

BUSH TRACKS

Bush Heritage Australia's quarterly magazine for active conservation

Helping protect remnant habitats

Western whipbird.
Photo by Graeme Chapman.

If our campaign to protect the 'Monjebup Creek' property in the Fitz-Stirling region of south-west Western Australia is successful, another piece of the Gondwana Link puzzle will fall into place. Here's a taste of what we expect monitoring work on the property will reveal.

The western whipbird (*Psophodes nigrogularis oregon*) isn't the type of bird to hog the limelight. More often heard than seen, it has a distinctive, 'never-forgotten' call. Officially, the male western whipbird calls whit-chee-awheer-chwit to which his equally elusive mate replies chwik-it-up. A melodious tune, it bears no resemblance to the drawn-out whip crack of its east-coast cousin, the eastern whipbird.

The virtually intact bushland of Monjebup Creek provides vital habitat for a number of threatened animal species, including the western whipbird.

Bush Heritage Ecologist, Angela Sanders, has heard the western whipbird's unmistakable call before on the property, and says the habitat is ideal for this ground-dwelling songbird.

"This sub-species of western whipbirds prefers the mallee heath – particularly one with an open canopy and a dense under-storey," she says.

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Listen to bird calls



Visit our website to hear the distinctive calls of the western whipbird.
www.bushheritage.org.au/western-whipbird

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I'm sure that I speak for many of you when I say to Doug and his family, congratulations and well done!

Right: Monjebup Creek provides habitat for the tamar wallaby. Photo by Jean-Paul Ferrero.

Below: Gerard O'Neill (right) with Doug Humann, AM, and his wife Jill. Photo by Craig Allen.



From the CEO

I'm pleased to introduce a new name for the newsletter with this edition – *Bush Tracks* – to go along with the extended format.

It's often the tell-tale tracks left by animals that help us identify their presence. The name also reflects a focus on leaving our own positive imprint – and we are doing so, as ecology reports show. We hope these connections resonate as we keep you up-to-date with our progress.

A major breaking story is our campaign to protect an exciting new addition to our Gondwana Link reserves. Monjebup Creek, a 1 000 hectare woodland property, is right in the heart of the Fitz-Stirling biodiversity hotspot.

We expect its remnant habitats, which are in outstanding condition, to house populations of tamar wallaby, malleefowl, western whipbird and honey possums among many others. We have a very generous family in Western Australia to thank for the foundation donation that kick-started this campaign.

Another recent highlight was the recognition of my predecessor, Doug Humann, in this year's Australia Day honours list. Doug was made a member (AM) in the general division of the order of Australia "for significant service to conservation and the environment."

Doug is still active in the field as a consultant, and also has a role providing land management advice to the Indigenous communities in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankumytjatjara Lands in South Australia.

We recently hosted Doug, his wife Jill and their family to celebrate and reflect on their contribution to conservation in Australia. I'm sure that I speak for many of you when I say to Doug and his family, congratulations and well done!

In other news, we were pleased to be recognised as one of the 10 finalists in the revenue \$5m to \$30m category in the 2013 PwC Transparency Awards for the quality and transparency of our reporting.

This confirms we're among industry leaders in the quality of our governance, management and accountability. By extension, our supporters can be confident funds are used to the best conservation advantage.

Finally, this edition contains an insight into our strategy and vision – newly identified 'priority landscapes' are set out and explained in the centre spread.

Our plan is to focus our efforts in these areas of high conservation value and low protection, where we can really make a difference.

I hope you enjoy this insight and other news of our progress in this edition. There are plenty of good signs in here that we're on the right track.

Cheers,
Gerard O'Neill, Chief Executive

Bush Heritage Australia

Who we are

Bush Heritage Australia is a leading conservation organisation, protecting millions of hectares of ecologically important land for the benefit of nature and all Australians.

