



Supporting landholders
with native vegetation



Photo: Brian O'Leary

Spotted-Tailed Quolls in your backyard

Reported sightings of spotted-tailed quolls have been on the increase on the tablelands and the escarpment over the last few years according to Chris Allen, Senior Threatened Species Officer with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

Monitoring by the NPWS at two sites in the Murrabrine area recently has revealed quolls at both sites. In less than a year three quolls have been recorded on camera in coastal heathland in the two major reserves between Eden and the Victorian border. The coastal quolls were a surprise as quolls are usually associated with tall moist forests and densely vegetated creeklines rather than heathland. Anecdotal reports by landholders, particularly in the Kybeyan and Kydra areas near Nimmitabel also indicate an increase alongside a reduction in fox and wild dog numbers.

One of our CMN members living in Verona borrowed a monitoring camera in September, training it on his compost pile which included fish scraps. He captured photos of two quolls.

If these sightings represent an actual

increase in the spotted-tailed quoll population, this is good news as they are listed as a vulnerable species in NSW. Their distribution and population has dramatically declined since European settlement, largely due to habitat loss and fragmentation and introduced species such as foxes and cats which compete with them for food. Foxes are also known to prey on juvenile quolls.



Photo: Brian O'Leary

Anecdotal evidence that the species is on the increase is being followed up by the NPWS with a survey program in areas such as Brogo, Bemboka, Yankees Gap and a host of sites along the top of the escarpment. They hope to start surveying other areas next year. These surveys are linked to areas where wild dog and fox baiting programs are being implemented.

Quolls are an indicator of well managed landscapes so landholders

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Prickly Pear Day

Fri 2 Dec 2011

9.30am - 2pm

'Willeroo'

1199 Big Jack Mountain Road, Rocky Hall



Great range of presenters organised by BVSC. Covers Prickly pear control, native pasture management, African lovegrass & Serrated tussock control. BBQ lunch provided. RSVP to Ann Herbert on 6499 2405 or aaherbert@begavalley.nsw.gov.au

Contact the FSCCMN

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Coordinator's column

What a hopeful time we are having this spring, with ongoing rain replenishing wetlands and dams, attracting waterbirds and encouraging frogs to sing and breed in unexpected places. Springs which had dried up in many areas have started flowing again. The rain is also maintaining soil moisture, creating excellent growing conditions. Spring flowering plants have been laden with blossoms, like the bottlebrushes, *Callistemon subulatus* (see photo below) and *Callistemon citrinus* growing near our rivers and wetlands.

The ideal growing conditions are also helping our weeds along. Serrated tussock is one to keep an eye out for as it sets seed (see the article on page 7).

We've held a couple of practical workshops on managing weeds and planting methods over the last few months which many of you were able to attend. If you couldn't make it you can read about them on pages 4-5.

That's all for workshops from the CMN until next year but Bega Valley Shire Council is holding a Prickly Pear Field Day next month (see information on the left). There will also be a guided tour of the Hobbs Corner rainforest on Saturday 26 November at 10am, led by local botanist and Coastal Weeds Project Officer Stuart Cameron, to celebrate recent rehabilitation efforts in this area. RSVP to Helen Davies on 6491 8203 or email helen.davies@cma.nsw.gov.au.



Photo: Alison Rodway

Wishing you all a great summer holiday and a fruitful new year.

Ali

What is the CMN?

The Far South Coast Conservation Management Network (CMN) supports private landholders in the Bega Valley Shire to recover and manage native vegetation on their properties.

The CMN aims to inspire and motivate landholders, increase knowledge about native vegetation management and develop the skills to do this work. The coordinator produces quarterly seasonal newsletters, organises workshops and field days, manages a website and keeps landholders up to date with relevant events and information via a mailing list.

The CMN is funded and supported by the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and Bega Valley Shire Council.



Southern Rivers
Catchment Management Authority



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Photo: Brian O'Leary

with quolls in their backyards have good reason to feel proud. Since the spotted-tailed quoll is a carnivore at the top of the food chain, its existence in an area, even in small numbers, indicates that there is a robust population of smaller prey species such as birds, reptiles, small to medium sized mammals and invertebrates.

