

BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF NGARRINDJERI YARLUWAR-RUWE

Landscape Priority Fund Project Update - March 2025



NGARRINDJERI
ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION

LANDSCAPE
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
WAVES



Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water



Migratory Kin Collective

The Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) has joined the Migratory Kin Collective, a global network of Indigenous groups working together to protect the migratory birds that travel between their countries along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF). The network includes groups from across Australia, Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Alaska.

Dr Billy Van Uitregt, from Te Herenga Waka University of Wellington in Aotearoa, recently visited Ngarrindjeri Ruwe to meet the community, tour the Kurrangk (Coorong) and discuss opportunities for Ngarrindjeri to link in and work with other groups across the world.

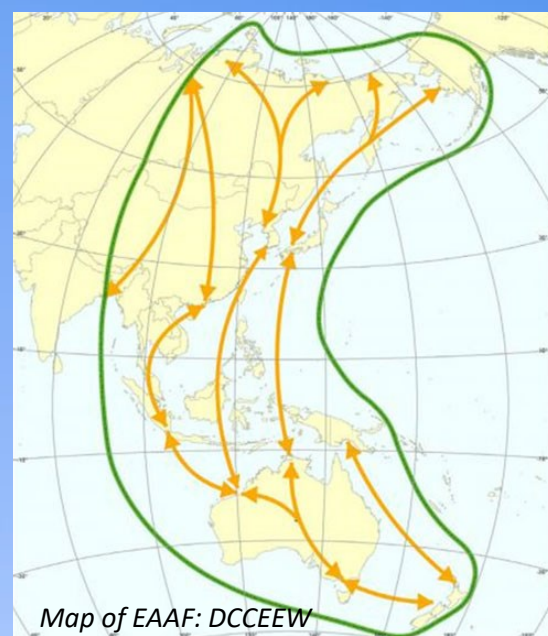
The trip started with a community discussion at Goolwa which included a virtual connection with representatives from Alaska, Lutruwita (Tasmania) and the Riverland.

The group then travelled across the barrages to speak with the Raukkan community and Ngarrindjeri rangers, before heading up to meet community members at the NAC office in Murray Bridge.

A huge thanks to Billy for returning for a visit and linking us into such an exciting and important global network. An example of some of the work that their Whanganui community-based research work on Kūaka (bar-tailed godwit) along their awa (river), with Cecelia Kumeroa and Tania Te Huna, can be found here: [Kūaka Collective Bus Hub – Korero](#).



Photo: Paul Gibson



Map of EAAF: DCCEEW



Photo: Adrienne Rumbelow



Menperi Yarning

Southern bell-frogs became locally extinct in the Lower Lakes during the Millennium Drought and have not been recorded anywhere on Ngarrindjeri Ruwe since 2018.

A large group of community members recently participated in a yarning circle at Clayton Bay to discuss the importance of Menperi (frogs) to Ngarrindjeri culture, look at a Southern bell-frog captive breeding facility, and find out about opportunities to get involved in re-introducing them back into our waterways.

Big thanks to Nature Glenelg Trust, Frogwatch SA, the Clayton Bay Nursery and Environment Group, the Clayton Bay Community Association, Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu, and the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board for supporting the event.





Photo: Sylvia Zukowski

Threatened Fish Release

Ngarrindjeri community members are continuing to work with a range of partners to save a small native fish species from extinction.

Yarra pygmy-perch (*Nannoperca obscura*), which only grow to 4cm in length, were severely impacted by the Millennium Drought, and by 2008 their numbers had fallen to critical levels. Before becoming extinct, the last remaining fish were caught and used to establish captive breeding populations in a number of private protected dams.

These captive-bred fish are now being reintroduced into the wild, with around 9,000 released at 3 sites near Kumerangk (Hindmarsh Island) in early 2024 and a further 2000 released in November 2024.

Saving our precious wildlife from extinction is critically important for Ngarrindjeri and it has been great to be part of this amazing work.