Why we're successful

It's **our way of working** that makes Bush Heritage Australia so successful – and makes us optimistic that we can expand our great conservation work to meet the challenges ahead:

- We pursue **non-confrontational, pragmatic solutions** to conservation challenges.
- We work closely with our neighbours and local communities to **share the outcomes and knowledge** gained for the benefit of all.
- Everything we do is informed by **good science** – aided by our staff ecologists and science partners.
- We have more than 20 000 (and growing) **committed supporters** who enable us to work on a scale that matters and to implement solutions that endure.
- **We partner** with Aboriginal communities, other land owners, non-profits, businesses and governments, because we know that by **working together** we can achieve so much more.
- We **buy** land, and invest in our partnerships and in our growing number of supporters. **Our mission is for the benefit of all Australians, forever.**



Continued from cover

“Western whipbirds are very shy and difficult to spot. Sometimes when I’m out doing my monitoring work, and sitting quietly on the ground weighing or measuring something, one will come in for a look and cock its head at me. They’re amazing looking birds and not a lot is actually known about them.”

If Bush Heritage succeeds in its quest to secure protection for the Monjebup Creek property, Angela will begin her monitoring work there in spring. The signs are good that she’ll find a number of significant animal species, including both the tamar and black-gloved wallaby and the malleefowl.

“Malleefowl are truly fascinating birds,” says Angela. “They’re megapodes – also known as incubator birds. They use heat from composting leaf litter to warm their nests, which are huge mounds about one-and-a-half-metres high.

“When the chicks hatch, they’re completely independent. They pop out onto the surface of the mound, then roll down the side and scuttle under a bush where they’ll stay until their wings are dry. Then they’re off. Right from the moment they hatch they’re basically fully-functioning mini malleefowl.”

A female malleefowl can lay up to around 30 eggs in a season, yet only about 1 per cent of the chicks survive because of predation by goannas and foxes. Angela is confident that monitoring will confirm the presence of at least two or three breeding pairs on the property.

Another animal that Angela says is certainly on the Monjebup Creek property is the honey possum. Although not closely related to true possums, this tiny creature punches way above its weight of around nine grams for a male and five grams for a female.

Comparatively speaking, the male honey possum has the largest testicles and sperm of any living mammal. When the babies are born they are about the size of a rice grain and their average life span is just two to three years.

Honey possums have no teeth and live on pollen and nectar, which they extract from native flowers with a paintbrush-like tongue. “The evolutionary trail of this animal is quite incredible,” says Angela. “South-west Western Australia is the only place in the world where they could have evolved. That’s because it’s the only place where pollen and nectar has been readily available for all twelve months of the year over such a long period of time.”

While there is still much to be revealed about the native animals of the Monjebup Creek property, it’s what we could learn from its vegetation that may yet hold the greatest conservation value.

Fire swept through the property around 20 years ago and since then, much of the bushland has regenerated into a dense and diverse mix of native shrubs and trees. The resulting mosaic of vegetation of different ages is in stark contrast to our other Fitz-Stirling properties, where much of the vegetation hasn’t been burnt for 50 years or more.

“A lot of banksias, for instance, collapse after about 50 years, and they’re one of the plant species that honey possums rely on.” says Angela.

If we’re successful in securing funds for ongoing monitoring and maintenance, we’ll look forward to studying the various ages of vegetation on Monjebup Creek. This will give us a baseline for patch burning on our other Fitz-Stirling properties, helping to both preserve and promote their biodiversity.



Help us protect these habitats

We need your continued support to ensure we can secure this property and be in a position to establish ongoing maintenance and monitoring programs. Donate today:

www.bushheritage.org.au/donate

Above: Honey possum. Photo by Annette Ruzicka.

“South-west Western Australia is the only place in the world where they could have evolved.”

Above left: Malleefowl pair opening mound for female to lay. Photo by Roger Brown.

Above top: Angela Sanders. Photo by Jessica Wyld Photography.

Above below: Monjebup Creek. Photo by Simon Smale.



Left to right, top to bottom:

Water amongst the York Gum woodlands of Charles Darwin Reserve, WA. Photo by Luke Bayley.

