

## Progress report – *Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037*

Victoria's biodiversity plan is being delivered through the collective effort of Traditional Owners, government, partner agencies, individuals, organisations and communities.

On this page

- Keeping the natural environment healthy
- Protecting our threatened species
- Victorians valuing nature
- Since the plan began

Launched in 2017, *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037* is Victoria's plan to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve our natural environment.

The plan is underpinned by two goals – *Victoria's natural environment is healthy and Victorians value nature*.

The plan sets out ambitious statewide targets and contributing targets for both goals.

Annual *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037* progress reports offer a snapshot of how Victoria is performing against the targets. This includes the contributions made by government and non-government organisations that are working to improve the natural environment. Significant progress has been made in the past five years towards these targets, despite the challenges of climate change, the 2019-20 bushfires and COVID-19. The action being undertaken is delivering tangible outcomes for the environment and improving the outlook for our native plants, wildlife and landscapes. We are working towards achieving our Biodiversity 2037 targets, but we still have a long way to go to stop biodiversity decline in Victoria. We all need to continue working together – across government, business, the community and Traditional Owners – to ensure that we have a healthy environment to support a healthy society.

View examples of Victorian Government initiatives supporting biodiversity and threatened species [here](#).

## Goal – Victoria’s natural environment is healthy

*Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037* has five targets for on-ground management to protect biodiversity.

These landscape-scale activities benefit multiple species, including some threatened species, and aim to reduce the risk of other species becoming threatened.

The targets focus on hectares of action in priority locations.

Our [Strategic Management Prospects](#) tool is used to identify priority locations and actions that provide the highest potential return on investment for biodiversity.

### Biodiversity 2037 targets for on-ground action



**4 million hectares of pest herbivore control** per year  
in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations



**1.5 million hectares of pest predator control** per year  
in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations



**1.5 million hectares of weed control** per year  
in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations



**200,000 hectares of revegetation**  
in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations by 2037,  
on average 10,000 hectares per year



**200,000 hectares of new permanently protected areas**  
on private land by 2037, on average 10,000 hectares per year

The progress figures are a compilation of data from organisations across the environment sector that are working to protect Victoria’s biodiversity.

This includes Traditional Owners, DEECA and other government agencies, not-for-profit organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals. While the

Victorian Government is a major contributor to all of this work, many of the projects from which this data is derived are funded from other sources.

## **Pest herbivore control: Giving landscapes the chance to recover and thrive**

- **About 2 million hectares of pest herbivore control achieved in both 2020-21 and 2021-22 – an area 10 times the size of Port Phillip Bay.**
- **Management of feral pigs, goats, horses, rabbits and wild deer has increased every year since 2018-19 in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations, reaching 1.6 million hectares in 2021-22.**
- **Pest control activities are delivered in partnership with other government agencies, Traditional Owner organisations and private landholders.**

## **Controlling wild deer and feral pigs is healing UNESCO World Heritage site after fire**

On Gunditjmara Country in south-west Victoria, the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape contains one of the oldest and most extensive aquaculture systems in the world.

The Gunditjmara have used these systems to harvest eel and fish for at least 6,600 years.

The wetlands and surrounding environment provide valuable habitat to native species. Several critically endangered orchids and the Plains Yam-daisy grow here. The Yam-daisy is a traditional food source.

The 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires burned 68 per cent of the landscape. Work has been underway since, to regenerate the Manna Gum woodlands and help native plants and animals recover.

Wild deer are especially damaging after fire because they trample and feed on new growth and damage Manna Gum saplings.

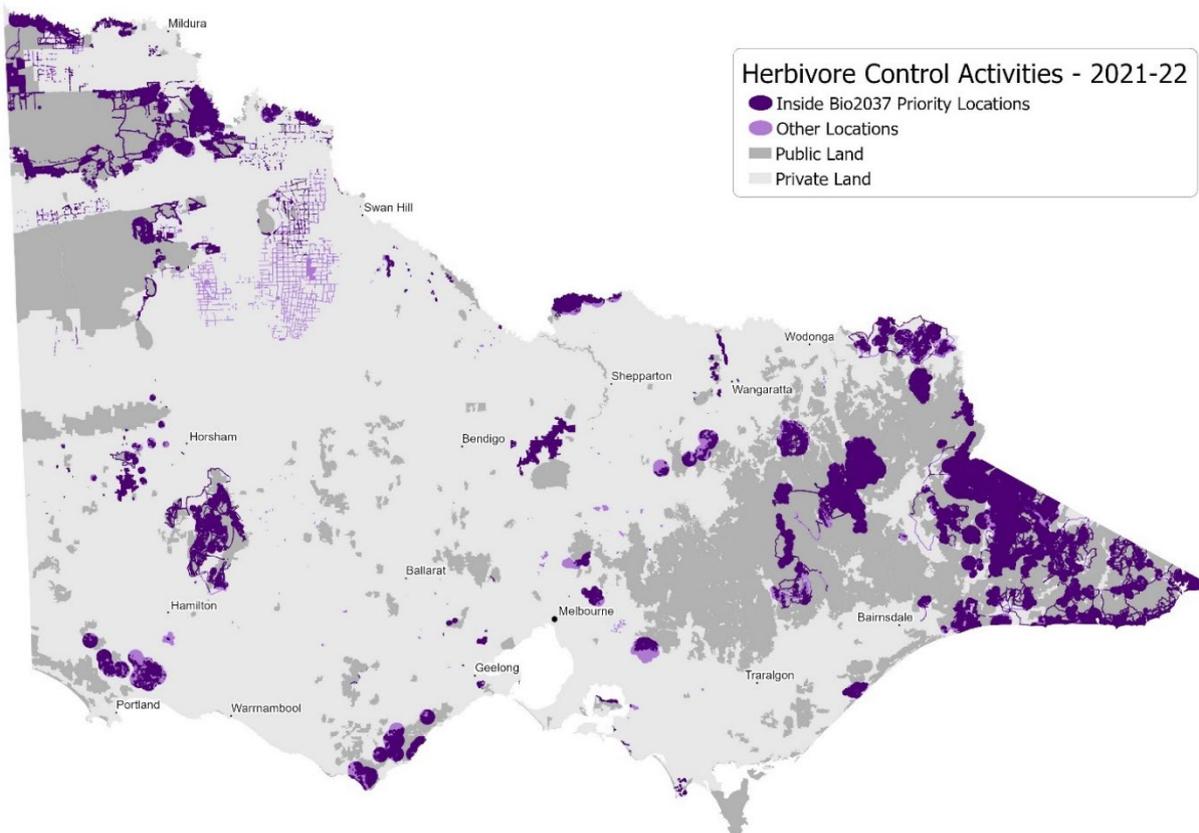
Feral pigs damage native plants, degrade the wetlands, and threaten the ancient aquaculture systems and other important cultural sites.



