

Para Woodlands Nature Reserve



Diamond Firetail Finch (Photo: Dragos Moise)

Para Woodlands Nature Reserve is a former farming property being restored to a functioning grassy woodland to provide habitat for local fauna, with a focus on declining woodland birds.

Aboriginal connections to the land

Nature Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our organisation is located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to Ancestors and Elders past and present.

Nature Foundation is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

We acknowledge that Para Woodlands Nature Reserve occurs on lands of the Kurna and Peramangk Peoples.

About Nature Foundation

Nature Foundation is an apolitical not-for-profit foundation that invests in conserving, restoring and protecting Australian landscapes, flora and fauna to ensure their survival.

We invest in a broad portfolio of activities including:

- Increasing the area protected for nature conservation
- Education and citizen science
- Creating enduring partnerships
- Multidisciplinary conservation management
- Scientific research
- Raising funds for nature conservation

Nature Foundation has considerable experience in managing land for conservation and owns and manages seven nature reserves totalling over 500,000 hectares:

Witchelina: a diverse arid land reserve between Marree and Lake Torrens

Hiltaba: adjacent to the Gawler Ranges National Park protecting Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby habitat

Tiliqua: protecting threatened Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard habitat near Burra

Watchalunga: a wetland near Finnis protecting endangered Fleurieu Swamp, Southern Emu-wrens and native fish.

Para Woodlands: a former farming property being restored to grassy woodland providing habitat for local fauna

Murbpook Lagoon: a wetland near Blanchetown which with its surrounds protects 19 threatened species

Geegeela: protecting buloke, an important food source for South-eastern Red-tailed Black-cockatoos.

Para Woodlands Nature Reserve

Area	500 hectares
Location	3 km south east of Gawler in South Australia
Protecting	Woodland birds of the Mount Lofty Ranges
Acquired	2003
Management	Nature Foundation and Department for Environment and Water (DEW)

Para Woodlands Nature Reserve consists of former farming land being gradually restored, and existing remnant vegetation, including River Red Gum, Peppermint Box, South Australian Blue Gum, native grasses and herbs.

Introducing Para Woodlands

Para Woodland Reserve is a 500 hectare area of former farming land, part-owned by Nature Foundation and part-owned by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW). The combined lands are jointly managed by Nature Foundation and DEW for conservation purposes.

The land came to Nature Foundation and government through the generosity of the late Mrs Elizabeth Law-Smith OAM and her husband David, who desired to see the farm land restored and managed to provide habitat for declining woodland birds. In addition to the bequest of land, Elizabeth Law-Smith also donated funds in perpetuity to assist in the restoration of the property.

The farm was used for cropping and grazing, but also retained areas of remnant vegetation including River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) open woodland along the South Para River along with Peppermint Box (*E. odorata*), mallee box (*E. porosa*) and SA Blue Gum (*E. leucoxylon*) open woodland on hill slopes.



Planting Day 2021 (Photo: Kelly Arbon)

Property management

Conservation activities at the nature reserve include maintaining remnant vegetation, revegetation of local native species and targeted weed control, along with property maintenance and increasing knowledge for conservation management.

To date, planting has occurred over 200 hectares, predominantly on former cropping land. Over 120,000 native plants have been planted and over 1,000 kilograms of native grass seed were used for direct seeding. A mix of locally indigenous eucalyptus, sheoaks, and other tree and shrub species have been selected to re-establish functional open woodlands with a grassy understorey, and provide valuable habitat for woodland birds.

Natural regeneration continues to be encouraged through bushcare-type weed control where understorey plants such as iron grasses, lilies, daisies and orchids persist.

Increasing and sharing knowledge

To increase knowledge of the site a series of ongoing activities are undertaken, such as collecting baseline data on soils, fauna, flora and vegetation associations; collecting data on vegetation condition, monitoring change over time and sharing of information.

Collection of data across the property will continue for years to come, to ensure that changes seen over the property continue to move the reserve towards the desired restored vision.

