The Running Postman

Newsletter of the Private Land Conservation Program

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Building partnerships with landowners for the sustainable management and conservation of natural values across the landscape.

Department of
Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Tasmanian Government

Manager's **message** – June 2016

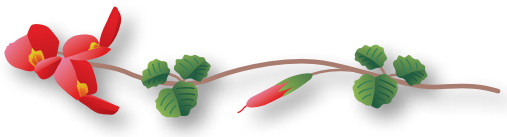
Recently I had the good fortune to sit with a few covenant owners as they discussed their experiences with fire on their reserves at the Conservation Landholders Tasmania '*Ecological Burning: research and practice*' forum in Campbell Town. When I arrived the meeting was already started and the room was abuzz with people sharing experiences and insights. The things that struck me about the discussions I heard was firstly the genuine concern these people had for the long term conservation outcomes for their land, and second the really effective way that a simple discussion became a way for peers to learn practicalities from each other.

The meeting was a great success and I congratulate the organisers for their insightful and intelligent approach to engaging with the audience. It is rare that such a competent group form together as volunteers to provide such a valuable forum.

I am fortunate indeed to be able to witness not just the success of CLT, but also the returning groundswell of interest for the sustainable and respectful management of Tasmanian landscapes and environments. The recent fires in wilderness areas remind us of the vulnerability we have to climatic conditions as we plan for the long term adaptiveness of our environment. These fires whilst disastrous in themselves, are a timely reminder to refocus on planning, understanding and prioritizing our approach to emergency management.

Our offering in this edition provides insights into some of the wildlife that depends on conservation reserves across the state and provides examples and opportunities for readers to connect with likeminded land managers. I encourage you to continue to find wonder in the bush around you and to share your experiences with others in the conservation community.

Peter Voller,
Manager, Natural Values Conservation Branch



In this **Issue**

The Running Postman *is printed on Monza Satin recycled paper, derived from sustainable forests, elemental chlorine free pulp and certified environmental systems.*

On the cover: Tasmanian masked owl (Tyto novaehollandiae castanops). Photo: Michael Todd. Design and layout: Land Tasmania Design Unit, DPIPWE.

Let us know

your email and updated contact details

An effective way for us to make contact with landowners about potential funding opportunities and alerts is via email. Recently we used email to contact Land for Wildlifers (LFW), Garden for Wildlifers and owners of conservation covenants requesting help with finding plantings of the primary host of the disease Myrtle Rust in Tasmania – the *Lophomyrtus*, a plant native of New Zealand and often planted in home gardens as an ornamental. A note sheet was attached showing what to look for and some photographs of *Lophomyrtus* species.

There was a good response with many people keen to help, which was greatly appreciated. However, we had quite a few emails that bounced back due to incorrect or no longer valid email addresses. Also, there were a lot of landowners for which we do not have a current valid email address.

Similarly, we recently contacted LFW and covenant landowners within an hour's drive of both Launceston and Hobart by email notifying them of a potential opportunity to get help with such activities as weed control, fencing or revegetation through assistance from a Green Army team. A funding application for a Green Army team is being put together for this with Expression of Interest from landowners being a key part of the submission to demonstrate the community interest in this proposal.

There has been a huge response from both LFW and covenant owners to this potential project if the grant application is successfully funded and it will be a great opportunity for landowners to get on-ground support with their land management.

Unfortunately we weren't able to let all landowners know about this potential opportunity because we don't have an email or valid email address for them. We are therefore asking if you could let us know your current email address and also if you have changed your postal address or contact number(s).

Rest assured we will not 'bombard' you with trivial or irrelevant emails, but wish to provide an effective means of letting you know about beneficial opportunities for you as they become available such as funding support, alerts, or call for help in order to contribute to the protection of our natural wildlife species and habitat.

Contact Iona Mitchell on **03 6165 4409** or email **iona.mitchell@dpipwe.tas.gov.au** to advise us of your email address or updated contact details.

