



TASMANIAN  
LAND  
CONSERVANCY

NL7 – WINTER 2023

Photo: Eddie Saffarik

## FROM THE TEAM

**It is hard to believe that we are halfway through the year already! The Land for Wildlife (LFW) program continues to grow and with it, we have been meeting dedicated landholders right across the state.**

It has really hit home how important it is to have people caring for the habitats on their own land. On one property, the very existence of critically endangered plants depends on the tenacity of the current custodian and on others, we've seen large patches of critical habitat turn up in unexpected places. And then there are those places where the bush is finally given the chance to do its thing without the pressures of logging or heavy grazing - which will help species to return and benefit the ones that have persisted. This is where the people who drive the Land

for Wildlife program really play an important role in preserving species.

New Land for Wildlife member and sustainable events venue, Spring Bay Mill, is doing all the above since the closure of the Triabunna Wood Chip Mill in 2011. In addition to site remediation, the team there see previously unrecorded Tasmanian devils wandering comfortably around the property and have planted more than 20,000 native plants, including many threatened species. The property has large areas of intact bushland and their efforts are creating fantastic connectivity for the fauna moving through the landscape.

We have packed quite a bit into the last six months: a seed collecting workshop with the Understorey Network in Kettering, a 'weeds and nature' event in Strahan with Landcare Tasmania and meeting new folk at Pangaea Festival,

Bream Creek Show and AgFest. This has generated a great deal of interest in Land for Wildlife with a significant number of new enquiries flowing in. We acknowledge those of you who are still waiting for assessments - we promise we will get to you! Our aim is to give new members further skills to care for their property's habitat, and it takes time to assess your habitat and provide valuable reports.

We hope you enjoy this winter edition of our newsletter.

**Anna Povey (North)**  
**Phil Wise (South)**  
**Land for Wildlife Coordinators**



Turning clapped-out paddocks into thriving forests: a visit with LFW members the Donagheys in northwest Tasmania.  
Find out more on page 2.



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](https://tasland.org.au/donate)



Bruny Island's swift parrots and forty-spotted pardalotes could use your help.  
Find out how you can get involved on page 3.





Plantings are now tall trees, still growing taller in these rich, damp soils.



The bush remnant by the creek is now healthy and blackberry-free.

## LAND FOR WILDLIFE MEMBERS: THE DONAGHEYS

**Richard and Carol Donaghey are stalwarts of nature conservation in northwest Tasmania, and it was a delight to visit their 16 hectare property and to see the incredible transformation they have made.**

When Carol and Richard bought the land in 1984, there were only a few old stringybarks in the paddock and some degraded native vegetation along the creek. The low-lying land was choked by weedy sweetgrass and there weren't even any wallabies.

They fenced off the creek and started to revegetate with native shelterbelts, eucalypt plots, understorey plantings, biodiversity and carbon plantings. Now much of the property is forest, some of it 50 metres tall and growing. The sweetgrass is replaced by paperbark forest. Richard and Carol are still planting, though now they need to guard the seedlings from flourishing pademelons.

'I particularly love hoeing out blackberries,' says Carol, without a hint of irony. 'That's my thing.' She spent years doing this every day after work and on weekends, hand-pulling (with double gloves) and hoeing out blackberries, then planting into the spot. The regrowing

forest shades out the weeds and wallabies browse seedlings, so the blackberries have disappeared from the forest areas.



Top: shows some revegetation in the 1990s. Bottom: Forest covers much of the property in 2023.

The diversity of wildlife has massively increased. Brown falcons nest here, there are bassian thrush among the leaf litter. You'll find platypus, bats, pygmy possums, bandicoots, swamp rats, long-tailed mouse, occasional devils and burrowing crayfish. Macleay's swallowtail butterflies lay eggs on a Chilean sassafras in the garden (and Tasmanian sassafras in the forest).

Richard is a much-published expert on birds, particularly Australasian robins, and his passion for native birds shines through when he talks about the decline of the endemic strong-billed honeyeater and dusky robin. 'We used to have strong-bills and duskys nesting on our place every year for 30 odd years...and the last time I saw them was two or three years ago. They haven't nested here for a while...And we know next to nothing about the natural history of these Tasmanian birds.' Despite our lack of knowledge, if we Land for Wildlifers can emulate what Carol and Richard have done, the future for our birds will be better.

Richard and Carol have made a huge personal difference to the wildlife of their land and through their active membership of local environment groups have strengthened the ability of other landholders to improve their habitat. They say, 'There is more green thinking now in some areas. Good people make a difference.'





Forty-spotted pardalote. Photo: Chris Tzaros.



Bull ant. Photo: Simon Grove.

## LAND FOR WILDLIFE MEMBERS NEEDED TO PROTECT BRUNY BIRDS

**Bruny Island provides important habitat for two threatened species of birds: the swift parrot and the forty-spotted pardalote. For swift parrots, Bruny Island is one of only two places where they can breed without the risk of predation by sugar gliders. There are only two remaining viable populations of forty-spotted pardalotes on Earth, and Bruny Island is the core of one.**

Because of the importance of Bruny Island to these threatened species, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (though a generous donation from the Elsie Cameron Foundation) is working with the Bruny Island Environment Network and The Friends of North Bruny Island to enhance the birds' habitat and breeding outcomes. We need Land for Wildlifers' help!