Manna Gum woodlands in Budj Bim

The collaborative invasive species control involves DEECA, Parks Victoria, Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation is helping this globally significant place to heal, protecting it for future generations.

### Statewide progress: Pest herbivore control



## **Pest herbivore control**

- Wild deer
- Feral horses
- Feral pigs
- Feral goats
- Rabbits

### **Annual target:**

4 million hectares in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations

**Table: Area (hectares) of pest herbivore control across Victoria to 2021-22**

<b>Annual progress*</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
<b>Priority locations (ha)</b>	327,382	888,757	1,470,578	1,632,390
<b>Other locations (ha)</b>	225,730	785,381	749,063	311,717
<b>Statewide total (ha)</b>	553,112	1,674,138	2,219,641	1,944,107

\*These progress figures are a compilation of data from organisations across the environment sector. While the Victorian Government is a major contributor to this work, many of the projects from which this data is derived are undertaken by others

Recent program announcements by the Victorian Government will continue to drive progress toward this target. These include the [Peri-urban Deer Control Plan](#), [East Deer Control Plan](#) and [West Deer Control Plan](#), continued support for community-driven action including [Landcare](#) and \$32 million for 36 large-scale conservation projects announced in 2022 and 2023 under the Protecting Biodiversity Program.

## **Pest predator control: Safer habitat for native mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs**

- **Over 1.8 million hectares of fox and feral cat control completed in 2021-22 – an area almost twice the size of Greater Melbourne**
- **We partnered with Traditional Owners to deliver pest predator control and post-fire recovery works**
- **Our 'Ark' projects – Glenelg, Grampians and Southern – are landscape-scale, multi-partner projects to reduce fox numbers across large areas of the state, to benefit wide ranges of native mammals, birds and reptiles.**

### **Reducing fox numbers in East Gippsland to protect native fauna**

Far East Gippsland is a hotspot for native animals – many of which are rare or extinct in other parts of Victoria. These include the Long-footed Potoroo, Long-nosed Bandicoot and Southern Brown Bandicoot.



Left: Setting up field cameras in east Gippsland to detect native animals and pest species  
Right: A Southern Brown Bandicoot captured on a field camera

The European red fox is a significant predator for these marsupials. Foxes also prey on livestock and have the potential to spread exotic diseases.

To combat these problems, our [Southern Ark](#) project is reducing the fox population across 1 million hectares of land.

Funded by our [Weeds and Pests on Public Land](#) program, the research, baiting and monitoring project started in 1995 and covers state forest, national parks and private land across the entire eastern wedge of Victoria, from the Snowy River Valley to Cape Howe.

Recent projects include completion of broad-scale camera monitoring, where cameras were deployed for a 35-day period across 693 sites. This was the second full survey of Southern Ark sites since the 2019-20 bushfires, repeating a similar survey carried out in 2021.

In 2022, Long-footed Potoroos were detected at 259 sites, indicating a strong recovery post-fire. Other species displaying promising recoveries were Long-nosed Bandicoots and Southern Brown Bandicoots.

Overall, this monitoring shows that populations of a wide range of mammal, bird and reptile species are recovering well post-fire (and post-drought that preceded the fires), which can be attributed to sustained fox control.

The Southern Ark project is delivered by DEECA in partnership with Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, Moogji Aboriginal Council, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, Deakin University, Gippsland Intrepid Landcare and Far East Victoria Landcare.

