
Flora and Fauna Assessment 38 Dafter Road, Woodend

Prepared for Ashbourne Landcare Group



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 2021, the Ashbourne Landcare Group commissioned the author to conduct flora and fauna assessments across twelve private properties occurring within the Ashbourne district. The project was funded by a grant provided by the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA).

The surveys confirmed that the private lands across the Ashbourne district are of very high conservation significance. The following ecological values were recorded across the 12 properties:

- 306 separate plant species, 220 which are indigenous and 86 introduced,
- 59 separate bird species,
- eight plant species listed as *Endangered* or *Critically Endangered* under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee List,
- numerous plant species of regional significance,
- 43 of the plant species observed have not previously been (officially) recorded in the area according to a 10km radius search of the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA). Twenty-five of these are indigenous and 18 are introduced.

This report presents the results of the flora and fauna assessment at 38 Dafter Road, Woodend. It provides a list of the flora and fauna species that were recorded, a description of vegetation and habitat values and some recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of ecological values.

1.2 Study area

The property at 38 Dafter Road is approximately 11.9 hectares in size and is located to the immediate west of the Woodend Bushland Reserve. Forest covers the entire property, with the exception of around the house in the southern portion. A prominent gully runs from the south to the north which eventually flows into Five Mile Creek downstream. A small dam is situated to the north-east of the house.

1.3 Methods

The property was assessed for approximately three hours on the 15th of December 2021. Effort was taken to traverse as much of the bushland as possible in the time allocated, during which time a list was compiled of all flora and fauna species observed. For fauna, most species were recorded from identification of calls (e.g. birds, frogs) or scats and tracks (e.g. Black Wallaby). Notes were taken on the vegetation, habitat features and management issues, whilst photographs were taken of representative areas.

2.0 RESULTS

2.1 Flora species

During the December 2021 survey, a total of 105 flora species were recorded at 38 Dafter Road (see Appendix 1). Of these, 81 are indigenous species and 24 are introduced or non-indigenous native species (e.g. Sallow Wattle from the Gippsland region). One of the recorded species is listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, two are considered to be of regional significance and one of local significance. (see Table 1 and Figure 1). This included

- a stand of Yarra Gum (*Eucalyptus yarraensis*) in the northern section of the property.
- several plants of Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) around the dam near the house. This species is rare in the region and has not previously been recorded in the Ashbourne area.
- Several plants of Graceful Fescue (*Festuca asperula*) near the eastern border of the property. This species is rare in the region and has not previously been recorded in the Ashbourne area.
- Several plants of Golden Tip (*Goodia lotifolia*) near the western border of the property.

Table 1 Significant flora species recorded at 38 Dafter Road, December 2021

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
<i>Eucalyptus yarraensis</i>	Yarra Gum	FFG
<i>Festuca asperula</i>	Graceful Fescue	Regional
<i>Goodia lotifolia</i>	Golden Tip	Local
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple Loosestrife	Local

FFG – listed as a threatened species under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. **Regional** – considered to be of regional significance. **Local** – considered to be of local significance.

2.2 Vegetation description

The forested areas of the property are dominated by Messmate Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*) and Candlebark (*Eucalyptus rubida*) with a middle storey of Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Narrow-leaf Wattle (*Acacia mucronata*) and Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*). The understory contains a rich diversity of small shrubs, grasses, lilies, orchids and herbs including Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea (*Daviesia leptophylla*), Grey Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia cinerascens*), Forest Wire-grass (*Tetrarrhena juncea*), Red-anther Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma pallidum*), Blue Pincushion (*Brunonia australis*), Common Bird-orchid (*Chiloglottis valida*), Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*), Pale Vanilla-lily (*Arthropodium milleflorum*) and Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*). The gully supports a relatively high shrub cover of Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Prickly Moses (*Acacia verticillata*) and a ground layer dominated by Spiny Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*). Scattered pools contain aquatic plants such as Water Ribbons (*Cycnogeton procerum*).



Plate 1 Significant flora species recorded at 38 Dafter Road, November 2021



Plate 2 aquatic vegetation along the gully in the eastern portion of the property.



