

- » Journey into the flooded Simpson Desert p.4
- » Find out which hungry vegetarian is making its home at Bon Bon Station Reserve p.7
- » Meet a special volunteer Bush Heritage family p.8

# Bush Heritage News



Winter 2010

## A trailblazing, treehopping marsupial?

### Charlotte Francis tells how you, our supporters, have helped the tiny red-tailed phascogale to become a trailblazer in Bush Heritage history

Night falls in the eucalypt woodland of Western Australia's southern wheat belt, but for the red-tailed phascogale, the fun is just beginning. This tiny nocturnal marsupial, weighing just 60 g, has a trick up its sleeve when predators come close – it loves to leap from tree to tree, and can travel two metres in one jump if pressed (not bad for an animal whose body averages about 10 cm in length). That makes for an active night in the woodland.

The red-tailed phascogale was once widespread throughout Western Australia but is now threatened with extinction. It's not easy for the phascogale – thanks to land clearance, wildfires and introduced predators, comfy digs are hard to come by. So what is a phascogale to do?

This was the question posed by West Australian scientists recently. Thankfully, Bush Heritage ecologists, working with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) came up with a plan: what about a change of scene? Kojonup Reserve, they thought, surely has everything a phascogale could ask for: cosy nesting sites in wandoo tree hollows; tasty pickings such as spiders, birds and mice; and areas of close canopy where they can leap from tree to tree.

Bush Heritage Ecologist Angela Sanders and Reserve Manager Mal Graham assisted DEC scientists recently in the first-ever translocation of endangered fauna to a Bush Heritage property. A population of twelve female and eight male phascogales, trapped on nearby properties, were released into wool-lined nest boxes at Kojonup in mid-May.

"Giving them a warm, ready-made home means they don't have to hunt for nesting hollows and risk being eaten for dinner by hungry barn owls, pythons or goannas," explains Angela. "The phascogales are wearing tiny tracking collars so we can keep an eye on their movements."

Scientists from DEC will be monitoring these tiny animals over the next few months. "The real excitement will be in a year's time," says Angela. "By then we should be able to see if the population has grown, and moreover, if the population has bred successfully on Kojonup."

With the ongoing help of Bush Heritage's generous supporters, who make work like this possible, we hope the phascogale can keep jumping from tree to tree, catching spiders and nesting in wandoo hollows, all night, every night. ■



To view photos of the phascogale being released into its new home at Kojonup Reserve, go to [www.bushheritage.org.au/phascogale](http://www.bushheritage.org.au/phascogale)

## Fire at Eurardy

"Intensely hot and uncomfortable," is how Elizabeth Lescheid remembers the feeling of being clad in non-breathable flame-retardant gear as she fought a fire on Eurardy Reserve in 40-degree-plus heat in late February. "It's the first time for a bushfire here since Bush Heritage purchased the property in 2005," says Elizabeth, Eurardy Reserve Manager. The fire started by lightning strike on a neighbouring property. "Bushfire is always a threat here over summer due to extreme hot and dry conditions," adds Elizabeth. "It's really important to

stop a hot burn from spreading into some of our fire-sensitive areas. We were overwhelmed by the effort of the many volunteers who helped contain the fire." Ironically, part of the 1223 ha burn area was already earmarked for prescribed burning.

Photo: Al Dermer



## Going batty

The bat may not rank among Australia's best-loved animals, but despite its reputation and its fondness for dark places, this humble animal has caught the attention of scientists from the Conservation Council of Western Australia as a climate change indicator on Charles Darwin Reserve. A team including Bush Heritage Reserve Manager Dale Fuller and Ecologist Matt Appleby assisted the West Australian scientists to carry out bat-trapping surveys in March, confirming the presence of the arid zone form of the inland free-tailed bat and the

inland forest bat. "That brings the total number of bat species recorded on Charles Darwin to seven," says Matt. "And now that we know more about the bat populations, we have a baseline for future monitoring to see how these species respond to climate change."

Photo: Kurt and Andrea Tschirner



## Surviving in the outback

Living and working on a remote outback reserve requires a raft of different skills. Nella and Mark Lithgow, Reserve Managers on the large remote properties of Cravens Peak and Ethabuka, recently completed a three-day Remote First Aid course to learn what steps to take in the event of a medical emergency. "You need to be resourceful, think clearly and not panic. It's all part of the job," says Nella, explaining that because it is so remote (on the QLD/NT border) even the Royal Flying Doctor Service might take a day to arrive. The potential hazards of life in the desert include heat stroke, dehydration and snake bites. Add to that the challenge of living in a remote location with limited communications, and things can get tricky indeed!

