



## EAST GIPPSLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT



# regent honeyeater project

BIODIVERSITY

**The Regent Honeyeater is in desperate need of saving, with just three key habitats left in Victoria. But thanks to a dedicated Landcare group near Benalla in North East Victoria, help is on the way.**

web: [www.regenthoneyeater.org.au](http://www.regenthoneyeater.org.au)

contact: [www.regenthoneyeater.org.au/contact.php](http://www.regenthoneyeater.org.au/contact.php)





The Regent Honeyeater Project is helping to restore vital habitat for this endangered species whose numbers have been in serious decline over recent decades.

Operating in the Lurg Hills, just outside Benalla, the project began 13 years ago with the aim of protecting these striking birds, of which only 1000 – 1500 remain in the wild today. It's a sad position for a bird that was once quite common and often seen in the street trees of regional towns.

Together with school students and other organisations, the group has propagated and planted more than 300,000 native seedlings and restored 900ha of habitat. Results show that bird life is improving, with several threatened species found breeding where previously, the group wouldn't have dreamt of finding them. "Recently we observed Yellow Tufted Honeyeaters breeding in an area that just eight years ago, was only a bare paddock with some scattered Ironbark trees," says Ray.

"Basically it's about increasing the quantity and quality of local bush remnants, so that the remaining wildlife can hang on long enough to breed their way out of trouble.

"A heavily grazed site simply loses most of the shrubs and ground covers, and becomes so open that sheltering, feeding and nesting potential is much reduced. Without shrubs, the birds can't stay there, insects breed up and the trees are eaten relentlessly."

"So we're in a race against the clock to restore the remaining habitat as quickly as possible, before it's too late and these threatened species can no longer cope."

"Each year more landholders are getting involved. You can't hide from the fact that our landscape is in trouble, and these farmers want to help out. They're leaving a tremendous legacy to future generations and we really cannot thank them enough."

