



Landcare UpHunter

Spring 2020

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Wedge-tailed Eagle Rescue

I found an injured Wedge-tailed eagle in the long grass on the edge of the Winter wheat crop in my cultivation paddock on June 14th, 2020. It was late on that Sunday afternoon when I arrived in the paddock, my walk being delayed by shots which sounded close by.

As I did not know who was shooting, or exactly where from or what at, I made discretion the better part of valour and stayed at home until some time after the shooting stopped.

My plan was to assess the Bathurst burrs (*Xanthium spinosum*) remaining around the edge of the wheat crop with the aim of removing as many as possible before stock were allowed back into the paddock, so I planned to walk right around the edge of the crop.

Bathurst burr is toxic to livestock (not just cattle) and the burrs contaminate wool (making it a serious economic problem for farmers), dispersal being by clothing, fur or waterways.

On the far side of my paddock I found a large depression in the lush green crop, near the edge, as if something had fallen into it, but without the tracks caused by a deer or a cow. Shortly afterwards I saw the eagle, obviously injured, when it tried to rise from where it was crouched in long grass. It could not fly, with a damaged wing and major body injury.

The large hooked beak, large wings and businesslike talons convinced me the bird was beyond my skill to rescue, I would need the assistance of experienced wildlife rescuers.

By the time I walked home it was dark and several phone calls found no one home, so I left messages. On the Monday morning Landcare UpHunter Co-ordinator, Ruth Hardy, contacted me and asked me to return to the site and find if the eagle was still alive, which I did and it was, so she organised a Wildlife Aid rescue team, coming from Muswellbrook.

Within the hour Meg from Wildlife Aid had arranged to leave work and arrived at the site, along with her support team of Meg's daughter and children, with Ruth there to assist.

It was a long trudge to and from the road for wildlife rescuer Meg, with an eagle to carry, a creek to cross twice and a lot of long grass and weeds to navigate, with the necessary equipment in tow to safely catch the eagle and carry it to the waiting transport vehicle.

I appreciate the commitment of Meg and offside Ruth (plus the support team waiting on the dirt road where our cars were parked).

Meg transported the eagle to a veterinary practice in Muswellbrook for an examination. The upper section of its right leg was shattered and a wing bent and broken where a bullet had penetrated in two places. It is disappointing that their dedication was in vain as the eagle was so badly injured it had to be euthanased, but at least it did not die of thirst and starvation out in the paddock.

From medical assessment of its injuries, I understand that the eagle would have been perched in a tree, not flying, when it was shot.

The Wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*) is a totem, a symbol of protection and healing for the Wanaruah People and local members took it to Aboriginal land, not too far from where I had originally found it in my paddock. It was welcomed back to country, with a smoking ceremony. Red ochre was sprinkled on its right side where it had been shot, then wrapped in paperbark tied with traditional twine from a Kurrajong tree. Yellow box and White box vegetation were used to draw smoke. It was honoured, recognising its life had been cut short and speaking in 'language' to the Karwal (the spirit name for the Wedge-tailed eagle), before being buried.

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Threatened Species Day at Belltrees School

Belltrees Public School is sited some 43kms. from Scone. It has 12 students of differing class ages. In early September students celebrated Threatened Species Day, each producing a one-page outline on Endangered Animals in Australia, on a species of their choice. Older students assisted younger ones when asked, with all presenting to a 'whole of school' class. Here are some extracts:

Mountain Pygmy-possum

They thought Mountain Pygmy-possum was extinct until they discovered in 1960 they find it in Victoria and New South Wales National Parks. Mountain pygmy-possum has predators such as feral cats and foxes. There are only 2,000 left in the world that is so sad. They have one to three years in the wild however the male can live to five years and the females can live to 12 years.

They eat nectar and pollen from eucalypts and bottlebrush trees. There are different types of pygmy-possums in the world like Western pygmy-possum, Long tailed pygmy-possum, Eastern pygmy-possum and Tasmanian pygmy-possum.