Iona Mitchell and Helen Crawford

Photos (clockwise from top): Green Army revegetation work. Green Army – erosion control works. Weed control – Green Army. Photos: Manpower Group.

Birds, wasps and **wet sclerophyll forest**

Conservation Landholders Tasmania (CLT) continues to hold enjoyable, informative events for people who own conservation land, supported by NRM North, NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM, Landcare Tasmania, DPIPWE and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy.

In late November 2015 we spent a weekend on Bruny Island, staying in the shearers' quarters at Murrayfield Station. Our focus was on bird conservation, a topic close to the hearts of many CLT members. Sarah Lloyd led two early morning bird watching walks, alerting participants to bird species in the area and their calls. She assured us that, with enough practice, we could all learn to identify birds from their calls.

We heard from Sally Bryant about efforts to preserve forty spotted pardalotes on Bruny Island. She described the precarious state of this tiny bird: its white gum habitat is becoming depleted through drought and tree clearing, and its breeding success is curtailed by predation from sugar gliders. A survey in 2009-10 showed that numbers had dropped from 3500 in 1995 to 1400. The Bruny Island community is working to preserve its habitat, replant white gums and raise awareness of the birds' plight. Lee Prouse and Ben Sculthorpe, representing the Weetapoona Aboriginal Corporation, showed us the nest boxes that researchers are using to find the optimum nest box height for successful breeding.

We also had a fascinating time looking at stone artefacts and a stone quarry with Lee and Ben. They shared their passion for preserving the extensive Aboriginal cultural sites on Murrayfield Station.

Many conservation landholders have wet sclerophyll forest in their care so we made that the theme of the next field day in February. Well known botanist, Fred Duncan, increased our understanding of this forest type, which tends to grow in humid areas on fertile soils in the west and north east of Tasmania. The area of wet forest has been reduced considerably due to logging and clearing for plantations.

Wet sclerophyll forests have tall eucalypts in the overstorey and an understorey of small trees and shrubs. Generally they are too wet to burn except in exceptionally dry years such as 2015. When they do burn, the canopy can be destroyed, depending on the species present, and the ash bed created from burning leaf litter forms a rich substrate for thousands of new eucalypt seedlings to germinate. A mature wet sclerophyll forest is often made up of one or two age classes of eucalypts, with each age class derived from a major fire event. In the past wet forests have burnt every 80 to 300 years but there is concern that climate change may provide the conditions for more frequent fires.

Matt Rose described the stages he went through in getting to know and manage his wet sclerophyll forest that borders the Leven River. His photo sequence showed how in just three years he had regenerated the river bank after damaging floods. We all discussed ideas for controlling European wasps that are a particular problem this year. Matt uses insecticide dust with an active ingredient of Permethrin once he has found a nest. Baiting with the chemical Fibronil is also recognized as an effective treatment when nests cannot be found and several landholders were seeking permits to use this chemical to control wasps.

We ended the day walking through Philip Milner's beautiful wet sclerophyll forest near the Don River. We wandered amongst tree ferns in the shade of his tall, *Eucalyptus regnans*, and felt thankful that he and his neighbours have preserved a substantial forest corridor with their covenanted properties.

Robin Garnett

Photos (L to R): Lee Prouse showing aboriginal artefacts at Murrayfield Station. Photo: Robin Garnett. A Forty-spotted Pardalote from Bruny Island. Photo Stuart Smith. Philip Milner pointing out features of his wet sclerophyll forest. Photo Robin Garnett.

Have you ever thought about **fungi**?

Are you familiar with the EucaFlip and TreeFlip? These are very useful guides to take out into the bush as they are compact and weatherproof. Now there is the FungiFlip which contains lots of beautiful photos of many macro fungi species you may encounter when out walking in the bush or other places.

