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Birds on Farms Info Day

Improving Habitat and Connectivity in the Farming Landscape for Birds in the Moore River Catchment



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On a perfect winter's day, about 20 people gathered at Calingiri Hall for Moore Catchment Council's Birds on Farms information day, as part of the State NRM funded project: Improving Habitat and Connectivity in the Farming Landscape for Birds in the Moore River Catchment. Ornithologist, Andrew Huggett*, gave a presentation of his bird work on the project. There was plenty of local knowledge within the audience as well. This was followed by a site visit to Sarah and Geoff Mason's excellent rehabilitated saline drainage lines, where the older plantings have been shown by Andrew's bird surveys to function in a similar way to remnant vegetation as habitat for birds.

Andrew has four key messages from his work in the Moore River catchment: (1) the high value of remnant native vegetation for bird habitat; (2) local bird communities are still reasonably diverse; (3) revegetation (planted vegetation) is providing important supplementary bird habitat, and; (4) there is good potential for re-connecting bush remnants with strategic plantings.

Andrew was asked the obvious question "but can't birds just fly from one patch of bush to another?" on the previous evening at his talk in Gillingarra. He explained how some species are reluctant to cross open ground due to the danger of predators. Connecting isolated patches of bush with corridors of vegetation allows these birds and other native animals to utilise larger and more diverse areas of habitat to live and breed. He showed real-life examples of how this can be achieved.

*Andrew Huggett has conducted numerous bird surveys in the sub-region through several different projects, including three projects with MCC. Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) paid for Andrew's services for the day, thanks to Greg Burrows and Marieke Jansen. NACC's contribution is greatly appreciated.

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