A crucifix frog at Naree. These burrow and hibernate in dry periods, emerging when it rains to feast on ants and termites. Photo by Victoria Schladetsch.

Ant chimneys at Naree. Photo by Sue Akers.

Ants washed out of their nests cling together as a living raft that carries survivors to solid ground. Photo by Matt Warr.

Ancient looking shield shrimp. Photo by John and Lyla Hansen.



Transforming rains

After one of the driest years on record for many of our rangeland reserves, some were fortunate to receive late summer rainfall.

At Naree Station in western New South Wales only 140mm rain fell in 2013 and the land was crying out for water after a very hot summer. Much welcomed rain storms through February and March 2014 brought more rain in a month than had been seen all the previous year, triggering a burst of new life in the woodlands and wetlands. The landscape responded at breakneck speed, as many plants and animals rushed to complete their life cycles before the dry conditions again took hold.

Ants of many kinds, sensing the change, built fascinating structures in the sandy red mulga country. One of the most spectacular discoveries was these large ant chimneys (above), which appeared after the first rainfall, only to dissolve back into the landscape with the following storms.

At Cravens Peak and Ethabuka, on the edge of the Simpson Desert in Queensland, the explosion of life after their first significant autumn falls of the year was quite unreal. Aquatic creatures like shield shrimp (whose tiny eggs persist for years through dry periods) and frogs appeared in the water-logged flats within a day.

The Mulligan and Georgina Rivers both ran over the access roads for quite some time. These flows found their way down the catchment and helped fill Pulchra waterhole on Ethabuka.

Meanwhile, after a very dry 2013, Charles Darwin Reserve in Western Australia's northern wheat belt received its best rains in some time – around 60mm – over the Anzac Day long weekend.

Most of the clay pans and samphire systems around the reserve were filled and amongst the york gum woodlands there was water pooling and seeping into the soil profile.

These rains will give a much needed reprieve to the native plants and animals that have struggled through the summer, as well as fuelling the explosion of wildflowers that the region is renowned for each spring.

These rains will give a much needed reprieve to the native plants and animals that have struggled through the hot, dry summer, as well as fuelling the explosion of wildflowers that the region is renowned for each spring.



Photo galleries

A new digital photo library is helping us catalogue and organise the wealth of beautiful photographs collected from our reserves over the years.

To share some of these stunning images we've created a series of digital photo galleries you can access on our website and that we'll be sharing over time on Facebook. For more images of transformative rains and other spectacular pictures visit: www.bushheritage.org.au/photos

Above: A sugar glider at home within a tree hollow. Photo by Steve Parish.

Briefs from the blog

www.bushheritage.org.au/blog

Your support makes a difference in so many ways. A glance through some of the regular posts on our blog gives an overview of what's been happening on our reserves around Australia – all made possible thanks to you.



For regular updates follow us on Facebook or see: www.bushheritage.org.au/blog

Vulnerable robins found



The 9th bi-annual bird survey in our Kosciuszko 2 Coast (NSW) partnership took in 21 properties. We found scarlet robins (on 14), flame robins (on three), hooded robins (four) and eastern yellow robins (five). Other threatened species seen: brown treecreeper (on six), diamond firetail (on five) and the speckled warbler (just one).

Scarlet robin. Photo by Stuart Harris.

Nursing seeds for revegetation

A project with Greening Australia on our Scottsdale Reserve in NSW aims to restore 300 hectares of woodland. We've also prepared some small sites for seeding by a specialist machine with a grassland forb seed mix – largely produced in our own volunteer-run nursery.

Yellow box seedlings in our Scottsdale nursery. Photo by Annette Ruzicka.



Pygmies caught on camera

Camera traps on Scottsdale Reserve have been kept busy. As well as a sub-adult Rosenberg's goanna, numerous common dunnarts (not previously found within 100km of the reserve), several agile antechinus and a bush rat, we recorded two gorgeous threatened eastern pygmy possums!

