

# Thurgoona *Conservation* NEWS

## Some long time Thurgoona residents are a dying race



Photo: Lindy Lumsden

Squirrel Glider

*We are not talking people here of course; we are talking about shrinking numbers of our colourful feathered friends and some cuddly native animals. We are also talking about our marvellous native flora.*

The Thurgoona Threatened Species Conservation Strategy found a major biodiversity feature of the Thurgoona area was the variety of fauna, in particular birds. Of the 118 types of native birds recorded in the Thurgoona area between 2000 and 2003, six are listed as being threatened species.

These are the Brown Tree Creeper, Bush Stone Curlew, Diamond Firetail, Speckled Warbler, Hooded Robin and the magnificent Regent Honeyeater, of which only about 1000 remain throughout Australia.

A further five species of threatened birds are known to utilize similar adjoining habitats in the Albury area.

The tiny but beautiful Squirrel Glider, once a common sight around Thurgoona, is now high on the list of threatened species. These small creatures glide from tree to tree hunting for food, feeding on nectar, pollen, sap and insects, and depend on old hollow bearing trees to nest and roost in.

One of the reasons for the decline in native birds and animals in Thurgoona is a deterioration in their natural habitat, food sources and breeding grounds. Another reason is an increase in feral and domestic animals, especially cats, which can be a lethal weapon for native birds and smaller animals.



Photo: Chris Tzaros

Regent Honeyeater

### ***What you can do to help these threatened species***

More than 20 years ago the Albury Wodonga Development Corporation started planting native trees and shrubs throughout Thurgoona to make it a pleasant place to live and to provide food and shelter for resident birds and animals.

In the wider area, the AWDC commenced an extensive tree-planting program in 1976 that has seen more than three million trees planted, with a total cover of more than 2000 hectares.

On the following page we have listed some of the things you can do in your own backyard.



Photo: Glenda Danson

*Eucalyptus nutans* (Red flowered Moort)

## **Birds in your garden**

Native shrubs already planted in gardens in Thurgoona are providing important food sources for many of the birds in the area. You can continue this valuable work by keeping as many of your native trees as possible and planting new trees, shrubs and wildflowers – including prickly ones, to encourage birds into your garden.

A good example is bottlebrush, which provides rich nectar and places to nest. Attracting birds can be great fun, particularly for the kids – buy them a bird book and a pair of binoculars to discover the wonderful world of birds.

You could also consider leaving fallen limbs, twigs and leaves on the ground where birds, lizards, gliders and bats live and forage for food.

Other options could include joining a local land care group, or learning more about birds by joining a local club such as the Albury-Wodonga Field Naturalists Club or Bird Observers Group of Australia.

## **Fencing**

If you are a landholder, consider avoiding the use of barbed wire on the top strands of fences so that squirrel gliders and other wildlife don't get 'hooked up' on the barbs. Also, retaining older trees with large hollows provides refuge for gliders, bats and tree creepers.

## **Don't dump your garden waste**

When you finish mowing the lawn and tidying up the garden, dispose of your garden waste in the garbage bin. Dumping garden waste in habitat retention areas can lead to the spread of environmental weeds such as privet, tree lucerne and broome.

***The choice is yours, but whatever you choose to do, your interest in the environment can make an important difference***

## **Domestic pets**

Dogs and cats are natural hunters, but unrestrained cats create a real threat to our wildlife. Not having a cat, or keeping puss inside, especially at night, is high on the conservation priority list. Cats are also prolific breeders; if your cat is not desexed you might consider a visit to your local vet.

You can find out more about what to plant in your garden from Albury City's publications *Garden Guide for Albury Wodonga* and *Bush Invaders* – 6023 8111, the AWC publication *Waterwise Gardening* – 6023 8000 or visit [www.floraforfauna.com/](http://www.floraforfauna.com/) and consider attending our free seminar.

## Free seminar 'putting birds in your garden'

Put a circle around June 19 on your calendar now and be at our free seminar to learn about bird attracting shrubs and trees, water wise gardens and plants that provide food for endangered and threatened wildlife. A short presentation on the Thurgoona Threatened Species Conservation Strategy will be a feature, as well as what you could do for conservation in your own backyard.