The Threatened Woodland Birds of Bruny Island project (TWBBI) will plant forage trees for both species, install nest boxes where needed, and deploy feather dispensers to reduce deaths of forty-spotted pardalote nestlings caused by parasitic fly larvae.

The project's success depends upon participation from Land for Wildlife members and people

with conservation covenanted properties on Bruny Island. Participating properties can get free tree seedlings and assistance with planting, along with tree guards, fencing, nest boxes, feather dispensers, and help with their installation.



**388 TREES HAVE BEEN PLANTED ON FOUR PROPERTIES**

The TWBBI project manager will work with individual landholders to determine the right management activities for their property, and plantings may entail anything from broadscale revegetation to planting wind breaks or amenity trees. So far, 388 trees have been planted on four properties across more than four hectares.

If you are interested in being involved, please contact the TWBBI Project Manager, Dr Andrew Hingston, via email [hingston@utas.edu.au](mailto:hingston@utas.edu.au) or phone 0478 601 306.

## THE SECRET LIFE OF ANTS

As a Land for Wildlife member, you've spent many intriguing hours watching what your animal neighbours get up to. But even the most attentive of us can miss the details of invertebrates' lives. If you didn't know that ants make 'milk' you're not alone: entomologists only recently discovered it!

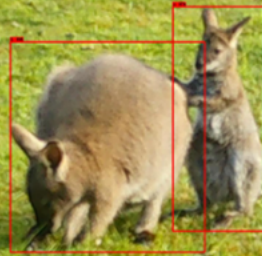
Scientist Orli Snir has found that ant pupae (the stage between larva and adult) exude a golden-tinted fluid made from their moulting leftovers, which are broken down old cuticles. It doesn't sound very tempting (though neither does cow's milk when you think about it!), but it is rich in nutrients, hormones and psychoactive substances.

In a colony, adults drink the fluid voraciously and carry larvae to it to drink. This stops the pupae from getting sodden and keeps the larvae fed and the colony connected. Scientists believe that the fluid affects adult ants' metabolism and behaviour and perhaps decides the ants' caste. It turns out even though they're immobile, pupae are vital to the colony's social fabric.

As we enjoy the bushland protected on our Land for Wildlife properties, it's intriguing to think that there are still such amazing aspects of nature to be revealed.

You can read the paper in *Nature*.





Bennett's wallaby with joey at the back, Tasmanian pademelon in the foreground.

## WILDTRACKER: SPOT THE MACROPOD DIFFERENCE

**Tasmania's two most-widespread macropods – Bennett's wallabies and Tasmanian pademelons – are also some of the most common creatures that will show up on your WildTracker camera. But how can you tell for sure which is which?**

Wallabies and pademelons look remarkably similar in a blurry, black-and-white night-vision photo. The cues you might use to differentiate them in the daytime – their size relative to other things, and the colour of their fur – are much harder to pick out.

Below are some of the key ways to recognise which macropod is which.

**Bennett's wallaby/payathanima (*Macropus rufogriseus*):** has a reddish coat, particularly around the back of the neck (which is why it's known elsewhere as the red-necked wallaby). It has dark forepaws, hindfeet and nose and there are often black rims or tips on the ears. There is a dark stripe down the centre of its face with white markings on the side. The coat appears to vary in colour across the body and the underbelly is grey-white. The wallaby's long, robust tail is almost the same length as the body. You'll often photograph them socialising.

**Tasmanian pademelon (*Thylogale billardierii*):** small with a round body, often in an arched posture (rounder and cuter than a wallaby!). The pademelon has a dark brown to rufous (red) coloured coat, more uniform than for the Bennett's wallaby. Its ears are small and round. Its tail is shorter than its body length. Males are larger than females. Groups may forage in open environments, but individuals typically remain close to dense vegetation cover.

Find out more at [wildtracker.com.au](http://wildtracker.com.au)



## WHAT'S ON

**12 August** WildTracker's Dr Glen Bain presents 'Your nocturnal neighbours: how to identify and monitor wildlife in your backyard' as part of the Beaker Street Festival. Visit [beakerstreet.com.au/2023events/nocturna-saturday-pass/](http://beakerstreet.com.au/2023events/nocturna-saturday-pass/)

**16-18 October** National Private Land Conservation Conference, 'PLC23: Unite For Nature', in Canberra. Find out more at [alcaconference.org.au](http://alcaconference.org.au)

**13-15 October** Landcare Tasmania conference at Triabunna. TLC is supporting up to 12 LFW and Revolving Fund landholders to attend: go to [landcaretas.org.au/conference2023](http://landcaretas.org.au/conference2023), apply for bursary tickets. Put 'TLC' as your 'Member Group'.

**28 & 29 October** Bruny Island Bird Adventure – last year's visits to at Inala Nature Tours were a huge hit and they're back for 2023. Watch your inbox for more details.

**Funds available for revegetation**  
If you have a revegetation project in mind, Fifteen Trees (15trees.com.au) may be able to help pay for plants. Contact us for more info [landforwildlife@tasland.org.au](mailto:landforwildlife@tasland.org.au)

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.

### Tasmanian Land Conservancy

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