



NL6 – SUMMER 2023

Dr Tonia Cochran at her Land for Wildlife property, Inala. Photo: Eddie Safarik.

FROM THE TEAM

In 2022, over 70 properties were registered to Land for Wildlife (LFW), and we are working through a waiting list of a similar number of properties. We thank those of you who are waiting for your assessments. We know that your land is already in good hands until we get there!

We were lucky enough to visit properties on Flinders Island last year, where we saw swift parrots feeding in potential breeding habitat, found rare orchids and mapped some new eagle nests. We also met incredible people who, in between running farms and working as professionals, still took the time to care and manage their land for the creatures that depend on it. We are now inducting a volunteer assessor for the Island, helping us expand the program to another corner of the state.

Did you come to any of our four 2022 workshops? These were great opportunities to hear from experts, meet other LFW members and connect with and inspire each other. We told stories and provided tips on encouraging forty-spotted pardalotes, eastern barred bandicoots and giant freshwater and burrowing crayfish. The final workshop for the year was held at Inala on beautiful South Bruny Island. We were all blown away at what has been achieved for conservation on this private property, one of the first registered for LFW in Tasmania. We learned about the importance of island refuges such as Bruny for the endangered swift parrot, which breeds here thanks to the absence of the Kreft's glider, which preys on the eggs, chicks and sitting female parrots. Some of us actually got to see a swift parrot up close on the driveway at Inala: everyone left inspired to do more on their own little patch of Tasmania.

As the program grows, it has been great to add a northern coordinator and four new volunteer assessors to the team, meaning we'll be able to get to your questions sooner! We sincerely thank all of our volunteer assessors, who are an integral part of our team. We all look forward to another great year of Land for Wildlife in 2023.

Anna Povey (North)
Phil Wise (South)
LFW Coordinators



WE NEED YOUR IDEAS

What LFW workshops would you like this year? Submit your ideas to:
landforwildlife@tasland.org.au



Artificial intelligence will make WildTracker even more useful, with 500,000 images from UTAS enhancing the platform's ability to help you identify wildlife.
Find out more on page 4.



LFW isn't the Tasmanian Land Conservancy's only program protecting wildlife. Find out more about the TLC's work and help us to support nature at tasland.org.au/donate



Did you know that for very little money you can get a macro lens to attach to your phone? It's great for ID'ing invertebrates.
Find out more on page 4.



Phil Wise on a Land for Wildlife property. Photo: Eddie Safarik. Below: Iona Mitchell. Photo: Phil Wise.

REFLECTIONS: IONA MITCHELL

You might not know that the Land for Wildlife Program has been operating in Tasmania since 1998. Up until 2019, the program was administered by the Tasmanian Government department now known as the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas); the Tasmanian Land Conservancy took over in 2020.

NRE Tas employee Iona Mitchell started managing the program in 2004. She delivered LFW through a partnership with Wildcare (previously delivered by Bushcare) and, with the help of volunteers until 2013 and by herself afterwards, built up a significant membership across the state.

In a recent catch up with Iona, she recalled with fondness the

opportunities that she had to identify plants with land holders and particularly letting people in on the secrets of the many orchid species that would have otherwise gone undetected during her many assessment walks. She also mentioned that quite a bit of black tea was consumed during those times as well!

Over time, Iona's role within the department changed to focus more on conservation covenants and other aspects of private land conservation, but she continued signing up more members to LFW.

The selection criteria to join LFW meant only landholders with around 2 hectares of intact native bush could participate. Iona realized that there were many dedicated conservationists with properties that didn't fit the selection criteria but who still had a lot to offer wildlife, including people that lived on the urban fringe.

As a result, she launched the Gardens for Wildlife program in 2008, which is still going strong in Tasmania today. Gardens for Wildlife provides great advice on looking after wildlife habitat in smaller places and members get to display a sign featuring the scarlet robin, showing their passion for nature on their front gates. The program has been mimicked in other parts of the country including Alice Springs (NT), Maleny (QLD) and Euroa in Victoria.



LFW members who joined the program during the time it was managed by NRE Tas had to opt in during 2020 to continue in the program with the TLC. If you know anyone who displays the LFW sign but hasn't heard from the program since it changed hands, please ask them to email us so we can move their registration over – landforwildlife@tasland.org.au



Eastern spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*). Below: Oliver whistler (*Pachycephala olivacea*). Photo: Peter Vaughan.

Warrick and Amie Bidwell. Photo: Supplied by the Bidwells.

LAND FOR WILDLIFE MEMBERS: THE BIDWELLS

Warrick and Amie Bidwell arrived on their beautiful little slice of Tasmania in February 2021.

It was overgrown, overgrazed and under-appreciated.

Their goal had always been to find a property where they could balance environmental considerations with their desire to (mostly) feed their family from their own, home-grown produce. ‘We’re mindful of our impact on the earth’s resources and it’s our belief that by being largely self-sufficient, we can minimise our footprint,’ Amie shared.

Warrick had been aware of Land for Wildlife for several decades and had always wanted to participate, but life led him in different directions. It wasn’t until he and Amie met and married some years ago and then decided to move to Lilydale, Tasmania that this became a reality for them both.