Plate 3 forest vegetation in the eastern portion of the property with a ground layer dominated by Red-anther Wallaby-grass

2.3 High threat weeds

Of the weeds recorded within the property, eight are considered to be high threat species that are recommended for control. These species are listed in Table 2 below. All are scattered at low density throughout the bushland areas.

Table 2 High threat weeds recorded at 38 Dafter Road, December 2021

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Acacia longifolia</i>	Sallow Wattle
<i>Billardiera heterophylla</i>	Bluebell Creeper
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	English Broom
<i>Genista monspessulana</i>	Montpellier Broom
<i>Hedera hibernica</i>	Atlantic Ivy
<i>Pinus radiata</i> var. <i>radiata</i>	Radiata Pine
<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	Sweet Pittosporum

2.4 Fauna

During the December 2021 survey, a total of 26 fauna species were recorded, including 21 bird, two frog and three mammal species. Koalas have also been recorded in the property by the landowners and have been added to the overall species list (see Appendix 2). The property would support a much greater diversity of fauna species, however due to the high mobility and cryptic nature of many species, it would take a survey across multiple years and seasons to prepare a detailed list.

One of the recorded species, the Satin Flycatcher (*Myiagra cyanoleuca*), is listed as a potentially threatened migratory species under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999. This species is uncommon in the region and was heard calling near the stand of Yarra Gum.

Habitat features observed within the property included:

- Several large trees with hollows. These trees are essential for many local birds and mammals which rely on hollows for breeding.
- Scattered small to large logs. These are important for fauna that live or feed at ground level to provide cover from predators. Large-old logs often have hollows that may be utilised for shelter and nesting.

- Healthy litter layer, including sticks, leaves, bark and humus. A healthy litter layer is essential for many insects.
- Diverse plant communities in the forest areas, providing food and habitat for various mammals, birds, insects and other fauna. Plant communities with many different species are better quality habitat than low diverse communities due to the variation in different flowers that attract specific insects. They are also more structurally diverse and provide better cover and shelter.
- The dam near the house supports aquatic vegetation and would provide habitat for waterbirds, frogs and waterbugs. It would also serve as a source of drinking water for many animals.

The bushland within the property is also connected to other extensive areas of forest and is therefore an important part of a network of corridors that allow fauna to move across the landscape.

2.5 Management issues and recommendations

Maintaining and enhancing the ecological values of the property will require protection of the bushland and occasional management. The following actions should be considered by the landowners:

- Control of high threat weeds shown in Table 2. Smaller plants can be removed by hand, however larger plants may need to be cut at ground level and painted with herbicide. If the landowners wish to avoid using herbicide, plants can be regularly cut at ground level. They will continue to re-shoot but at least will be kept at a low height and will not spread further seed.
- Retention of as many logs across the bushland area as possible, particularly the larger ones.
- Much of the forest is regrowth with minimal large, hollow-bearing trees. Additional areas for hollow dependant fauna could be provided by installing nest-boxes. These are often a nice feature if installed near the house where animals can be more clearly observed entering and leaving the box.
- Avoid excessive disturbance in the bushland areas, particularly where there are dense areas of wildflowers.

- It would be of value to collect seed from the regionally rare Graceful Fescue that was recorded in the eastern section of the property. This would allow propagation and planting at other suitable sites to increase the regional population and prevent possible regional extinction. It is a relatively attractive grass and could also be planted in native gardens across the local area. This might be a potential project for the Ashbourne Landcare Group.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The property at 38 Dafter Road contains bushland of high ecological significance. A total of 105 flora species and 26 fauna species were recorded during the brief assessment, including several threatened plant species and one listed migratory bird species. The property also supports good quality habitat and is part of an important biolink that allows fauna to travel across the landscape.

Maintaining and enhancing the ecological values of the property will require protecting the bushland from excessive disturbance and controlling high threat weeds.

