



WINTER 2022

NL 70

Wattle blossom (*Acacia suaveolens*), Sloping Main. Photo: Andy Townsend

The changing seasons are always special across Tasmania with many woodland birds beginning their journey north for winter, fungi in abundance and early orchids springing up after recent rains. This was in evidence during the TLC Foundation trip to Little Swanport Reserve where, just three years since its protection and thanks to conservation management, the reserve's condition is phenomenal, with waist-high native grasses aplenty, regenerating eucalypts and riparian environments full of life.

At TLC we believe we achieve more for nature by working with others. Supporting applied conservation science is core and we are thrilled to be supporting two early career

scientists' important research through the Bird Conservation Fund. You can read more about these projects on page 3.

It is with great enthusiasm that we launch our latest reserve acquisition campaign, to purchase and protect 425 ha on the Tasman Peninsula at Sloping Main. The property has the highest diversity of threatened ecological communities of our entire estate, from ephemeral wetlands to coastal forests adjoining the Lime Bay Conservation Area. A special thank you to all of those who have already contributed to the campaign to protect this unique corner of Tasmania. We are inspired and humbled by the generosity and commitment of the TLC community and their connection to the places we work to protect.

I am constantly inspired by the TLC staff, who share their passion, knowledge and expertise to protect nature across the state. We sadly farewell Margie Jenkin, who will be taking up an exciting new role with the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network in July. We thank Margie for her valued contribution and wish her well. We also congratulate Dr Cath Dickson on her appointment as Conservation Science and Planning Manager.

We hope you enjoy the Winter newsletter and thank you for all you do to support the work of the TLC and nature conservation in Tasmania.

James Hattam
Chief Executive Officer

HIGHLIGHTS



Tasmanian devil. Photo: Matt Palmer

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We are currently raising funds for the purchase and protection of Sloping Main.



Cider gums, August 2019. Photo: Heath Holden

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We have been monitoring the recovery of bush fire affected cider gums with some excellent results.



Little Swanport Reserve. Photo: James Hattam

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We headed off to Little Swanport Reserve to see how the property is faring after three years of protection.



PROTECTING SLOPING MAIN

Aerial view of Sloping Main. Photo: Eddie Safarik.

Plant-lovers rejoice: we are currently raising funds for the purchase and protection of Sloping Main, a property rich in diverse, intact native vegetation, the likes of which we haven't seen on any of our other reserves.

Sloping Main, on the Tasman Peninsula, is 425 hectares that supports seven threatened vegetation communities. As TLC Conservation Ecologist Joe Quarmby reports, 'Sloping Main contains one of the best examples of remnant coastal forest in south-east Tasmania. Its beautiful freshwater wetlands covered in aquatic plants are equally impressive. The vegetation is complex and diverse, with an understorey rich in coastal heaths, bush peas, orchids, sedges, and daisies. Seven of the vegetation communities on the property are listed as threatened in Tasmania, which is exceptional. This includes a significant area of black gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) forest which is listed as critically endangered at a national level. Large patches of black gum forest in good condition are extremely rare in Tasmania, especially in the south-east of the state. The property also includes good areas of black peppermint (*Eucalyptus amygdalina*) forest on sandstone, a threatened vegetation community not found on any of TLC's other reserves, making it a very high priority for protection.'

Elsewhere, critically endangered 'Tasmanian forests and woodlands dominated by black gum' communities are usually weed infested, highly modified and in small patches of less than two hectares. At Sloping Main,

27 hectares of the community is officially recorded; in one initial visit we have already found more than 40 hectares. Once this property is a reserve we will have the chance to set up vegetation monitoring to find the true extent of black gum woodland at Sloping Main and manage this precious and critically endangered ecosystem to help it thrive.

This level of vegetation diversity is also good news for mammals, birds, reptiles and invertebrates: Sloping Main provides habitat that could support 19 threatened species. The Tasman Peninsula is home to one of the last remaining populations of Tasmanian devils free of devil facial tumour disease. Spotted-tailed quolls thrive here and the area could be a stronghold for a species now declining on the mainland. There is potential for the property to provide a refuge for one of Tasmania's most cryptic and least understood mammal species – the Tasman Peninsula dusky antechinus (*Antechinus vandycki*). These little creatures love forest with a dense understorey and plenty of fallen logs, habitat that is plentiful at Sloping Main. Making the property a reserve will give us the chance to monitor and manage for antechinus and for many other elusive small mammals.

