

The largest threat to the Powerful Owl is the loss of suitable tree hollows. This impacts directly upon nest sites and reduces possums which are the owl's main food source.



What Council will do

Council will work with the Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI), DSE, the universities, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Melbourne Zoo, and landholders, to develop species and ecosystem management plans.

Informed decision making is essential for sound environmental management, and much of Council's information is accessed through working in partnership with DSE and the Catchment Management Authority (CMA).

Council will develop appropriate habitat risk assessment procedures for staff or contractors conducting vegetation removal works on Council-controlled land, and ensure that relevant staff members have access to threatened species data.

Where vegetation removal is unavoidable, then there must be a program to offset this to ensure that no long-term decline in habitat that is available for threatened species will occur.

Two Eucalypt species, which are classified as Rare in Victoria, often form part of removal requests: Green Scentbark (*Eucalyptus fulgens*) and Yarra Gum (*Eucalyptus yarraensis*). Care needs to be taken in reviewing the identification of these trees as both these species have been misidentified as other, more common species. Council will ensure that a competent assessment of impact to threatened flora and fauna species or their habitat is completed with all permit applications involving vegetation removal.

Yarra Ranges Council will actively encourage DSE to increase pre- and post-cut auditing on all timber harvesting operations to ensure all precautions to protect waterways and threatened species habitat have been taken. Council will also actively encourage DSE to amend the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 to more effectively protect and/or manage threats to threatened species and their habitat on public and private land at both the forward planning stage (i.e. to minimise pre-emptive clearing) and during development assessments.

The Yarra Ranges Council supports pre-cut ecological surveys on logging coupes to adequately identify any areas of conservation concern, and to allow for best-practice planning of all coupes and timber harvesting methods.

The Yarra Ranges Council supports the use of timber harvesting practices that achieve the retention and long-term protection of habitat elements for native fauna species (i.e. the retention of hollow bearing trees for animals like Leadbeater's Possum and Powerful Owl), the retention of understorey flora for food and shelter and movement for native fauna.

Legal responsibility

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) – protects the environment, streamlines a national environmental assessment and approvals process, protects Australian biodiversity and integrates management of important natural and cultural places.

Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 – seeks to put in place preventative management mechanisms to ensure no biota or ecological communities become extinct and that the processes that threaten biodiversity are identified and addressed. The Act is far broader than 'endangered species' legislation, covering ecological communities; potentially threatening processes; and community involvement in conservation.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 – Planning schemes set out policies and provisions (land-use planning controls) for the use, development and protection of land for an area. Each municipality in Victoria is covered by a planning scheme. The Yarra Ranges Council Planning Scheme has strong emphasis in the Municipal Strategic Statement, Local Policies, Planning Overlays and Clauses relating to the importance of protecting indigenous flora, fauna and other biodiversity.



Yarra Ranges Council
Anderson Street
PO Box 105
Lilydale Vic 3140
1300 368 333
yarraranges.vic.gov.au



Action Sheet 6

Threatened species and vegetation communities

Related materials

Plans and Guidelines

Yarra Ranges Council Flora & Fauna Plan 2012: Sustaining biodiversity for current and future generations
Yarra Ranges Council Environment Department

Websites

- **EPBC Act**
 - <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/index.html>
- **General websites**
 - www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au
 - www.dse.vic.gov.au
 - www.dpi.vic.gov.au
 - <http://www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au/>
 - <http://www.vnpa.org.au/> Victorian National Parks Association
 - <http://leadbeaters.org.au> Friends of Leadbeater's Possum
 - <http://www.helmetedhoneyeater.org.au/> Friends of Helmeted Honeyeater:
 - <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/plants-and-animals/native-plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities/threatened-species-advisory-lists> Department of Sustainability and Environment Advisory Lists of Threatened Species:

Photo acknowledgements: Esther Beaton, Alex Maisey, Marilyn Grey



Threatened species and vegetation communities

1
Broad-scale
Habitat

2
Property
Habitat

3
Urban
Backyards

4
Waterways
& Wetlands

5
Fire

6
Threatened
Species

7
Weeds

8
Pest
Animals

Threatened species and vegetation communities

Vegetation removal and the introduction of pest plants and animals has led to a decline in indigenous flora and fauna, including freshwater aquatic invertebrates, and damage to our waterways.

