

Notes from the field

Hello, I'm Doug Robinson, a conservation scientist with Trust for Nature and the co-owner of a covenanted property in northern Victoria.

I'm helping landowners who have conservation covenants with information about how climate change will impact them and what they can do to help their local environment and wildlife survive and flourish.

All covenantors have already taken the most important adaptation step possible by protecting, forever, habitat which will always be there to support native wildlife as its primary goal.

How do we maximise the potential plant growth and flow-on food supply of these ecosystems? I think this is where your help is critical.

With your support, we can

- Help landowners to manage new pest animals or plants before they become widespread
- Support landowners to do positive actions such as provide water for the environment, large-scale nest-box installation or build guards around threatened plants
- Restore areas that can capture and store carbon in the soil, wetlands and trees
- Protect or buffer important climate refuges and do work in areas at high risk from climate change, like coastal marshes and rainforest.

We are constantly using science to refine our conservation to make the biggest difference on the most urgent issues. For example, rising sea levels will see much of the coastal saltmarsh and mangroves on public land submerged in the next 50-100 years. We are therefore working with adjacent private landowners to enable these coastal habitats migrate inland.

I have worked as a conservation scientist for more than 25 years and have seen first-hand just what a difference having the support of a community makes.

Each of us is responsible for taking care and looking after the natural wonders of Victoria - from rainforests to deserts, coasts to mountains.

Thank you for playing your part.

Dr Doug Robinson



Climate-ready checklist

While the magnitude of climate change can seem daunting, it is important to recognise and value what can be achieved through local conservation action.

Here is what property and landowners can do to help protect native plants and animals until there is a global transition to a more sustainable world:



Observe how native species on your property respond to small variations in habitat and to different pressures. Use this information to help think about and plan your conservation actions



Manage existing habitat to support as much diversity as possible, increasing its capacity to provide food for native species throughout the year and places for shelter and breeding



Consider how to improve the quality of each layer of vegetation and habitat feature present on your property (for example the trees, shrubs, ground layer, fallen wood) and the actions which will achieve the most enduring change



Maintain or improve the quality of the most productive environmental areas of the property (for example, waterways, wetlands, mature forest, southerly or easterly slopes)



Think about revegetation strategically; how will your potential management actions provide additional food resources, breeding habitat, shelter, buffers or corridors



Tackle existing and emerging threats from pest animals, weeds or over-abundant native species as a priority to reduce competition and predation pressures on local fauna and flora



Improve habitat connectivity on your property and through the local district to increase access to productive habitat areas



Record changes in species' occurrences, abundances or life-history patterns and submit records to relevant databases such as Atlas of Living Australia, Victorian Biodiversity Atlas, Birdlife Australia's Birddata to help inform planning and adaptation.