Last year, the TLC established reserves at Tinderbox Hills just south of Hobart, an important refuge for breeding 40-spotted pardalotes, and at Eagle Rock, our first reserve on the west coast. Then earlier this year we were thrilled to announce the successful completion of the campaign to protect

Kelvedon Hills, 2,300 hectares of habitat for 40 threatened species on the east coast, taking its place in a network of public and private reserves that includes the TLC's Little Swanport and Prosser River reserves. For our new campaign we wanted to ensure we found a property that conserves an ecosystem not already well looked after in our other reserves. Sloping Main does this in spades. With seven threatened vegetation communities, the diversity of native flora here is exceptional. And while the Tasman Peninsula is home to other public and private reserves, including Lime Bay State Reserve to the north, Coal Mines Historic Site to the east, and TLC Revolving Fund properties at Mount Communication in the south, as well as a host of Land for Wildlife properties, the TLC holds no reserves in this landscape. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to protect Sloping Main, and to make a real difference to the future of a critically endangered forest community.

GIVE

To donate to the Sloping Main campaign, visit tasland.org.au/donate-now or call us on (03) 6225 1399. To find out more about the property and see maps and photos, visit tasland.org.au/reserves/sloping-main



SAVING CIDER GUMS

Cider gum caging, August 2019. Photo: Heath Holden

In April, a team of TLC ecologists, reserves officers and volunteers visited Five Rivers Reserve to monitor the cider gums (*Eucalyptus gunnii*) at Top Marsh. You might remember that in 2020 we placed wire cages around resprouting cider gums and seedlings after 2019's destructive Pine Tier bushfire. We have been monitoring the recovery of cider gums over the last three years, with some excellent results.

The cider gum is an endemic eucalypt adapted to living in some of the coldest and most frost-prone areas of Tasmania. Its sap has a very high sugar content, and acts as a natural antifreeze, letting it live on the frosty and often waterlogged margins of highland marshes on the Central Plateau that are uninhabitable to less specialised species. This sap is also what gives the species its name: it was tapped and fermented into a cider-like drink by both the palawa people and early European settlers.

Cider gums are endangered thanks to their preference for wet, cold conditions in a warming, drying Tasmania. The situation isn't helped by the tastiness of their leaves – the sugary sap is irresistible to animals and insects, and when the trees are already stressed, this chewing can finish them off.

The Pine Tier fire in 2019 affected the south-eastern section of Five Rivers Reserve near Bellevue Tier, burning ferociously through McKenzie Tier and the Top Marshes, which support significant fringing stands of the endangered Miena cider gums. Unfortunately, many older cider gums were killed by the fire, which

was devastating, but younger trees survived and started resprouting from lignotubers. Seedlings also germinated in the ash beds left by the fire, which was very exciting because cider gum seedlings are rarely observed. Unfortunately, the new growth was at risk of being eaten by herbivores with our fauna cameras showing a significant increase in deer activity after the fire. TLC staff and a team of volunteers headed out in wintery weather to erect cages in the hope that we would save the new growth.

The result after two years is astounding! Most of the caged cider gums are now reaching the top of the cages and are in excellent health. In contrast, the uncaged gums are being heavily browsed by possums, wombats, wallabies, and deer, and are struggling to survive.

This has proved to be a very effective and timely intervention for the recovery of this endangered species, and one that – given suitable funding – could be expanded more widely.

EXPLORE

Watch CEO James Hattam, Head of Science Cath Dickson & Freya McGregor, Director of Programs & Outreach at bird conservation organisation Birdability, discuss how we make bird conservation & bird watching available to more people at vimeo.com/tasland



Forty-spotted Pardalote. Photo: Chris Tzaros

NEW BIRD SCHOLARS

We are delighted to announce the newest recipients of the TLC's Bird Conservation Fund (BCF) Scholarships, Erin Bok and Carla Bruinsma. Both are working on projects to improve our knowledge of the forty-spotted pardalote.

Carla is a UTAS honours student studying the distribution of forty-spotted pardalote habitat in Tasmania. She is interested in feral animal eradication, re-introduction ecology and land management. The research the Bird Conservation Fund is supporting aims to validate the modeled distribution of white gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), the tree the endangered forty-spotted pardalote depends upon. This information will help scientists assess the viability of re-introducing the forty-spotted pardalote into its historical range.

