

Gooram Valley Landcare Group Newsletter

February 2016

Gooram Valley Landcare website: gooramvalley.org.au

Gooram Valley Landcare Group Contact List:

Chairperson:	Rob Colvin	Phone:	0419 594 547
		email:	bondsbottom@bigpond.com
		Postal:	P.O. Box 591 North Carlton, Vic. 3054
Vice Chair:	Andrew Douglas		
Secretary:	Rowena Stubbe	Phone:	5790 3330
Treasurer:	Charlie Brydon		
Facilitator:	Bethany Devanny	Phone:	5795 2849
		email;	neil.n.devanny@gmail.com

Rabbit control and the release of the new Calicivirus

Planning has been underway over several years for the release of the new Calicivirus strain, RHDV K5. It has required a complex process of approvals and regulatory guidelines being developed. A strategic plan has been developed to maximise the impact of the new virus.

The release is to be autumn or spring of this year. The Granite Creeks Project has registered its six landcare groups, including Gooram Valley Landcare Group, to be a potential release site. The new virus will not have an effect as great as the original RHDV, but the new planned release provides an opportunity for rabbit numbers to be reduced across Australia. The release sites are needed to spread the virus widely and to provide data for research.

This virus is an additional tool to assist in rabbit control. To maximise its effect our ongoing control program of monitoring, reducing rabbit numbers by poisoning and or fumigating, eliminating harbour (blackberries and inkweed) and ripping must continue.

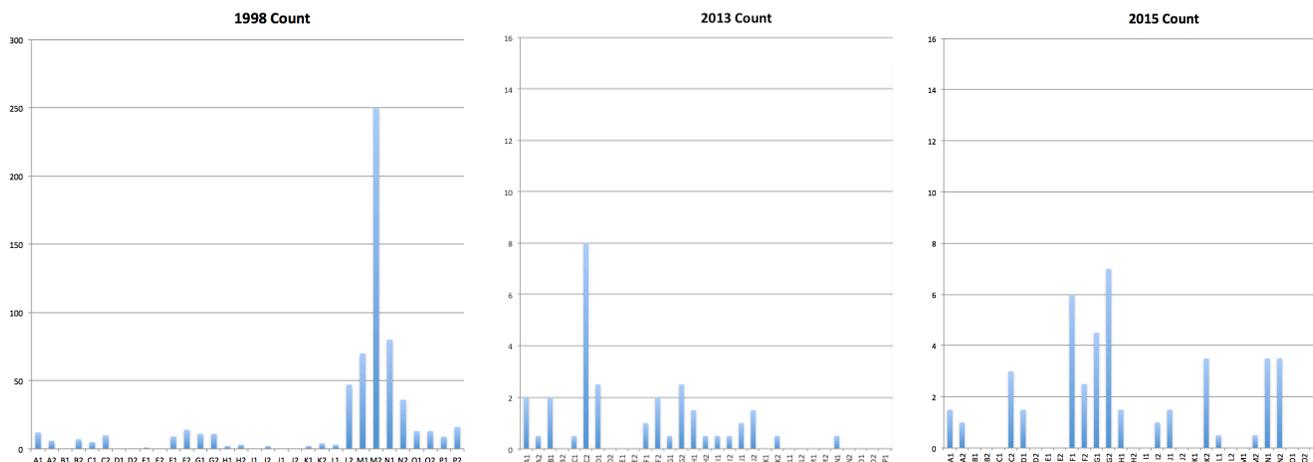
Ripping program

Unless burrows are destroyed rabbits will return to any area where the numbers have been reduced. The Granite Creeks Project has funds available to assist in ripping on your property. The subsidy is 50% of the ex GST amount spent on ripping rabbit burrows by an approved operator. To be eligible for the subsidy a spotter must be on-site to guide the operator and to check the work. The landholder pays the full amount (around \$160 per hour) and on submission of the paid invoice will receive a 50% rebate leaving a net cost of about \$80 per hour. There is no limit to the amount of funding any individual can apply for.

The ripping hours requested must be approved before work commences. Heather Tingay will coordinate the work to minimise the movement of the machinery and maximise the impact of the ripping. **Register the number of hours you wish to complete by contacting Bethany as shown above. If you need advice or assistance assessing your need please call or email.**

Monitoring of rabbit numbers

Gooram Valley Landcare Group has been involved in collecting data for the RHDV rabbit control program since 1996. The following graphs show data from some of those years. Each column shows the number of rabbits seen in each 500 metre distance (note the different scales). The transect follows the same route every year. As you can see rabbit populations have been reduced significantly: this is because of the effectiveness of our rabbit control program. Our success should not be measured by how many have been killed, but by how many remain. These are the breeders. As we know rabbits breed prolifically!



Weeds on Roadsides:

Over the past three years all roads in the Gooram Valley Landcare Group area have been treated for blackberry, St. Johns Wort, briar, bridal creeper, horehound and cape broom. The work has been highly effective. The work for this, the fourth year, has been completed. **Please report any weeds you see on our roadsides to Bethany ASAP.**

Prairie Ground Cherry and Inkweed:

Prairie Ground cherry and inkweed are relatively new weeds to Gooram. Each is very invasive. While inkweed is easy to control prairie ground cherry is much harder to eradicate once it is established. Over the past several years both weeds have been identified at a small number of locations (some of which have been on roadsides). Since then it has become evident that **these weeds are much more widespread than previously thought**. Often landholders have not known what the weeds look like and hence did not realise what to look for. Photos will be available (ASAP) on the Gooram Valley Landcare website. Contact Bethany to have an identification made if you are not sure whether the plant is a weed. If you know of the location of either of these weeds (private land or roadside) please contact Bethany immediately so an action plan can be discussed.

New Landholders – keeping in touch

Keeping the contact lists up to date is always challenging. If you know of somebody who does not get the newsletter, or is new to the district, would you advise them of the existence of our Gooram Landcare Group and encourage them to contact Bethany. This way we can ensure everybody is kept informed and our work is more effective.