Birriliburu partnership

We've begun working with the Land and Community Team of the Central Desert Native Title Service (CDNTS) who have an Indigenous ranger program. The rangers lead a number of land management activities in the Birriliburu Indigenous Protected Area. We're helping establish a science and monitoring program.

The Land and Community Team of the Central Desert Native Title Service.



Burning Buffel

Buffel grass is the major weed along the 65km stretch of the Stuart Highway that runs through our 200 000+ hectare Bon Bon Station in South Australia. Four major sites were recently burnt back to reduce mass and promote new growth, which herbicides can control.

Moths to inform library

Volunteer moth and butterfly enthusiasts at our Eurardy Reserve (WA) have been collecting specimens for a project aiming to create a DNA barcode reference library. An amazing diversity of moths was found.

One of many moths yet to be identified from discoveries on Eurardy. Photo by Vanessa Westcott.



At loggerheads

Feral foxes prey on loggerhead turtle eggs. Fox baiting on our coastal Reedy Creek Reserve in Queensland will help protect the eggs and the next generation of these beautiful turtles.



Our vision

Australia has many vastly different natural landscapes with varying conservation statuses and threats. Our aim is to protect biodiversity and native habitats, working where it's most needed – areas with high conservation value and low levels of protection.

Our strategy is to identify and focus on 'priority landscapes' that have conservation assets of national importance and where we can make a significant difference. We plan to actively invest in these (through purchases and partnering with others) to achieve positive conservation change.

Priority landscapes

Arnhem Land

Has some of the most intact and bio-diverse natural ecosystems, and the enduring stewardship of Aboriginal traditional owners make the region internationally renowned.

Partnerships: Warddeken.

Brigalow

This region in central Queensland is one of 15 national biodiversity hotspots, yet has suffered extensive habitat loss and degradation. We aim to help protect the last viable remnants of once extensive ecosystems and the threatened species within.

Reserves: Camarvon, Goonderoo.

Bulloo

One of the least protected regions, it encompasses an entire internally-draining and unregulated river catchment, floodplain and terminal wetlands. Higher ranges are a refuge for many threatened species. Relatively free from development.

Cape York

Largely intact and connected landscapes with high species diversity and endemism, but threatened by agriculture and mining. We can help support Aboriginal groups to manage their land and culture.

Reserves: Fan Palm.

Partnerships: Balkanu.

Einasleigh Uplands

A national biodiversity hotspot with many threatened and poorly protected species and communities. Threatened by clearing, invasive species, unsustainable grazing and needs fire management.

Reserves: Yourka.

Gondwana Link

Includes the Fitz-Stirling link and the Great Western Woodlands – the most extensive intact temperate woodland in the world; many threatened species.

Reserves: Yarrabee, Monjebup, Monjebup North, Chereninup Creek, Beringa.

Partnerships: Gondwana Link, Chingarup.

Gulf Plains

Part of the world's most extensive tropical savannah woodlands; largely unprotected and faces expanding agriculture, invasive species and altered fire regimes.

Partnerships: Waanyi Garawa.

Kimberley

A national biodiversity hotspot and the last refuge of many species on continental Australia. Has high species diversity and endemism; threatened by pastoral expansion, invasive species and inappropriate fire regimes.

Partnerships: Wunambal Gaambera.

Kosciuszko 2 Coast

A highly depleted and fragmented landscape supporting five threatened communities, including the once extensive box-gum grassy woodlands, and many threatened and endemic species.

Reserves: Scottsdale, Burrin Burrin, Brogo.

Partnerships: Kosciuszko 2 Coast.

Lesueur-Eneabba

A centre of floristic endemism and diversity within the Southwest Floristic Region global biodiversity hotspot. Threatened by coastal development, mining, agriculture and inappropriate fire management.

Mid-west WA Rangelands

This landscape overlaps the Avon Wheatbelt and Geraldton to Shark Bay national biodiversity hotspots along a transition zone between rangelands and woodlands. Threatened by habitat fragmentation, invasive species, poor fire management and over-grazing.

