

Submission on the South-West Cypress State Forests

Introduction

With 80 – 95% of the central –west wheat belt plains and riverine woodland cleared for cropping and pasture, State Forest are often the only native vegetation left and as such have become valuable islands of woodland, that is vital for maintaining ecological and bio-diversity in the central west. Many state forests though small in size and isolated, form important refuges for wildlife, as well as forming important depth to corridors or to providing buffers to critical vegetation communities and protected areas.

Threats

The active management in the '70 by the State Forest meant that many species of trees was ring-barked to encourage *Callitris glaucopylla* regrowth (example **Strathorn SF and Wombin SF**). This practice has now stopped, though management of *Callitris* still continues (thinning) and harvesting. Other threats to State Forest's are overgrazing by stock (sheep and goats) (**East Cookery's Plains SF**), introduction of weeds, wood getters and to a lesser degree motor bikes and rubbish dumping (**Cookamidgera SF**). **Limestones SF** is being infringed on my mining operations.

Vegetation Communities

State Forest's is important as a refuge for wildlife and have communities of *Callitris*, *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia*. They are also critical for the survival of many isolated vegetation species such as *Phebalium obcordatum* (**Coradgery SF**), Snowy Mint-bush *Prostanthera nivea* and Slender Sun-orchid *Thelymitra pauciflora* (**Monumea Gap SF**) to name a few.

Some of the best examples of threatened communities, Fuzzy Box, Grey Box (**Back Yamma SF**) and White Box (**Mulyandry SF, Killanbutta SF**), Blue Mallee (**Blue Mallee SF**) are ecologically critical to the region is found in State forests. The forests have examples of plant communities (see Figure 1.) that are important remnants or endangered communities or species at the end of there distribution (either western or eastern) **Gunningbland SF, East Cookery Plains SF**. The importances of these state forests should not be under estimated.

It is important to note that many of the threaten vegetation communities listed under the Threaten Species Conservation Act 1995 can only be found in State forests as is many threatened species.

The **Wilbertroy SF** SW Forbes is an example of a forest that has important remnants of riverine woodland of River Red Gum, Grey Box and Belah, being part of the flood plain from Lachlan River to Lake Cowal, This forest is surrounded by the Jemalong Irrigation area. **Gunebang State Forest** is comprised of Black Box and River Red Gum woodland on a flood plain of the Lachlan River. Good stands of Gum-barked Coolibah, Grey Box, Popular Box, Green Mallee communities can found in **Tottenham SF** which is isolated by cleared cropping land but forms an important linkage to the Bogan River..

Forests such as **Warraderry SF** and **Kangaroooby SF** north of Grenfell, are an important linkages to Weddin Mountain National Park and Conimbla NP and the Lachlan River an then to Goobang NP. These are important for not only linkage between the National Parks, but also as buffers (**Bimbi SF and Weddin SF**) increasing the woodland around important communities of Red Stringybark, Red Ironbark, Grey Box and White Box communities.

Mt Nobby SF is an important buffer to an isolated mallee (Woggoon) Nature Reserve north of Condobolin. **Coradgery SF** W Peak Hill has a stand of Grey Box considered to be in or near to pristine condition with an undergrowth of Streaked Wattle *Acacia lineata*. Spur-winged Wattle *Acacia triptera* and *Phelipium obcordatum*. Red Ironbark and White Box are also present

Cocopair South SF s of Rankin Springs, adjoins Cocopair NP and is and important corridor to Lachlan River along with the **Lachlan Range SF**. Grey Box, Red Ironbark, Currawang and Rankin Springs *Grevillea Grevillea glabella* can be found in these state forests. Other state forests for important habitat along Gunning Range.

Boxall/ Wyrra/ Back Creek SF south-east of West Wyalong are important state forest in the Lake Cowal region and provided essential corridors and habitat with communities of, Red Ironbark, Grey Box, Belah and Bull-oak. . For many of these species to survive into the future requires active management by State Forests.

Fauna

State Forest being the last and largest remnants of woodland in the region makes them important for the future survival of many species of fauna within the region.