Hunting mostly at night, the quoll's diet appears to consist primarily of medium sized mammals such as sugar gliders, possums, rabbits, bandicoots and even small wallabies.

What can landholders do to help quolls? Maintaining habitat with tree hollows, hollow logs and a diverse understorey and groundcover will provide den sites for quolls as well as cover for hunting by stealth. It will also support healthy populations of quoll prey species.

Keeping fox numbers low through baiting programs is likely to have a positive influence on quoll populations. Contact South East Livestock Health and Pest Authority for support on 6492 1283 or visit www.lhpa.org.au/pests/pest-control-advice.

Using best practice fox baiting will reduce the likelihood that non-target species will be affected. See the Best Practice Community Fox Control leaflet on the CMN website at www.fscmn.com.au.

Monitoring quolls on your property and reporting sightings will provide a clearer picture of the factors affecting quolls. Report sightings to Justin Gouvernet at the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority on 6491 8220 or justin.gouvernet@cma.nsw.gov.au.

You can also record sightings on the Atlas of NSW Wildlife at wildlifeatlas.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/wildlifeatlas/about.jsp and on the Atlas of Living Australia at www.ala.org.au.

Seedbank

by Karen Walker

Spring has been a long and beautiful season this year, due mainly to increased soil moisture levels and mild weather conditions.

Of particular note has been the prolific flowering of wattles and peas (or egg and bacon plants, *Pultenaea* & *Daviesia* species). The frothy white veils of Old Man's Beard (*Clematis glycinoides/aristata*) were extensive and are now producing their fluffy fruiting bodies. I've also noticed the re-emergence of lovely herbaceous plants such as Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyna*).

Will all this flowering lead to a bountiful seed harvest? Possibly, but there are no guarantees, as anyone who grows a vegetable garden or fruit orchard would know. There are many natural variables that can affect seed set and maturity. Prolonged rain may deter pollinating insects from doing their job, or lengthy bouts of humidity may cause fungal problems. A bumper season of lush green vegetation may attract an abundance of insect foragers which could feast on nitrogen-rich pods.



Photo: Iain Harrison

Stackhousia monogyna

Remember to let me know if you have seed available that you are happy for me to harvest. Contrary to popular belief, I don't have access to large areas of land for seed collecting (unless invited!). I'm interested in anything from a groundcover to a tree, and don't judge a species as being too common, or assume it is already well represented in the Seedbank. As an example, at present the Seedbank is very low on two of our most well known species, Hickory (*Acacia implexa*) and Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*).

As always I am only a phone call away (64918224) and happy to talk plants and seed.

New Book On Our Feathered Friends



The raucous screeching call of the Channel-billed Cuckoo can be heard now as it looks for the nests of Currawongs, Magpies and Ravens in which to lay its own eggs.

The Rufous Whistler's rollicking and extended song resounds through woodlands, open forests, gardens, parks and farms.

Check along exposed dead branches and powerlines if you hear the Dollarbird's rasping, cackling 'kik-kik-kik'.

If you have Red Wattlebirds then listen at night for the long 'coo-o-woo' of the Eastern Koel which usually lay eggs in the wattlebirds' nests.

There are lots of waterbirds about in swamps this season due to good ongoing rainfall.

One to look out for is the Buff-banded rail, hiding in reeds and

coming out into the open to eat insects and berries, sometimes with their clutch of tiny chicks.

All this information and more can be found in a new book by the Far South Coast Birdwatchers called Looking at Birds on the Far South Coast.

This pocket sized book of 132 pages features 194 colour photographs of birds found on the Far South Coast of NSW. The text will suit all levels of interest in our birds and what they are doing. Perfect for adults, children, home, car, gifts.

Available in Bega at Candelo Books or contact the Far South Coast Birdwatchers direct at birds@asitis.net.au. Order online at thebegavalley.org.au/birdwatchers.html. For orders of 6 or more books, delivery within the Shire can be arranged.

