

BULOKE WOODLANDS

What does it look like?

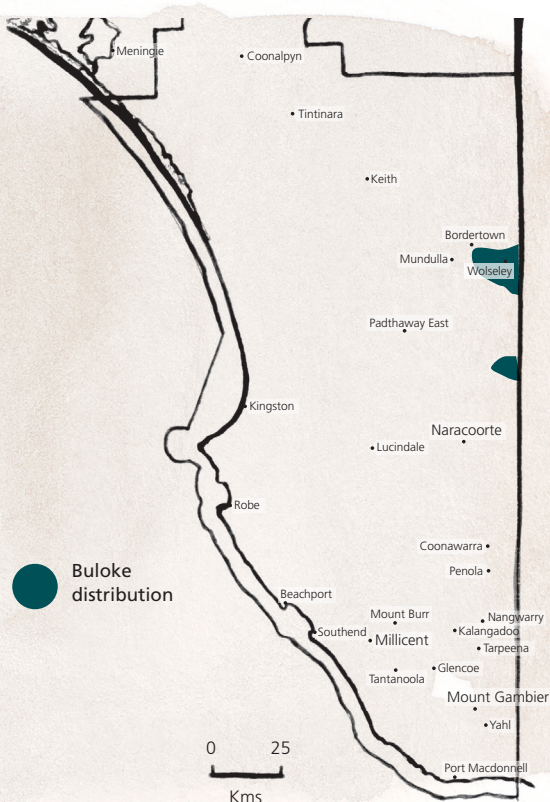
Buloke (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) is a long-lived, single trunked tree (5-15 m high) and is a type of sheoak. Buloke is the hardest wood in the world.

The leaves have been reduced to branchlets/needles and are dark green and held upright. Trees are either male or female and flower between September-November. When in flower, male trees are covered in yellow/orange pollen laden stamens while female trees have a dense tuft of red styles. Only the female trees produce cones and seeds.

In a typical Buloke woodland, Buloke is the dominant tree species but will sometimes occur with eucalypts such as Grey Box and Blue Gum. The understorey consists of native grasses, lilies and herbs and the occasional scattered low shrub.

Where will I find it?

Buloke woodlands in South Australia occur on heavy fertile clay soils, often subject to seasonal flooding (crabhole/gilgai country), and also on low hills of clay/loam. These are the same areas where the larger remaining stands of Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) woodland are found. In the South East, the remaining patches are largely restricted to roadsides (e.g. Pooginagoric - Teatrick Roadside Reserve), isolated patches and paddock trees on private land, or in reserves such as the Wolseley Common Conservation Park.



Importance

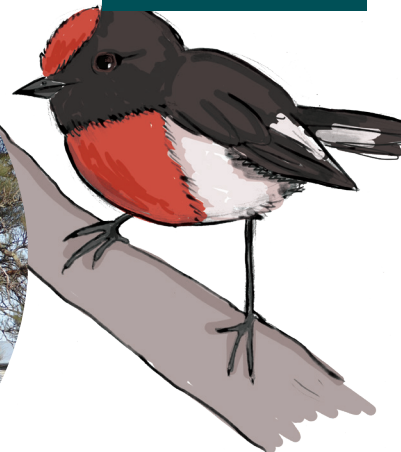
Buloke woodlands occur on productive farming land and as a result, have been substantially cleared. It currently occupies less than 3 percent of the area it once did and is Nationally listed as an Endangered community.

Buloke woodlands offer important habitat for many native plants and animals including the nationally endangered South-Eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. Buloke is one of only three types of trees that the endangered South-eastern Red-tail Black Cockatoo feeds on and hence is important to the birds' survival.

This region was originally inhabited by the Potaruwutj Aboriginal people and evidence of Buloke diggings sticks and boomerangs have been found.



Red-capped Robins usually pounce onto their prey on the ground from an elevated perch



Other species that can be found in Buloke woodlands include:

Plants

- Broughton pea *Swainsona procumbens*
- Lambs-tails *Ptilotus exaltatus* var. *semilanatus*
- Leafy Templetonia *Templetonia stenophylla*
- Golden billy-buttons *Pycnosorus chrysanthes*

Invertebrates

- Wood white butterfly *Delias aganippe*

Mammals

- Fat-tailed dunnart
Sminthopsis crassicaudata

Reptiles

- Olive legless lizard *Delma inornata*

Birds

- Bush stone-curlew *Burhinus grallarius*
- Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata*
- Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*
- South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo
Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne

Threats

Buloke woodlands have been greatly reduced in range and often exist in less than ideal situations, where various processes can degrade them.

Grazing: over-grazing by livestock and other animals reduces tree health, prevents regeneration, and alters habitat structure.

Weeds: weeds out-compete native plants, prevent natural regeneration and changes habitat structure.

Fragmentation and disconnected remnants: small and isolated patches, including paddock trees, are susceptible to external influences such as invasion by weeds. It makes it difficult for native wildlife to move between patches, or find large enough patches in which they can survive.

Restoration Action

With so little of this woodland remaining, securing and managing Buloke woodlands and individual paddock trees is of vital importance. Even small areas and individual trees in paddocks are important as they provide stepping-stones for wildlife to move across cleared landscapes.

Protecting stands of Buloke is one of the most constructive things a landholder can do. Large stands of Buloke are the highest priority especially if some native plants exist underneath but individual trees in paddocks should not be dismissed.

Controlled grazing

Management of stock is an important step in protecting these woodlands to encourage natural regeneration of new seedlings. Buloke often reproduce through 'suckering' and these are highly palatable. Fencing to control and/or remove grazing for lengthy periods will start this process. Once grazing pressure has been removed, a focus on the control of pasture grasses and weeds may be necessary.

Weed control

Reducing weed cover will allow more native plants to flourish. Bridal creeper, Phalaris and Boneseed are commonly encountered in these remnants. Seek advice on weed control practices.

Link remnants

Where possible, link existing Buloke (especially if understorey plants exist) or revegetate to connect stands of scattered trees. Revegetate by planting seedlings but be sure to use secure tree guards to prevent damage from herbivores. It will be necessary to follow up with several years of weed control and watering to get them established. They are slow growing and highly palatable.

Stubble burning causes significant damage and even death, to paddock trees, so establishment of fire-breaks around standing vegetation is essential.

Rabbit control

Rabbits can have a devastating impact on young Buloke seedlings which they find highly palatable. This makes tree guards essential, but rabbit baiting and control is an even better method for avoiding this problem.

Farmers have shown that conserving biodiversity and native vegetation on their farms supports sustainable agriculture.

Further Advice

Contact Limestone Coast Landscape Board on (08) 8735 1204 to supply a list of regional revegetation contractors, consultants and specialists to advise on your project.



Photo: Emily Fearn

Calocephalus citreus
Lemon Beautyhead



Photo: Cath Dickson

Templetonia stenophylla
Leafy templetonia



Buloke trees provide a food source for South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoos from January to March

Photo: David Hinchliffe