‘Being involved in the program has further opened our thinking to include native (and especially indigenous) flora and fauna in our plans for our property,’ says Warrick.

‘We’ve worked hard in the two years we’ve been custodians of *Warrambiddy* (we’ve given our property this name and yes, we



do have a mortgage!) and in that time have removed many, many exotic plants, something we’ve termed “excavator pruning”!’ joked the couple.

The pair have been gradually revegetating with local native flora and in this short time have seen the return of several native species, such as the eastern spinebill, scarlet robin, grey shrike thrush, olive whistler, black cockatoos and ringtail possums. Also returning are birds of prey, and a myriad of insects such as butterflies, dragonflies and lacewings. Amie says she even excitedly spotted a native Tasmanian bee recently!

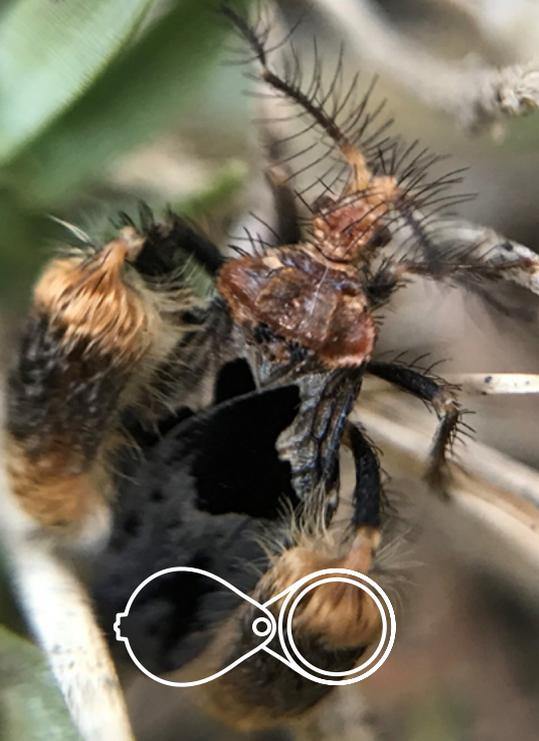
Warrick and Amie are using a regenerative agriculture approach to work with, rather than against, the native ecosystem in planning their grazing and land use on the area of the property not set aside specifically for LFW. They plan to use a mix of species such as *E. viminalis*, *E. globulus*, *E. ovata*

and *E. obliqua* to create wind breaks and contour-hugging water traps to literally slow the flow of water off their land and retain the moisture for soil health and microbial activity.

Warrick and Amie plan to keep revegetating *Warrambiddy* with local native flora both in the paddock areas and in their home patch to create a reserve for native bird and other life amid the surrounding farming land.

‘Perhaps the greatest highlight for us has been seeing native fauna put pressure back on the introduced species such as the blackbird, and watching the balance tip in favour of our local bird and insect communities. We feel LFW embodies more of the thinking that our Indigenous predecessors upheld and we’re proud to be changing the way this land is cared for into the future,’ says Warrick.





Feather-legged assassin bug (*Ptilocnemus lemur*). Photo: Anna Povey.



Bare-nosed wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*). Photo: Loic Le Guilly.

A HAND LENS MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

No Land-for-Wildlifer should be without a hand lens, as this cheap and easy-to-carry item reveals features of flowers, insects and other small things that you'd never know existed otherwise, and those details give you the power to identify species. Also known as a jeweller's loupe, this little lens offers better magnification than a magnifying glass and can be kept in a pocket or around your neck on a lanyard, ready at all times.

To use it to best effect, hold the lens to your eye, almost touching your eyelashes. Bring the item right up close to the lens (1-2 cm away). You'll be astonished at the magnification.

You can also hold the lens in front of your phone's camera lens for a macro shot. Alternatively, you can buy little macro lenses that clip easily onto your phone (see the results in the photo above).

It's generally easier to find a good range online. Although some are very cheap indeed, it's worth going a step or two up from the bottom. Magnification of 10x is the most useful and glass lenses are better than plastic.

The world changes with a hand lens. Once you've got one, you can join the ranks of naturalists who look at almost anything and exclaim in amazement at tiny delights.

Since August 2022, more than 80 people have joined the WildTracker citizen science platform and tens of thousands of photos of Tasmanian wildlife have been uploaded. Rangers from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) used WildTracker to tag 9,000 images collected from the TLC's Long Point Reserve.

We will be integrating an artificial intelligence model into WildTracker. Developed at UTAS, the model is >90% accurate for 31 Tasmanian species or species groups. Your WildTracker images will improve the model's accuracy even more and the AI will be able to help you identify wildlife. Importantly the AI will first delete all those annoying 'empty' images.


NEED HELP?
If you registered but couldn't set your password, visit: wildtracker.com.au/forgot-password

Visit our new online Wildlife ID Guide for species distributions, key identifying features and animal names in palawa kani, kindly provided by the TAC.

We are now tidying up users' dashboards – deleting any duplicated

surveys and sites and addressing surveys where image uploads may have failed prematurely.

Thank you for your website feedback. Email wildtracker@tasland.org.au if you have other web suggestions.

We acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

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