## Statewide progress: Pest predator control

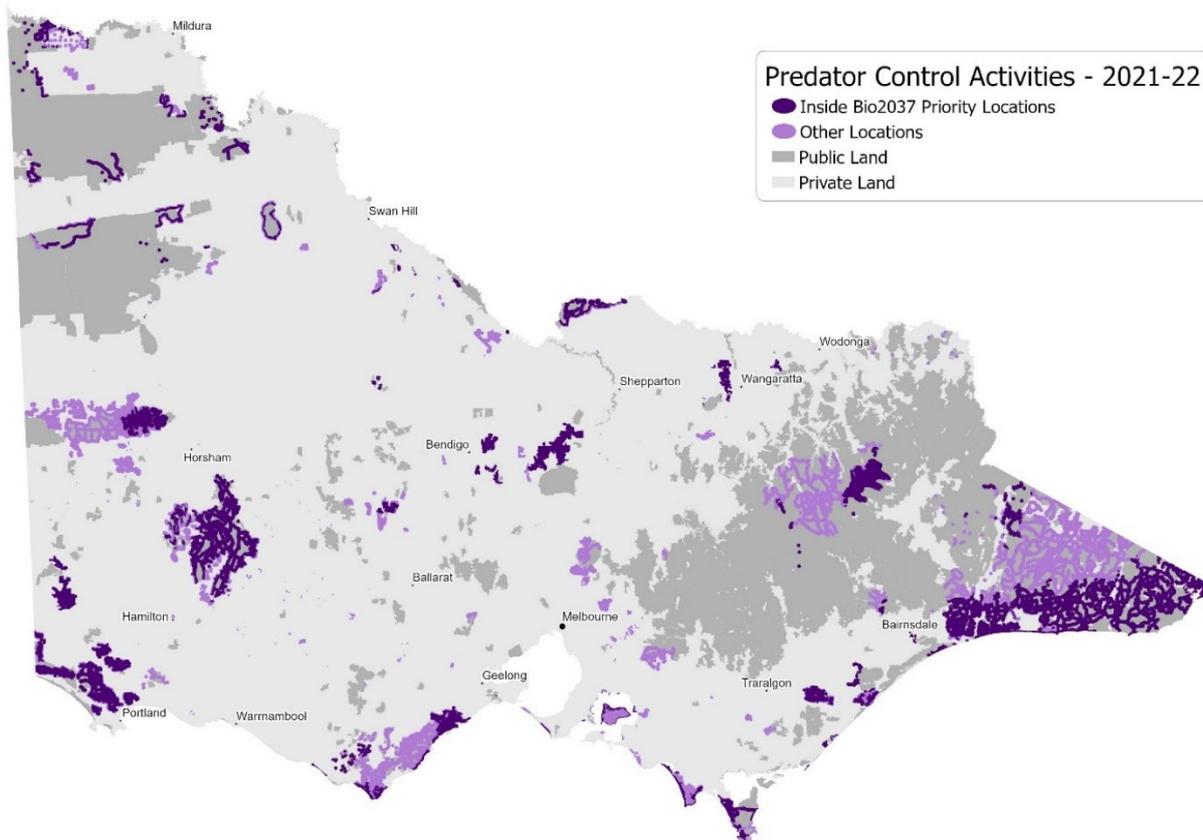


Figure: 2021-22 activity data, pest predator control

### Pest predator control

- Foxes
- Feral cats

#### Annual target:

1.5 million hectares in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations

**Table: Area (hectares) of pest predator control across Victoria to 2021-22**

Annual progress*	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Priority locations (ha)</b>	823,735	865,328	1,042,706	923,168
<b>Other locations (ha)</b>	1,092,497	1,239,892	1,130,012	896,134
<b>Statewide total (ha)</b>	1,916,232	2,105,220	2,172,718	1,819,302

\*These progress figures are a compilation of data from organisations across the environment sector. While the Victorian Government is a major contributor to this work, many of the projects from which this data is derived are undertaken by others

Recent program announcements by the Victorian Government will continue to drive progress toward this target. This includes \$32 million for 36 large-scale conservation projects across Victoria announced in 2022 and 2023 under the Protecting Biodiversity Program.

## Weed control: Stamping out pest plants to help native species grow

- In 2021-22, we controlled weeds across over 600,000 hectares – more than 3 times the size of Port Phillip Bay. Over half of this was in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations.
- The area of weed control in priority locations in 2021-22 was over 5 times greater than in 2018-19.
- Our 'Eden' projects – Otway, Central Highland and Glenelg – focus on the detection and removal of high-risk weeds that threaten biodiversity values.

### Controlling weeds to protect native species in the Glenelg region

A long-running conservation project in south-west Victoria is helping native plants and animals to thrive by stopping the spread of weeds.

Funded by our Weeds and Pests on Public Land program, the [Glenelg Eden project](#) removes weeds across 90,000 hectares of public land to improve habitat and give vulnerable species such as the Blotched Sun-orchid and long-nosed potoroo the best chance to survive.



Woody weed removal in the Glenelg Eden project

Operating since 2008, the project is led by DEECA Barwon South West and delivered with Parks Victoria and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

More than 87 unique weed species invading the region are targeted. Weed control has been done on over 195 infestations in national and state parks and forests, with the area recently expanded to include the Annya State Forest.

The project is continually improved to better assess and prioritise which infestations to target, so that investment is used efficiently to achieve the best outcomes.

Highly targeted action to remove common climbing-aloe has improved the herb-rich woodlands, heathy woodland and lowland forests of the Mt Clay State Forest, home to the critically endangered small-flower grevillea.

Controlling and eradicating weeds is one part of a broader strategy to restore the landscape. The [Glenelg Ark](#) fox control project complements Glenelg Eden by reducing the number of European red foxes that prey on native animals.

Comprehensive monitoring measuring the reduction of weeds and foxes shows that these two projects benefit many native plants and animals, including the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot, vulnerable White-footed Dunnart and vulnerable Blotched Sun-orchid.