Ecological principle: ecology of modified landscapes

Many vegetation communities throughout Yarra Ranges are now severely degraded or no longer exist because urbanisation, agriculture, forestry and weed invasion have changed the local landscape. To restore what has been lost, and stop further loss, we need to prevent threats to animals and their habitat, preserve water catchment areas and waterways, maintain soil quality, protect our present and future carbon storage and restrict impacts that will result in long-term ecological changes.

Much of the remnant vegetation of the Yarra Ranges contains a high proportion of ecologically mature forests of Ash or mixed-species forests. These forests are home to many of Victoria's threatened native fauna and flora species, including Leadbeater's Possum, forming significant biodiversity areas.

Any development in the Yarra Ranges can potentially have a negative impact on threatened species, but with careful planning these risks can be kept to a minimum.



The Brush-tailed Phascogale relies on large trees, logs and leaf litter to survive. The reduction in this type of habitat has seen a decline in their numbers making them vulnerable to extinction.

What is a vegetation community?

A vegetation community is part of an Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) — a classification system used to describe different vegetation types in Victoria made up of the combination of plant communities, forest types and physical environments (e.g. landform, geology, rainfall, climate) that occur in similar types of environments. EVCs can also be used as a guide to the types of animals and other organisms that are likely to occur in those environments. There are approximately 300 EVCs in Victoria, 48 of which are in the Yarra Ranges. The majority of these EVCs have been exposed to significant vegetation clearance and other threats, which currently place them at risk of extinction. At least 16 of these EVCs have a conservation status within the bioregion of either Endangered, Vulnerable, Depleted or Rare.

Flora and fauna goals

Goal 1 PROTECT

Retention of all indigenous vegetation (including trees, shrubs and grasses) is recognised by Council as being important. Removal of vegetation causes the decline of indigenous fauna and compromises the way the ecosystem functions to provide abundant clean water and healthy soil, and maintain the current climate. Vegetation loss has led to the continual threat of extinction to many species of flora and fauna.

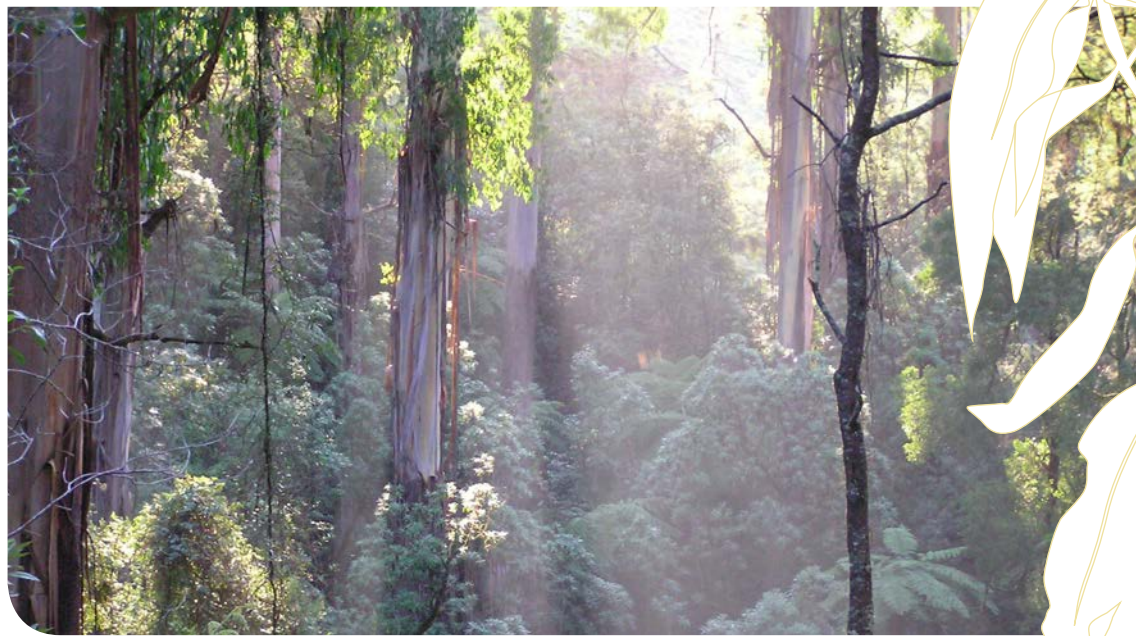
This goal, to retain and protect our existing flora and fauna, employs the priority principle of avoiding any further loss of indigenous vegetation. This principle is consistent with the Victorian Native Vegetation Management Framework and the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority's Native Vegetation Plan.

