

LAND FOR WILDLIFE



News

TASMANIAN
LAND
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Welcome to the Tasmanian Land Conservancy's first edition of Land for Wildlife news

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) took carriage of Land for Wildlife (LFW) from the Tasmanian Government at the beginning of this year. Thanks for replying to the letter the government sent you asking if you wished to continue in the program, and for opting in to future communications.

We are so grateful to Iona Mitchell, who administered LFW on behalf of the Tasmanian Government for 16 years and whose name will be known to many of you. Iona's enthusiasm for wildlife conservation both in and outside of the workplace is inspiring, and she has been instrumental in the smooth handover of the program to the TLC. Iona continues her role in DPIPWE, with more focus on conservation covenants and coordinating the Gardens for Wildlife scheme which she founded in 2008. We look forward to building on all her great work.

We had big plans for activities this year, including introducing new landholders to the scheme, but coronavirus has forced us to rethink. We are planning a suite of online resources covering land management and wildlife conservation topics – these resources will be guided

by responses to the survey sent to registered LFW members (more on this later in the newsletter).

As long as restrictions remain relatively relaxed, we hope to get out to more properties to chat with you about what you can do for wildlife. Thank you to all landholders who have expressed interest and are waiting patiently for their property to be assessed for registration. We will continue to update you on when we can schedule a visit.

Our inaugural LFW Coordinator, Emma McPhee, is now on maternity leave. While she's gone, Shaun Thurstans will coordinate the program. Shaun has worked around Tasmania as an ecologist and spatial scientist and is keen to share people's passion for conserving nature on their properties.

Despite the challenges of this year, LFW members across Tasmania are demonstrating their passion for conserving our native wildlife, both through the continued efforts on their land and the steady stream of new expressions of interests we've had. We'll be sending this newsletter out twice a year – please get in touch if there's something in particular you'd like us to cover. Thank you all!

What kind of camera?

We often get asked what wildlife camera to use for monitoring animals on your property. TLC has been using Bushnell brand wildlife cameras for the past few years and they've been pretty good, but we've recently conducted a trial of a few new models and now recommend one of the following two cameras.

The first is the mid-range **Browning Spec Ops Edge (\$320)**. It is a high-quality camera that takes great day and night images, with minimal false triggers due to waving grass or bracken! The second is a budget camera that still takes good images, but is a little less user-friendly, called the **Little Acorn Zero Glow (Ltl-5310a, \$195)**. Both cameras use an infrared flash, which produces black-and-white images at night, without disturbing the animals. If you're going to get a camera we also recommend investing in good-quality rechargeable NiMH AA batteries. This will save you heaps of money in the long run and is better for the environment.

We have recently arranged a deal with our supplier Pros Choice (proschoice.com.au) to provide a discount to Land for Wildlife members on the two wildlife cameras mentioned above. Enter the discount code **tasland** when you checkout in their online store and you will receive a 5% discount (around \$25).

If you want to learn more about wildlife monitoring and how to participate in TLC's WildTracker program, visit tasland.org.au/wildtracker/.



Wonderful woodland birds

Birds have regular behaviour patterns and always head for critical resources like water, flowering plants, old hollows and secluded thickets, according to their needs. Think of the pair of green rosellas that visit your bird bath: your property is one in a network they visit on a routine basis as they expand or contract their foraging patterns depending on the season.

Two of Tasmania's most threatened woodland birds, the swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) and forty-spotted pardalote (*Pardalotus quadragintus*), are a great example of why Land for Wildlife properties are so important. Both species are dependent on Tasmania's southeast forests and although their life histories are different, their ecological niche is very similar. It's no surprise that private land on Bruny Island and the Tinderbox Peninsula is key to the survival of both of them.