## Statewide progress: Weed control

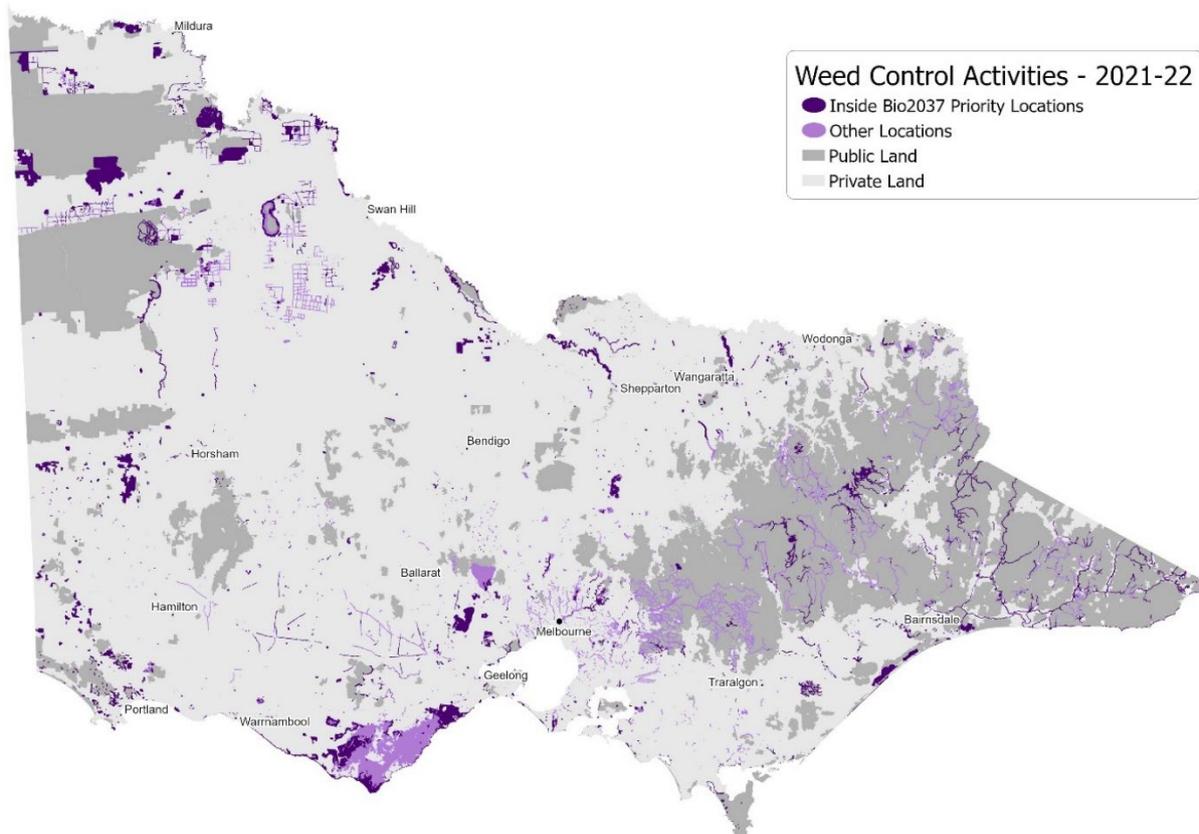


Figure: 2021-22 activity data, weed control

### Weed control

#### Annual target:

1.5 million hectares in *Biodiversity 2037* priority locations



**Table: Area (hectares) of weed control across Victoria to 2021-22**

Annual progress*	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Priority locations (ha)</b>	69,726	201,857	400,583	352,387
<b>Other locations (ha)</b>	150,302	382,765	336,306	263,615
<b>Statewide total (ha)</b>	220,028	584,622	736,889	616,002

\*These progress figures are a compilation of data from organisations across the environment sector. While the Victorian Government is a major contributor to this work, many of the projects from which this data is derived are undertaken by others.

The Victorian Government's recent program announcements will continue to drive progress towards this target. These include the \$10 million Nature Fund, continued support for community-driven action including Landcare and \$32 million for 36 large-scale conservation projects announced in 2022 and 2023 under the Protecting Biodiversity Program.

## Revegetation: Planting trees for a greener future

- **14,000 hectares revegetated since 2017 – over 20 times the size of Melbourne CBD.**
- **As well as benefitting native species, revegetation also helps reduce carbon emissions, control erosion and improve water quality.**
- **The Victorian Government is investing \$30.9 million to revegetate and restore at least 20,000 hectares of native habitat across private land in Victoria. That's an area 10,000 times the size of the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) that will be transformed into healthy habitat for native wildlife.**

### Improving habitat for woodland birds and animals through revegetation

Taking action to reconnect land and increase the quality of habitat for native plants and animals on the northern plains and slopes of Victoria.

Funded by our [Biodiversity Response Planning](#) program and led by Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, revegetation was carried out between 2019 and 2022 in Box-Ironbark Forests to link up public and private land.

These landscapes had become fragmented due to land clearing for farming and introduced weeds and pests that destroy habitat and prey on native animals.

Improving corridors of vegetation helps the Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot, Squirrel Glider, Brush-tailed Phascogale, Grey-crowned Babbler and the listed Threatened Woodland Bird community by providing uninterrupted habitat and food sources.

However, direct seeding and hand planting alone is not enough to protect these threatened species.

Rabbit, fox, goat and weed control was also undertaken to give new plantings the chance to thrive and stop predators from harming wildlife. These threats were managed across 13,600 hectares of private and public land.

To further support natural regeneration, fencing was installed to protect some areas from livestock grazing.

This coordinated approach was delivered collectively by state government agencies, farmers, Landcare, conservation and environmental volunteer groups, invasive species management specialists, Traditional Owners and local businesses.

These on-ground actions exceeded expectations by revegetating over 500 hectares - five times the area initially planned.



