



International Environmental Weed Foundation **Annual Report – June 2020**



International Environmental Weed Foundation is pleased to present a report covering activities for year ending 30th June 2020.

International Environmental Weed Foundation (IEWF) trading as Habitat Network and The Habitat

Well that was an interesting year—drought, water restrictions from 1 June 2019 for the entire 12 months, bush fires, floods and Covid-19. Regardless, we have stayed positive and had a productive year.

We didn't do as many talks, workshops or stalls as usual due to face-to-face group meetings being prohibited from March 2020. However we were happy with those that we did, especially the Improving Linear Corridors presentation that we gave at the NSW Landcare Conference in Broken Hill in October 2019.

The Habitat nursery and garden were well used during Covid-19 as people have been working from home, doing up their gardens, thinking about food security and walking out and about further and more regularly. We did restrict the number of volunteers during the period of lock-down to just the 5 essential volunteers and implemented Covid safe plans and practices.



We have been continuing to work on our small bird habitat corridors (except during lock-down). The drought wasn't conducive to doing much planting but with more rain and volunteers returning in the latter part of 2020 we expect to make advances.

We have kept our websites up-to-date and remained active on social media. Check out:

www.iewf.org

www.habitatnetwork.org

<https://www.facebook.com/HabitatNetwork> and also HabitatNetwork on Instagram.

We continued to utilise the GoVolunteer website to attract new volunteers to The Habitat up to March 2020. We will reactivate this later in the year as needed. The Google AdWords grant is still helping to promote our Habitat Network website.

Please read on for more information about our activities.

The Habitat - community native plant nursery and community food garden

The drought, which ran all the way through to February 2020, was challenging in that water restrictions were escalated. Luckily we have tanks holding 15,000 litres of water and we planted using water crystals and sea-weed meal (good for the soil and retaining moisture), cut back our water usage and improved our water collection using every container we could find.

The floods and storms were easier. The tanks were filled. A few plants blown off the benches and bigger shrubs planted in the community garden were blown over. In total we had to remove about 6 tall shrubs and left an *Acacia longifolia* growing on its side so as to make it easier for seed collection.

Now in our 7th year we have continued to attract volunteers. Unfortunately due to Covid restrictions we have had to turn new volunteers away.

We were very excited to erect 4 new shade shelters in 2020—these are for our cuttings, newly potted up plants and shade loving ground covers. The nursery looks so sleek and professional now!

In calendar year 2019 we had 82 regular/semi regular volunteers and 139 who only attended a couple of days mostly for school community volunteering giving a total of 221 active volunteers. Which was exactly the same total as the previous calendar year!

As usual The Habitat provided 50 plants free of charge to local schools for National Tree Day and we gave plants to local bushcare groups throughout the year. See below for details of workshops etc.

The Habitat statistics by financial year:

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total volunteer hours	4242	4301	4337
Recorded visitors	1603	1559	2260
Total plants out (sold, donated or planted)	4248	6259	6083
Total out plus in-stock at EOY	7776	9757	9635



Left: A pair of Tawny frogmouths living at The Habitat since March 2020.

Below right: Since November 2019 native bee workshop there are 2 native bee hives at The Habitat, the new one being located under one of our new shade shelters.

Below left: 4 new shade shelters for cuttings and plants requiring shade.



Hunters Hill Small Bird Corridor and Lower Parramatta River Habitat Corridor

The **Lower Parramatta River Habitat Corridor project** was started in 2009 and has been funded by an Environmental Trust (ET) Grant from 2016 to 2019. This project is a partnership between NPWS, Hunters Hill Council and Habitat Network and is improving a habitat corridor which is about 4 km in length. The final report for the ET grant was submitted on-time in August 2019.

The next stage of this project is funded to the tune of \$30,000 by a grant from Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's (DPIE) Estuary Grant program plus matching funding from Hunters Hill Council for the period 2019 to 2021. This funding allows further contract work and community engagement to be undertaken in this corridor. This year we engaged with the local community to undertake small bird habitat planting in Betts Park and Bedlam Bay Regional Park.