Erin will be working on a PhD project investigating manna, sugary juice produced by white gum, the pardalotes' main food source. Erin is working to understand what factors underpin variation in manna quantity and quality, and how these factors drive pardalote behaviour, fitness and ultimately the woodland bird community more broadly.

Funding for Carla and Erin's projects was announced at an online event hosted by the TLC in April. Attendees also heard the findings made by previous recipient, Adam Cisterne, who has been studying the conservation and ecology of the endangered Tasmanian masked owl. The BCF scholarships are funded through the TLC Foundation.



Little Swanport Reserve. Photo: James Hattam

With Queensland's warmer climate having reclaimed our last Science and Conservation Manager, we're delighted to announce that Dr Cath Dickson has taken on the role after a competitive recruitment process.

Cath joined the TLC early in 2020 as the Conservation Management & Planning Coordinator, building a link between the Science and Reserves teams. Cath has a couple of decades experience working in natural resource and threatened species management in South Australia and Victoria and holds a PhD on the response of a dominant threatened plant to climate change on Macquarie Island, with particular expertise in the collapse of ecosystems as climate change worsens.

Those of you who have been on a supporter trip with Cath will know that she is passionate about Tasmania's plant life. Many times on reserve visits a group has been brought to a halt as Cath discovers a particularly fascinating orchid, the plants closest to her heart. We are delighted to have a new Head of Science with such enthusiasm for botanising, wading in wetlands and rigorous science.

Recently, we've been joined by a new Planned Giving Coordinator, Annabelle Sweetman, who is overseeing our Natural Guardians Gifts in Wills program. Annabelle grew up on a merino sheep farm in the Western District of Victoria and in her twenties settled in the wilds of Alaska for a few years, where she worked in a wilderness lodge in Denali National Park. She has been in Tasmania for the past 20 years, working as a host for the Freycinet

Experience Walk, and for Tourism Tasmania. On the weekends Annabelle used to marry couples as a celebrant.

Connecting people with nature and hearing stories over cups of tea is what excites her most about this role. Annabelle is enjoying meeting and supporting those interested in including the TLC in their wills.

And yes, the rumours you have heard on the grapevine are true: Margie Jenkin, Engagement & Giving Manager, is finishing at the TLC at the end of June. The six-and-a-half years Margie has spent with us have been transformative for the organisation, and there wouldn't be any supporters Margie has met who wouldn't be impressed by her professionalism, warmth, resourcefulness and sense of humour. Margie is going to join the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network – they are extremely lucky to have her and we will miss her immensely.

In other staff news, Phill and Amira Laroche have had a baby boy, and a brother for Miro. Congratulations from us all!

ACT

Want to set up your own Foundation Fund to support TLC's science and management work? Find out more at tasland.org.au/the-tlc-foundation

FOUNDATION FUND FOUNDERS

On May 14 the annual reserve visit for TLC Foundation fund founders went to Little Swanport to hear about conservation management on the reserve.

Back in 2019, soon after the property was protected, the TLC developed a blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) restoration project with researchers and TLC supporters Chris Harwood and Prof Brad Potts. Over 100 blue gums of local provenance were planted within areas of the reserve that were historically cleared. Dense thickets of black wattle were thinned in some plots to test the effect of shading and competition.

TLC's Conservation Ecologist Joe Quarmby introduced the research sites to Foundation fund founders, explaining potential conservation gains from active management. After two wet summers the vegetation growth is terrific – some plots more than others.

Foundation fund founder Chris Harwood joined the excursion and noted that 'it was great to see an initial idea developed and expanded through discussions with Joe and Brad and implemented so effectively by the TLC team. The swift parrots will be licking their lips anticipating a feed on new blue gum flowers in a few years!'

Read more about the project on the TLC blog 'Restoring the Balance at Little Swanport'.



LAND FOR WILDLIFE

New LFW members Damian Hope and Kate Johnstone. Photo: Phil Wise

2022 has been a big year for Land for Wildlife (LFW), with new-ish Coordinator Phil Wise getting out on the highways and byways of Tasmania and signing up new participants all over the state. The LFW program now covers 693 properties and more than 24,000 hectares, an incredible contribution by Tasmanians to creating wildlife-friendly habitat. We've been delighted to welcome so many landholders to the program since we began its delivery in 2020.

LFW isn't just for individuals – businesses can get involved too. In May, the Hobart Airport became a member. Within the airport boundaries are some of Australia's nationally significant habitats, which are protected and managed on the land surrounding the runway. Species occurring on airport land include native silver tussocks (protected across Australia) and many rare herb species such as yellow beauty head, roundleaf wilsonia and leafy fireweed. The airport is collaborating with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to manage the health of the grassland.