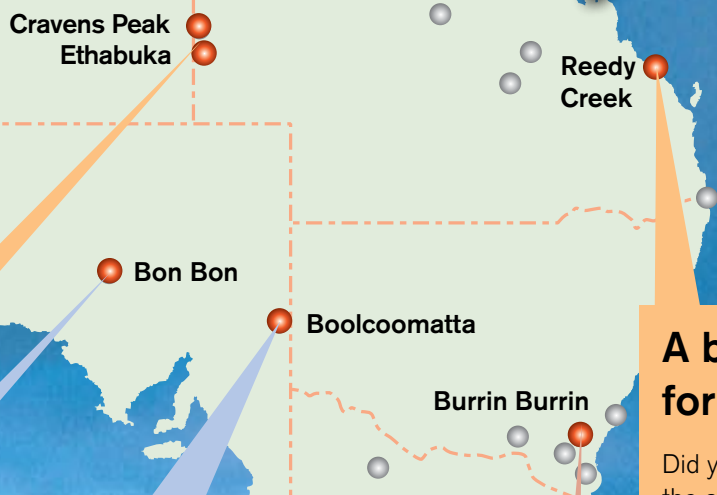
## Smile! You're on candid camera

Excitement ran high at Bon Bon Station Reserve when remote cameras picked up images of hopping mice in Melaleuca scrub fringing the margins of a remote salt lake. "We can ascertain that *Notomys* is the species, but we're not sure exactly which ones they are from the pictures," says Reserve Manager Glen Norris. "But the survey work we're planning in October should help to solve the mystery."

Photo: Bush Heritage



# Around your reserves in 90 days



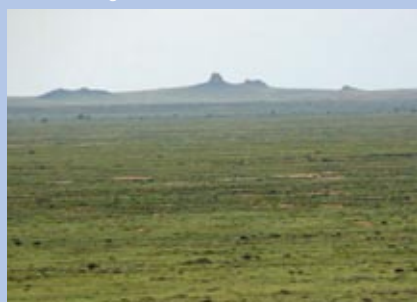
Life on a Bush Heritage reserve bears little relation to your standard 9-to-5 office job – there is no such thing as an average day. Our reserve managers juggle the everyday work of protecting our unique wildlife with responding to the unpredictable nature of the environment. But what really makes a difference to their everyday work is you – your support is vital. Here’s a snapshot of how your money is hard at work on some of our 32 reserves scattered around the country.

By **Charlotte Francis**

## Singin’ in the rain

Reserve managers Emma and Peter Ashton have been jumping for joy at Boolcoomatta Reserve, celebrating the first good rainfall since Bush Heritage supporters enabled us to buy the former sheep station in 2006. Thanks to the hard work of Peter, Emma and the team of volunteers in controlling weeds and feral animals, the recent rains transformed the usually arid reserve into a flourishing landscape. Ecologist Sandy Gilmore reports that the saltbushes have boomed, and grasses and forbs have prospered and set seed. “Recent bird surveys showed marked increases in many grassland species including the brown songlark, inland dotterel, Australian pipit, little button-quail and stubble quail!”

Photo: Doug Humann



## A bumper year for the turtles

Did you know that three out of the six marine turtle species found in Australian waters – the green, the flatback and the loggerhead – are found nesting on beaches around our Reedy Creek Reserve? Reserve Manager Matt McLean is working with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to monitor these ancient creatures of the ocean and protect them from feral animals. “This year has been a good year for the turtles,” enthuses Matt. “Bush Heritage

volunteers have recorded over 130 nests, most of them loggerheads, which is 30 per cent up on recent years – great news as the loggerheads are endangered.”

Photo: Matt Mclean

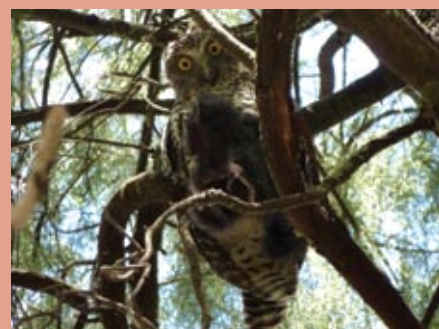


## Spotted!

Fingers were pointed, and cameras were whipped out by lucky Bush Heritage staff on a recent visit to Burrin Burrin Reserve, when the group spotted a powerful owl feasting on a greater glider while a wedge-tailed eagle flew overhead. Regional Reserve Manager Peter Saunders said the group stood wide-eyed as the spectacle unfolded in front of them. “I’d noticed owl scats previously and so was delighted to get such a good view of the owl, which is the largest in Australasia and classified as vulnerable in New South Wales.” Once

selectively logged, Burrin Burrin’s mature hollow-bearing trees are now protected, along with all other native flora and fauna at Burrin Burrin, because of the generosity of Bush Heritage supporters.

Photo: Jen Grindrod





The Mulligan river in flood. Photo: Max Tischler

## Two men and a boat

A boat might be the last thing you'd think of taking into the Simpson Desert, but it was the first thing that Bush Heritage ecologists Max Tischler and Adam Kerezsy packed on their most recent trip.

By **Lucy Ashley**

It's less than one hour before daybreak on the edge of the Simpson Desert, the place once described by explorer Charles Sturt as "a country which never changed – but for the worse".

As dawn breaks, two men load their gear into their small boat and launch themselves into the river. As far as the eye can see there is water.

This is no mirage. This is the Mulligan River in the Simpson Desert during a rare flood.

Max Tischler and Adam Kerezsy are accustomed to doing unusual things. As

Bush Heritage ecologists, they've been to places and seen sights that most lovers of the bush can only dream about.

