



TASMANIAN  
LAND  
CONSERVANCY

# AUTUMN 2022

NL 69

Eagle Rock Reserve. Photo: Rob Blakers

**Happy 2022 to all, and what a start to the year it has already been for the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC). We are thrilled to announce in our first newsletter of the year that we have successfully reached our fundraising target to create the Kelvedon Hills Reserve – this reserve could protect more than 40 rare and threatened species across 2,300 ha, forming the TLC's second-largest reserve. We cannot thank enough the 839 supporters from near and far who donated to protect this unique landscape forever.**

We also look back at the end of the TLC's 20th year in this edition, including the exciting partnership with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation to purchase and protect nearly 200 ha at Diana's Basin, on the east coast.

We were also delighted to announce, in late 2021, our first reserve in the northwest of the state at Eagle Rock. Protecting these three important properties has only been possible thanks to the support and enduring commitment of many people over many years. We are deeply grateful for all those involved, especially the local communities that have worked for years to see these areas protected.

As we often say, protection is just the start of the conservation journey. It has been a busy field season across all the TLC reserves, with our science and reserve management programs in full swing. We continue to see exciting results from our blue gum restoration trial at Little Swanport Reserve, and we also sincerely thank our ever-reliable volunteers, alongside the TLC team who have completed another year

of weeding at our Liffey Reserve and across the central highlands.

One of the great joys of working at the TLC is working alongside amazing people. So many have contributed to the success of the TLC over the past 20 years, bringing their passion, expertise, dedication and enthusiasm to achieve lasting outcomes for nature in Tasmania. We are sad to farewell Sophie Marshall, who in her fourteen years with us has been instrumental at the TLC, connecting so many people to our work and fostering a meaningful sense of community and connection. We are so thankful for all that Sophie has brought to the TLC, building our Natural Guardians (Gifts in Wills) Program and enabling so many people to leave a lasting legacy to nature.

**James Hattam**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

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## HIGHLIGHTS



Eagle Rock Reserve. Photo: Rob Blakers

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The TLC is protecting land coast-to-coast, including a new reserve at Kelvedon!



Little Swanport Reserve. Photo: Andy Townsend

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Science makes Little Swanport Reserve even better.



Weeding at Liffey Reserve. Photo: Phill Laroche

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An epic weeding effort at Liffey Reserve comes to an end.





# KELVEDON HILLS RESERVE

Kelvedon Hills Reserve. Photo: Rob Blakers

**In the past few months, Tasmanian nature lovers have had much to celebrate, with nearly 2,500 ha of reserves added to TLC's estate and 195 ha protected and returned to the Aboriginal community to manage (see the Diana's Basin story on the next page for more information).**

And in news just in, Kelvedon Hills is now a reserve! This massive 2,300 ha property is TLC's second largest, after Five Rivers, and it has habitat that supports 40 endangered species, including 11 that are nationally threatened.

The property is bounded by large areas of existing nature reserves including Dry Creek Nature Reserve and Eastern Tiers Conservation Area, providing a huge overall contribution to conservation across the landscape. With Kelvedon's connections to TLC's Little Swanport and Prosser River Reserves, protecting this landscape means the area now has 3,500 ha of contiguous private reserves.

An important part of the conservation benefit of Kelvedon Hills Reserve is the safe home it affords to woodland bird communities. Iconic species such as swift parrots and forty-spotted pardalotes are often the focus of our conservation campaigns, but at Kelvedon Hills we are particularly proud to be supporting an often-overlooked group of birds.

The entire temperate woodland bird community, including those in Tasmania, are now considered to have declined and degraded to the point they are being considered for listing as

a threatened ecological community under IUCN criteria. The key cause is land clearing, and the perverse consequences of clearing, such as the increase in despotic native birds, that dominate woodland remnants and exclude smaller woodland birds.

Protecting large tracts of habitat, such as Kelvedon Hills, is a way to prevent the continued loss of our precious woodland birds. The creation of a large complex of protected areas from Prosser River to Kelvedon and beyond, constructs an essential barricade to the threats faced by native wildlife.

At the TLC, we can't do the work we do without the support of landholders – those who protect nature on their own land and those who sell us the property that becomes our reserves. Kelvedon Hills Reserve was previously part of the 5,000 ha Kelvedon Estate, which belongs to the Cottons, a family dedicated to combining agriculture and conservation. We are very grateful for the trust and confidence the Cotton family has shown in the TLC in allowing us to become stewards of part of this property.