The various bushcare groups in this corridor have been actively working on maintaining their sites and doing small plantings, except for during the Covid-19 lock-down. The Tarban Creek Bridge Bushcare Group have been gradually extending the habitat areas and for this group a bush fire, started by vandals, has further extended an area by clearing the weedy undergrowth and stimulating natural regeneration.

And most importantly the small bird populations are thriving and a pair of Eastern whipbirds are often heard.



'Heathers area' at Tarban Creek Bridge has continued to grow and expand.

Shrimptons Creek small bird habitat corridor

Work in this corridor has been mostly maintenance this past year. Council undertook a planting with a Corporate group at ELS Hall Park and with a school group at Greenwood Park and The Habitat volunteers have mostly done weeding and small areas of planting in Santa Rosa Park. With the drought it was not conducive to planting and with Covid-19 following the drought when we finally got rain we didn't have the volunteers. We have plans to do weeding, planting and mulching in Santa Rosa Park in the 2nd half of 2020.

This corridor seems to have many disappointments - in October after having Sydney Water install a stormwater overflow tank in the front of the community garden the Council mowers 'cleaned up' one of our habitat plantings, which had only been there for 3 years, by mowing it to the ground.

Every year Buff-banded rails were seen in this corridors but for the past 2 years they have been missing. They are now probably locally extinct. On the positive side even though there is massive development taking place along this creek a couple of Eastern whipbirds have taken up home in the Wilga Park area.

We have also had a bit of a win with the Turpentine Ironbark Threatened Ecological Community in the Ivanhoe Estate being saved from development - it will be impacted along the northern edge but at least it will be there and also wont have the originally planned road running through it. The developers have also talked positively about working with us and Council to improve habitat along the creekline after they have put an access road across the creek.

Promotions, events and workshops

During the year talks were given for Senior Members Association at the Epping RSL Club, Eastwood Evening Garden Club and at the Landcare NSW Conference in Broken Hill—all were well received. At the Broken Hill Conference we also had our pull-up poster and a table of brochures to give away, most of which were taken by the delegates to use in their own regions.

We manned stalls at the Moocooboola Festival and Granny Smith Festival and spoke to many people. All other face-to-face events that we usually participate in from March to June were cancelled due to Covid-19. We hosted 2 composting /worm farming workshops at The Habitat in 2019.

In November we held a bee talk at The Habitat and had Gavin Smith a bee specialist demonstrated how to split a native bee hive using ours as an example. We now have 2 lovely hives at The Habitat. Opposite is a photo of the original hive when it was opened. We did get a small container of honey from the hive to share with our volunteers.



We attended the Roadside Environment Committee and had Improving Linear Corridor pull-up display and gave away posters. We also shared our posters with the Eastern Ranges Project.

The Habitat was placed in the annual community gardens completion in both the 'Community Garden' section and the 'Native and Habitat Friendly Garden' section.

Following the horrific fires a new group calling themselves Marrickville Tree Growers formed. We helped them with advice about how to proceed and to undertake a small bird habitat project while the fire grounds recovered and land managers got themselves organised.

We have also had discussions with local community garden The Happy Hens about bush regeneration opportunities and the PlantingSeeds Project about their bee hotels in schools project. The Habitat provided discounted plants for the latter project with more to be provided later in 2020. We have also supported projects and other community nurseries across NSW.

We continue to work with Greater Sydney Landcare Network and Landcare NSW to expand interest and opportunities for bushcare and landcare groups and continue to support the bushland committees of both Ryde and Hunter's Hill Councils.

To see photos of more activities please visit <http://www.habitatnetwork.org/> activities photo pages.

In November 2019 The Habitat provided native plants and bags as a give-away for the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare event at NSW Parliament House.