Para Woodlands Nature Reserve

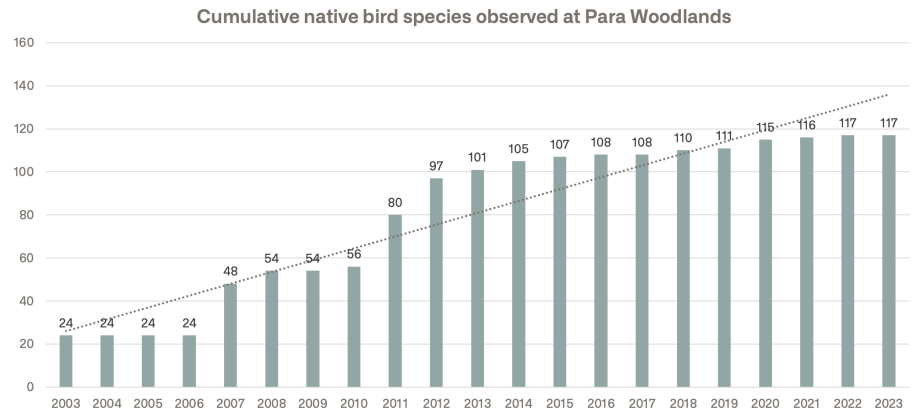
Endangered Diamond Firetail Finches are now resident in Para Woodlands. The species has been recorded nesting in old revegetated areas since 2018.

Increase in fauna species

An initial survey (2003) recorded 24 native bird species at Para Woodlands. To date, the native bird list of the reserve comprises 117 species, of which 64 have conservation ratings at National, State and Regional levels. Eucalyptus porosa remnants are a stronghold for Brown Treecreepers, Endangered in Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR) region. The reserve now supports a small population of Diamond Firetails, Endangered in AMLR and recently listed nationally as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. Red-browed Finches (Near Threatened in AMLR) are regularly seen in the South Para River area. Recently a Painted Button-quail (State Rare and Vulnerable in AMLR) was spotted within the old revegetation. This is evidence that the Para Woodlands restoration project is achieving its main objective of providing habitat for declining woodland birds.

In addition, fauna surveys undertaken on the property and opportune observations recorded 185 (and counting) invertebrate species, five species of fish, three frog species, 15 reptile species and 24 species of mammals.

A survey in autumn 2021, as part of a Green Adelaide grassroots grant, used Anabats (remote audio-recording devices) to record bat activity. 10 microbat species were detected in remnant and



revegetated areas of the reserve. Species detected included Gould's Wattled Bat, Lesser Long-eared Bat, White-striped Free-tailed Bat, Southern Free-tailed Bat and Chocolate Wattled Bat.

Flora

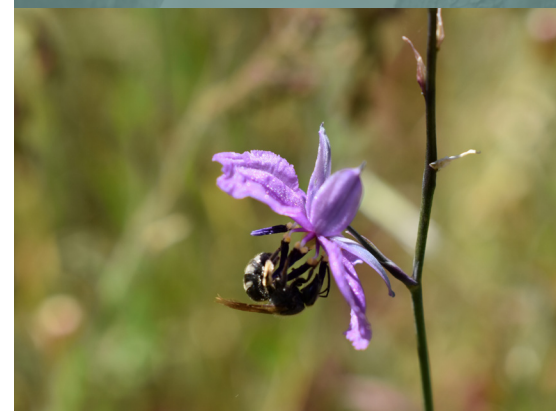
Vegetation surveys undertaken on the property recorded and mapped existing vegetation associations, and also are used to assess vegetation condition. To date, 455 plant species were recorded at Para Woodlands either during vegetation surveys, or opportunistically: 257 natives and 198 introduced (exotics or non-indigenous natives). From the native plants, 14 have conservation status at State, and 124 at Region level.

Access to the reserve

The reserve is only open during events that support conservation work on the property. Visit our website for upcoming events.



Red-capped Robin (Photo: Dragos Moise)



Native bee visiting a Vanilla Lily (Photo: Dragos Moise)