Reserves: Charles Darwin, Eurardy.

Partnerships: Gundawa Regional Conservation Association.

Mitchell Grass Downs

Highly productive, fertile plains dominated by Mitchell grass tussock grasslands. Has one of the lowest levels of protection, yet contains many significant and threatened species.

Mulligan

A desert ecosystem with the highest diversity of lizards of any desert globally; a range of threatened species may include the night parrot.

Reserves: Cravens Peak, Ethabuka.

Northern Woodlands

Poorly protected landscape dominated by grassy box woodlands, now largely cleared from the inland slopes of the Great Dividing Range. Supports more than 60 threatened flora and over 50 threatened fauna species; important for woodland birds.

Paroo Warrego

Contains the last unregulated rivers (in the best condition) in the Murray Darling catchment, and some of the most important inland wetlands, including the Paroo Floodplain and Carrawinya Important Bird Areas.

Reserves: Naree.

Riverina Goldfields

A highly fragmented and depleted landscape that's poorly protected; contains viable remnants of grasslands, grassy woodlands, floodplain woodlands and wetlands, and the threatened species and communities they support.

Reserves: Nardoo Hills, John C Griffin.

SA Arid Rangelands

Arid and semi-arid country threatened by over-grazing and invasive species, yet supporting a range of threatened species in small pockets of more productive country.

Reserves: Boolcoomatta, Bon Bon.

Partnerships: Arid Recovery.

South East Tasmanian Midlands

National biodiversity hotspot with very high levels of endemism and threatened species; one of our most endangered ecosystems (temperate grasslands) under increasing threat from conversion to pasture, irrigated crops and inappropriate grazing.

Partnerships: Tasmanian Midlandscapes.

Reserves: Liffey Valley Reserves, South Esk Pine, Friendly Beaches.



Controlling carp on the 'Bidgee

A major focus of the Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach (UMDR) – a 100 kilometre stretch of the Murrumbidgee River that runs past our Scottsdale Reserve in south-east NSW – is learning more about controlling carp. An exciting new research project is fusing science with community engagement to track carp movements and trial control methods.

The common carp has a lot to answer for in Australia. Since its introduction around 150 years ago it has been implicated in the degradation of some of our greatest inland river systems.

The problem is carp are consummate opportunists. They can tolerate a broad range of conditions and habitats. With remarkable reproductive capabilities, few natural predators and a lifespan over 15 years, carp have become an international pest and one of the world's most invasive species.

The Murrumbidgee River, or 'the 'Bidgee' as it's affectionately known, supplies Canberra's water and supports a range of agriculture. On its journey downstream from the high-country town of Bredbo, it winds along the north-western edge of our Scottsdale Reserve.

The Upper 'Bidgee provides critical habitat for three nationally threatened species (the Macquarie perch, Murray cod and trout cod) and three ACT-listed threatened species (the Murray River crayfish, silver perch and two-spined blackfish).

While these species were already in decline before carp arrived, the impact of carp has been devastating, with alien species such as carp now comprising up to 96 of every 100 fish caught.

Reducing carp numbers in the Upper 'Bidgee is difficult, partly because of knowledge gaps. Not enough is known in the context of this upland riverine system about where carp live and breed, how they interact with other species, or how far they travel.

The UMDR's ambitious new research project aims to answer these questions – and more. Importantly, findings will also contribute to a growing pool of knowledge about the best way to tackle this environmental pest.

The project has three distinct parts. The first involves tracking carp with acoustic telemetry established by Prue McGuffie for a PhD project on Macquarie perch. The second part, to take place on Scottsdale Reserve, involves trapping and removing carp to ease pressure on a specific aquatic habitat and learn more about their population structure. The third part involves enlisting the local community to collect information about where carp are breeding and gathering.