But entertaining the thought of being possibly the first two men to navigate a boat down the usually dry Mulligan River, which might not flow for years on end, is exhilarating even for them.

Cravens Peak and Ethabuka are Bush Heritage's two conservation reserves on the eastern edge of the Simpson Desert. Driving west from Brisbane, it takes two full days to get there.

The reserves cover just under 500,000 ha or around the area of greater Sydney and Melbourne combined. With a relatively short history of cattle grazing prior to their acquisition and de-stocking by Bush Heritage, they represent an exceptionally broad sweep of regional ecosystems, with many different types of vegetation and landform.

The sand dunes dominate. From Ethabuka they run west in a continuous north-west to south-east orientation way past the Northern Territory border, about 70 km away. As far as you can see, it is just dune after dune.

Max and Adam have made the long trek out to Cravens Peak and Ethabuka to witness the aftermath of one of the most extraordinary natural events in decades: the flooding of large areas of

western Queensland in late February and March. In a matter of days, some areas of central Australia received over 250 mm (ten inches) of rain, releasing it from a state of watchful waiting into an exuberant burst of life.

"We're here to monitor the response of plants and animals to this rain event and the subsequent flooding," says Max. "We're looking at the floodplain, the waterholes and the river and what we learn will be integral to how we manage these reserves in the future."

For Max, this is an ecological dream come true, witnessing this normally parched and unforgiving land in a state of rare abundance. The native plants and animals that inhabit this region are opportunists and masters of adaptation. The water-holding frog, *Cyclorana platycephala*, responds to dry periods by pumping itself full of water and then retreating underground, while the nomadic budgerigars arrive shortly after rain in brilliant swooping clouds of green and yellow.

During their fieldwork, Max and Adam cover hundreds of square kilometres of rugged land, leaving the comforts of the Cravens Peak homestead and the hospitality of reserve managers Mark and Nella Lithgow far behind.

Finding wood in the desert for a campfire is never a problem. "Some people think it's just all sand like the Sahara, but it's not," says Max. "It's quite densely vegetated. There's a common tree out there, the gidgee, which occurs in dense clumps and always makes a good campsite. It also provides the most fantastic wood for a campfire – it burns really hot. Slim Dusty wrote many songs about gidgee coals ... and they're all true."

**"People think the Australian desert is a tough place, capable of withstanding anything. It's not. It's actually incredibly fragile, with hundreds of vulnerable plants and animals that spend most of their existence teetering on the brink."**

For news of the outside world, Max and Adam rely on the 'local' ABC radio for weather updates and news. "When you're out there, it's so incredibly remote. The world could have fallen in and you wouldn't have a clue," says Max.

A typical 'working day' in the field might start with checking animal monitoring traps or fish nets set the night before. The afternoon is often spent doing vegetation work: collecting plant specimens and doing surveys. At night they are often setting traps or spotlighting.

In the heat of summer when the mercury soars into the high 40s, working in the middle of the day becomes almost impossible. "In summer it's very difficult," says Max. "A lot of flies. Heat. You find yourself daydreaming about the inland ocean the early explorers here were hoping to find."

And when he's in the desert, often for weeks at a time, what does Max miss most about home? "I miss the ocean, particularly when you work in summer. You're just longing to be able to drop your core temperature."

Yet it's quite apparent that the desert has got under his skin. Talking about it, he runs short of superlatives: splendid, spectacular, breathtaking. Yet it is still difficult to translate this beautiful landscape into words for those who picture the desert as barren and empty.

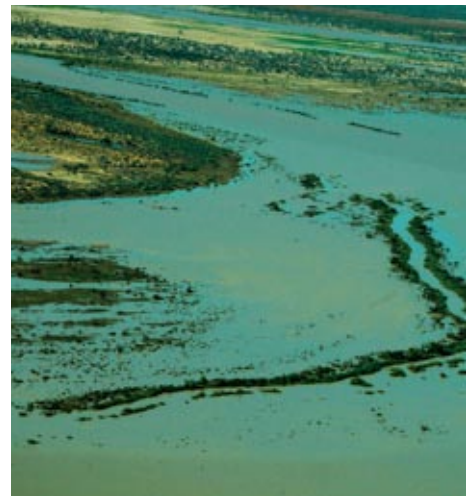
"People think the Australian desert is a tough place, capable of withstanding anything. It's not," says Max. "It's actually incredibly fragile, with hundreds of vulnerable plants and animals that spend most of their existence teetering on the brink."

"It's just as important to protect this ecosystem as it is to protect our rainforests like the Daintree, and our marine environments like the Great Barrier Reef."

"I can't wait to get back out there. There's nothing else on the planet quite like it." ■

*Ecological work like Max and Adam's is only possible thanks to the generosity of Bush Heritage supporters like you. Thanks for helping to protect Australia's unique animals, plants and ecosystems.*

Cravens Peak and Ethabuka reserves are managed for nature conservation as part of the National Reserve System. We would like to acknowledge the Commonwealth's National Reserve System and The Nature Conservancy for their generous support of this work.