The FungiFlip is a pictorial guide with photos and Latin names for the fungi species unlike the EucaFlip, for example, which provides information on key identifying features for Tasmania's native Eucalypt species. Once you get your eye in however, and see just how beautiful, colourful and intricate many species are, you may need further information and resources to support your fascination.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria sponsor 'Fungimap' a National Australian fungi database where records of distribution, identification and additional information about Australia's fungi are stored. You can contribute to this database by submitting photographs along with details of where you found the fungi growing should you come across any interesting or unusual fungi. The Fungimap web site **www.fungimap.org.au/** contains the link to where you can send such photos. This web site also has lots of useful information about fungi and visual key for the major groups such as, clubs, corals, or brackets for example.

In 2005 the book 'Fungi down under – the Fungimap guide to Australian fungi' by Pat Grey and Ed Grey was published (this is available to purchase on the Fungimap web site). This book contains excellent close-up and in-situ photos along with descriptions of key identifying features, habitat and distribution for 100 'target' species selected to represent a wide range of fungi types. Another excellent guide also published in 2005 is 'A field guide to Australian Fungi' by Bruce Fuhrer which similarly provides a pictorial guide to the major groups for ease of homing in to the likely identification of a fungi species. The photographs are very clear and show the characteristic features along with brief but succinct descriptions of each species.

However, the most appropriate guide to get for Tasmanian fungi is 'A field guide to Tasmanian Fungi' by Genevieve Gates and David Ratkowsky which was published in 2014. Unfortunately it is now out of print, so if you do spy a copy for sale it is worth buying. It is likely that it may be reprinted perhaps later this year – let's hope so. The first part of the book provides guidance on how to identify fungi from such features as spore print colour, presence or absence of veils, whether there are gills on the undersurface of the cap, the shape of the gills if present or if there are pores. There are excellent keys to the genera of gilled fungi and a table which summarises the key features of the major genera. The photographs are beautiful and clearly show the identity of each species. There is a brief description for each species along with a fruiting season diagram which shows the months in which you are most likely to see the above ground fruiting bodies.

There is also an excellent Facebook page for Tasmanian fungi **www.facebook.com/tasfungi** where you can submit photographs for identification which more than likely will be identified by Genevieve Gates. Some very beautiful photos have been sent in which I am sure will spark an interest in looking more keenly for fungi.

Iona Mitchell

Photos (L to R): Podoscypha petalodes, Armillaria novae-zealandiae, Cortinarius archeri. Photos: Oberon Carter.

Tasmanian Masked owl

– more of a screech than a hoot

To many people the call of an owl is often associated with a gentle hoot hooting sound. There are some owl species which do make such calls. However, the call of the masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) is far less melodious and more akin to a high pitched screech not unlike the noise brush-tailed possums can make when they are having a dispute among themselves. It can be an alarming sound coming out of the darkness if you are in the bush and don't know what made the noise.

Masked owls occur in New Guinea and Australia and are the largest *Tyto* owl (barn owl) species in the world. In Australia there are four subspecies of masked owl: *Tyto novaehollandiae melvilliensis* (Tiwi Island - which occurs on Melville and Bathurst Island of the Northern Territory north coast), *T.n. kimberli* (Northern masked owl which occurs along the top end of Australia from the NT to north Queensland); *T.n. novaehollandiae* (Southern masked owl) and *T.n. castanops* (Tasmanian masked owl which is endemic to Tasmania).

The Tasmanian masked owl is the largest subspecies with a body length of around 47 to 51 cm and wingspan of up to 1.28 m. Females are larger than males and are also darker in colour.

The plumage of the Tasmanian masked owl is brown or chestnut with speckled spots, with paler underparts and facial feathers formed into a rounded almost heart shaped disc with chestnut to white feathers ringed by a darker border of feathers. The blackish-brown eyes and cream coloured bill are also ringed with darker feathers, giving the appearance of a mask. The powerful legs are feathered down to the feet with greyish-brown to yellowish-grey toes and dark brown sharp talons.

