

Thurgoona Conservation NEWS

ISSUE 4

This year, make it a Merry Christmas for our threatened wildlife too

With the festive season just weeks away, now is a good time to think about giving our threatened wildlife a Christmas present too. Add a few bird attracting plants for the garden to your Christmas shopping list to make sure our wildlife have a Merry Christmas now and in the years ahead.



Purple-crowned Lorikeet
Photo: Graeme Chapman



Photo: Tadao Shimba

Crested Shrike-tit

Your garden plays an important role in conserving our wildlife by providing food and shelter for birds and other wildlife. The other important feature of the home garden is that it can provide a valuable linkage through the wildlife corridor – a sort of ‘half way house’ between areas of older, established habitat.

Plants that produce nectar and attract insects are vital food sources for birds and squirrel gliders. With careful planning you can organise your garden to provide shelter for wildlife as well as year round nectar. But, be careful not to spray chemicals to kill insects; this can cause great harm to insect eating birds and gliders.

The experts at your local nursery can advise on the best plants to use, or select from the ‘Flora for Fauna’ range.

You could also consider building and installing a nest box in the higher reaches of the garden to provide shelter for squirrel gliders and parrots. These creatures prefer to nest in old tree hollows, but with the decline in that type of habitat, nest boxes can act as a replacement.

Recent studies on the threatened squirrel glider in the Thurgoona area showed that gliders readily used nest boxes located in the area.

Imagine the joy of young children when they discover baby squirrel gliders, or young parrots emerging from a nest box.

Watch out for these threatened birds

The purple-crowned lorikeet, cloaked in distinctive, vibrant colours, is a rare visitor to the Albury area. When in residence, you can usually find them on the northeastern edge of the ranges and in the Thurgoona area. This colourful lorikeet feeds on mature, flowering eucalypts and makes its home in old hollow bearing trees.

The crested shrike-tit is unmistakable with its bold black and white head-crest and yellow breast. You may see these birds in pairs or small family parties around Thurgoona in big eucalypts, where it uses its can-opener like bill to tear off loose barks to find insects. Apart from having a distinctive range of calls, it often mimics other birds.

Two new conservation strategies

The Albury-Wodonga Corporation has released two new threatened species and habitat conservation strategies. One is for the Albury Ranges area; the other one covers both corporation land and some privately owned land in the Leneva Valley and Baranduda.

Brian McLennan, project manager for the Albury-Wodonga Corporation, said these two plans, together with the Thurgoona strategy, would form a blueprint for the future management of the remaining corporation land in the Albury-Wodonga region. “We now have three complementary plans for managing threatened wildlife and wildlife habitat in both cities,” he said.

New residents win competition

Our thanks to everybody who responded to the competition announced in issue two of this newsletter. The winner is Tina Hobbs. Tina and her family made a 'tree change' from Sydney to Thurgoona in March this year to escape the rat race and find a better way of life.

In her winning letter, Tina said in part: "We've swapped aircraft noise and endless concrete for bird song and greenery. We believe we've moved 'from hell to heaven' and want to help protect the native flora and fauna, while teaching our children, the future caretakers, to do the same."

The family has embraced Thurgoona's outstanding lifestyle and the spirit of the conservation campaign with passion and commitment as Tina explains.

"So far we have planted bird attracting plants such as waratahs, bottlebrush and black coral peas, and wire netted the gates to keep out neighbouring cats," she said.

"Our current project is a butterfly garden that I found on the Internet on the Flora for Fauna site.

"The children take great delight in recording our plans, progress with the garden and daily observations in their garden diary."

The Hobbs family has won a \$50 gift voucher from Peards Nursery.

Tina Hobbs with husband Phil and children Jack and Johanna



Wildlife Warriors

Wildlife conservation was high on the agenda when students from the Border Christian College headed to the Thurgoona shopping centre to talk to people about protecting threatened wildlife.

Armed with flyers and colourful posters, students from years four, five and six spread the message that cats are a menace to native birds and asked residents to 'bell the cat' to save wildlife.

Their teacher, Johnson Alagappan, said the aim of the project was to support the Thurgoona conservation campaign and create awareness that conservation is both a domestic and global issue.

"We aimed at making students aware of the need to preserve wildlife and habitat, taking into account broader concerns such as global warming and loss of habit around the world," Mr. Alagappan said.

"We hope to create a ripple effect so the kids take the message home to their parents, their neighbours and local communities. We hope too that they will get involved in conservation at grass roots level."

The college also plans for students to develop a garden for wildlife during the next few years.



Border Christian College students, enthusiastic about conservation

Thinking of building a nest box?

These publications should be helpful: The Nest Box Book, available from Gould League: www.gould.edu.au and Nest boxes for wildlife – a practical guide, by Alan & Stacy Franks, available from Dymocks. Brochure from the Albury-Wodonga Corporation: Phone: 6023 8000

First project for Thurgoona Landcare

Plans are now well and truly on the drawing board for the Thurgoona Landcare Group's first project, which follows the exciting news of the \$8,000 grant from the Murray Catchment Management Authority.

The group's chairperson, Bridget O'Connor, said the task would involve enhancing around four hectares of prime wildlife territory in the heart of Corry's Wood and St John's Hill.

"This is a well used area of open space which is now surrounded by an increasing number of houses," Ms. O'Connor said.

"It's important that we act now to make sure this habitat for squirrel gliders, regent honey eaters and other wildlife continues to thrive in the future.

"The plan includes eradication of noxious weeds, tree planting to connect wildlife corridors with retained habitat, and fencing to help the new plants become established."

Fieldwork for the project will commence in 2007.

For more information, or membership enquiries, contact Bridget O'Connor on 02 6043 1830, or email: thurgoonalandcare@hotmail.com



Landcarers: (L-R) Megan Graham, Murray CMA; Chester Merrick; Bridget O'Connor, chairperson, Thurgoona Landcare; Sylvia McKenzie; Matt Goulton with son Joe (rear); Wendy Whitten and Wendy Cowley.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our thanks to horticulturalist Glenda Datson for her helpful advice on 'putting birds in your garden', our sponsors Peards Nursery and Thurgoona Country Club Resort and everyone who has contributed to the campaign, we appreciate you help.

The Thurgoona Conservation Management Advisory Group