Top to bottom: The lesser hairy-footed dunnart *Sminthopsis youngsoni*. A flooded channel of the Mulligan River. Shield shrimp. Max Tischler with a spangled perch. Photos by Adam Kereszy

# Trees worth their weight in carbon

Pay a visit to Chereninup Creek Reserve and you'll find a forest of young trees that have taken their place in the conversation about carbon. **Bron Willis** reports

**B**en Carr is a happy man when he's surrounded by trees. And when Ben, our Landscape Partnerships Team Leader, visited Chereninup Creek Reserve in WA recently, that's exactly what he was: surrounded by trees. If he had stood in the same spot when Bush Heritage purchased the reserve in 2002, the scene would have been entirely different. Where the trees now stand was once an empty, environmentally barren paddock. Each of those trees – eucalypts, melaleucas, wattles and casuarinas – were carefully chosen and planted back in 2003 as part of Bush Heritage's first broadscale ecological restoration planting.

Now just seven years later, the trees are not only increasing native animal populations but they're also worth their weight in ... carbon. Bush Heritage's first carbon analysis report published in March reveals the restoration has stored 2,200 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent to date, or enough to offset the annual carbon emissions of 157 average households. Even better news is that as the revegetation grows, the rate of carbon capture is expected to increase such that in the next 13 years (2010–2023) an additional 5,800 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

equivalent (equal to the annual carbon emissions of 414 households) will be captured, and ultimately we can expect twice that amount by the time the revegetation is mature.

"Although we have no current plans to trade carbon credits," says Ben, "the measurement is an exciting recognition of the carbon storage benefit of the revegetation and restoration work occurring in Western Australia's Gondwana Link Project."

"The primary aim of our ecological restoration will always be to protect and recover our unique species, but having a carbon storage measure for that restoration gives us great currency to inform others about the added benefits of carbon storage. A lot of research is going into carbon sequestering and the wider community is paying attention. We can now promote our work to a broader audience, including those who pay particular attention to the benefits of carbon storage."

The carbon report marks a coming of age for Chereninup Reserve, purchased in 2002 for its rich and diverse habitats, despite the large plot of empty land which came as part of the package.

Bush Heritage supporters got behind the project and enabled us to nurse this degraded land back to health. The project was a landmark case for Bush Heritage: ecological restoration has been carried out on several of our reserves as part of the Gondwana Link Project, but Chereninup is the first property to bear the fruits of broadscale restoration. ■

*Your support helped us to plant these trees on Chereninup Creek Reserve – why not pay a visit to see how they're growing? Chereninup is one of four Bush Heritage reserves open to self-guided day trips. See page 11 of this newsletter for more on visiting reserves, or visit [www.bushheritage.org.au / getting\\_involved\\_visit](http://www.bushheritage.org.au/getting_involved_visit)*



**Before:** preparing the land for planting in 2003  
Photo: Amanda Keesing

**After:** Chereninup Creek 2010  
Photo: Al Dermer



## Species Profile

## A wombat's best friend

Did you know you've helped create a brighter future for the southern hairy-nosed wombat? Your support has allowed us to preserve the wombat's habitat by removing competition from livestock, controlling erosion, increasing vegetation productivity and controlling rabbits in a mange-free population. Thanks to you, a sizable population of wombats calls Bon Bon home. And you can feel good about that!



Night movements captured by Bon Bon's remote camera. Photo: Bush Heritage

### Southern hairy-nosed wombat *Lasiorhinus latifrons*

**Length:** 77–93 cm

**Weight:** 19–32 kg

**Distribution:**

Patchily distributed from the Nullarbor Plain, across the Eyre and Yorke Peninsulas to the South Australian Riverland, plus two small colonies in western NSW

**Longevity:**

Estimated to be 15–20 years in the wild

**Threats:**

Sarcoptic mange, drought, competition with introduced herbivores, habitat fragmentation, conflicts with humans.

# Life on the edge

You might think your office job is stressful, but at least you don't have to share your home with ten mates all trying to escape the heat, writes **Jim Radford**

**H**ow does a big-bodied, burrowing, hungry vegetarian with an aversion to hot weather and who doesn't like company, survive in one of the hottest and driest places on earth? Surprisingly, for the southern hairy-nosed wombats at Bon Bon Reserve, the answer is 'just nicely, thank you very much!'

Day-to-day life for this stumpy-legged powerhouse throws up many challenges, but this is one tough wombat. First there is the heat. Wombats are susceptible to heat stress, so to conserve energy and water, southern hairy-nosed wombats rest in cool, humid burrows during the day and only emerge to feed on grasses and forbs at night once temperatures drop.

But here's an unkind twist of fate – around here the ground is either too sandy for burrows or rock-hard. This means an awful lot of work when it comes to building a burrow. So, some tolerance of the neighbours is required (even though they'd prefer to be left alone). These wombats need as much help as they can get to carve out complex burrow systems with many entrances for flow of fresh air. Even better if you can share an already built warren with up to ten other wombats.

Next there is finding something to eat. Southern hairy-nosed wombats might be the smallest of the three wombat species but that still makes them the third largest burrowing mammal in the world. And digging takes energy. Yet, they occupy low-productivity land in low-rainfall areas that support low-nutrient grasses. To combat this, southern hairy-nosed wombats live on the

edge physiologically: they have very low metabolic rates that enable them to conserve water and extract enough energy and water (they don't need to drink) from their low-nutrient diet.