Bush Heritage Healthy Landscape Manager, Peter Saunders, will lead the trapping trial at the northern end of Black Rock Gorge on Scottsdale. A four-metre waterfall several kilometres upstream and a series of 'riffles' and rapids downstream provide natural barriers that top and tail a pool called 'the Basin'.

The good condition of this stretch of the river, and its relative remoteness, make it an excellent site for trapping. Peter and his team will 'train' the Basin's carp to gather using thermal lures in winter and food lures in spring. The carp will be caught in nets, euthanised, studied and then used to fertilise a nearby organic farm.

Meanwhile, local anglers will be asked to report carp sightings – including numbers, behaviour and size of fish using note books, an online portal or the soon-to-be-released *feralfishScan* app. This will help create a more complete picture of carp presence and 'hotspots' in the region.

Three community 'carp outs' – sponsored fishing events with prizes for the most carp caught, largest and so on – will take place next January between Numeralla, Bredbo (near Scottsdale Reserve) and Canberra. With around 1 800 carp caught at a previous event, carp outs are a great way of engaging locals to support the project.

"Aquatically, our greatest challenge at Scottsdale is carp," says Peter. "We hope this work will guide new trials for targeted carp removal to better protect our native fish and habitats. The findings also have the potential to help protect native species on a much wider scale."

Scottsdale Reserve was acquired in 2006 with the help of David Rickards, in memory of Helen Rickards, the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and the Australian Government's National Reserve System program.



Far left: A vessel equipped for electric fishing uses currents to temporarily stun fish, which float to the surface for capture. Photo by Annette Ruzicka.

Left: Peter Saunders with a threatened Murray cod. Photo by Annette Ruzicka.

Above: Peter Saunders with Prue McGuffie (PhD student) and Antia Brademann (UMDR facilitator) having just received 30 electronic tags for carp. Photo by Peter Saunders.



Our valuable volunteers

Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach

The Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach (UMDR) was established by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to demonstrate how the recovery of native fish populations can be supported. The UMDR is now a sub-group of the Kosciuszko 2 Coast conservation partnership involving 13 organisations, as well as many businesses, landowners and individuals in south-east NSW.

This project involves the following partners:

Bush Heritage Australia, ACT Government's Conservation, Planning and Research Unit, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Prue McGuffie (PhD student) and Assoc. Prof. Mark Lintermans, in association with the University of Canberra, Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch, Capital Region Fishing Alliance, Murray-Darling Basin Authority, South East Local Land Services, Willow Warriors, Numeralla Fishing Club, SA Catchment Group.



For more details on UMDR see: www.upperbidgee.reach.org.au

Volunteering is another way we connect like-minded people with what we do, and volunteers help us stretch our resources to achieve more of our conservation priorities.

We have **430 active volunteers** in our database and **70 more registered** and waiting for the right chance to get involved. On average, we receive **two enquiries** and **one new application** a day.

Over the past year volunteers have contributed **14 000 hours** to support our work.

We are careful to induct, supervise and evaluate each volunteer role because it is worth that investment. Volunteers contribute across all our operations from weed control to Wiki development and finance to feral animal control. We have volunteers as ambassadors at community engagement events, and to lead projects like working bees and ecological surveys.

Among their ranks are students, Natural Resource Management professionals, keen naturalists, interested locals and even Bush Heritage staff (yes, some of us volunteer in our holidays!) – all united by a shared conservation vision and a strong desire to do something about it.

When we ask them how they want to be thanked, they say, "Just give us something meaningful to do and let us do it". We do and we will, but as May 12–18 was National Volunteer Week, we also want to reflect on their contribution and publicly say a big 'Thank-you'.



Volunteering by the numbers

430
Active volunteers

70
More registered

14 000
Hours over the past year

Above top: Volunteer revegetation work on Scottsdale. Photo by Peter Saunders.

Above: Trish MacDonald and Joss Haiblen have recently embarked on a project to review and enhance visitor information at Boolcoomatta Reserve. Photo by Katrina Blake.