Goal 2 ENHANCE

The municipality has at least 1365 indigenous flora and 375 indigenous fauna species. Approximately 8% (108 species) of the indigenous flora species and approximately 17% (62 species) of the indigenous fauna species in the Yarra Ranges are listed as being 'Rare' or 'Threatened' in Victoria. These numbers do not include a huge number of invertebrates, fungi and soil organisms that have not been described or studied within the area. However, it is important to remember that the success of individual species of flora and fauna is reliant on their placement across the landscape, interactions at patch and landscape level, and the attributes of the habitat of the particular site.

Goal 3 RESTORE

The Yarra Ranges Council's primary focus is to retain and enhance existing vegetation across the municipality. Active management to improve flora and fauna in the municipality include encouraging successful natural regeneration of flora; revegetation of indigenous species to supplement missing structure or species within patches of remnant vegetation; the creation of suitable habitat linkages with revegetation; and increasing the size of remnant vegetation patches.



Goal 7 INFLUENCE

The majority of land in Yarra Ranges (68%) is under the direct control of State Government, over which the Council has no or little direct control or influence in respect of how flora and fauna are managed. However, as Council is the tier of government closest to its community, it has an important and legitimate role in advocating for appropriate land management outcomes on land outside of its control within the municipality. It is therefore paramount that the Council continues to engage in ongoing discussions with public land managers, particularly the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Parks Victoria, and Melbourne Water.

Council works in partnership with key groups to manage the environment and to advocate for the ongoing extension, protection and management of forest areas in National Parks and on other Crown land.

The Yarra Ranges Council supports long-term scientific research into the habitat needs and population distribution of native flora and fauna, independent scientific research into the impacts of forest-based industries and forest management practices on the habitat of threatened species.



Matted Flaxlily *Dianella amoena*

What you can do

Keep as much vegetation in your backyard as you can. Hollow-bearing trees are important homes for gliders, possums, parrots, owls, and bats. Understorey trees, shrubs and grasses provide habitat for small birds and mammals, such as bandicoots, and other animals.

Two types of trees in our area are rare: the Yarra Gum and the Green Scentbark. We need to protect these trees. Yarra Gums can be found in the Lilydale, Coldstream and Yarra Glen areas. Green Scentbark can be found in the Upper Yarra areas east of Wandin North.

Record any sightings of threatened plants or animals and report them to the Department of Sustainability and Environment to improve the knowledge of the locations or population sizes of these species.

By planting native plants and building a pond you can create an ideal habitat for native animals, especially frogs. Remove all weeds from your garden (**see Action sheet 7 Environmental Weeds**).

Keep your pets under control (**see Action sheet 8 Pest Animals**), as they can kill birds and other native animals.

Join one of the local fauna watch groups, friends groups, Victorian National Parks Association and other similar programs.

Ensure no nutrient rich or contaminated water is allowed to enter waterways or other sensitive habitats (**see Action sheet 4 Waterways**).

Cobra greenhood