And now, finding a mate. These wombats produce a single offspring every two to three years. They have a female-biased dispersal system, which means the females leave home and go in search of mates, while the blokes laze at home and wait for a growl at the burrow entrance. Burrows, however, are valuable real-estate, so it's an attractive offer to a prospective mate if you can provide shelter and a home.

So, as the sun sets and the heat of the day melts into the cool evening, another day ends at Bon Bon. You might think that life out here sounds pretty cruisy. But for the southern hairy-nosed wombat, it is anything but. ■

*Bon Bon Station Reserve was purchased with the assistance of the Australian Government. The reserve is managed for nature conservation as part of the National Reserve System. We would also like to acknowledge The Nature Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy's David Thomas Challenge for their generous support of this work.*

The Nature Conservancy  
Protecting nature. Preserving life.

Australian Government



# Life on Goonderoo

Who needs TV when you've got a backyard like Goonderoo Reserve? **Kate Johnston** meets a special family whose volunteer stint as reserve caretakers was made possible by you – our Bush Heritage supporters



When Cathy Olive's five-year-old son Toby discovered a sugar glider outside his bedroom he and his sister Jirri were so excited they sat out every night for two weeks to watch every movement of the tiny creature. It was then that Cathy and her husband Steve knew their six-month stint as volunteer reserve caretakers at Bush Heritage's Goonderoo Reserve in Central Queensland had changed their family's lives forever.

For years, Cathy and Steve had been pondering how to share their passion for the environment with their children, Jirri, 7, and Toby, 5. But they never quite imagined their idea would lead them to a six-month stay caring for the land at Goonderoo, a 600 ha property in the fertile Brigalow Belt of Central Queensland.

At first, Toby felt overwhelmed by the scale of the dark. "He could not stop turning on his torch," says Cathy. "But after only five days, he was keen to find out what was out there and would take

his binoculars and rug and sit under the stars waiting to discover what the native animals were up to."

The whole family fell in love with Goonderoo – its grasslands and woodlands provide excellent habitats for many native flora and fauna, including sugar gliders, koalas, bettongs, swamp wallabies, euros, grey kangaroos, echidnas and brush-tailed possums. "It's a remarkably diverse area," says Cathy. "Our house was situated on a volcanic knob with native grass which drops down into red, sandy country."

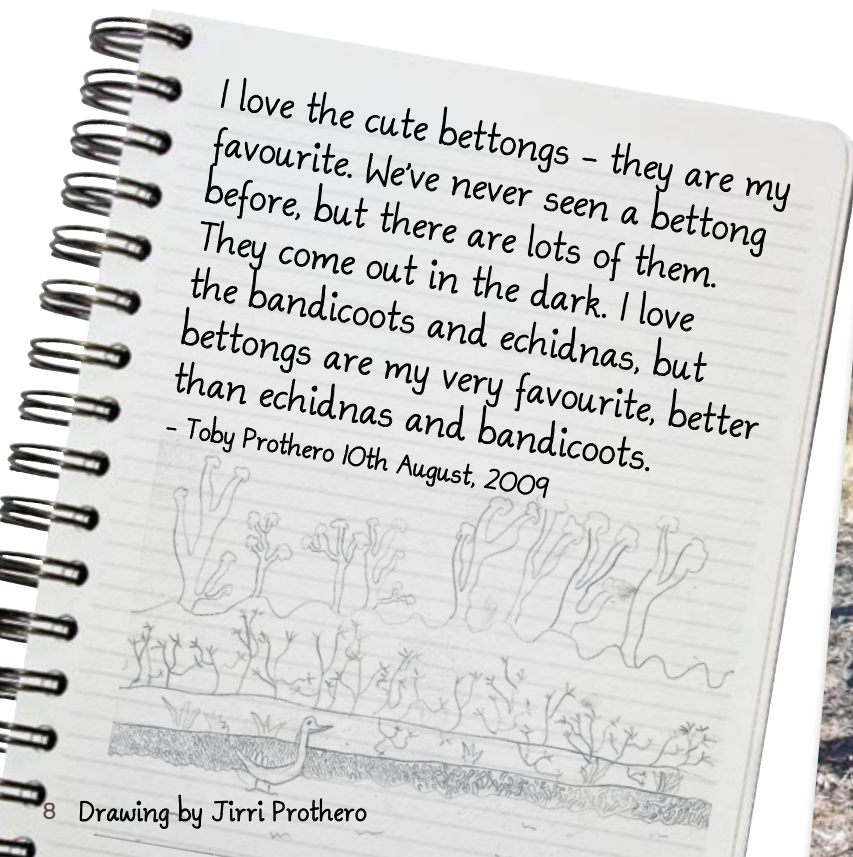
Jirri and Toby loved every aspect of life on Goonderoo, from catching and identifying butterflies, frogs and lizards to helping set up the camera traps and learning the various animal tracks. When asked at the completion of their stay what she loved most about the last six months, Jirri simply said, "I love the space and freedom of Goonderoo."