We have been seeking your support to make this property a reserve since May 2021 and in less than a year you have donated enough to make this conservation dream a reality. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has contributed to the protection of Kelvedon Hills, including the Elsie Cameron Foundation. Not only our conservation estate but our hearts are expanded by the generosity of nature lovers here in Tasmania and from all over the world.

## EAGLE ROCK RESERVE

In December, we announced the protection of Eagle Rock Reserve. On Tasmania's west coast, surrounded by the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area, Eagle Rock is 176 ha of coastal heathland, wetland and small areas of dry coastal eucalypt forest. It allows us to protect wetlands and swamp forest unlike any seen on our other reserves.

Eighteen threatened plants are recorded on the property; the four nationally threatened species include a critically endangered orchid, the western leek orchid.

The reserve is home to wedge-tailed eagles, white-bellied sea eagles and grey goshawks. Orange bellied parrots have been seen here on their migration.

While the TLC has been working to protect nature in the northwest region for more than a decade through covenanting programs, working recently with the Cradle Coast Authority to protect saltmarsh and freshwater crayfish habitat, this is our first reserve in the region.

Dr David Hamilton, TLC Conservation Ecologist, says 'West coast Tasmanian devils are vital to the species' recovery. This is the most genetically diverse devil population, with some notable recoveries from facial tumour disease. I'm delighted the TLC is protecting a landscape that is home to these animals.'

We are so grateful to participate in the broader effort to protect nature in this region, carried out by dedicated organisations and individuals for decades.





# LITTLE SWANPORT RESERVE UPDATE

Little Swanport Reserve. Photo: Andy Townsend

**At Little Swanport Reserve, on the east coast, towering old-growth blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) forest is one of three threatened forest communities providing essential habitat for a diversity of threatened species. These forests are rarely seen on Tasmania's east coast and are essential for providing the critically endangered swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) with food, shelter and breeding hollows, and the best possible chance of survival. In 2020 the TLC Science Team embarked on a project to restore areas of Tasmanian blue gum forest within the reserve.**

The project, which is a collaboration with Chris Harwood and Professor Brad Potts from UTAS, aimed to regenerate forest at the reserve using a novel approach. Early results from the trial are in, and it's exciting news!

Eighteen months ago, we planted over 100 blue gums into experimental plots within areas of the reserve that were historically cleared and converted into paddocks. The seedlings were planted into deeply cultivated holes with water-retaining gel and fertilizer. We placed wire mesh tree-guards around each seedling to protect them from browsing. Dense thickets of black wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) were also thinned in some plots to test the effect of shading and competition.

In spring 2021, TLC ecologists monitored the growth of the blue gum seedlings in the experimental plots. We were very pleased to find that the seedlings had thrived in the plots that were thinned of wattle. Many of these blue gum seedlings had grown to more than 2m tall and looked vigorous and healthy. In contrast, the growth of seedlings planted

amongst dense wattle was weak, with some seedlings dying or in poor health.

The understorey within the thinned plots had also changed dramatically in 18 months. Native grasses, sedges, forbs and shrubs had exploded into life following the removal of the acacias. There were also several blue gum seedlings coming up naturally in these plots! This is largely due to the sudden increase in light and moisture, but the fallen branches of wattle have inhibited grazing pressure from native marsupials allowing the understorey to bounce back.

As part of the experiment, we also planted blue gum seedlings without water retaining gel, fertilizer, or cages, to test whether these treatments were really necessary. Unsurprisingly, only a few of these seedlings survived, and the ones that remained had hardly grown at all. So, this is clearly not a viable option for Little Swanport.

We will continue to monitor the growth of the blue gum seedlings at Little Swanport Reserve over the coming years. We hope that these seedlings will grow into large trees with broad crowns which will provide an excellent food source for swift parrots in the future.

**Joe Quarmby, Conservation Ecologist**

## GIVE .....

**We love our regular donors! Thank you for supporting nature in Tasmania. To join in, visit [tasland.org.au/donate-monthly](https://tasland.org.au/donate-monthly) or call 03 6225 1399**

## DIANA'S BASIN

We are thrilled to be part of a collaborative effort to protect nature at Diana's Basin, on Tasmania's east coast.

The acquisition of 195 ha of ecologically sensitive and culturally significant land was financed through a partnership between the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC), Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) and the TLC. Once purchased and covenanted, the land was returned to Aboriginal ownership.

More than 70% of the property, near the coastal town of St Helens, is covered in old growth forest and it is home to at least three threatened species. The TLC had been aware of the important natural values of this property for many years, and we are delighted to have finally achieved this great conservation outcome.

