

# Koobabbie Farm

“Koobabbie” is a 6,885 ha wheat and sheep property in the Marchagee/Waddy Forest Districts of the northern wheatbelt of Western Australia and is owned and managed by Mrs Alison Doley AM.

“Koobabbie” was purchased from the Crown in 1906 by Alison’s grandparents.

The following table documents the profound changes that have occurred across the landscape of one farming property, “Koobabbie” in the space of just over 100 years.

Date	Events	Factors Facilitating Conservation	Factors Hindering Conservation
1906	Samuel Burton and Alice Mary Rudduck purchase “Koobabbie” from the Crown	Wide timber belts retained. Rocky hills, drainage lines and naturally saline areae not cleared	Clearing and cultivation of forest country commenced. Horse, sheep and cattle introduced.
1930’s	First sign of salinity near salt lake system appears. Major clearing completed.		
Late 1940’s	Samuel Arnold and Clarice Lavinia Rudduck assume management of “Koobabbie”		
1950’s	Coorow-Waddy Forest Pasture Improvement Group active	Pastures improved using legumes	Stocking rates increased
1960’s	John and Alison Doley (nee Rudduck) assume management of “Koobabbie” Drought	Use of mouldboard plough for spring fallowing ceased	Unfenced bush severely overgrazed by sheep and cattle
1970’s	Fencing of remnant vegetation commences. Purchase “Wandoa” 1,092 ha. Good season. Commodity prices improve. Coorow Wildflower Group forms. 1976 Drought begins	Use of disc plough ceased. Roy Casey commenced re-fencing farm. Local Nurseryman provides information on using local provenance for revegetation.	Labour unavailable for conservation work. Unfenced bush severely overgrazed by stock.
1980’s	1980 Drought ends. 1986 Waddy Forest Land Conservation District Committee (WFLCDC) formed. Purchase “Dudabar” 2,208 ha including salt lake system and rocky hill.	Roger Edmison introduces practice of ripping before planting trees. Wool prices increase, finance and labour available to increase fencing and tree planting. Bush on east block fenced. Seed collection for revegetation commenced on “Koobabbie”. Denis Saunders enrolled volunteers to keep checklist of birds sighted. Department of Agriculture research work on predators for lucerne flea and red mite began on “Koobabbie”	
1990’s	Greening Australia Grant trialling understorey species on 8 farms in WFLCD. Dr Stephen Davies surveys wildlife on :Koobabbie”. Roy Casey, fencer retires. A new species of <i>Eremophila</i> identified from “Koobabbie”. Named <i>Eremphila koobabbiensis</i> . Neil P Johns employed. He commenced a program of shooting to control Western Long-billed Corellas and Galahs to protect nesting hollows for Carnaby’s Cockatoo. The “Role of Networks’conference in Geraldton.	Purchase of air seeder facilitated minimum till.	Fencing of bush ceased for a time.

2000	Rabbits almost disappeared due to impact of Calici Virus. Regeneration in fenced areas can establish.	WFLCD NHT Grant to revegetate degraded road verges. 2662 seedlings planted on “Koobabbie” as part of Bush Corridor project.	
2001			
2002	Marchagee Catchment Group established.	Marchagee Catchment Bushcare Project Bush corridor planted with 7 kms fencing erected across the catchment.	
2003	Carnaby’s Cockatoo breed well with 19 confirmed nests. 7 artificial nests erected for Carnaby’s. 107 Carnaby’s Cockatoos recorded returning from feeding sites adjoining “Koobabbie”.		
2006	36 active Carnaby’s Cockatoo nests.		
2007	33 active Carnaby’s Cockatoo nests. (BMNDRC) Project by Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). 109,956 seedlings planted across catchment.	“Koobabbie”participates in Surface Water Management Project initiated by Buntine-Marchagee Natural Diversity Recovery Catchment .	
2008	. 8 species of native bees identified.	Bird Surveys and 30,000 seedlings planted on “Koobabbie” as part of the BMNDRC Project	
2009	Carnaby’s Cockatoo population goes into decline. 15, mostly female birds found dead on nests. Cause of deaths unknown.		
2010	Rabbit numbers at record lows.	Fencing of remnant vegetation complete. 15,000 seedlings of native trees and shrubs planted by BMNDRC to protect gypsum lakes.	
2011	A magnificent year for orchids with 19 species of orchid identified in the salt lake country.	Planting of 71 ha of salt salt bush and York Gum complete revegetation on “Koobabbie”.	
2012	Neil P Johns retired and control of problem fauna was taken over by members of the Sporting Shooters’ Association. The Carnaby’s Cockatoo population declined again with the death of another 10 birds, 8 of them females sitting on eggs. There were 4 active nests. Lightning starts fire which burns part of Dudabar Hill.		
2013	3 active Carnaby’s Cockatoo nests		
2014	5 active Carnaby’s Cockatoo nests		
2015	21 Carnaby’s Cockatoo with 7 pairs nesting, 4 successful.		
2016	6 successful Carnaby’s Cockatoo nests. Biological control of Paterson’s Curse on Dudabar confirmed in spring with discovery of flea beetle <i>Longitarsus echii</i> grubs feeding on tap roots of Paterson’s Curse plants.		
2017	7 active Carnaby’s Cockatoo nests.		
2018	21 August first Carnaby’s Cockatoo return to “Koobabbie” for breeding season.	All fenced remnant vegetation on “Koobabbie” protected by covenant in perpetuity.	