Revegetation to link Box-Ironbark Forests on public and private land

## Statewide progress: Revegetation

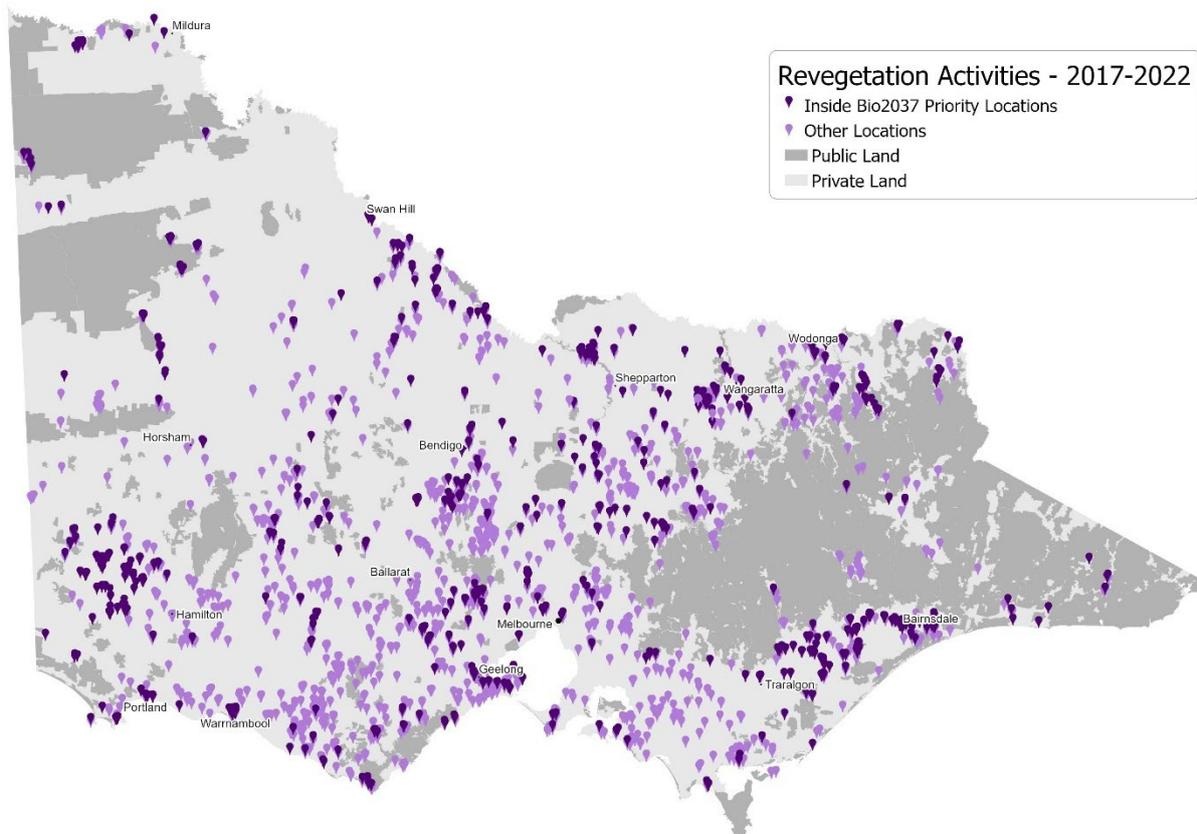


Figure: 2017-22 cumulative activity data, revegetation. Locations shown are indicative and have been enhanced for readability.

### Revegetation

#### Target:

200,000 ha in Biodiversity 2037 priority locations by 2037



**Table: Cumulative area (hectares) of revegetation since 2017 across Victoria to 2021-22**

Cumulative progress**	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Priority locations (ha)</b>	63	74	3,374*	3,695
<b>Other locations (ha)</b>	7,211	9,061	10,202	10,274
<b>Statewide total (ha)</b>	7,274	9,135	13,576	13,969

\* Increase in priority locations 2019-20 to 2020-21 partly due to change in method

\*\*These progress figures are a compilation of data from organisations across the environment sector. While the Victorian Government is a major contributor to this work, many of the projects from which this data is derived are undertaken by others.

The Victorian Government's recent program announcements will continue to drive progress toward this target. These include the \$77 million [BushBank](#) program, the \$10 million [Nature Fund](#) and continued support for community-driven action including [Landcare](#).

## **Permanent protection: Securing Victorian nature for future generations**

- **Two-thirds of land in Victoria is privately owned.**
- **Trust for Nature secured 40 new conservation covenants in 2021-22, covering an area 3.5 times the Melbourne CBD.**
- **The Iconic Estates and BushBank programs are supporting the permanent protection of more areas of private land in Victoria.**
- **The new exemption from land tax introduced in 2023 for land protected by a conservation covenant will make it easier for private landowners to protect important areas of nature.**

### **Connecting semi-arid landscapes in the north west**

National Parks provide critical habitat for our native plants and animals. Approximately 18 per cent of land in Victoria is included in our parks and reserves system, while about 62 per cent is privately owned. Working to permanently protect private land with unique biodiversity values is the important role of Trust for Nature.

Established in 1972, Trust for Nature (Victoria) is a not-for-profit organisation that works with private landholders to place voluntary conservation covenants on properties with high biodiversity values.

One of these special places now under permanent protection is the Bank Australia Conservation Reserve, a 2,117-hectare group of properties on Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Country in the Wimmera district of north-west Victoria. In 2021, a further 1,190 hectares was added to the reserve, about half of which is currently protected with a conservation covenant.