The favoured habitat for masked owls is eucalyptus forest and woodlands, especially where these have a relatively open understorey or adjoin areas of cleared open land where they can hunt for prey. A key requirement for masked owl habitat is that it contains old mature trees with hollows having an entrance diameter ≥ 15 cm for nesting and roosting. They may also take advantage of large hollows in isolated paddock trees. Suitable hollows to accommodate such a large bird and their offspring can take more than 150 -200 + years to form. The protection and retention of trees with large hollows is extremely important for the survival and successful breeding of masked owls. They may also nest and roost in caves. The other key habitat requirement is that there is a suitable abundance of prey species.

Masked owls are nocturnal, sleeping during the day in their nest or roosting in dense canopy, emerging at night to fly to a perch site where they watch and wait for an unsuspecting prey. They may preen themselves to tidy feathers ruffled while they were sleeping. They will also defecate and regurgitate a tightly bound pellet made up of indigestible matter from their previous meal, such as bones or fur. Characteristically, faeces are white coloured splats which can be found under their favoured perch sites.

Masked owls feed mostly on small mammals, such as bandicoots, rabbits, possums, potoroo, rats, mice, but will also take birds such as sparrows and starlings. When they detect prey they silently swoop down capturing their prey with their powerful sharp talons which kill the prey. The leading edges of the feathers on the wings have 'mufflers' which create silent flight.

They may also feed on fresh road kill, placing themselves at risk of becoming road kill.

The eyes of masked owls are forward facing and tubular shaped which allow stereoscopic vision. The shape of the eyes also allows more light to enter the eye enabling them to have excellent vision in low light or at night. They also have good daylight vision adjusting their eyes to the brighter light. The tubular shape of the eye has limited movement within the socket. To compensate for this they can rotate their head 270° left to right and at least 90° up and down.

Vision is used in hunting for prey, but mostly they rely on their acute sense of hearing to listen for the movement of prey rustling in the leaf litter, or even in snow. The ears of masked owls are slightly off-set in that one ear is higher than the other. The ruff of the facial disc is made up of special feathers which point in two different directions. The facial disc and ruff feathers act to trap sound and direct it to the ears. Depending on the direction, sound will hit different parts of the face and ears at different speeds and hence be detected at slightly different times by the left and right ear. Owls will bob or move their head until the sound is heard in both ears at the same time. When this occurs they know the prey is in front of them.

Birds pair for life and remain within the same territory. In Tasmania, breeding generally occurs during spring and early summer, but can be all year round if conditions are favourable. Two to three white eggs are laid in the nest. The female is the one who incubates the eggs while the male does the hunting, bringing food back to feed her and the chicks after they hatch. The eggs hatch after about five weeks and it takes a further 10 to 12 weeks before they can fly. The fledglings are still dependent for a few more weeks as they learn to hunt for themselves. It is estimated that there are around 500 breeding pairs in Tasmania.

Masked owls in Tasmania and elsewhere in Australia are listed as a threatened species predominantly due to loss of habitat, especially areas containing mature trees with hollows, and increasingly secondary poisoning from the use of rodenticides.

They are majestic birds if you have the good fortune to see one, but they are very good at remaining hidden. Surprisingly, there are very few verified records of nest sites. If you think you have masked owls nesting on, or near your land, let the DPIPWE Threatened Species Section know by phoning: **03 6165 4340** or email: **ThreatenedSpecies.Enquiries@dpipwe.tas.gov.au** Information on masked owls and how you can help protect the species can be found on the Threatened Species Link **www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/masked-owl-(tasmanian)**.

The Bookend Trust has produced a short video on masked owls where you can listen to their calls, see the type of pellets they regurgitate and learn about their habitat requirements. Go to **www.youtube.com/watch?v=P35OyL2kbWA**.

Iona Mitchell

Photos (L to R):
Tasmanian masked owl nesting in a sandstone cave. Photo Michael Todd.
Tasmanian masked owl nest in tree hollow. Photo Helen Crawford.
Lighter colour morph of the Tasmanian masked owl. Photo Michael Todd.
Facial disc showing 'mask'. Photo Michael Todd.

Australia's **extraordinary birds**

Recently some excellent books have been published that provide great insights into the behaviour, ecology and evolution of birds.