Daily life on the property was a relaxed routine, so different to the busy

demands of life at home in Alexandra, 110 km north-east of Melbourne. "The kids fed the neighbour's horses in the morning," says Cathy, "then either Steve or I would start home schooling while the other went to work, spraying or stabbing cacti and checking feral traps." Lunch was often a picnic at the dam and a long swim, and then it was back to school and work.

The family's most exciting task was to "trap" the elusive bridled nail tail, a small endangered wallaby that was translocated to the adjoining property a decade earlier. The family worked with Bush Heritage Ecologist Murray Haseler, who had hoped the nail tail would spread through the areas of suitable habitat on Goonderoo. But so far, sightings have only been occasional and knowledge of their whereabouts is patchy.

Cathy remembers the project as a highlight for the children. "I'll never forget the look on Jirri and Toby's faces when they got to hold a nail tail that had been trapped on the neighbouring property







“We are especially proud of the care and stewardship our children are showing toward their land.”

of Avocet. After such a long hunt for the marsupial, it was such a thrill to see one up close. The distinctive colouring was quite stunning.”

The project became a mixture of natural history, science and bush detective work to determine the best place for the traps. “At one stage we thought we had a nail tail on the property for sure,” says Cathy. “We found prints that looked just like the plaster cast print we had taken from a taxidermied nail tail. We thought we had an exact replica. The scats were identical too. Unfortunately, it turns out that rufous bettongs are almost exactly the same, so although there was lots of excitement building, it wasn’t to be.”

Cathy and Steve also conducted cool burns to provide areas of green pick to attract the nail tail. This also aimed to create wildfire buffers, whilst protecting the fire-sensitive, regenerating brigalow, a long-lived wattle with silver leaves and rough bark. “It was a touchy exercise,” says Cathy. “The buffel grass was highly flammable and thick after a big wet season.”

The community around Goonderoo became a great source of information and shared excitement for the children and served to further deepen their sense of the importance of nurturing our land. The kids adored their Bush Heritage family: Murray [Haseler] and Steve [Heggie], and our neighbours Hugo from Avocet, and Cathy Zwick and the Wilson family from Carnarvon,” says Cathy. “They became great friends.”

Toby and Jirri have become more independent and outgoing. “When we got home, most people hardly recognised Toby,” says Cathy. “He was quite introverted before but has become much more extroverted. And Jirri, who is quiet by nature, has developed real strength of character. She is now very sure who she is.”

Although it has been difficult to settle back into their busy life at home, the family have considered setting off again at some point. “We became such a close unit as a family,” she says. “We still miss Queensland.” ■

*Bush Heritage would like to thank Cathy and Steve for supporting our work on Goonderoo, Carnarvon and Edgbaston reserves. And we'd like to thank you – it's the support of donors like you who make it possible to send volunteers like the Olive-Prothero family to work on our reserves.*



We would like to acknowledge the Norman Wettenhall Foundation for their generous support of this work.



## Bridled nail tail wallaby

The bridled nail tail wallaby is so called because of the white ‘bridle’ line running along its neck, shoulder and forearm area and a nail-like spur at the tip of its tail. The nail tail, known locally as the flashjack, is endangered and only a few tiny wild populations are left, one which was reintroduced just a kilometre away on Avocet, a neighbouring property to Goonderoo. It is small, shy and hard to find in its dense habitat. Bush Heritage’s Queensland Ecologist, Murray Haseler, set up a survey program using motion-sensing camera traps at Goonderoo to map the population of the nail tail. The survey hopes to map the distribution and habitat use of the wallaby across Goonderoo and Avocet. Your support will help Murray and his team understand and better protect this beautiful and endangered creature.

Photo: Bush Heritage



## Volunteering

Bush Heritage volunteers give generously of their skills, experience and time to be part of a solution for Australia’s unique plant and animal life. If you have special skills that could help Bush Heritage, phone us on **1300 NATURE (1300 628 873)** or **(03) 8610 9100**, or email **info@bushheritage.org.au** to be added to our email list for V-News. You’ll find information on volunteer positions available and how to apply at **www.bushheritage.org.au/getting\_involved\_volunteer/**

Far left: Jirri and Toby with the remote camera that captured images of nocturnal animals. Left: Toby keeps watch over the sugar glider. All photos by Steve Prothero



# You're never too young to twitch

by **Karen Graham**



**H**ugh Harrold's sixth birthday party was like any other children's party – games, sweets, laughter and fun – except for one major difference. On the invitation, Hugh asked his friends to give a gold coin donation (instead of birthday gifts) to Bush Heritage.

Hugh's mum Lisa has been a proud supporter of Bush Heritage since 1997. "This year it was Hugh's turn for his very first party and so we discussed all the things we could do to celebrate his birthday. We considered that he'd receive lots of gifts

Above photo: Mareeba Wetland Foundation

from his family and that it'd be a great idea, instead of presents from his school mates, to raise money for something that might need a gift more than he does."