The reserve provides vital habitat for 225 native plant and 234 native animal species. Threatened species include the Tufted-grass Tree, Slender Cup flower and Buloke, and animals such as the south-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Diamond Firetail, Fiery Jewel Butterfly and Growling Grass Frog.

The reserve also forms an important habitat corridor adjacent to Little Desert National Park, allowing species to move across the landscape and enhancing the health and climate resilience of local ecosystems.

The impact of colonisation and agriculture means this land has a legacy of land degradation. Bank Australia has partnered with the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, the Country Fire Authority, Greening Australia and Trust for Nature to manage the reserve, including cultural heritage surveys, cultural burning, planting of over 180,000 native plants and restoring and improving over 600 hectares of previously cleared land.



Bank Australia Conservation Reserve. Credit: Jess Gardner



Left: Diamond Firetail. Credit: Jennifer Goldsworthy.

Right: Red Capped Robin. Credit: Jennifer Goldsworthy.

## Statewide progress: Permanent protection



### Permanent protection

#### Target:

200,000 ha across Victoria by 2037

#### Table: Cumulative area (hectares) of permanent protection since 2017 across Victoria



Cumulative progress**	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Statewide total (ha) *</b>	3,601	5,373	8,103	10,460

\* Locations of permanent protected areas are not shown to maintain landholder privacy

\*\*These progress figures are a compilation of data from organisations across the environment sector. While the Victorian Government is a major contributor to this work, many of the projects from which this data is derived are undertaken by others.

In 2023, the Victorian Government announced a land tax exemption for land protected with a conservation covenant through Trust for Nature to come into effect from 1 January 2024. This will support progress towards the permanent protection target by making it easier for private landowners to protect important areas of nature.

## Protecting our threatened species

*Biodiversity 2037* partners go to great lengths to look after our threatened species – from rafting down rivers to collect seed, to captive breeding and release programs.

Some threatened species need targeted assistance, as they don't receive enough benefit from landscape-scale actions like pest animal or weed control.

Here are some examples of work happening across the state to make sure our threatened species have a positive future.

### Orange-bellied Parrot



## Orange-bellied Parrot

*Neophema chrysogaster*

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG) listing: Critically Endangered



The Orange-bellied Parrot is one of only three migratory parrots in the world. Not much larger than a budgerigar, the parrots spend winter feeding along the coasts of Victoria and South Australia, before flying to Melaleuca in south-west Tasmania every summer to breed.

### What's being done?

In 2016, fewer than 50 Orange-bellied Parrots existed in the wild. The National Recovery Team urgently needed to determine the best way to release captive-bred Orange-bellied Parrots to bolster the wild population.

The team began trialling four different release methods simultaneously, and in 2019 partnered with DEECA to conduct a [Specific Needs Assessment](#).

This process helped the team have more confidence that the best course of action was to release a higher number of young captive-bred birds to help the population grow.

The changed strategy has already helped the wild population grow. For the past four years, over 100 orange-bellied parrots have made the northern migration.

A population that had been declining for 40 years is now growing, and in autumn 2023, 139 parrots were estimated to be leaving Melaleuca to begin their annual migration to the mainland.

### How can you help?

- Join a [volunteer bird count survey](#) through Birdlife Australia
- If you manage coastal property with orange-bellied parrot habitat, contact your local Catchment Management Authority, council or DEECA regional office to learn what support and funding may be available

## Plains-wanderer



## Plains-wanderer

*Pedionomus torquatus*

FFG listing: Critically Endangered



Plains-wanderers are elusive birds found primarily in Victoria's Northern Plains Grasslands in north-central Victoria.

As the only surviving member in their branch of the evolutionary tree, there is nothing quite like them anywhere else on earth.

Much of the range of the Plains-wanderer overlaps with land used for agricultural practices. As such, most of their habitat has been removed or is now less suitable. Looking after the places they call home today is a critical part of their recovery.

### What's being done?

Government agencies, Traditional Owners, non-government organisations and private landholders are working together across public and private land to help the species recover. They are creating suitable habitat and managing agriculture to retain suitable habitat for plains wanderers.

As a result, Plains-wanderer numbers have increased and there are now two stable breeding populations in northern Victoria, the best result for more than fifteen years.

A captive breeding program involving the Werribee Open Range Zoo is also being trialled. Several wild birds have been brought into captivity and bred since 2018.

Adult birds that have been bred at the Zoo are being experimentally released and monitored to determine a strategy where captive-bred birds could help to further boost numbers in the wild. Birds are being monitored using audio and thermal imaging, and capture-recapture methods.

A genetic analysis will provide further information about the population.

### **How can you help?**

- Sign up to the [Plains-wanderer Song Meter citizen science program](#) and help identify calls
- Attend a [Friends of Terrick Terrick National Park](#) planting day
- Volunteer to [help Parks Victoria conduct nocturnal surveys](#) of Northern Plains Grasslands
- If you live near a native grassland or reserve, keep your cat indoors



## Spotted Tree Frog

*Litoria spenceri*

FFG listing: Critically Endangered



In Victoria, Spotted Tree Frogs are restricted to remote mountainous river systems in the state's north-east.

Threats to the species include disease caused by chytrid fungus, and more frequent and severe fires associated with climate change. Predation by trout, a non-native fish, is a further challenge.

The [2019-20 bushfires](#) impacted much of the Spotted Tree Frog's range. Bushfires can result in direct death of frogs, but the challenges for the frogs continue long after the fires are out. The spread of disease is enhanced, and waterways are clogged with ash and sediment following rain on the bare, fire-affected hillsides, altering the frog's breeding habitat.

