC Habitat Propagation Project:** The Project Coordinator is currently working closely with the Kalangadoo Primary School on a small project which will involve the propagation and restoration of key food and nest tree species of the SeRtBC by students at three locations within the cockatoos' range in the South East of SA. This project has both a focus on education and revegetation of key food and nest tree species of the SeRtBC. Students will learn about the conservation needs of the SeRtBC and gain hands-on experience through participation in a propagation project focusing on growing and replanting key local stringybark and Red-gum tree species, together with associated understorey species.
- **Improved Fire Management:** Fire management in SeRtBC stringybark habitat continued to be a focus for 2010 given the increased pressure to manage the threat of wildfires through fuel reduction burning. The Project Officer is continuing to work closely with DSE Land & Fire Management staff to ensure the impacts of fire on SeRtBC feeding habitat are managed according to recommendations defined by the Recovery Team. A final draft of the ecological burning report for the SeRtBC has been prepared, and will lead to the development of guidelines for practitioners burning in SeRtBC stringybark habitat.
- **Community Education & Engagement:** The Project Coordinator has continued to maintain the 1 800 sightings phone number, redesigned SeRtBC website, and observer mail out network during 2010. The Project Coordinator again

attended the Lucindale Field Days to promote the project and annual count, and continues to educate the community on identification and conservation needs of SeRtBCs at the 2010 Threatened Species Day and Kalangadoo Primary School SeRtBC Education & Planting Day. The Project Coordinator is currently working together with the South East Environmental Education Coordinator to develop key education resources for primary school students in the South East of SA.

- **Supporting Habitat Recovery Projects:** The Recovery Team continued to support and work with local facilitators, community groups, NGO's and landholders to protect and restore critical stringybark and buloke feeding and nesting habitat across the species range in South Australia and Victoria. Projects supported and endorsed by the Recovery Team for 2010 have included:
 1. Cockies helping Cockies helping Cockies Project
 2. Conservation Volunteers Australia SeRtBC Wild Futures Project
 3. Kowree Farm Tree Group

For more information about these projects or how you can become involved please contact the Project Coordinator, Bronwyn Perryman on 1800 262 062 or email rtbc@birdsaustralia.com.au.

This year the SeRtBC Recovery Team sadly said goodbye to some of our long serving Recovery Team staff including our long-term chair David Baker-Gabb, long-term field biologist, Richard Hill and more recent Project Officer, Rachel Prichard (nee. Sims). We wish them all the very best for their future endeavours and encourage them to continue to be involved in the conservation of our colourful cocky.

Thanks to everyone who has been involved in the Recovery Program for 2010, including the many of you who kindly reported sightings and participated in the 2010 Annual Count. I hope you can continue to be involved in this fantastic program in 2011 and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Thank you,

Bronwyn Perryman

Red-tail NEWS

Reminder 2011 Annual Count

The South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Annual Count is fast approaching. Next year the 2011 Annual Count will be held on Saturday 7th May 2011, with another Bailey's Rock Campout planned to close a fun day of counting. More information will be given in the next edition of *Red-tail News* (due out in March 2011), but if you wish to secure your spot early please register from now, particularly if you have not been involved in the count before. This year we will be running an annual count training day for those who haven't participated in the count before or feel they need a little more hands on experience in searching for our colourful cockies. To register please contact Bronwyn Perryman on 1800 262 062 or email rtbc@birdsaustralia.com.au

Have you got your new SeRtBC poster?

As many of you would be aware, a new South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo poster is available for distribution to anyone who has a keen interest. The poster, which was released earlier this year, aims to raise awareness about the ecology and threats to Red-tails and promote how you the community can help to assist the Recovery Team to secure and maintain the future of Red-tails for many decades to come. If you would like to receive a copy please contact Bronwyn Perryman on 1800 262 062 or email rtbc@birdsaustralia.com.au



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