By Jack



Glossy Black Cockatoo

The Glossy black cockatoo is an Australian bird that lives in coastal wetlands and drier forest areas.

They like to eat seeds from different types of She Oak trees. They also sometimes eat insect larvae.

Glossy black cockatoos look a little bit like a crow. They are black with a crown on their head. It is because of their colour that they get their name, they are black and their feathers look glossy.

Glossy black cockatoos are of least concern but their population is dropping in NSW, they are close to being listed as endangered. Their numbers are dropping because wild cats and possums they take the eggs out of their nest and eat the eggs.

Last year in 2019, scientists found out that there are about 370 Glossy black cockatoos.

By April & Angus



Numbats

Numbats, *Myrmecobius Fasciatus*, are in a lot of danger from extinction, in fact they are listed as critically endangered with only about 1,000 left in the wild and about 500 in captivity.

These termite eater's population are dropping. The cause of this is habitat loss, due to clearing for roads, building and housing. Bush fires also play a part in affecting the population of their species. They are also hunted by other wild animals that prey on them such as foxes. But lucky for these reddish-brown, white striped creatures, Perth zoo is doing their best to save them from extinction.

They take great care of this wonderful species by helping to create a breeding environment where the Numbats are happy, safe, healthy with regular health checks and breeding more of their kind.

Numbats eat round about 20,000 termites a day. To catch termites, Numbats have to use their sticky, long tongues, and have to use their amazing sense of smell. Numbats are asleep in the day and are awake in the night. When termites are active Numbats are active.

By Riley & Audrey



Spear-toothed Shark (*Glyphis glyphis*)

The spear tooth shark is endangered due to incidental capture in commercial and recreational fisheries, as well as by habitat degradation. The spear tooth shark is an extremely rare species of river shark that lives in coastal marine waters and tidal reaches of large tropical rivers in northern Australia and New Guinea. They eat fish. Spear tooth sharks have a short and a broadly rounded snout.

This species has erected, broadly triangular, serrated upper teeth and slender, lower teeth which are not serrated. This makes the top teeth look different very from the bottom teeth. To help save them we should find alternative ways to fish and avoid fishing in their habitat.

By Darcy



Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat

The Northern hairy-nosed wombat whose scientific name is known as *Lasiorninus Krefftii*. It is known to be critically endangered. In fact, there are only about 250 left in the wild, and 10 in captivity, at Richard Underwood Nature Refuge. These species used to live in peace, but as the world evolved, their population started dropping due to floods, wildfires and disease.

Competing for food is really hard for these species, but also surviving without food in the wild. Grasses like leaves are caught in wildfires and affected Northern hairy-nosed wombats food supplies.

2008, the year when the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, along with some sponsorship, ensured the Recovery Plan was organised for the Northern hairy-nosed wombat.

Northern hairy-nosed wombats use their long sharp claws to dig up holes in the ground to live in.

By Riley



Wedge-tailed Eagle Rescue cont'd.

Our 'Wedgies' are unique and glorious birds that eat rabbits and hares on our rural properties (up to 70% of their diet) and they clean up dead carcasses of all kinds of animals. Yes, they will sometimes eat lambs, but if it does so, this is a very small proportion of the eagle's diet, usually dead, weak or sickly lambs and when normal food is scarce.

Wedgies can live over 20 years. They mate for life, often keeping the same nesting sites for many years, renovating with new sticks and leaves, the nest being 2 metres wide, 3 metres deep and weighing up to 400 kilos. Eagle pairs are lucky to hatch and raise one chick a year. Smaller birds like finches sometimes use the underside of the nest to lay their own eggs and raise their own young.

Researchers have not been able to say with any certainty how many there are today because their ranges can be so large. One radio-tracked eagle was found to range over an area equivalent to a quarter of Western Australia, a staggering area. In Tasmania, after being hunted prolifically in times past, they are now trying to rescue their Tasmanian Wedge-tailed eagles from extinction.

