

NATURAL VALUES ATLAS NEWSLETTER

Issue 3. Winter 2020

ATLAS OF LIVING AUSTRALIA DATA

Readers may recall that in the last edition of the NVA Newsletter we suggested the loading of the Tasmanian ALA data should happen 'in the next few months.' Well, the complexities of taking a 1.5 million records from the ALA and making them to fit into the NVA were perhaps more than we had first imagined.

We needed to complete a substantial amount of data quality checking and data cleaning and we also had to make some changes to the NVA database to accommodate the requirements of the incoming data, including adding a considerable number of new taxa to the NVA taxonomy. We then had to develop a tailored data load tool to allow us to bulk load the 1.5 million ALA records into the NVA.

Virtually all this work has now been completed and the data load is currently being tested in our 'Test' copy of the NVA. Once we have ironed out any glitches, the data will be loaded into the live or 'Production' version of the NVA. Barring significant unforeseen technical issues, the production data load should be completed around the beginning of August 2020.

NVA EVOLUTION

The NVA Evolution project has been temporarily put on hold in recent months, in part due to redirection of resources resulting from the COVID 19 epidemic, and in part so the team can focus on completing the ALA data load.

At the time the project was put on hold, the basic underlying framework of the new system had been established and work had begun on setting up the fundamental processes around searching for and returning data, displaying, and editing records etc.

We intend to return to working on NVA Evolution in August.

NEW NVA RECORDS

Approximately 50,000 new species observation records have been added to the NVA since our last newsletter was compiled in late 2019.





Tawny Frogmouth, *Podargus strigoides*.
Photo by David Storey

Significant recent contributions include, around 7300 shorebird records, 5400 records from environmental consultancies, and 3500 records from local councils. There were also around 10,000 records resulting from research projects and just over 3000 records submitted through iNaturalist.

Internal DPIPW survey work also contributed several thousand records, in particular, from surveys of the TWWHA extension areas, and from recent work on wombat mange.

NVA USER TIP

If you draw a feature or select a feature on the map to run a search or Natural Values Report, you can then export and save that feature as an ESRI shapefile by clicking on the  icon at the top of the map window. Then, if you want to run another search anywhere in the NVA using that same feature, you can upload the file again (on which ever page you are searching on) by clicking the upload shapefile  icon, navigating to where you saved the downloaded file and re-uploading it.

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment



WILD ORCHID WATCH

Wild Orchid Watch (WOW) Australia is a project within [iNaturalist](#) that is a collaboration between citizen scientists, orchid enthusiasts and scientists. It exists to provide additional security around potentially sensitive orchid observations. It also enables the collection of a much greater range of observation attributes than the standard iNaturalist app to help researchers better understand each species.

All photos and data collected using the WOW app will be stored, collated and identified on the iNaturalist platform. If you already have an iNaturalist account you can use it to log in to the WOW app, and if not, it is very easy to create one.

WOW app frequently asked questions (including details about the WOW app, photo and data copyright, privacy policy and terms of service) can be found on the website here <https://www.wildorchidwatch.org/faqs>.

You can access the WOW app by going to the internet browser on your mobile device and typing in www.app.wildorchidwatch.org and it will run in any web browser (no need to install anything from an app store). For guidance on signing up and getting the most out of the WOW app please see the [WOW App Instructional Videos](#) on the website.



Glistening Sun Orchid, *Thelymitra lucida* Photo by Peter Fehre.

TASVEG 4.0

A new release of the Tasmanian vegetation map (TASVEG 4.0) is about to be published. This is the fourth major release of TASVEG. Some of the key updates since the last release in 2013 include:

- New or updated mapping for many areas across Tasmania, including high priority regions such as King Island, the Central Plateau and extension areas to the TWWHA.
- Improvements to mapping of high conservation value communities, especially those vulnerable to the impact of wildfire e.g. *Athrotaxis* (pencil pine and king billy pine) communities and *Sphagnum* peatland.
- Integration of significant mapping contributions from external stakeholders.

If you are interested in learning more about the latest TASVEG update or in receiving the TASVEG Newsletter there is more information [here](#).

NVA users should be aware that Natural Values Atlas provides a tool to notify the TASVEG team of any potential corrections/additions to the TASVEG mapping. The TASVEG notification service is available under the 'Vegetation' tab on the NVA. There are some brief instructions on the Notification page but there is also a help menu item (under Help and Support) which describes in detail how to submit a TASVEG notification.



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TASMANIAN GEOCONSERVATION DATABASE - GEOSITE OF THE YEAR 2020

It is with great pleasure that the Geodiversity Team of the Natural Values Sciences Section (DPIPWE) introduce you to the inaugural Geosite of the Year: Wombat Plain Fluvial and Floodplain Features!

Found in the north-east of the state on the upper St Patricks River, this charming site includes a range of stream and floodplain features that are seldom preserved in such good condition. The form of the river reflects the controls of the local landscape – the sandy granite sediment sourced from the catchment, the local slope of the valley, and the strong influence of vegetation. The features present range from a straight shallow channel controlled by large woody debris, to the smoothly sinuous deeper channel controlled by low slopes, organic rich floodplain sediments and dense turf. In places, a smaller tributary runs underground. Backswamp areas support unusual lowland *Sphagnum* peatlands.

The streams and rivers of Wombat Plain are recognised in the Geodiversity Database within the NVA as being of State significance. They are special not because they are inherently rare types of stream, but because of their good condition. Efforts to improve agricultural productivity in this type of environment can spark a response in the geomorphology, and floodplain streams like this are now commonly straightened and incised, with greatly changed and simplified instream features, altered sediment loads, and changes to their hydrology so that they are divorced from their floodplains. Wombat Plain is valued because it is a rare remaining good example of a natural geomorphic system that was once common.

The Geodiversity layer of the NVA contains information on more than 1100 sites recognised as having geoconservation significance in Tasmania. The database tells you about Tasmania's rich geoheritage and reveals sites that help us to understand the history, development and maintenance of our landscape. The database also provides guidance on how to protect our geoheritage, with information provided on the sensitivity to 20 different types of disturbance. Some sites, like Wombat Plain, are potentially sensitive to changes in land management, while others, such as the escarpment of the Great Western Tiers, are much more robust.

If you are interested in geodiversity, or would like to nominate a site for next year's Geosite of the Year, the database can be found under the Geodiversity tab in the NVA



Images: Meandering channel of St Patricks River in a section of floodplain dominated by *Poa* grass (top and middle), *Sphagnum* dominated back-swamp area at the boundary of the *Poa* and forested areas of floodplain (bottom). Photos by Kathryn Storey .