First in your wish list should be Sarah Lloyd's new book, ***The Feathered Tribes of Van Diemen's Land***. It is available at good book shops for $30, or email Sarah at **sarahlloyd@iprimus.com.au**. Most of Tasmania's approximately 104 terrestrial and shore birds are dealt with, in chapters such as "Garden Birds", "Bush Birds", "Birds on Farms", and "Birds of Sea and Shore". This allows her to delve into the patterns within groups, as well as the contrasts between similar species.

For example, her section on cuckoos reveals they are fascinating birds. All four species breed by slipping their own eggs into the nests of other bird species, with the cuckoo hatchling pushing other eggs or chicks out of the nest. While this may seem deplorable, cuckoos are important ecologically because they feed on the hairy caterpillars that most other birds avoid. Sarah explains how cuckoos are able to deal with the hairs and toxins of this unpleasant prey.

Who hasn't had trouble distinguishing between the Brown Thornbill and the endemic Tasmanian Thornbill, and the Scrubtit and Tasmanian Scrubwren? Sarah explains how their different foraging niches and feeding strategies can help to tell them apart. And at last, a hint on how to tell drab-plumaged Dusky Robins from females of the other species – Dusky Robins are slightly larger and do not flick their wings when they land.

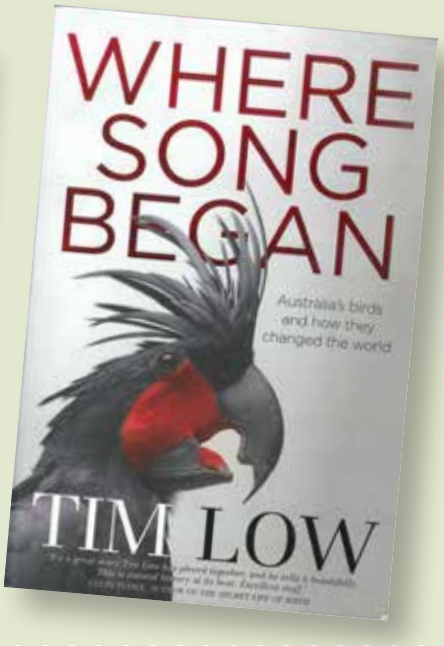
The book makes the links between broad principles and particular species. Because it is an island, "Tasmania has only about a quarter of the bird species found in equivalent areas in Victoria and some familiar and widespread mainland species such as sitellas and treecreepers are absent. Nevertheless, Tasmania's bird fauna is interesting because of the high percentage of endemic species and sub-species that have evolved and adapted to fill the foraging niches left vacant because these birds don't occur in Tasmania. For instance, the Scrubtit forages on bark in a similar way to sitellas and treecreepers".

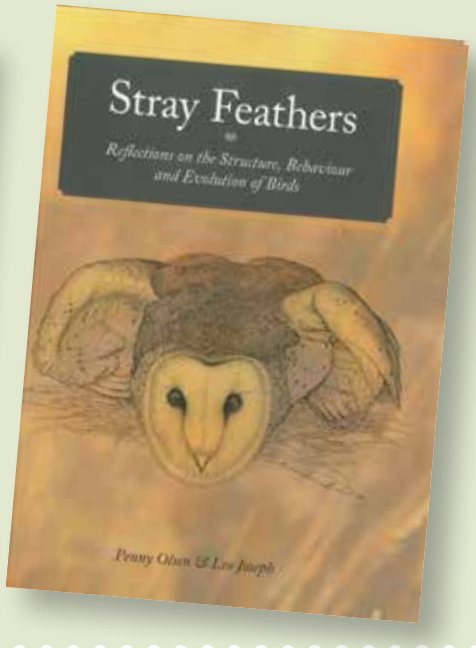
There is a wealth of tit-bits throughout, such as the way some birds use "anting" to control parasites, either by sitting in a swarm of ants, or by actively clasping an ant in the bill and rubbing it over the feathers, presumably because of the formic acid or other repugnant fluids. Apparently even cigarette butts have been used in this way.