Wedge-tailed eagles are native to Australia and southern New Guinea. Listed as an 'Endangered Species' by Federal government they are legally protected in all States and Territories. In NSW, if harmed, they are notifiable to National Parks & Wildlife Service.

Looking upwards at an eagle soaring and circling on the updraughts, gliding on the air, floating thousands of feet above the hills with its mighty wings spread wide, is to feel the joy of flight in its purest form. Let us all make sure they continue to survive not only for our environment, but for our children, grandchildren and future generations.

Belinda Scott

(additional information by Ruth Hardy)



Resources & Funding

Take Time—a new magazine from the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP). With a key theme being "connection through change" this first edition includes personal stories from across the country. It highlights the importance of our connections with others, our environment and our communities. Tips and strategies on maintaining and improving your own mental health and a comprehensive mental health directory are all in the magazine. Go to www.taketimemagazine.com.au or www.ramhp.com.au/take-time-magazine—share the link with others. Call Matthew Milne on 0437 898 044 for more information or questions you may have.

Yerrabingin Native Rooftop Farm—Yerrabingin is Australia's first indigenous-run rooftop farm. Established on an office block in Sydney, it includes threatened species of bush food, botanical plants and medicinal plants. As a demonstration farm and cultural space it aims to improve biodiversity in the city, food and habitat for insects and birds, human wellbeing and is a research space on the suitability of local flora species for planting elsewhere. Workshop dates and project information are at www.yerrabingin.com.au

Farming Wildflowers: the future of restoration and native seed—Boiling Point podcast on Sydney's Eastside 89.7FM on 3rd June 2020. Discusses the Australian Native Seed Survey Report (ANPC), highlighting issues in the native seed industry and seed-based restoration for sustainability, just go to <https://eastsidefm.org/podcast/farming-wildflowers-the-future-of-restoration-and-native-seed/>

First Nation Farmers—An ABC Landline presentation giving stories that explore past and future aspects of First Nation Farmers & their harvesting of Australian flora & food over millennia. To watch this segment go to view.abc.net.au/show/first-nation-farmers

Taste & Learn—CSIRO evidence-based resource for primary schools. Focuses on the learning and enjoyment of vegetables to impact children's health and wellbeing in a positive way—sensory education based. Go to <https://research.csiro.au/taste-and-learn/>

Managing Land Post-Fire for Landholders—a Nature Conservation Council (Hotspots Fire Project) fact sheet on post-fire land management. An easy-read, informative booklet for landholders. Just go to fireandrestoration.org.au/managing-land-post-fire/

Funding

Environmental Education Program—Environmental Trust funding of up to \$250,000 for projects to develop, broaden & transform community knowledge, skills and motivation, encouraging sustainable actions and participation in environmental protection. Closes 16th November at environment.nsw.gov.au/funding-and-support/nsw-environmental-trust/grants-available/environmental-education

Strengthening Rural Communities—Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal. The current round of funding to support projects addressing broad community needs for small rural, regional and remote communities is for grants of up to \$25,000. Applications close 24th November. Go to frrr.org.au/grants/strengthening_rural_communities for more details and application download.

Statement of Attainment in Bush Regeneration—TAFE NSW are offering the Statement of Attainment in Bush Regeneration as an online course free-of-charge. Whether you are new to Landcare, have an individual interest in Bush Regeneration knowledge or would like to use this qualification for entry to further study, this course is open for NSW residents. Areas of study in the course include recognising plants, recognising weeds and natural area restoration. For information go to tafnsw.edu.au/course/-/cc/900-81400V01/Statement-of-attainment-in-bush-regeneration or access via their general website and follow the prompts.

Events for your Diary

Landcare UpHunter stall—farming, environment, Landcare, education resources, plants/herbs. Visit us at: No stall events for 2020.