Weeds in Wet Areas Workshop

At the Weeds in Wet Areas Workshop in Springvale on 5 August, Stuart Cameron posed a range of questions we need to ask before we begin to work on a site.

He suggested there is as much work to be done in our heads as in the landscape. And much of this work must be done before we ever pick up a mattock or a spray gun.

Some of these questions included: What landscape do we think we want? Can we reconstruct the pre-European landscape on this site? Should we re-establish it? And what is the ecological role of the weeds that are present?

He concluded that "essentially we each have to become experts on the sites under our stewardship, keen long-term observers of the landscape processes under way, careful recorders of what we observe. We need to explore the various weed control and rehabilitation techniques to determine what best suits our site, our budget, our inclinations. It can be a most satisfying learning



Presenters at the workshop from left to right: Jamie Dixon-Keay (BVSC Weeds Officer), Stuart Cameron (Coastal Weeds Project Officer), Ali Rodway (CMN), James Cook (Brighter Day Landscapes), Shannon Brennan (SRCMA River Rehabilitation Officer) and Leon Miners (SRCMA Snowy River Rehabilitation Project Officer).

experience and we will learn much from others engaged in similar projects."

For the full list of questions posed by Stuart, visit the CMN website www.fscmn.com.au

Planting Methods Workshop

Landholders said they enjoyed getting their hands dirty at the CMN Planting Methods Workshop on 14 October. With spectacular views of the Bega River, the workshop was held at a property in Springvale where a shelterbelt planting was underway.

Len Gazzard gave an introduction on why and where to plant. Landholders then asked questions about species selection, soil moisture, why you would guard and stake, site preparation and maintenance without chemicals. Presenters Andrew Taylor and Shannon Brennan demonstrated planting techniques using a range of tools, stakes, guards and weedmats. Chris Post, a local planting contractor, shared his passion for the potti-putki which lets you plant seedlings without having to bend over.

Landholders then planted several trees each into well prepared riplines trying out the range of tools and planting products. Landholders said the workshop helped them think through how they would go about a planting project on their own properties.



Presenters at the planting workshop



Jens Birchall and John Buckley



Ian Fowler



BRAWL

The Bega River and Wetlands Landcare Group meets monthly in the Bega urban area. Formed in 2006, the group has concentrated on the rehabilitation of two wetlands in Bega: Spenco Lagoon and the Bega River Anabranch. Hundreds of wetland species have been established in this time. It has also planted Bega Dry Grass Forest species at the Bega/Brogo River Junction and is working with Council, the SRCMA and the Lands Department to improve the reserves along Bridge Street adjacent to the Bega River.

To join the group, visit their website at thebegavalley.org.au/begariver.html or call Ali Rodway on 6492 0518.



BRAWL planting day at Spenco Lagoon in October

Photo: Shannon Brennan

Photos: Alison Rodway

Help Save the Imlay Mallee

Eucalyptus imlayensis is listed as critically endangered at a state level and endangered at a national level. It has a very highly restricted distribution known from only a single location on the summit of Mt Imlay National Park.

Mt Imlay summit is an oasis of unusual plants and is a botanical treasure of the south east with *Eucalyptus imlayensis* an integral part of the landscape.

The number of trees has declined in the last ten years with a population of only 69 plants recorded in 2010. The health of the remaining plants is also deteriorating. One of the five



genotypes is now extinct and there are no juvenile plants in the population.

Recent decline of the species is thought to be attributed to the soil-borne pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Susceptibility of the species to *Phytophthora* is still under investigation.

In September this year, the Imlay Mallee's chances of survival were

boosted following a dedicated team's trek up the 886 metre Mt Imlay to plant 20 precious seedlings.

The rescue mission was launched by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) who worked with the Australian National Botanic Gardens and the Australian Native Plant Society to propagate and plant the *Eucalyptus imlayensis* seedlings.

NPWS Ranger Lyn Evans recently reported that "at this stage all the seedlings seem to be going well."

Lyn is now looking for volunteers to help care for the plants over summer. "We have water up on the site. Volunteers would need to walk up the mountain and water the plants, check the plant health and tree guards. If we are able to get a couple more volunteers on our roster then people will only have to walk up the mountain once or twice over summer."