### What's being done?

Victoria's [Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery](#) program has helped protect the frog's future. Populations were monitored to understand the direct and indirect impacts of the fire and clarify disease status in the frogs. Remote populations were accessed by helicopter. The monitoring has informed the way we manage threats.

Control of deer in the area following the fires helped native plants recover. This in turn is supporting healthy waterways and frog populations.

At one important site, anglers have been helping by removing trout to reduce the threat to the frogs.

A new captive breeding program led by [Zoos Victoria](#) has been established to look after small numbers of individuals from at-risk populations. It has produced more

frogs to increase numbers back in the wild. The program is helping restore and re-establish this species as its habitat recovers.

### How can you help?

- Record frog calls with the [FrogID](#) or [Frog Census](#) apps – scientists listen to the calls and the data informs the protection and conservation of frogs.

## Eastern Barred Bandicoot



## Eastern Barred Bandicoot

*Perameles gunnii*

FFG listing: Endangered



A small endangered nocturnal marsupial, the Eastern Barred Bandicoot was once widespread across the grasslands and grassy woodlands of western Victoria.

In the 1980s, the last remaining Eastern Barred Bandicoots were found in a rubbish tip near Hamilton.

Thanks to the incredible efforts of the recovery team, volunteers, government agencies and other partners, this species is now making a comeback.

### What's being done?

A captive breeding program over many years helped return these wonderful marsupials to the wild. Bandicoots were released into fenced fox-free reserves within their original range in south west Victoria.

More recently, they have been released onto the fox-free Phillip, Churchill and French Islands, while others were released into farmland protected by Maremma dogs and into a fox and cat-free area on private land near Skipton. The captive breeding program was so successful in restoring bandicoot numbers, it is no longer needed.

In 2021, the species had their [conservation status changed](#) from extinct in the wild to endangered. This was the first time in Australia a species has had its conservation status improved from 'extinct in the wild'. The reclassification is a step in the right direction.

Yet, there is more work ahead to secure the species' future. The current focus is on increasing the genetic diversity of Eastern Barred Bandicoots by introducing new genetics from a close relative, the Tasmanian Eastern Barred Bandicoot. This will make Victoria's bandicoots more resilient to a rapidly changing environment due to climate change.

### How can you help?

- Join [Conservation Volunteers Australia](#) as they monitor bandicoots and protect their habitat.

## Snowy River Westringia



## Snowy River Westringia

*Westringia cremnophila*

FFG listing: Endangered



Snowy River Westringia is a silver-grey shrub that occurs only on steep cliffs in the Snowy River Gorge in north-eastern Victoria. It is threatened by droughts and fires.

### What's being done?

The species faced extinction when its entire range was burned in the 2019-20 bushfires. Experts from Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) went to extraordinary lengths, rafting 100 km along the Snowy River to search for remaining plants. Of the estimated 500 plants surveyed before the fire, only 60 survived.

Cuttings from five plants are being grown in RBGV's living collection. These flowered for the first time in January 2023, but as yet no seed has set on plants in cultivation. More seed and propagation material will be collected on a future trip.

Seeds from other fire affected species are stored in the [Victorian Conservation Seed Bank](#). The seed bank is providing insurance in the event of future environmental disasters.

### **How can you help?**

- Learn more about the work of the [Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria](#) to save threatened plant species.

## **Goal: Victorians value nature**

All Victorians play an important role in protecting our native species and natural environment. Connecting with nature is also good for our health and wellbeing.

Encouraging more Victorians to connect with and act for nature are key goals of *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*.

Evidence shows that people who have a greater connection with nature are more likely to value nature and take action to protect the natural environment.

Regular online surveys collect information about how Victorians are connecting with and acting for nature.

### **Partnerships and learning together are key**

DEECA is working together with many organisations to understand how to foster more connection to nature and encourage people to do more actions more often. Partners include:

- BehaviourWorks Australia at Monash University
- BirdLife Victoria
- Coastcare Victoria
- Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability
- Environmental Protection Authority
- Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporation
- ICON Science at RMIT University
- Landcare Victoria
- Parks Victoria
- Phillip Island Nature Parks
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Remember the Wild
- RSPCA Victoria
- Sustainability Victoria
- Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities
- Trust for Nature
- Vic Catchments
- Victorian Landcare Program
- Zoos Victoria

## Biodiversity 2037 annual targets for Victorians valuing nature

	All Victorians <u>connecting with nature</u>
	5 million Victorians <u>acting to protect</u> the natural environment
	All Victorian Government organisations that manage environmental assets contribute to <u>environmental-economic accounting</u>

### Victorians connecting with nature

- 86 per cent of Victorians surveyed said they spent time in nature at least once a month.

#### Statewide progress: Victorians connecting with nature

#### Victorians connecting with nature

##### Annual target:

All Victorians connecting with nature

**Table: Per cent of Victorians who are connected to nature for 2018-19 to 2021-22**



Annual progress	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Statewide total (%)</b> Victorians who report a moderate to high connection with nature	64%	64%	66%	64%

## Victorians acting for nature

- Victorians have achieved the annual target of 5 million people acting for nature.
- 173,629 volunteers across 1,998 groups donated 1.4 million hours for nature in 2021-22.
- Nature volunteers contributed \$63 million in value to Victoria's economy in 2021-22.
- Citizen scientists play a key role in our work to protect and manage Victoria's land, waterways, vegetation and wildlife.
- Experts have identified 5 **priority action areas** that provide easy ways for all Victorians to take action and have the greatest outcomes for biodiversity.