Frog ID Week—6th to 15th of November. Details of this annual citizen science event & to download the app go to www.frogid.net.au/

Wild Pollinator Count—8th to 15th November. Participation & events at www.wildpollinatorcount.com/

Re-set sessions for Rural Women—Rural Women's Network free online events run until 24th November.

Book at <https://rwnbetreat.online/>

AWMS Annual conference—the Australian Wildlife Management Society Conference on 8th to 10th of December is online this year. Link into awms.org.au for details.

Mental Health focussed training—Rural Adversity Mental Health Program. To request a workplace or community group training event call Matthew Milne 0437 989 044

World Soil Day—United Nations on 5th December. Go to www.un.org/en/observances/world-soil-day

Merriwa Landcare Group. Contact Jenny Lee on 0429 337 557

Murrurundi Landcare Group just Email Sandy@boydscreek.com.au

Pages River Warriors Working Bee Wilson Memorial Oval, Murrurundi 1st & 3rd Sunday monthly (morning) Email Sandy@boydscreek.com.au Working Bee activities on hold.

Scone Landcare—Contact Ruth at Email: sconelandcare@gmail.com or Tel: 0407 232 539

Landcare UpHunter—details below



Opinions & views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Landcare UpHunter. We reserve the right to edit article contributions.

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Landcare UpHunter is hosted by Scone Landcare Inc.

Native Tree & Photo Shoot Project

A long-term activity for Scone Landcare is the Native Tree & Photo Shoot Project which focusses on providing **FREE** native trees and shrubs to local landholders, for planting on their property, for land and riparian improvement, wildlife habitat and shelter for stock.

Over recent years the severity of the drought made it impossible to plant and establish native trees and shrubs in many parts of the Upper Hunter Shire. After a two year hiatus for this Project, with improved weather conditions for planting and retention, we are once again offering a variety of native tube stock species to farmers and other landholders.

Native Trees & Shrubs FREE to Local Landholders

From our current supply of native trees and shrubs, you decide which species you need and where they will be planted—close to home or in your paddock.

We can provide you with

- A list of native trees and shrubs we have in stock
- Copy of our Scone Native Tree Guide—includes data on suitable soil types, tree height, width, general notes for species in stock
- Support to your planning and retention of trees and shrubs provided

Eligibility

- Your property must be located within the Scone Landcare catchment of Aberdeen to Burning Mountain and Waverley/Gundy to Bunnan/Kars Springs See map below—black line marks boundaries
- Minimum property size 2.5 hectares

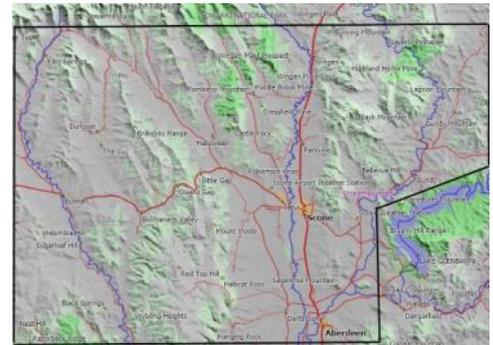
Available while stocks last.

For enquiries & to order

Email: sconelandcare@gmail.com

Tel: Ruth Hardy 0407 232 539.

Office hours M - F 9.00am-5.00pm
Limited after hours service.



National Tree Day is an annual event with some 300,000+ participants across Australia. Whilst the main event in July was cancelled, National Tree Day can be celebrated at any time—dependant on when in any geographic area are the best seasons to plant natives.

The current supply of trees and shrubs to local landholders, under the Native Tree & Photo Shoot Project, is also Scone Landcare's local event for National Tree Day 2020.

As part of their long-term support for community planting activities, Upper Hunter Shire Council funded purchase of these plants, suitable for the wider Scone area landscape.

Ruth Hardy



Photos: Previous plantings—Morning mist & daytime

Visit us at www.landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/scone-landcare-group