Volunteers need to be fit as the climb up and down Mt Imlay is steep, taking about 2 hours. However, the spectacular views and the chance to help save this endangered species are great rewards. People interested can contact Lyn Evans on 64955019.

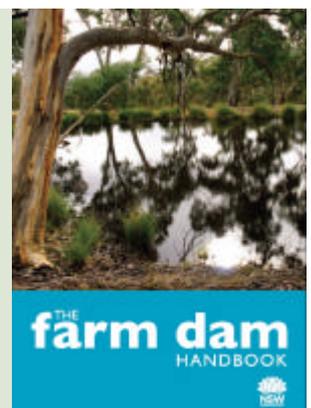


Imlay Mallee planting team in September 2011

The Farm Dam Handbook

A new publication is available to help landholders keep their farm dams in good condition and enhance the health of their properties. A healthy farm dam is an important resource to keep stock healthy and provide water for farming properties. It also provides a valuable habitat for local wildlife. The guide provides practical advice for improving water quality, managing weeds, controlling erosion and run-off and enhancing wildlife habitat.

http://www.southern.cma.nsw.gov.au/news_publications-brochures_posters.php



Look Out for Serrated Tussock

by Hayden Kingston, District Agronomist, NSW DPI, Bega

At a recent field day at Brogo organised by Bega Valley Shire weeds officers, landholders learnt the basics of identifying serrated tussock and the importance of reducing its spread in the Bega Valley. Serrated tussock is a listed noxious weed in NSW and is regarded as one of the worst perennial grass weeds in Australia. Dense infestations can reduce pasture productivity by up to 95% and are costly to eradicate.

Luke Pope, District Agronomist with NSW Department of Primary Industries at Cooma spoke about identification of serrated tussock as it can easily be mistaken as a native tussock grass. Key points for identification before the plant has seeded are that the plant has very fine leaves which can be rolled between your fingers, the tussock is made up of many individual plants and when you rub your hand up and down the plant it feels rough.

If you have tussocks that have these features take a sample to your agronomist to confirm the identification. Once the plant has



Alan Smith, Clare Hamilton and Derek Lewis

seeded in early summer it has distinctive purple to mauve tinged seed heads that are long and wispy and tend to blow over in the wind.

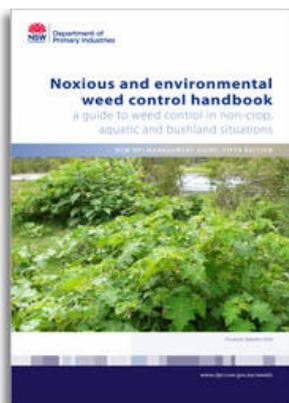
Derek Lewis and Peter Schumann told local farmers about the efforts of landholders in the Towamba Valley where serrated tussock has been present for over forty years. They have shown that with persistence and good management, serrated tussock is readily controllable and most landholders have successfully controlled extensive infestations. It is a weed that can be beaten.

They emphasised the need to identify and destroy established

plants before they can set seed - for dense infestations, careful and strategic use of appropriate herbicide is warranted, with a follow-up plan for establishing or maintaining competitive pasture. Seek agronomic advice. For scattered plants, chip and expose roots – don't leave bare spots for re-establishment.

At the field day the new Serrated Tussock pamphlet that has been developed as part of the Farming for Weed Suppression project - a Southern Rivers CMA and Bega Valley Shire Council partnership program - was launched by Clare Hamilton, the NSW/ACT Serrated Tussock Coordinator.

The new publication contains detailed information on identifying serrated tussock and management tips for controlling serrated tussock infestations in coastal pastures. Landholders can obtain a copy of the pamphlet by contacting Bega Valley Shire Weeds Officers on 02 6499 2222, Department of Primary Industries on 02 6491 7800 or Southern Rivers CMA on 02 6491 8200.



The new version of the Noxious and environmental weed control handbook is available on the dpi website:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/publications/noxious-enviro-weed-control>

Or contact your district agronomist Hayden Kingston 6491 7802.