

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Managing agricultural landscapes for production & conservation

Description:

Managing agricultural landscapes to maximise production and conservation outcomes: the case of the Regent Parrot (2008-2012)

Studies of biodiversity conservation in agricultural landscapes generally focus on remnants of native vegetation. However, the conservation value of other agricultural components of farming landscapes is gaining recent attention. Farms can provide important food resources for native fauna, both from crops and associated non-farmland habitats. However native species can inflict damage to crop production as well.

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Researchers Dr Peter Spooner, A/Prof Dave Watson, A/Prof Gary Luck (all ILWS), Damon Oliver (NSW DECCW), & Ian Temby (VIC DSE). Phd Students Mr John McLaughlin & Mrs Shannon Triplett (ILWS)

Objectives:

Sustainable agriculture aims to maximise production and conservation outcomes, which relies on understanding cost-benefit trade-offs under different management approaches—information that is rarely available. To achieve this requires a detailed understanding of the influence of the structure and composition of agricultural landscapes on species abundance and behaviour.

Methods:

This project is based in a major food producing region in northern Victoria, where research is underway aimed at identifying the relationships between key habitat, food resources and selected groups of birds, with an emphasis on the endangered Regent Parrot. A concurrent project will use a broader multi-state approach to focus specifically on the ecology of the Regent Parrot (NSW DECCW), by a Post Doctoral Research Fellow (Simon Watson) who commenced in 2011 (part funded by ILWS).

Outcomes:

Expected outcomes are improved understanding of biodiversity patterns and interactions in farming landscapes, changed management practices and landscape restoration plans to promote an endangered species, and development of strategies to maximise both production and conservation aims of a major Australian food producer.

Outputs

This research has led to a number of workshop and conference presentations, and the successful completion of a community-based field day in 2010.



Regent parrot in almond orchard

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