The project is led by Nature Glenelg Trust, the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board, and Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu, and is supported by a range of other partners.



Photo: Sylvia Zukowski

Raukkan Bushcare



Bushcare is a low-impact approach to controlling weeds in sensitive natural areas to remove threats, encourage regeneration and protect habitats.

A Bushcare training workshop was recently held at Raukkan for community members and local Ngarrindjeri rangers to teach them some new approaches to caring for our Ruwe.

The workshop started with a classroom session which covered basic ecology, bush regeneration principles and techniques, and how to work safely in the bush.

The group then headed out to Block K to learn how to protect some of the last remaining populations of Nationally threatened sandhill greenhood orchids.

Another important aspect of the workshop was learning low-impact approaches for controlling weeds in sensitive heritage areas, such as middens, where other standard control methods cannot be used.

It is hoped that the training will lead to some employment opportunities for the community to undertake Bushcare work across Ngarrindjeri Ruwe.

The workshop, which was organised by NAC, was delivered by Trees for Life and supported by the Murrylands and Riverland Landscape Board, the Landscape Priority Fund (LPF) program, and the Australian Government.





Bulrushes update

The Bulrushes revegetation is growing well! The area was identified as a priority during a community tour in 2023, and following that a Yarlurwar-Ruwe Assessment, heritage survey and revegetation plan were done for the site.

In June 2024 a Raukkan planting team was employed to plant and guard 8,000 tubestock that were propagated by the Raukkan nursery. A community planting day was also held with the local team being joined by the Meningie and Berri rangers, and staff from other partner organisations.

Since going in the plants have been rocketing out of the ground! Community members are now being employed to look after the planting and the Raukkan nursery is growing additional seedlings (banksias, hakeas and native pines) for planting this year.

It's fantastic to see the plants growing so well and to see the area moving towards the community's vision of protecting the heritage sites and re-establishing habitat for ngaitjis.





Salt Creek Wiwiringili



Photo: Tom Hunt

Wiwiringili (malleefowl) are a very important species for Ngarrindjeri. Following the strong community interest at the previous Wiwiringili yarning circle at Monarto Safari Park, a second event was held recently at Salt Creek.

Wiwiringili are large ground-dwelling birds that are famous for building enormous mounds for incubating their eggs. They are considered a threatened species as their numbers have declined significantly due to habitat loss and fragmentation, inappropriate fire regimes, and introduced predators such as foxes and cats.

The Salt Creek Wiwiringili yarning circle included a presentation from the National Malleefowl Recovery Group, discussions about the species' cultural significance and history, and identifying opportunities for the community to get involved. It was also great to have some representatives of the South East Aboriginal Focus Group come up to be part of the day.

Following the yarning circle the group visited a large Wiwiringili mound in the Coorong National Park.

The yarning circle was organised by NAC with support from the National Malleefowl Recovery Group, the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board, the Limestone Coast Landscape Board and the Australian Government.



Thukubi work recognised



The Ngarrindjeri Thukubi Monitoring Program has been recognised as a finalist in the 2024 South Australian Citizen Science Awards as part of National Science Week.

The monitoring program, which is run by NAC in partnership with Scotte Wedderburn from the University of Adelaide, employs Ngarrindjeri community members to survey Thukubi at a range of sites around the Lower Lakes and lower River Murray.

The program helps to monitor Thukubi numbers, over time, identifies hot-spots for Thukubi protection, and gives Ngarrindjeri people the opportunity to work together on Ruwe and learn more about these important Ngaitji.

Funding to support the program in 2024 was provided by the Department for Environment and Water on behalf of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's The Living Murray Program, and the Landscape Priority Fund. The program is also supported by the 1 Million Turtles program.



The Building the Resilience of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe project is supported by the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation, local landscape boards, and a range of other partners, with funding from the South Australian Government's Landscape Priorities Fund, landscape levies and other sources.