East of the runway, the airport is home to saltmarsh areas that are endangered nationally, mostly because they occur in areas that are highly compatible for human habitation or industry. Monitoring cameras have been established at key locations around the airport and have shown endangered Tasmanian devil and eastern barred bandicoot, and also more common species like echidnas and pademelons

We're delighted with the effort the airport is making to look after its areas of important habitat and pleased they've joined LFW.

On election day, a team from the TLC voted early and headed off to run a LFW/WildTracker workshop in Exeter, just north of Launceston in the beautiful Tamar Valley. The workshop focussed on the vulnerable eastern barred bandicoot (*Perameles gunnii*), which originally occurred in native grasslands and grassy woodlands in Tasmania's Midlands. Its range has been significantly restricted since colonisation as its habitat has been cleared for agriculture – bandicoots feed in grassy areas but need tussocks and shrubs as well where they can hide from their many predators. Around twenty participants showed up to the workshop to learn how they can create and encourage bandicoot habitat on their own property.

TLC's Conservation Programs Ecologist Helen Morgan and NRM North's Stephen Izzard gave a detailed and practical guide to improving cover for bandicoots on private land, while Anna Povey took participants on a tour of local plant life, helping everyone recognise the plants that matter to bandicoots.

LFW Coordinator Phil Wise explained how Tasmanians can sign up for the LFW program and be recognised and celebrated for their work as conservationists on private land. Meanwhile, WildTracker Coordinator Glen Bain gave a rundown on the TLC's WildTracker citizen science program



Platypus. Photo: W E Brown

and how to set up and use wildlife monitoring cameras, and then led everyone through a challenging quiz, identifying a range of Tasmanian animals from camera trap photos.

This workshop, supported by the Ian Potter Foundation, was such a success and so enjoyable that the LFW and WildTracker team are now planning one for the north-west of the state later in the year. Towards the end of 2022, we'll also be joining forces with Inala Conservation Reserve on Bruny Island. This reserve contains several threatened species, including the endangered and endemic forty-spotted pardalote and critically endangered swift parrot, in addition to breeding pairs of the grey goshawk, wedge-tailed eagle and white-bellied sea-eagle. In December we hope to run two day-long birding tours at Inala for LFW members, giving them the chance to expand their bird identification prowess and providing a richer understanding of habitat for bird conservation.

Many of Tasmania's most threatened species occur mainly on private land and are not protected by our national parks. That's why programs like LFW are so important, recognising and encouraging private landholders who incorporate nature conservation on their properties. To find out more about the program and express interest in joining, visit tasland.org.au/programs/land-for-wildlife



WHAT'S ON

Revolving Fund property at Simpsons Bay, Bruny Island. Photo: Rob Blakers

SAVE THE DATE: REGULAR DONORS TRIP TO THE BIG PUNCHBOWL RESERVE

Friday 19 August 2022

We applaud our 200+ regular donors! They make a gift every month (or sometimes every fortnight) that supports our ongoing landholder conservation programs, reserve visitation, research for future acquisitions and other admin and planning. To say thank you, we're inviting these steadfast supporters to join us at The Big Punchbowl Reserve on Tasmania's east coast to explore this rich and unique area. Invitations will be sent in July with end of financial year receipts.

To set up a regular donation see tasland.org.au/donate-monthly/ or ring the TLC office on (03) 6225 1399

SAVE THE DATE: NATURAL GUARDIANS TRIP TO TINDERBOX HILLS RESERVE

Saturday 10 September 2022

This year the Natural Guardians reserve trip will take confirmed bequesters to Tinderbox Hills Reserve (protected in 2020) to explore this precious woodland on Hobart's doorstep. Invitations will be sent in mid August. If you have included the TLC in your will and haven't let us know, please get in contact with Annabelle Sweetman, Planned Giving Coordinator at asweetman@tasland.org.au so we can invite you along. We'd like to say thank you to everyone who plans to leave a legacy for nature.

VOLUNTEERING ON OUR RESERVES

With spring around the corner, the reserves team is scheduling on ground management works. There will be a number of activities across the TLC's estate which we'd love help with. If you're a registered volunteer, keep an eye on your inbox for these invitations. To receive updates about TLC volunteering opportunities head to: tasland.org.au/volunteering

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