Capacity to Deliver

LP-022-R058

Regional-scale nest box program for bushfire recovery.

North Coast Regional Landcare Network

A key response to the wildlife impacts of the Black Summer bushfires has been the installation of nest boxes to provide shelter, nesting and refuge habitat for hollow-dependant fauna. North Coast Regional Landcare Network took a regional approach to designing, delivering and monitoring this important activity.

The issue

The Black Summer bushfires have taken an enormous toll on the wildlife that were in their path. While the bush often regenerates in the months and years after a wildfire, the loss of old hollow trees is something that takes hundreds of years to recover from. Hollow-bearing trees often are easily susceptible to catching on fire and often collapse as the fire eats away at the base and up through hollow trunks. Hundreds of native species depend on these hollows and providing artificial replacements in the form of nest boxes can help species recolonise burnt areas.

The solution

The project brought together the local Landcare networks across the North Coast to implement a program of nest boxes with some consistency, cost-efficiency and standard monitoring and data collation. Charles Sturt University came on board as a partner to provide expert evaluation of data and prepare some guidelines on best practice to support future nest box programs. Innovative approaches included trialling PVC moulded nest boxes and creating carved hollows using equipment that bores into the tree trunk for a more natural and long-lasting hollow. 400 nest boxes were installed and monitoring included many more installed previously with over 1600 entries in the database. Workshops were delivered for both community awareness and involvement as well as engaging arborists and other contractors to be trained in Hollow-Hog carving equipment so that technique can be more broadly applied across the region.

The impact

The project has had some good success with wildlife utilisation of the nest boxes and hollows - even though the timeframes between installation and monitoring were fairly short. The project has established a database which provides for the opportunity to collate and evaluate data from future monitoring sessions. The partnership with Charles Sturt University has been positive with opportunities for publishing outcomes and presenting the project at conferences. Evaluation is comparing nest box location and usage by wildlife with a range of parameters such as vegetation type, proximity to Black Summer burnt areas, and topography. Interest in the seminar being presented by Charles Sturt University was across a broad range of interested stakeholders. Future steps include sourcing funding for ongoing monitoring to better understand the effectiveness of nest boxes as a bushfire recovery tool.

Key facts

- Regional-scale project to support wildlife post bushfire.
- Partnership with Charles Sturt University to bring expert advice on data collation and evaluation.
- Monitoring resulted in over 1600 entries to the database.
- Great results with wildlife making use of the nest boxes and hollows.

This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Enabling Program, a collaboration between Local Land Services and Landcare NSW supported by the NSW Government.

04 Jul, 2022