TAC Chairperson, Graeme Gardner, said having the property back under Aboriginal ownership would enable Aboriginal people to strengthen their connection to the country.

'This whole coastal area of north-east Lutruwita, from St Helens all the way to Musselroe and beyond is the home of our old people, our direct ancestors,' Mr Gardner said.

The ILSC has granted money to the TAC so Diana's Basin can be managed by their ranger team, giving local people the opportunity to be employed on country.

An event was held on country on Friday 10 December to celebrate the return.





# LATHAM'S SNIPE

Latham's snipe. Photo: Peter Vaughan

**TLC's Silver Plains New Leaf property has become an important site for research into a migratory shorebird. This property has a proud tradition of supporting scientific research. Our eastern quoll recovery project is conducted here, and Silver Plains is also the site of deer research and forms part of the Australian Mountain Research Infrastructure Facility.**

And now Silver Plains is providing data for the Latham's snipe project. Project leader, Birgita Hansen, told us about why the team is monitoring snipe at this property's wetlands.

Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) is a medium-sized migratory shorebird that breeds in northern Japan from May to July. It migrates to Australia in August and September and spends its non-breeding season (October to February) in shallow, vegetated, freshwater wetlands, feeding up in preparation for its return flight to Japan.

Snipe usually feed at night in open, muddy wetlands and wet paddocks, feasting mostly on invertebrates that live in the sediments. They roost during the day in nearby wetlands, which are often geographically distinct to their night-time foraging sites. In Japan, they breed in meadowlands, woodlands and agricultural land.

Monitoring population sizes in Australia is challenging due to difficulties in observing snipe, but it's known snipe are threatened by wetland habitat loss, which is an ongoing problem. The population size is estimated at 35,000 birds, based on data from the breeding grounds.

Snipe using Tasmanian sites during the non-breeding season have the greatest distance to travel to their breeding grounds and therefore need to maximise their feeding opportunities while in Australia.

Buck's Marsh, on the TLC's Silver Plains property, was added to the national snipe surveys in September 2020. It is unusual in having a relatively large population size, and is located inland and at higher altitudes than other monitoring sites. Furthermore, it is relatively unmodified. Buck's Marsh may turn out to be disproportionately important for snipe conservation as the site is at a lower risk of loss through conversion to housing and other intensive land uses.

Continuous longitudinal monitoring is essential to understand how Latham's snipe use wetland sites, as snipe numbers can vary greatly from year to year depending on climate and rainfall. Early results from Buck's Marsh have revealed it supports relatively high numbers. Therefore, it will be important to continue monitoring it alongside other sites in eastern Australia to determine how use of the site changes over time and how that compares to other monitoring sites in Tasmania.

## EXPLORE .....

To see maps and data from this project and read more about our science projects, visit *In Our Nature* at [tasland.org.au/blog](https://tasland.org.au/blog)

Sophie Marshall with Keith Corbett. Photo: Eddie Safarik

## FAREWELL FROM SOPHIE MARSHALL

**For the past fourteen years, the TLC has been a huge part of my life, my identity.**

I've worked across so many programs and for the past few years have overseen our Gifts in Wills program. I hold deep gratitude for the opportunities that I've had working for an organisation that's so dynamic, yet where integrity remains a core priority. My time has been enriched by the inspiring people I've had the privilege to meet and work with: supporters, staff and stakeholders.

I feel really proud to have played a part in protecting some truly special places. But the greatest highlight has been to see the Natural Guardians community grow into something really wonderful.

This program represents the deep trust, respect and connection people have to the TLC. It's been an honour to help people create a legacy that reflects their passion for conservation or to remember someone special in this powerful, lasting way.

In March, although I will always remain a part of the TLC, I'll be moving on to pursue a different career. Thank you from my heart to everyone who has made my job so rewarding. From phone conversations, emails, property visits, cups of tea or full belly laughs on reserves, I appreciate you all.

The new Planned Giving Coordinator starts work very soon; in the meantime, stay in touch with us at [bequests@tasland.org.au](mailto:bequests@tasland.org.au)





# STEWARDSHIP CHANGES

Anna Povey at Prosser River Reserve. Photo: Eddie Safarik

**For the past eight years the TLC has worked in partnership with Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE) (formerly DPIPWE) on their Private Land Conservation program, undertaking stewardship services for conservation covenant landowners across Tasmania under the Protected Area Partnership (PAP) banner. Regrettably, we have not been offered the opportunity to negotiate a new contract after 30 June 2022. Over the next few months we will be working closely with NRE to ensure a smooth transition.**

The partnership has been invaluable to TLC and NRE in providing advice, assistance and monitoring of the private land conservation estate and in maintaining contact with many TLC supporters and other private landowners who have committed parts of their land to conservation.

