

BSQ'S TWENTY MILLION TREES PROGRAM COLLABORATION

Some of us spend so much time at our desks and precious little time out in the field looking at birds, but last week along with a small dedicated team, we headed down Texas way to team up with a visionary property owner and CO2 Australia staff to undertake the first formal survey of a number of properties participating in the Australian Government's 20 Million Trees Programme.

I am sure that many of you will be aware of this Australian Government initiative, designed to protect and restore that environment and make agriculture more sustainable.



Surveying within planting areas that have been prepared in advance of upcoming plantings (Christopher Ewing)

As one of only three service providers for the Australian Government for this Program, CO2 Australia has been engaged by the Department of the Environment and Energy to deliver seven large-scale revegetation projects across Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria. All their projects have been carefully designed to restore habitat for critically endangered species and improve the integrity and connectivity of threatened ecological communities on private land and within the protected area estate.



The hint of an early frost alongside the track leading up to one of the Mugga sites (Sandra Gallienne)

Last year we were approached by CO2 Australia to gauge our interest in conducting bird surveys on one of the Queensland plantings. The land is a privately-owned nature refuge comprising of four adjacent properties with a combined area

of over 7000-hectares. As a result of this project the bulk of the property is now devoted to carbon farming instead of sheep. This is a compelling and inspirational situation. Coupled with a significant shift away from mass plantings with no attempt to assess the efficacy of the initiative over time, it was an opportunity too good to miss. An added bonus was that we were able to complete a formal base line survey even before the planting had occurred.



Mistletoe and the Mistletoebird were abundant! (Graeme Gallienne)

After a reconnaissance trip late last year, our survey team gathered on site at the end of April to survey 19 separate sites across various habitats within the properties. Using standard BirdLife Australia atlas methodologies, embedded surveys were undertaken on 17 of the sites: One team member undertaking a 2-ha search around a central point, and two team members doing a 500-metre area search. Topography confined one of the survey points to a 2-ha search, and the 500-metre area search methodology was used for a large dam on the property.



Early morning bird survey in remnant patch (Christopher Ewing)

There are fabulous stands of White and Red Mugga (ironbark), Cypress and Box-Gum Grassy Woodland (BGGW), which is listed as a critically endangered ecological community under the Australian Government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Whilst some of the Muggas were blossoming, most were still in bud. The property was chockers with birds! In two days, we observed 107 species including 14 species of honeyeater.

Large flocks of White-winged Chough were a welcome sight. Dusky Woodswallow, Diamond Firetail, Squatter Pigeon, Brown Treecreeper, Turquoise Parrot, flocks of Red-winged Parrot and, surprisingly, a few Australian Ringneck parrots were also found.



Squatter Pigeon, Southern Subspecies (Graeme Gallienne)

Whilst some of the Muggas were blossoming, most were still in bud. In a few weeks, the mass flowering of the Muggas will be in full swing. Imagine what it will be like then!



A survey team L-R Neil Humphris, Sheena Gilman, Deborah Metters, Christopher Ewing (Christopher Ewing)

We have committed to undertaking two surveys per annum – one in spring and one in Autumn – for 10 years. In addition, we also plan to undertake targeted surveys for Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots. If you have good call recognitions skills and wish to be considered for future surveys you can [email us](#) with 'Bird Surveys Expression of Interest' in the subject line.

Sincere thanks to all those who participated in the survey: Deb Metters, Sandra and Graeme Gallienne, Sheena Gillman, Paul and Leanne Grimshaw, Neil Humphris, Gavin O'Meara and Jailene Santana. Thanks also to Chris Ewing from CO2 Australia for participating and providing our breakfasts and lunch. But the biggest thanks must go to the owner of these wonderful properties who has the vision and drive to make a stand against habitat destruction. I hope after reading this, others will be inspired to follow your lead!

Now read on for more information on the 20 Million Trees Programme!

[Judith Hoyle](#)
May 2017

THE NEXT PHASE OF THE 20 MILLION TREES PROGRAM – CAN YOU HELP?

CO₂ Australia's current projects involve the planting of more than three million native species of trees to revegetate over 2,400 hectares of cleared land. With Queensland holding one of the worst land clearing records on the planet, there has never been a more vital time to get behind projects that aim to restore the balance ... **and it is all free!**

Having visited and surveyed Queensland private properties benefitting from this wonderful programme, BSQ can attest to its importance first hand.

The next phase of Australian Government funding for the programme will commence in June. Recruitment of properties for tree planting is the most important driver for success in this project. CO₂ Australia is looking for landholders willing to participate.



Figure One: One of CO2 Australia's projects being planted out

Participation in the programme is most suited to properties that meet the following criteria:

- 100 ha of cleared land available for revegetation **or** multiple properties in the same local area that can together provide a project of at least 150 ha
- Flat to moderately sloped land with a reasonable depth of topsoil
- More than 350 mm of rainfall each year.

If you have a property, or know of someone with a suitable property(ies) *we urge you* to contact CO₂ Australia directly. Interested landholders can contact Christopher Ewing for further details. Christopher is currently managing the delivery of several CO₂ Australia's projects under the 20 Million Trees Programme in Queensland and New South Wales.

Christopher can be contacted on the following details:
M: 0409 684 370 T: 07 3248 0209 E: [Christopher Ewing](#)