Improving linear corridors

to increase farm productivity and support wildlife

What are linear corridors?

Shelter belts, wind breaks, watercourses, road verges, paddock trees, landscape plantings or any long narrow strip of plants.

There is strong science showing that well structured shelter belts and wind breaks not only support wildlife but improve productivity on farms generally.

They protect stock in adverse weather, and improve survival rates and health of stock (i.e. stock put on more weight and are less stressed with better shelter).

They provide habitat for small native birds and other wildlife which can help pollinate plants and control problem insects. Improved biodiversity is known to improve general farm productivity.

Small native birds such as wrens, robins, finches, silvereyes, thornbills and jacky winters are under threat from loss of habitat. They require midstorey and understorey native plants for food, protection, nest sites and within corridors so they can travel safely between larger areas of native vegetation.

Improving habitat values in linear corridors in both rural and urban areas will help our native birds move around safely, and improve the health of their populations.

Before

Linear corridors are typically a narrow line of trees 10 to 25 m tall, 5 to 20 m apart with very little understorey and very few if any small birds.

Create a map of your property showing your planned habitat network.

Through additional planting, connect to other linear corridors, such as road verges, travelling stock routes and watercourses, and also connect to areas of remnant native plants, regrowth native plants and paddock trees.

Restrict spraying of fertiliser and pesticides near linear corridors.

Manage weeds, but if a weed patch is home to small birds, keep it until native habitat has grown before removing it.

Increase width of linear corridor to at least 20 m, but preferably 50 m or more by planting local native plants.

What looks messy to us might be valuable habitat—resist the urge to tidy up and mow.

After

Wider corridor, young trees regenerating, habitat havens incorporated, small birds travelling safely.

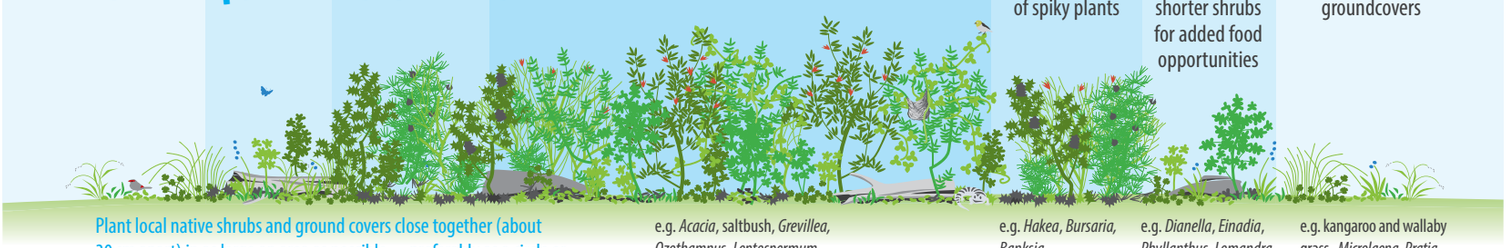
Exclude stock permanently to allow natural regeneration of native plants. Trees of different ages benefit a variety of fauna. If this is not possible then permit only low-intensity, short-term grazing so new plants can establish.

Allow fallen trees and branches to remain as habitat e.g. shelter for lizards, and feeding opportunities for small birds.

Plant 'habitat havens' (also called 'habitat islands'). These are a dense, diverse mix of native shrubs, vines, groundcovers and grasses—including spiky plants such as *Hakea* and *Bursaria*. Plant havens as close together as possible and no more than 50 m apart.

Record fauna using existing corridors. Record dates and quantities of plants planted, then monitor any change in fauna using the improved corridors.

How to plant a Habitat Haven



Plant local native shrubs and ground covers close together (about 30 cm apart) in as large an area as possible—preferably as a circle or rectangle (quantities are based on minimum size of 7 m diameter).

e.g. *Acacia*, saltbush, *Grevillea, Ozothamnus, Leptospermum.* Minimum 3 plants.

e.g. *Hakea, Bursaria, Banksia.* Minimum 17 plants.

e.g. *Dianella, Einadia, Phyllanthus, Lomandra.* Minimum 36 plants.

e.g. kangaroo and wallaby grass, *Microlaena, Pratia,* native violets, native geranium. Minimum 44 plants.

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For more information contact Habitat Network **info@iewf.org**, see **www.habitatnetwork.org**, and talk to your local Landcare people **landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups** about suitable local native plants and how to obtain them.

References: *What Makes a Good Farm for Wildlife* and *Wildlife Conservation in Farm Landscapes*, both by David B. Lindenmayer (lead author).

Landcare New South Wales

Australian Government | National Landcare Program

NSW Government | Local Land Services

habitat network restoring natural capital