Appendix 1 - Flora species recorded at 38 Dafter Road, December 2021

Key to symbols	
*	Introduced species
#	Non-indigenous native species

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
#	<i>Acacia longifolia</i>	Sallow Wattle	
	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	
	<i>Acacia mucronata subsp. longifolia</i>	Narrow-leaf Wattle	
	<i>Acacia verticillata subsp. verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses	
	<i>Acrotriche prostrata</i>	Trailing Ground-berry	
	<i>Acrotriche serrulata</i>	Honey-pots	
	<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	Common Maidenhair	
*	<i>Aira elegantissima</i>	Delicate Hair-grass	
*	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass	
	<i>Arthropodium milleflorum s.s.</i>	Pale Vanilla-lily	
	<i>Arthropodium strictum s.s.</i>	Chocolate Lily	
*	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	English Daisy	
*	<i>Billardiera heterophylla</i>	Bluebell Creeper	
	<i>Billardiera mutabilis</i>	Common Apple-berry	
	<i>Bossiaea prostrata</i>	Creeping Bossiaea	
	<i>Brunonia australis</i>	Blue Pincushion	
	<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	Milkmaids	
	<i>Caladenia carnea sensu Willis (1970)</i>	Pink Fingers	
	<i>Cassinia aculeata subsp. aculeata</i>	Common Cassinia	
	<i>Cassinia longifolia</i>	Shiny Cassinia	
*	<i>Centaurium erythraea</i>	Common Centaury	
	<i>Clematis aristata</i>	Mountain Clematis	
	<i>Coronidium scorpioides s.s.</i>	Button Everlasting	
*	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	
	<i>Cynnogeton procerum s.s.</i>	Common Water-ribbons	
*	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	English Broom	
	<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>	Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea	
	<i>Deyeuxia rodwayi</i>	Tasman Bent-grass	
	<i>Dianella revoluta var. revoluta s.l.</i>	Black-anther Flax-lily	
	<i>Dianella tasmanica</i>	Tasman Flax-lily	
	<i>Dichelachne rara</i>	Common Plume-grass	
	<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Kidney-weed	
	<i>Dillwynia cinerascens s.s.</i>	Grey Parrot-pea	
	<i>Drosera auriculata</i>	Tall Sundew	

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
	<i>Echinopogon ovatus</i>	Common Hedgehog-grass	
	<i>Eleocharis sphacelata</i>	Tall Spike-sedge	
	<i>Epacris impressa</i>	Common Heath	
	<i>Epacris impressa var. impressa</i>	Common Heath	
	<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Messmate Stringybark	
	<i>Eucalyptus ovata subsp. ovata</i>	Swamp Gum	
	<i>Eucalyptus radiata subsp. radiata</i>	Narrow-leaf Peppermint	
	<i>Eucalyptus rubida</i>	Candlebark	
	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis subsp. viminalis</i>	Manna Gum	
	<i>Eucalyptus yarraensis</i>	Yarra Gum	Critically Endangered
	<i>Euchiton involucratus s.s.</i>	Star Cudweed	
	<i>Euchiton japonicus s.s.</i>	Creeping Cudweed	
	<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i>	Cherry Ballart	
	<i>Festuca asperula</i>	Graceful Fescue	
*	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	
	<i>Galium leiocarpum</i>	Maori Bedstraw	
*	<i>Genista monspessulana</i>	Montpellier Broom	
	<i>Geranium potentilloides</i>	Soft Crane's-bill	
	<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i>	Common Raspwort	
	<i>Goodenia ovata</i>	Hop Goodenia	
	<i>Goodia lotifolia s.l.</i>	Golden Tip	
	<i>Gratiola peruviana</i>	Austral Brooklime	
	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purple Coral-pea	
*	<i>Hedera hibernica</i>	Atlantic Ivy	
*	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog	
	<i>Hovea heterophylla</i>	Common Hovea	
	<i>Hydrocotyle foveolata</i>	Yellow Pennywort	
	<i>Hydrocotyle hirta</i>	Hairy Pennywort	
	<i>Hydrocotyle laxiflora</i>	Stinking Pennywort	
	<i>Hypericum japonicum</i>	Matted St John's Wort	
*	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Flatweed	
	<i>Isolepis fluitans</i>	Floating Club-sedge	
	<i>Isolepis inundata</i>	Swamp Club-sedge	
	<i>Isolepis platycarpa</i>	Broad-fruit Club-sedge	
	<i>Isotoma fluviatilis subsp. australis</i>	Swamp Isotome	
	<i>Juncus planifolius</i>	Broad-leaf Rush	
	<i>Lagenophora stipitata s.l.</i>	Common Bottle-daisy	
*	<i>Leontodon saxatilis subsp. saxatilis</i>	Hairy Hawkbit	
	<i>Lepidosperma laterale var. majus</i>	Variable Sword-sedge	
	<i>Leptospermum continentale</i>	Prickly Tea-tree	
	<i>Lomandra filiformis subsp. coriacea</i>	Wattle Mat-rush	

