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CONSERVATION OF WOODLAND VERTEBRATE BIOTA IN THE TEMPERATE WOODLANDS OF SOUTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES

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1. Remnant vegetation and plantings are perceived as markedly different kinds of habitat by some elements of the biota and should be treated as different components of a portfolio of vegetation assets on a farm.
2. There are cumulative effects of remnant vegetation and plantings on vertebrate biota at several spatial scales.
3. Large patches are important for biodiversity conservation but small patches also can make an important conservation contribution.
4. Forgotten environments, particularly rocky outcrops, are critical for the conservation of species-rich groups like reptiles.
5. The content, configuration and context of plantings all make an important contribution to the value of these areas for bird biodiversity.
6. Landscape context is a key driver of the composition of vertebrate assemblages occupying temperate woodland remnants.
7. There are few, if any, robust shortcuts to biodiversity conservation in temperate woodland landscapes.

Introduction

The temperate woodlands of south-eastern Australia are some of the most heavily cleared and degraded vegetation types in Australia (Benson 2008). There also have been significant changes in biodiversity in these vegetation types, including increases in exotic plant species (Burrows 1999) and reductions in many native plant species (McIntyre *et al.*1993; McIntyre and Lavorel 1994; Prober *et al.* 2005), as well as changes in populations of many species of mammals and birds (Ford *et al.* 2001; Barrett *et al.* 2003).

Over the past decade, we have conducted an extensive series of multi-scaled studies of the vertebrate biota of remnant temperate woodland and planted native vegetation in the South-west Slopes bioregion of southern New South Wales (see map on next page), (e.g. Cunningham