And for young Hugh, that something was an endangered bird: "I want to save the Gouldian finch, because there's not many left," he says. Hugh loves birds so much that his family refer to him as a "walking encyclopaedia of world birds". Along with the Gouldian finch, he is a big fan of the Marabou stork ("because it has really big wings") and the Peregrine falcon ("because it's the fastest animal on earth"). Ask Hugh who is his favourite superhero and he'll say David Attenborough beats Batman hands-down.

"In a society where materialism rules," says Lisa, "we hope we can teach our kids to think about others less fortunate – in particular the 'others' that can't speak for themselves."

One day, perhaps Hugh will be able to tell his grandchildren the story of how he helped the Gouldian finch survive against the odds. ■

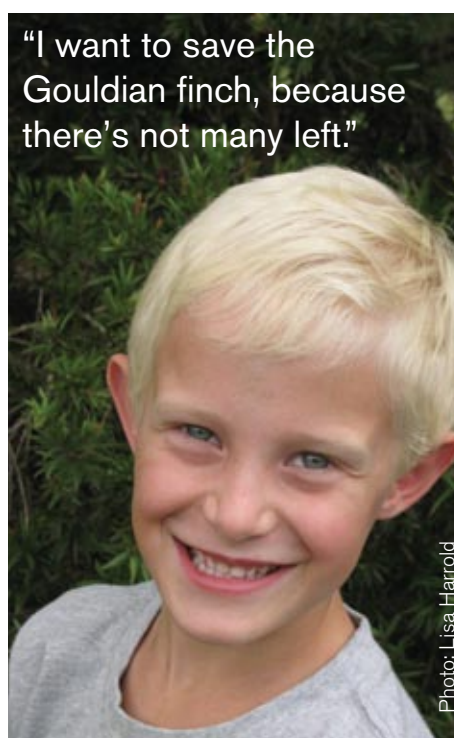


Photo: Lisa Harrold

*The Gouldian finch is found in northern Australia in tropical savanna woodland. It occurs in the West Arnhem Plateau where Bush Heritage is working in partnership with the Wardekkeren people to conserve its habitat.*

## What gets you hot under the collar?

In February we asked for your thoughts on climate change. We found out that you Bush Heritage supporters are a passionate bunch!

**Some of you railed against our politicians and population growth, a few declared yourselves non-believers and others despair about rising carbon emissions. But all of you support Bush Heritage's work – to protect our land for future generations.**

"I'm more interested in saving our flora and fauna and ridding Australia of feral animals – that's why I support you. 'Climate change' is best avoided – leave it to the politicians, because it is a theory."

**Dr Graeme Banks, Chiltern, Vic.**

"For the sake of my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, I really hope you can succeed in making a difference."

**Name withheld, Lethbridge Park, NSW**

"I want to believe that 'the science is clear' as you say in your letter, perverse as it may be. But I fear the communication of that science is anything but clear."

**Mark Huntington, Ivanhoe, Vic.**

"I'm pleased to see that your organisation is now talking about the relationship between your good work and slowing the tide of climate change."

**Kylie Jarrett, Daw Park, SA**

"I see Bush Heritage reserves as vital sources of protection for what remains of our ecology and will hopefully enable endangered species to survive."

**Trevor McCarron, Bendigo, Vic.**

Photo: Stuart Cohen, Scottsdale Reserve



Many thanks to all who contributed. We appreciate knowing a little more about your views and concerns.

## Breathe in the smell of a Bush Heritage Reserve

Look around you and see what you are a part of. Meet our reserve managers. And see the places that you – our generous supporter – have helped to protect. If you've got a day, a week up your sleeve, come and share your time with us.

### Walk among the wildflowers

#### Eurardy Reserve, WA

**When:** Sat 28 Aug, Sun 26 Sept or Fri 8 Oct (am/pm)

When Bush Heritage first bought Eurardy Reserve back in 2005, one of the main attractions was its flowering plants – Eurardy is found within the Southwest Botanical Province, which has one of the greatest diversities of flowering plants on the planet.

This is a unique opportunity to accompany reserve managers Elizabeth and Matt as they show you through Eurardy at its best. Experience the springtime bloom of flaming reds and bright yellows with carpets of daisies and orchids bursting into bloom.

**Transport:** Make your own way to Eurardy (2WD access). Transport on the tour is provided.

**Food:** Morning or afternoon tea provided

**Nearest town:** Northampton (97 km)

**Cost:** \$30 or \$40 for non-supporters



#### Nardoo Hill Reserves, Vic

**When:** Sat 25 Sept (10am – 4pm)

Join us for a series of gentle meanders around this beautiful property. Take in the panoramic views from Mt. Kerang and the large diversity of vegetation communities including grey box grassy woodland, box-ironbark and mallee.

**Transport:** Make your own way to Nardoo (2WD access) and after that, you'll be on foot.

**Food:** Morning tea provided. BYO lunch.

**Nearest town:** Wedderburn (12 km)

**Cost:** \$30 or \$40 for non-supporters

You should be reasonably fit for this six-hour guided walk, which includes off-track walking on uneven and hilly terrain.

#### Self-guided visits

You can visit some Bush Heritages reserves on a self-guided trip. Whether it's just for the day, or for a whole week's camping, a self-guided visit is a wonderful way to discover the land you've helped to protect. Check our website for details.