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
	<i>Lomandra filiformis</i> subsp. <i>filiformis</i>	Wattle Mat-rush	
	<i>Luzula meridionalis</i> var. <i>flaccida</i>	Common Woodrush	
*	<i>Lysimachia arvensis</i> var. <i>arvensis</i>	Scarlet Pimpernel	
	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple Loosestrife	
	<i>Monotoca scoparia</i>	Prickly Broom-heath	
	<i>Myriophyllum crispatum</i>	Upright Water-milfoil	
*	<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	White Waterlily	
	<i>Olearia myrsinoides</i>	Silky Daisy-bush	
	<i>Oxalis exilis</i>	Shade Wood-sorrel	
	<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	Grassland Wood-sorrel	
*	<i>Pinus radiata</i> var. <i>radiata</i>	Radiata Pine	
#	<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	Sweet Pittosporum	
*	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort	
	<i>Plantago varia</i>	Variable Plantain	
	<i>Poa labillardierei</i> var. <i>labillardierei</i>	Common Tussock-grass	
	<i>Poa sieberiana</i> var. <i>hirtella</i>	Grey Tussock-grass	
	<i>Poa sieberiana</i> var. <i>sieberiana</i>	Grey Tussock-grass	
	<i>Potamogeton cheesemanii</i>	Red Pondweed	
	<i>Potamogeton ochreatus</i>	Blunt Pondweed	
*	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Self-heal	
	<i>Ranunculus glabrifolius</i>	Shining Buttercup	
	<i>Schoenus apogon</i>	Common Bog-sedge	
	<i>Senecio linearifolius</i>	Fireweed Groundsel	
	<i>Senecio minimus</i>	Shrubby Fireweed	
	<i>Senecio phelleus</i>	Stony Fireweed	
*	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Common Sow-thistle	
	<i>Tetrarrhena juncea</i>	Forest Wire-grass	
*	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Suckling Clover	
*	<i>Trifolium striatum</i>	Knotted Clover	
*	<i>Vicia sativa</i> subsp. <i>nigra</i>	Narrow-leaf Vetch	

Appendix 2 - - Fauna species recorded at 38 Dafter Road, December 2021

Key to symbols	
*	Introduced species
L	Recorded previously by the landowner

Status	Common name	Scientific Name	Type	FFG Status
	Australian King-Parrot	<i>Alisterus scapularis</i>	Bird	
	Australian Magpie	<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Bird	
	Banjo Frog	<i>Limnodynastes dumerilii</i>	Frog	
	Black Wallaby	<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>	Mammal	
	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Bird	
	Brown Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Bird	
	Common Froglet	<i>Crinia signifera</i>	Frog	
	Common Wombat	<i>Vombatus ursinus</i>	Mammal	
	Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	Bird	
	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Mammal	
	Eastern Spinebill	<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	Bird	
	Golden Whistler	<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>	Bird	
	Grey Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	Bird	
L	Koala	<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	Mammal	
	Laughing Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Bird	
	Musk Lorikeet	<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Bird	
	Olive-backed Oriole	<i>Oriolus sagittatus</i>	Bird	
	Rufous Whistler	<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Bird	
	Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	Bird	
	Satin Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	Bird	
	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites lucidus</i>	Bird	
	Striated Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	Bird	
	Striated Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	Bird	
	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	Bird	
	Superb Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Bird	
	White-naped Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus lunatus</i>	Bird	
	White-throated Treecreeper	<i>Cormobates leucophaea</i>	Bird	