In other sections, the book provides advice on finding and identifying birds, attracting birds to the garden (don't overdo the hybrid grevilleas, which attract the aggressive large honeyeaters at the expense of smaller birds), threats and good ecological practices to encourage birds.

With beautiful photographs and historical references, easy to read and illuminating, this is a book that would make a great present for anyone.

Tim Low, with his book, ***Where Song Began***, (RRP $32.99) takes Australia's birds and tells how they changed the world, namely by the evolution here of songbirds, parrots and many pigeons which spread and evolved to make up more than half the world's birds. This concept is so radical that it has taken the scientific world some time to catch on. "The birds in northern Europe





and northern North America, where most ornithologists live, have unusually narrow habits, limited by severe winters… Our sense of what the world's birds are like was skewed by these northern birds…. This distortion was so strong that as recently as 1996 we can find an article… depicting most of the world's birds as unusual".

Here in Tasmania, we are all used to seeing yellow wattlebirds attack and chase other birds, but have you ever realized that this level of inter-specific aggression is extremely unusual in the world? Elsewhere, aggression tends to be limited to pairs of the same species defending territories. In Australia, the abundant sweet treats available in our trees, of nectar, manna and lerps, means that they are worth defending vigorously against all comers. Our birds are also more likely to live in complex societies, lead long lives, and be intelligent and loud. Reading this book gives you much to think about when next you look at the goings-on between birds in your neighbourhood.

In typical Tim Low fashion, this book is packed with thought-provoking information, backed by notes and comprehensive references, while maintaining a readable, dynamic style. He says "Australia's birds break every 'rule', and in every possible way. Male bowerbirds do nothing to aid the young they sire, instead pouring all their energy into boudoirs kept for sex. At the other extreme are large miner groups, where many males bring food to one nest." "Extreme behaviour in birds is more likely in Australia than anywhere else because its songbirds have been diversifying for so long… "You can have a picnic … and what you are seeing is something like 50 million years of bird evolution from your picnic table".

Amongst the big concepts, there are heaps of amazing stories about our birds. Australia leads the world in cooperative breeding, with birds like choughs, wrens and babblers staying with their parents for a while to help raise the next clutch of chicks in a communal effort. In fact, white-winged choughs even commandeer the help of non-related choughs, and "come closer than any non-human (apart from ants) to practicing slavery". I'll leave to you to get the book and read all about that.

This is a book to re-read many times.

And thirdly, I'd recommend ***Stray Feathers - Reflections on the Structure, Behaviour and Evolution of Birds***, by Penny Olsen and Leo Joseph, if for nothing else but the exquisite drawings. This book delivers its learnings in bite-sized chunks of one or two pages, each with an illustration. Whether you are interested in evolution or not, you can learn about how little penguins "fly" through the water, and how storm-petrels are "oil-powered" as they concentrate food into high-energy oil that takes up less volume and allows them to fly long distances as they forage for their chicks. The wedge-tailed eagle has a vice-like grip, said to be over ten times more powerful than that of the human hand, even though the eagle only weighs three or four kilos, due to the ratchet mechanism of its tendons. There are stories of courtship, the anatomy of beaks and other body parts, birds that use tools, cooperative behaviour (such as pelicans hunting together to drive fish and trap them) and much more.

Anna Povey

Photos (L to R):
Dusky robin. Shining bronze-cuckoo with hairy caterpillar.
Photos: Sarah Lloyd

Wasp management in Tasmania

Many people have been noticing large numbers of introduced wasps around Tasmania this autumn. The dry spring may have contributed to high numbers, as fewer nests would have been flooded. Colonies are usually annual, but, with Australia's milder winters, some colonies survive the winter intact, growing even bigger in their second year. Some nests here may reach 100 times the size that they do in Europe. The biggest nest ever found was dug up at Karoola near Launceston last year (**www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-02/world-biggest-wasp-nest-found-on-a-property-in-northern-tas/6367536**).