#### Bon Bon Station Reserve, SA

**When:** Fri 20 – Mon 23 Aug

Highlights of this four-day guided tour include a visit to Lake Puckridg as well as freshwater wetlands, mulga shrublands and bluebush plains.

**Transport:** A high-clearance 4WD is required to travel around the reserve. Limited spaces may be available for those without a 4WD if arranged with us prior. (There is 2WD access to the reserve.)

**Accommodation:** Shared shearer's quarters at Bon Bon Reserve. Camping available with own gear.

**Food:** Breakfasts and dinners provided. BYO lunches.

**Nearest town:** Glendambo (100 km)

**Cost:** \$730 or \$830 for non-supporters

A good general level of fitness is required.

For information about visitation, visit [www.bushheritage.org.au/getting\\_involved\\_visit](http://www.bushheritage.org.au/getting_involved_visit). To book your place on any of the tours listed above, contact us on **1300 NATURE (1300 628 873)** or **(03) 8610 9100**, or email [visits@bushheritage.org.au](mailto:visits@bushheritage.org.au)

Photos, left to right: Jiri Lochman / Lochman Transparencies, James Cowie, Annette Stewart

### In memory

Louise Gilfedder and Stephen Bennett donated in memory of **Chris Baxter** in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Australian Bush. Many family and friends donated in memory of Bush Heritage supporter **Margaret Joyce Brister**. Julie Duell gave in memory of her husband, a keen naturalist. Peggy McKinlay gave in memory of her baby grand-daughter, **Catherine Zingel**, and Susan de Ferranti honoured the life of **Barry Davis**, a keen Bush Heritage supporter. Mr Ernest John Cannard made a donation in memory of **Scott Cannard**. James Milne gave in memory of **George Mace**, "a man of the land," and Trevor Ireland gave in memory of **John Riddell**. Kerry Timms donated in memory of **Pam Timms**. Barbara Fargher made a gift in memory of her late husband **Philip Fargher**, a keen bushwalker and photographer of native flowers.

### In celebration

Ian Hotchkiss gave a donation in celebration of **Ross Calvert's** 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Jaz and Cam McFarlane gave in celebration of the marriage of **Lisa and Marcus Godhino**. Janet Mayer made a donation to celebrate the birthday of her grandson **Harry Jessup**. David and Jennifer Grantham gave a donation to mark the joint 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of **Desley and Michael Whiteside**. Many family and friends made donations in celebration of the wedding of **Natalie Mendelsohn and Will Wright**.

## From the CEO

My recent experience on two reserves in the rangelands of South Australia has highlighted the critical nature of partnerships in achieving our conservation work, and the resilience and strength of Bush Heritage, as we approach our 20th year.

Spending a fortnight on Boolcoommatta and Bon Bon reserves I was also reminded of the ingenuity and skills of our reserve, management, science and conservation support staff which enable them to cope in remote and often hazardous, environments, managing reserves and partnership properties.

As many Australians are now aware, central and northern Australia experienced above-average rainfall events early this year. This has made access to many of Bush Heritage's reserves difficult and created infrastructure headaches, but at the same time has led to a boom in wildlife activity. If you can visit Central Australia this year, now is the time to do it!

Already we have new wildlife sightings on reserves – a bustard at Boolcoommatta, new fish and mammal sightings at Cravens Peak and Ethabuka reserves, and birds flocking to the Channel Country there, to name a few. These sightings reinforce not only an excellent season but also the suitability of habitat which we are providing. It is such a thrill to see the recovery of these landscapes that you, our dedicated supporter, have helped protect and to see the patience and dedication of our people working in these landscapes. As we enter the cooler months of the year, we have an important window for fire management and indeed the bulk of reserve management activity – activity which has only increased as a result of the rain.

Bush Heritage is only able to undertake the work at the level we do with the support that you our donors provide, not to mention the help of our wonderful volunteers. I am astonished at the work volunteers do from rabbit warren mapping, infrastructure repair and visitation to essential office-based work. Volunteers add wonderful flexibility to our workforce and help us to manage in times such as these when there is such immense reserve activity.

The unity of purpose of our team also struck home on my reserve visits as the Bush Heritage Board held a reserve-based meeting where we were joined by volunteers, neighbours and partners. There is no doubt the sum of all our parts is collaborating in order to get our conservation work done. The results of that conservation work are on display in this newsletter and on our website.

Please encourage your friends and colleagues to have a look at our conservation achievements and support our work financially if they can.

Doug Humann, CEO



Photo: Lee-anne Bradley

**Yes, I want to help Bush Heritage protect our threatened animals and ecosystems**

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth     /     /     \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

**I want to join the Friends of the Bush and give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ each month by automatic deduction**

I will give via:    the credit card below until further notice    bank debit (Bush Heritage will send an authority form)

**I would rather give a single gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ I am paying by:**    Cheque/Money order    Visa    MasterCard

Card No.     \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_     \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_     \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_     Expiry date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Cardholder's name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

All donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible

**Please send me information on leaving a bequest to Bush Heritage Australia in my will**

Please return to: Bush Heritage Australia, Reply Paid 329, FLINDERS LANE VIC 8009 AUSTRALIA

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