Visiting the Liffey Valley

If re-connecting with nature is on your holiday travel agenda, our Liffey River Reserve in Tasmania provides a chance to explore ancient World Heritage listed forests and connect with a landscape that inspired pivotal campaigns for the environmental movement in Australia.

Open to the public and only a 45-minute drive from Launceston, you will find the Liffey River Reserve – the birthplace of Bush Heritage – nearby the Great Western Tiers Conservation Area.

For 23 years we have protected this rich ecosystem with its white gum wet forest, myrtle beech-sassafras rainforest and stringybark dry forest. This land has provided sanctuary for wild creatures like the wedge-tailed eagle, white goshawk, spotted-tail quoll and Tasmanian devil.

Its towering tree canopies and lush understory are easily accessed with a 3.5 kilometre (90 minute) interpretive walk guiding you through the forest and detailing the important habitats within.

If you finish this and are looking for something more challenging, at our Oura Oura Reserve (just a five minute drive away) you can find the path to Dean's Track – a six-hour walk up into the breathtaking cliffs of Dry's Bluff.

This trek requires a good level of fitness and preparation. Detailed track notes are available from Bushwalk Australia: <http://tasmania.bushwalk.com/wiki>

“Everyone is welcome to visit our Oura Oura and Liffey River reserves and to explore these rare and very special natural sanctuaries.”

Alistair Dermer
Bush Heritage Healthy Landscape Manager

“Everyone is welcome to visit our Liffey River reserve and to explore this rare and very special natural sanctuary,” says Alistair.

New addition

Thanks to our generous supporters, we have been able to enlarge Oura Oura Reserve with the purchase of an adjacent property to the east. This extension of the reserve effectively doubles the size of the property.

Above top left: Healthy Landscape Manager Alistair Dermer on Oura Oura. Photo by Peter Morris.

Above bottom left: Tasmanian echidna showing fur coat, in temperate rainforest. Photo by Wayne Lawler/EcoPix.

Above: Interpretive boardwalk across native grassland in temperate wet sclerophyll forest. Photo by Wayne Lawler/EcoPix.



Self-guided day trips

Self guided day trips are available at:

- Chereninup Creek Reserve, WA
- Currumbin Reserve, QLD
- Kojonup Reserve, WA
- Liffey River and Oura Oura Reserves, Tas.

See www.bushheritage.org.au/visits

Above: Bob Brown's former cottage on Oura Oura, against the Dry's Bluff pinnacle. Photo by Alistair Dermer.



Cameron Creek, Yourka Reserve. Photo by Wayne Lawler/EcoPix.

Access to our reserves

Tag-along tours

There are still places available to join a tag-along vehicle tour of one of our remote reserves.

- Yourka, Qld, 7–10 August
- Carnarvon Station, Qld, 11–14 August
- Bon Bon, SA, 25–29 August
- Naree Station, NSW, 12–14 September

Travellers will need to be fully self-sufficient with their own vehicles and gear, camping equipment, food and fuel. Bookings are essential. Fees apply.

See www.bushheritage.org.au/visits or contact Katrina Blake (kblake@bushheritage.org.au / 03 8610 9100).

Birding watching

Personalised, guided bird-watching tours of our Nardoo Hills Reserves in Victoria are available through Melbourne Birding Tours.

See MelbourneBirding.com or call 0414 355 146.

Mountain bike tour

The Far North Wilderness Bike Tour is an annual fundraising event for the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC).

Riders will traverse some spectacular country and spend two nights on our Yourka Reserve in Queensland with Managers Paul and Leanne Hales. Regular riders will be best suited as over 400km will be covered, mostly on remote dirt tracks.

For more details or to book a place contact CAFNEC on (07) 4032 1746 or visit www.wildernessbiketour.com

Camping

If you're self-sufficient with your own equipment, vehicle and supplies, camping is available April to October on:

- Charles Darwin Reserve, WA
- Boolcoomatta Reserve, SA
- Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld.