European Wasps, *Vespula germanica*, in Australia were first recorded at Hobart in 1959 and more recently, English Wasps, *V. vulgaris*, arrived in Tasmania about 1995. These two species are difficult to tell apart but the former is more common and widespread.

Remember that these introduced pests should be distinguished from the various Tasmanian native wasps, such as the Flower Wasp, *Thynnus zonatus*, which is more slender and a solitary species that does not bother us (though they will sting if handled).

Conservation landholders are increasingly concerned about European wasps' impact on native invertebrates, as they attack and consume many of our native invertebrates to the degree that they can greatly reduce abundance and diversity. Although there are records of echidnas sometimes eating wasp larvae, wasps have almost no predators or parasites in Australia.

Land for Wildlife member, Matt Rose, decided to tackle the wasps around his forest property. He diligently tracked wasps (once they have fed, they fly in a straight line back to their nest, and can travel up to 500m) and found 25 nests within 500 metres of his house.

Matt says, "If you can trace the location of the nests, they are easily controlled using an insecticide dust with an active ingredient of Permethrin (Yates Ant and Roach Dust is what I use, available from most supermarkets). The treated meat baits used when you can't find the nests include the active ingredient Fipronil. Wines Tasmania are the contact for Fipronil baits."

Natural alternatives are also possible, if you can find the nest. Soapy water (e.g. 2 tbsp dishwashing liquid in a litre of water) may kill the wasps, as it drowns them (but don't attempt this till dark and **BE VERY CAREFUL!** – nest control is highly dangerous and may provoke wasps to attack. Multiple stings can be life threatening).

Trap stations with insecticides and meat bait, done well, can be very targeted and extremely effective, as the wasps themselves take the insecticide back to the nest. It is important to follow the instructions and observe the trap carefully once it is set up to ensure that native animals can't access it.

It appears that the most positive results with wasp control are being achieved with small amounts of slower-acting fipronil insecticide within a meat bait in a bait station. New Zealand is further down the track of making available such targeted baits for conservation land

(**http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-17/european-wasp-bait-effective-keeps-bees-safe/6946482**)

although a similar bait is now available here through Wine Tasmania (winetasmania.com.au/news/article/fipronil_wasp_bait_permit_approved_for_wine_tasmania).

****Important note:** Agricultural chemicals, including insecticides are not to be used for any purpose or in any manner contrary to the label unless authorised. Before using a chemical, read and follow instructions for use on the label. For information on registered chemicals and current permits, visit the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) website **www.apvma.gov.au**.

For further information, contact Anna Povey (**0498 800 611**). If you have a conservation covenant, please ring Anna before using insecticides in your reserve.

General information on European wasps is available on the DPIPWE web site **http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity/plant-biosecurity/pests-and-diseases/european-and-english-wasps**.

Anna Povey

Photos (L to R): European wasp (Vespula germanica) on leaf. Native flower wasp (Thynnus zonatus) feeding on teatree. Photo Anna Povey.

Myrtle Rust Update

In February 2015 the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment commenced an eradication program to rid Tasmania of an incursion of the myrtle rust plant disease. This rust fungus has spread from central and southern America to infect Myrtaceae in Australia (first detected in New South Wales in 2010) and recently Tasmania (first detected in 2015). This rust is notable for its ability to infect and cause disease in a wide range of Australia's Myrtaceae, though the risk to individual species varies widely and is greatest in the tropics and subtropics of Australia. Tasmania's climate is predicted to be marginal for myrtle rust and this has played out in only a single taxa, cultivars of the New Zealand *Lophomyrtus* genus showing signs of disease outside of the nursery environment. These include the common garden plants Black Stallion™, Red Dragon™ and Rainbows End™.

Symptoms of disease include bright yellow powdery patches on the last few centimetres of soft growing tips. Other garden species that are infected in Victoria include willow myrtle, lillypilly, Bottle brush, NZ Christmas bush, Chilean guava (Tazzieberry™), paperbarks.