On average our staff have visited over 100 conservation properties per year, and we hope that those interactions have given landowners the support they need to help them maintain the natural values on their land.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise several TLC staff who have made a significant contribution to the program: James Hattam, Sally Bryant, Oliver Strutt, Matt Taylor, Anna Povey and Julie Fielder. Individually they have brought their own skills but as with most things it is their contribution as team members that has made the program a successful one. Anna Povey has been with the program for all eight years and

has represented TLC/PAP in such a fabulous manner; I particularly want to thank her for her determination and the quality service she has provided to landowners over that time.

NRE will return to a previous model for the program, handling stewardship services in-house. As we learn more about how services will be delivered by NRE we will update you through social media and other communications. Staff at NRE have many years of experience and knowledge developing conservation covenants and maintaining the private land conservation estate. We wish them well in delivering the services to landowners and thank them for their commitment to private land conservation.

Our relationship with NRE will continue as we seek to register conservation covenants through the various NRM contracts, Revolving Fund, and TLC reserves and will remain vital to TLC achieving outcomes for more conservation of private land in Tasmania.

**Leigh Walters**  
**Operations Manager, Reserves and Conservation Programs**

## ACT .....

**Are you a landholder with a covenant on your property? Keep in touch by joining the Land for Wildlife program**  
**[tasland.org.au/programs/land-for-wildlife/](https://tasland.org.au/programs/land-for-wildlife/)**

## LIFFEY WEEDING

**After nine fun, transformative years TLC's Liffey volunteer weeding project has reached a conclusive point.**

TLC reserves staff will now shift to a new phase of managing the 14 ha Liffey Reserve without the support of an annual, large-scale volunteer weeding activity.

From here on, annual treatment of foxglove seedlings with low-toxicity herbicide should ensure these noxious weeds do not re-establish enough to alter or harm the biota of the Wilderness World Heritage-listed reserve.

Admittedly, foxglove will never be entirely eradicated. However, we can confidently proclaim the volunteer project to be a brilliant, hard-won success, given the extent of harmful infestation present when we acquired the property from Gunns back in 2010.

This will undoubtedly be bittersweet news for the 70 volunteers who have traversed Liffey Reserve's steep, slippery, marsupial-tracked slopes since 2013, hand pulling millions of foxglove plants. Many of those dedicated volunteers have participated more than once, forming firm friendships while negotiating the jumbles of fallen silver wattle trees, battling the six-foot-tall thickets of bat's wing fern, and sitting fireside on fresh nights while camped by the sweet-sounding Liffey River.

In Liffey's stead, we will be introducing an exciting new volunteer weeding project later this year.

**Phill Laroche**  
**Engagement Coordinator**





# WHAT'S ON

Pygmy sundew (*Drosera pygmaea*) at Diana's Basin. Photo: Andy Townsend

## SAVE THE DATE: BIRD CONSERVATION ONLINE EVENT

**Thursday 28 April, 5.30–7.00pm**

2020/21 Bird Conservation Scholar, Adam Cisterne, will share the results of his work on the conservation and ecology of the endangered masked owl in an online presentation. Join us for updates on the Bird Conservation Fund and the latest recipient of the scholarship. Read more about the Bird Conservation Fund at [tasland.org.au/projects/bird-conservation-fund](https://tasland.org.au/projects/bird-conservation-fund) and check your inbox for invitations – coming soon.

## SAVE THE DATE: LITTLE SWANPORT RESERVE FOUNDATION FUND FOUNDERS VISIT

**Saturday 14 May**

With around 60 named funds, the TLC Foundation provides resources for ongoing science and on-ground management of the TLC's suite of reserves. Founders of Foundation funds are invited to join TLC staff and special guests for a tour of the Little Swanport Reserve on Tasmania's east coast. Hear about the recent black wattle experiments and active conservation management on the reserve as outlined on page 3. Invitations will be sent to Foundation fund founders with more information and registration details. To learn more about the TLC Foundation visit [tasland.org.au/the-tlc-foundation](https://tasland.org.au/the-tlc-foundation)

## PROPERTIES FOR SALE

Is 2022 the year you buy a conservation property? If you'd like to be the first to know when we have new properties available, sign up to our mailing list at [tasland.org.au/subscribe-to-our-newsletter](https://tasland.org.au/subscribe-to-our-newsletter). To learn more about the Revolving Fund, visit [tasland.org.au/properties-for-sale](https://tasland.org.au/properties-for-sale)

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