The natural dense stands of White Cypress Pine is important for many species of birds that require thickets to survive for feeding or nesting. i.e. Eastern Yellow Robin, White-browed Babbler. Thinning makes this habitat unsuitable and as such a varied density and age structure of White Cypress woodland is required to maintain the bio-diversity of species Gilbert's Whistler *Pachycephala inornata* in such woodlands.

Many of the state forest have isolated populations of threaten species (see Figure 3.) such as Gilbert's Whistler, Turquoise Parrot *Neophema pulchella*, Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata*, (**Back Yamma SF** and **Warranderry SF**). Many forests have isolated population such as Variegated Fairy-wren *Malurus lamberti* race *assimilis*, (**East Cookery Plains SF**).

Species have become extinct in some state forests in recent years, such as the Crested Bellbird *Oreoica gutturalis* from **Back Yamma SF**, Splendid Fairy-wren *Malurus splendens* race *melanotus* from **Blowclear West SF**). Endangered species such as Major Mitchells Cockatoo *Cacatua leadbeateri*, Mallee fowl *Leipoa ocellata* are still to be found in **Tottenham SF** and **Caroline SF**.

The forests are also important for migrating and nomadic species such as Superb Parrot *Polytelis swainsonii*, Regent Honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia* and Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*.

All the species identified by Reid (1999) as decliners (see attached list 2) are to be found in state forest woodlands and such are essential if woodland species are to remain part of the landscape.

Conclusion

The future survival of many species in the region, require the retention and ecological management of remaining woodland communities found in state forests.

The major point is that all state forests in the Central west are important ecological communities to maintain the floristic and fauna vital to the biodiversity of the local landscape, region and state.

References

David Paton and James O'Connor 2010 The State of Australia's Birds 2009 Birds Australia

Julian R.W. Reid 1999 Threatened and Declining Birds in the NSW Sheep-wheat Belt

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Figure 1. Important Eucalyptus Species and Communities

Red Stringybark *E. macrorhyncha*

River Red Gum *E. camaldulensis*

Gum-barked Coolibah *E. intertexta*

River Red Gum *E. camaldulensis*

Yellow Box *E. melliodora*

Fuzzy Box *E. conica*

Black Box *E. largiflorens*

Bimble Box *E. populnea*

Grey Box *E. macrocarpa*

Red Box *E. polyanthemos*
Red Ironbark *E. sideroxylon*
Red Mallee *E. socialis*
White Mallee *E. dumosa*
Blue Mallee *E. polybractea*
Green Mallee *E. viridis*
Dwyer's Red Gum *E. dwyeri*
Currawang *Acacia doratoxylon*
Weeping Myall *A. pendula*
Buloke *Allocasuarina luehmannii*
Belah *A. cristata*
Rosewood *Heterodendrum oleifolium*
Wilga *Geijera parviflora*

Figure 2. Bird Species Identified as decliners in the NSW Sheep-wheat belt and found in State forests

Emu
Painted Button-quail
Brown Treecreeper
Speckled Warbler
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
Inland thornbill
Southern Whiteface
Jacky Winter
Red-capped Robin
Hooded Robin
Eastern Yellow Robin
Grey-crowned Babbler
White-browed Babbler
Varied Sittella
Crested Shrike-tit
Crested Bellbird
Rufous Whistler
Restless Flycatcher
White-browed Woodswallow
Dusky Woodswallow
Diamond Firetail

Figure 3. Threatened Species found in State forests

Malleefowl
Square-tailed kite
Black-breasted Buzzard
Grey Falcon
Bush Stone-curlew
Squatter Pigeon
Glossy Black Cockatoo
Major Mitchell Cockatoo
Superb Parrot
Swift Parrot
Turquoise Parrot
Barking Owl
White-browed Treecreeper
Brown Treecreeper
Regent Honeyeater
Black-chinned Honeyeater
Painted Honeyeater
Black Honeyeater
Pied Honeyeater
White-fronted Chat
Jacky Winter
Hooded Robin
Grey-crowned Babbler
White-browed Babbler
Gilbert's Whistler

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