A concerted effort to eradicate myrtle rust continues in Tasmania, however disease outbreaks in gardens continue to be found, reflecting the difficulty of controlling a wind dispersed plant pathogen. In 2016 Myrtle rust has been found in the north of the state from Wynyard in the West to Launceston in the East, however not all towns have recorded rust infections. Fortunately no evidence to date has been found of myrtle rust infecting Tasmania's native plant species in gardens, commercial forestry or reserves. This is consistent with a lack of observations of myrtle rust causing disease in Victorian native vegetation.

It is expected detections of myrtle rust will dissipate as the cool conditions of winter suppress emergence of disease symptoms. However, disease symptoms are likely to emerge again in the beginning of 2017 when conditions warm up again.

Ongoing vigilance for symptoms of myrtle rust will help with the control of this disease. Particularly if you have *Lophomyrtus* cultivars in your garden, regularly checking these and other Myrtaceae for yellow rust spores on the last 4 or 5 cm of soft new growth will be of assistance. If symptoms are observed please do not touch or disturb the plants and contact the myrtle rust hotline on: **6165 3785**. Yellow rust fungi can also be found on other plant families but these are not myrtle rust. If in doubt it is good to check. For more information and updated alerts for myrtle rust go to the DPIPWE Biosecurity website **www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity/plant-biosecurity/pests-and-diseases/myrtle-rust**

Tim Rudman,
DPIPWE Biosecurity
Monitoring Section

Photos (L to R): Lophomyrtus plant (variety 'Black Stallion') with typical Myrtle rust symptoms of yellow pustules. Photo DPIPWE. Spraying plants with a bonding agent to hold the spores prior to removing plant.

Conservation Landholders Tasmania: next event

Conservation landholders are welcome to participate in the following event:

Saturday 8 October 2016: ***Safe and Effective Use of Herbicides on Conservation Properties***

CLT will hold a field day on the theme of *Safe and Effective Use of Herbicides on Conservation Properties*. It will be held at Nabowla, near Scottsdale, in the north east. The principal presenter will be Sean Guinane of Integrated Catchment Services who works both in Tasmania and Victoria. The morning will be spent at the Nabowla Community Hall and in the afternoon we will visit 'Dunbarton', a nearby conservation property owned by Peter and Lorraine Riggall.

To join the CLT email contact list, email
Robin Garnett **robin@rubicon.org.au** or
John Thompson **thompsonjohng@gmail.com**.
Invitations are sent out to those on the list a month before each event.

Private Land Conservation Program participants as at June 2016

Number of covenants	807	98,582 hectares
Land for Wildlife members	917	57,192 hectares
Gardens for Wildlife members	556	2,798 hectares

Please note that some landowners are registered with more than one program and there is some overlap in the figures presented.

Post or email

Just a reminder that if you would prefer to receive your copy of *The Running Postman* by email please **contact the PLCP** on **6165 4409** or **iona.mitchell@dpipwe.tas.gov.au**

Selling property?

If you have a conservation covenant over your property and are thinking of selling, you should keep in mind that anyone involved in the sale process (e.g. agents, lawyers) need to be informed of the covenant and its implications.

Prospective buyers and new owners must also be informed of the covenant on the property title so that they can factor this into their decisions.

A covenant may appeal to particular purchasers and should be promoted as a valuable aspect of the property. Stewardship Officers are happy to talk to prospective buyers regarding the natural values and how to manage them in accordance with your agreement.

We often find that buyers of Land for Wildlife (LFW) properties are keen to enter the program so that they can get involved in more active conservation management.

We therefore also ask LFW owners who are selling to notify us so that we can make contact with the new owners and see if they would like to keep the property in the program.

Contacts

Stewardship
Anna Povey (North) **0498 800 611**
Andrew Cameron (North) **0417 361 998**
Oliver Strutt (South) **0407 352 479**

Land For Wildlife
Iona Mitchell **6165 4409**

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