Swifties and forty-spots are habitat specialists, preferring to feed on specific eucalypts that grow in coastal areas along Tasmania's east coast. Swifties forage on the bountiful flowers of blue-gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and black gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*). These trees were once much more widespread in Tasmania, but land clearing has resulted in the loss of much of these birds' former habitat and is a leading cause of their decline. Over 90% of the swift parrot population is gone and it is now listed

as critically endangered. Forty-spots are even more specialised, feeding almost exclusively on white gums (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), which produce manna (a sap-like substance) and host lerps (an insect). Habitat loss from land clearing and, more recently, dieback of white gums associated with climate change, have reduced the population of the forty spotted pardalote to a few isolated populations, mostly on offshore islands such as Bruny, Maria and Flinders and nearby coastal areas such as Tinderbox.

But like us, woodland birds require shelter as well as food. The loss of old-growth forest from the landscape, and hollow-bearing trees in particular, is another reason for the decline of these two iconic bird species. Both the swift parrot and forty spotted pardalote nest in tree hollows. There may be abundant food but without somewhere to nest and raise their young these birds will struggle to persist in an area. Native bird species such as rosellas and cockatoos, and introduced species such as starlings and rainbow lorikeets, compete with swift parrots for the limited number of good hollow-bearing trees that remain.

As a landholder you can make a big difference for the conservation of these two threatened species, especially if you live or own land on the east coast and in the southeast in areas like the Huon Valley, Channel, Bruny, Tasman or Tinderbox. Plantings of blue gum, white gum and black gum will start providing a vital food resource in 5-10 years and will continue to support swift parrots, forty spots and other woodland birds for decades or centuries to come. Whether you are contemplating a significant restoration project on

some disused farmland or planting a few trees along your driveway or in your garden, it doesn't matter: every tree that is put into the landscape will help these birds to survive! You can also put up nest boxes, which provide additional nesting opportunities for threatened birds and a host of other species. This is a great practical short-term solution, because old-growth trees with hollows can take up to 100 years to form naturally.

The other thing you can do is work with the TLC to protect habitat in important areas for woodland birds. The TLC is currently fundraising to protect a vital area of habitat for swift parrots and forty spotted pardalotes at Tinderbox Hills. This 67 ha property will add to a network of state reserves, conservation covenants and Land for Wildlife properties to protect a vital remnant on the doorstep of Hobart. You can also encourage your neighbours and friends to join the Land for Wildlife program, and grow this important network of conservation landholders in Tasmania, protecting more habitat for threatened and iconic species like our beloved swiftie and forty-spot.

— MATT TAYLOR,
TLC CONSERVATION SCIENTIST

Next issue: Wetlands!

Sal's tips

Every newsletter we'll have some tips from wildlife biologist, Dr Sally Bryant, on how best to set up or adapt your property to support wildlife. This edition Sal is starting from the very beginning, looking at how much property you need to provide decent habitat.

PATCH SIZE

There is nothing better than owning your own patch of bush: it's not only a privilege but a great opportunity to trial some new ideas. Tasmania's Land for Wildlife properties come in all shapes and sizes, but typically they're on the rural/urban fringe, containing the bushland corridors that so many of our wildlife species need to survive.

Tasmania's woodland birds, for example, flourish around parks and gardens and will tolerate low levels of disturbance, but it's the larger, more intact patches of bush that are the essential breeding grounds for the future.

While big is better, bush patches of 10 to 20 ha are ecologically viable for many species. This is the case even when those patches are made up of multiple properties of just a few hectares in size. All you need are some kind of linkages between them: a network of corridors and linkages, at least 50 m wide with gaps no more than 100 m apart, mean small birds such as the forty-spotted pardalote can use these patches for breeding and as stepping stones through the landscape.

