

Buloke woodlands in the Mallee



Above: An example of Buloke woodlands. Photo: Arthur Rylah Institute (Department of Sustainability & Environment).

Buloke woodlands are characterised by the flagship species Buloke (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*), a distinctive tree belonging to the She-oak family.

Bulokes grow up to 15 m tall and have long, wiry branchlets instead of leaves. They have dark, rough bark and flat, woody cones that contain seeds. Other trees that occur in Buloke woodlands include Slender Cypress-pine (*Callitris gracilis*), Belah (*Casuarina pauper*) and Sugarwood (*Myoporum platycarpum*). Eucalypts are generally not prominent in these woodlands.

Understorey species in Buloke woodlands may include Umbrella Wattle (*Acacia oswaldii*), Weeping Pittosporum (*Pittosporum phillyreoides*) and Sweet Quandong (*Santalum acuminatum*).

Where are Buloke woodlands found?

Buloke woodlands have a patchy distribution from south east South Australia through north west Victoria into south central New South Wales.

The largest remaining stands of Buloke woodlands in Victoria are in the Hattah-Kulkyne, Murray-Sunset and Wyperfeld National Parks.



Above: Major Mitchell's Cockatoos nesting in a Slender Cypress-pine. Photo: V.G. Hurley.

At a glance

- Buloke woodlands are listed as endangered under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and as threatened under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.
- Buloke woodlands provide important habitat for many native plants and animals, including threatened species.
- The Mallee CMA offers a range of incentives to land managers for the protection of Buloke woodlands. These include assistance with revegetation and conservation covenants and incentives for stock exclusion fencing.

In the Victorian Mallee, patches of Buloke woodlands are interspersed among grasslands and Eucalypt-dominated woodlands. Buloke woodlands often occur on clay and clay-loam soils; they are not found on deep sandy soils.

Why are Buloke woodlands important?

Buloke woodlands provide important habitat for native plants and animals, including threatened species. For example, the White-browed Treecreeper (*Climacteris affinis*) and Major Mitchell's Cockatoo (*Lophocroa leadbeateri*) depend on Belah and Pine-Buloke woodlands for nest hollows. Other threatened species that call Buloke woodlands home include the South-eastern Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni*), the Orange Sun-moth (*Synemon nais*) and the Yellow-lip Spider-orchid (*Caladenia xanthochila*).

A matter of survival

Buloke woodlands are listed as endangered under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. They are also listed as threatened under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Buloke woodlands have been extensively cleared for agriculture; they now have a highly fragmented and degraded distribution in Victoria.

Currently, the most pressing threat to Buloke woodlands is a severe lack of regeneration of overstorey trees. Rabbits, kangaroos and stock graze on seedlings and prevent trees from regenerating. This eventually transforms Buloke woodlands into weed-dominated grasslands where overstorey trees are missing. Species



Above: Buloke woodland. Photo: Mallee CMA.

that nest or forage in these woodlands subsequently lose their habitat. Other threats to Buloke woodlands include weed invasion and large-scale wildfires in Mallee national parks.

How can I help?

If you own or manage land that contains areas of Buloke woodland you can help by:

- Removing stock from these areas and controlling rabbits: this will reduce grazing pressure and give woodlands the chance to regenerate;
- Controlling weeds to reduce competition with native species; and
- Leaving logs and fallen timber on the ground: these provide important habitat for native animals.

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) also encourages the community to assist the recovery of Buloke woodlands more generally by sticking to existing tracks while travelling through national parks and reserves.

How can I find out more?

The Mallee CMA undertook surveys in 2011 to assess the extent and condition of Buloke woodlands in the Mallee. For more information on these surveys, or about the grants and incentives available to protect Buloke woodlands, please contact the Mallee CMA on 03 5051 4377.

References

This fact sheet is based on the following references:

Callister, K and Westbrooke, M (2002) *Guidelines for the management and rehabilitation of Belah and Pine-Buloke woodland remnants in north western Victoria*, University of Ballarat, Ballarat.

Cheal, D, Lucas, A, and Macaulay, L (2010) *National recovery plan for Buloke woodlands of the Riverina and Murray Darling depression bioregions – draft for public comment*, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, East Melbourne. Available online at:


<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/recovery/buloke-woodlands.html>

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