*Priority behaviours - important ways Victorians can take action to directly help protect biodiversity*

## Local heroes helping Hooded Plovers at the beach

*Thinornis rubricollis rubricollis*

FFG Listing: Vulnerable

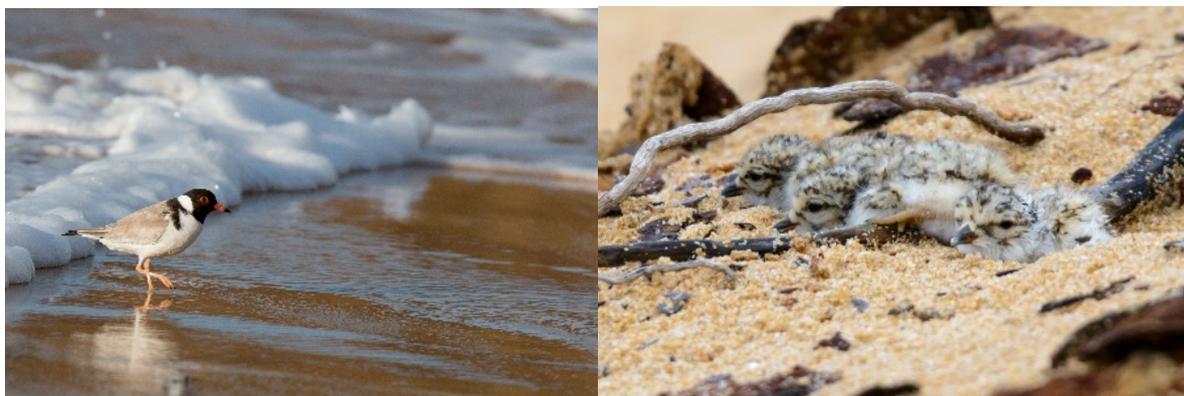


Photo credit: Mark Lethlean (Friends of the Hooded Plover Mornington Peninsula Inc)

Hooded Plovers are petite, beautifully coloured shorebirds and can be spotted foraging in the sand between wave sets, feeding on invertebrates.

Unfortunately, coastal development, weeds and introduced predators like foxes are impacting their homes. Disturbance from people, dogs and horses also pose a risk to eggs and hatchlings during nesting season. Off-leash dogs disturbing or attacking birds are a major threat to the species.

Since 2006, dedicated volunteers across Victoria have helped protect and monitor Hooded Plovers through BirdLife Australia’s [Beach-nesting Birds Program](#).

Volunteers put up signage and protective fencing to look after nesting sites, and also educate the broader community about how to enjoy their local beach without disturbing nests and hatchlings.

Alongside landscape-scale programs to control foxes and weeds, these volunteer ‘Plover lovers’ are helping to significantly improve the outlook for this species. In the 2021-22 breeding season in Victoria, 66 hooded plover chicks fledged.

### How can you help?

- Look for and follow the instructions on beach signage during Hooded Plover nesting season (August to March)
- Join your local [Hooded Plover volunteer group](#)

### Statewide progress: Victorians acting for nature



#### Victorians acting for nature

##### Annual target:

5 million Victorians acting to protect the natural environment

**Table: Number of Victorians who act to protect nature**



Annual progress	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Total across Victoria</b> Number of Victorians doing at least one priority action that helps to protect the natural environment	5 million	5 million	5.45 million (82% of the population)	5.6 million (84% of the population)

## Accounting for the environment

- **Environmental-economic accounting helps reveal the links between natural capital, society and the economy.**

### What is environmental-economic accounting?

Environmental-economic accounting is an integrating framework to report on the inventory of environmental assets and the services they provide in our society and economy over time, along with transactions involving spending on the environment.

Since *Biodiversity 2037* was released, DEECA has applied environmental-economic accounting to support key government policy, planning and investment decisions affecting the environment, including a recent assessment of the value of our forests.

### What are our forests worth?

Two Victorian reports have been published on the value our forests.

The first report estimated the value from forest ecosystem assets and services. These include timber, providing water and regulating flows, stored carbon and climate regulation, preventing erosion, as well as recreational and cultural value.

The second report looked at the impact of the 2019-20 bushfires on these values.

#### [Read the reports](#)

This work informed the modernisation of Regional Forest Agreements, and provided new, Victoria-specific information on how bushfires can impact natural capital.

In 2023 the Victorian Government announced a cessation of timber harvesting in native forests from 1 January 2024.

DEECA will work with Commonwealth agencies to support a formal, ongoing approach to environmental-economic accounting at the national level.

For more information on DEECA's approach to environmental-economic accounting, please visit [Accounting for the environment](#).

## Since the plan began

Our shared journey since the launch of the *Biodiversity 2037* plan in 2017 has included many significant initiatives, investments and milestones.

Recent program announcements will continue to drive progress toward the targets by controlling threats and improving and protecting habitat for biodiversity.

These include the [Peri-urban Deer Control Plan](#), [East Deer Control Plan](#) and [West Deer Control Plan](#), the \$77 million [BushBank](#) program, the \$10 million [Nature Fund](#), more than \$1 million further funding to [Icon species](#), continued support for

community-driven action including [Landcare](#) and the [Protecting Biodiversity Program](#) that has allocated \$32 million for 36 large-scale conservation projects across Victoria in 2022 and 2023.



The Frequently Asked Questions include more information about Biodiversity 2037 targets and data.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) 

## Previous Progress Reports

<a href="#">2020 Progress Report</a>	
<a href="#">2019 Progress Report</a>	
<a href="#">2018 Progress Report</a>	