When Land for Wildlife properties join together or border other protected lands then safe havens are quickly created. You'll see an

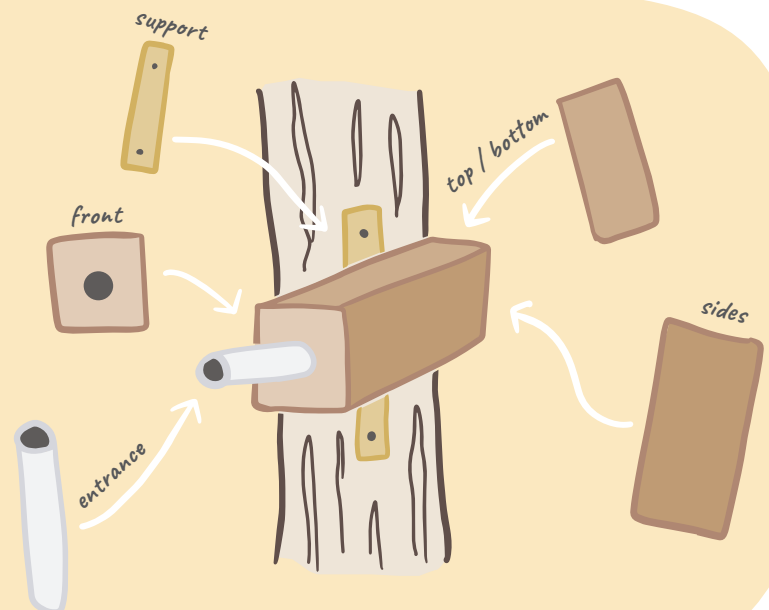
agglomeration of properties like this just south of Hobart, on Tinderbox Hills. TLC's current land campaign to purchase 67 ha of critical forty-spot and swift parrot habitat on Tinderbox Hills adjoins the 73 ha Tinderbox Nature Reserve, a number of neighbouring covenanted properties and along Tinderbox Road, eight registered Land for Wildlife properties that are already undertaking weeding, cat control, erecting nest boxes and looking after their bush. Add the 67 ha of the TLC's proposed Tinderbox Hills reserve to this equation and around 200 ha of habitat will be protected for wildlife.

Top tip

Native vegetation cover should be in patches of at least 10 ha and linked by strips at least 50 m wide

Making a nest box

If you want to make a home for pardalotes on your land, you could try your hand at building a nest box. The diagram on the right is adapted from the **NSW Government publication, 'Build your own wildlife nest box'**. You can search online for more detailed plans or download **Birdlife Australia's info sheet, 'Nest boxes – technical information'**, which includes recommended dimensions for many species.





Land for Wildlife
makes a valuable
contribution to
protecting nature

Tell us what you want from Land for Wildlife

Why guess what kinds of resources our Land for Wildlife members want or need, when we can just ask!

One of our aims in running the Land for Wildlife program is to provide useful, relevant support to our members to help conservation efforts on their land. As part of research undertaken by University of Tasmania (UTAS) masters student, Lykke Otzen, we have recently sent out an online survey which we hope will shed light on ways the TLC can help you best. The research also hopes to understand how Land for Wildlife contributes towards national and international conservation efforts.

To have your say on how the TLC can make Land for Wildlife better, please fill in the anonymous survey sent to all registered members via email or on a postcard. *Prefer to handwrite a submission?* Let us know by calling (03) 6225 1399 or emailing landforwildlife@tasland.org.au

What's on

11 & 18 SEPTEMBER

On ABC TV – Gardening Australia: Tino Carnevale signs his Tasman Peninsula property up for Land for Wildlife. He's balancing wildlife conservation with mixed farming. Watch as we help him search for species and set up wildlife cameras in a two-part series.

ALL YEAR

Fullers Bookshop in Hobart is celebrating their 100th birthday. Fullers sells a range of useful guides to help encourage wildlife on your property, and supports the TLC with publications we can give to LFW members. Thanks, Fullers!

ONLINE

Keep up to date with Land for Wildlife and other activity by following TLC on social media:

facebook.com/taslandconservancy

instagram.com/tasland

twitter.com/Tas_Land

or subscribing to our newsletter:

tasland.org.au/subscribe-to-our-newsletter/