Professional speakers will discuss garden options with lots of time for questions. Check out the displays of colourful shrubs, bushes and helpful brochures. Relax with morning tea on arrival and win lucky door prizes.

**WHERE:** Thurgoona Golf Club

**WHEN:** June 19, 2006

**WHAT TIME:** 10.30am for 11.00am start

## Thurgoona strategy wins top award

**Launched in 2004, the Thurgoona Threatened Species Conservation Strategy got off to a flying start with the Planning Institute of Australia commending it as an outstanding environmental initiative.**

In 2005 it bestowed its national and state awards for Planning Excellence in Environment Planning and Conservation on this excellent document.

This extensive study of the biodiversity of the Thurgoona area identifies environmental issues that need to be addressed, which include protecting wild life now on the threatened or endangered list. It also suggests strategies and actions for the future management of Thurgoona and surrounds.



Brian McLennan, Ian Davidson and Glenda Datson

Brian McLennan, project manager for the Albury Wodonga Corporation, Glenda Datson, an environmental and horticultural consultant and Ian Davidson, an experienced wildlife biologist, managed the fieldwork and later wrote the strategy.

The all-inclusive strategy is a blueprint for the future management of Thurgoona's environment as co-author Brian McLennan explains.

"The strategy has identified a variety of environmental issues, including preservation of wildlife that could become extinct in Thurgoona during the years to come, unless we start to take action now," Mr. McLennan said.

"Land clearing and urbanisation in Thurgoona has impacted on the natural habitat of some threatened species of wildlife including the Squirrel Glider, Regent Honeyeater and a number of other birds. It has also impacted on some types of natural vegetation.

"This strategy suggests initiatives to retain and enhance the remaining wildlife habitat. Some proposals are on a large scale, more suited to land care groups, but there are numerous ideas that Thurgoona residents, businesses and landholders can adopt.

"Among these would be planting bird attracting native shrubs and trees in the home garden, retaining natural habitats and being a responsible pet owner."

# *In the interests of conservation, 'bell' the cat with a free bell*

Everyone loves his or her pets, whether it's a dog, cat or something more exotic.

Cats can be cute and amusing, commanding your complete attention; purring and head butting you, rubbing against your leg waiting for a gentle pat or a tasty morsel, rolling over for a tummy tickle or snoozing on the bed. Sometimes they may even let the kids dress them up in doll's clothes or hide on top of the closet with their tail hanging limply over the side.

You can usually find them in the warmest or coolest spot in the house or garden, depending on the season.

But under this soft, cuddly, loving exterior lurks a predator, stalking and striking at small birds and animals with lightning speed. It's not the cat's fault; it's just the way nature made them.

Cats can be a menace to small creatures in the environment they share. Responsible pet ownership means protecting your pet and the living things in your local surroundings.

If you own a cat, we urge you to lock it up at night when small creatures are most vulnerable, and to put a bell on its collar. The tinkling bell warns birds of imminent danger.

To make this easy we are offering you a free cat bell – that's right, a free bell to 'bell' the cat in the interests of conservation.

So play your part in protecting our endangered species and pick up your free cat bell today.

## **Get a free bell for your cat**

*Simply present this newsletter to the friendly staff at  
Border Aquarium & Pet Centre, 1088 Mate Street, North Albury  
and receive a free bell for your cat.*

## ***The Thurgoona Conservation Management Advisory Group***

Membership of the Advisory Group represents a diverse group of stakeholder interests. The group provides ongoing expert advice and uniformity in managing the implementation of the Thurgoona Threatened Species Conservation Strategy.

Albury City  
Albury Area Aboriginal Community  
Albury Rural Lands Protection Board  
Albury-Wodonga Corporation  
Charles Sturt University  
David Sexton. Thurgoona resident & landholder  
Department of Environment & Conservation

Department of Lands  
Glenda Datson. Horticultural Consultant  
Ian Davidson. Independent Biologist  
Parklands Albury-Wodonga  
Riverina College of TAFE  
Roads and Traffic Authority