Bookings are required as sites are limited. See www.bushheritage.org.au/visits

Thank you

Bush Heritage thanks the many supporters who have generously donated to our work.

We were especially inspired by a letter from the KWCFA – Kids Who Care For Animals (see their letter on our blog). Special thanks to their CEO, Genevieve, and her sister Charlotte, and friends Teresa, Jade and Rohan.

'Thank-you' as well to the many supporters who have donated in honour of friends or family members. A small selection is below.

In memoriam

The Paterson family donated in memory of their son and brother Iain who loved and valued the natural environment. Several donations were made in memory of Nina Bardsley, Lorna George and Alan Wood. Mr and Mrs Zakrevsky remembered Ilderbrando Poggiol with a gift to us. Margaret Regan made a donation in memory of her husband, William J Regan, who was a Bush Heritage supporter. Madge Sceriha gave us a gift in memory of her friend Dorothy Lee; a keen birder. Joy and Roger Membrey remembered their daughter, Elizabeth Membrey with a donation and Jenny Stokes donated in memory of her friend Robin Gengos.

In celebration

Dr Lawrence Johnson donated in celebration of Pheobe and Miranda. Aleksandra and Andrea Kowalczyk made a donation in lieu of a wedding present. Gregory and Anne Marks celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary with a gift to Bush Heritage. Glenn and Judy Burns gave us a gift to celebrate the marriage of their son, Ian Burns, to Felicity Halling.

Bequests

We gratefully acknowledge the estate of Violet Cleverdon Austin, the estate of Saxon Condon and the estate of Judith Gaskin.

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Blues for the Bush & Open Day 2014

Following the success of last year's inaugural event, the Shire of Perenjori in mid-west Western Australia will come together again at our Charles Darwin Reserve on October 4, for the Blues for the Bush, and Charles Darwin Reserve Open Day.

If you are in, or will be travelling to, WA in the spring, the event is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in an outback community event. You'll also learn about the role of our conservation work and how it fits with the broader land use of the area. Allow some extra time to take in the wildflowers that transform the landscape into a sea of vibrant colours for several months at this time of year.

Our Regional Reserves Manager, WA Rangelands, Luke Bayley, was integral to the development of the Open Day. It was conceived last year to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Bush Heritage purchasing the 68 000 hectare Charles Darwin Reserve.

"We thought it was fitting to bring some of the local community together," said Luke. "It started off small and we were just thinking of ideas, but Perenjori Shire was keen to do something so we just sat down together and worked out the concept of Blues for the Bush."

With a population of 900 spread across some 8 611 square kilometres the Shire of Perenjori is a land of wide open spaces and far-reaching horizons. It's also renowned for its annual wildflower displays, and after some great autumn rains, this spring should be exceptional.

Charles Darwin Reserve itself is located at the junction of major landforms, ecosystems and climates known as the Mulga-Eucalypt line, where the desert meets the south-west. As a result it's a 'melting pot' of plant species with eucalypts and mulga scrub intermixed.

As many patrons found last year, there will be something for everyone to enjoy from 10am to midnight.

There will be children's entertainment with painting, art and stories being told. Guided ecology tours of the property will run throughout the day. Adults will be engaged in bush poetry sessions, with some great raconteurs adding flavour to the day's discussions.

"There's a bit more of a serious side as well," said our CEO, Gerard O'Neill. "There are some great yarns about the role of agriculture and mining in the region, the role of Bush Heritage, and then the kicker for the day is the great concert in the evening."

This year's musical line-up includes Chris Russel's Chicken Walk, Hatz Fitz and Cara, with more to be announced in the coming months.

"We'll have the stars on the stage, stars up above and a lot of people relaxed and just enjoying being out in this fabulous environment," said Gerard.

For bookings and more information see: www.bluesforthebush.org.au

Above left: Hatz Fitz will be appearing again at this year's festival. Above right: Ecologist Matt Appleby leads a tour of the reserve. Photos by Cineport Media.

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