



Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group Inc

A0037706R

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13/03/2013

Media Release

Local firefighter discovers endangered bird emerging phoenix-like from a wildfire *Plains Wanderers still in Wyndham*

Simon Jolly is a local Parwan resident who is a member of both Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group & Parwan Landcare Group.

He is also a CFA fire-fighter who fought the recent large grass fire in Wyndham in on the 14th January.

He writes of his extraordinary observation of a Plains Wanderer emerging phoenix-like in the immediate aftermath of the fire.

The Plains Wanderer is a very rare and endangered bird that was once common throughout the grasslands but is now highly endangered. It was long feared extinct in this region but several have been rediscovered in recent years.

Simon writes:

'I have been fond of plains wanderers since taking part in a university field trip to study them in far western Queensland some years ago. The photo attached is one that I took of a male wanderer in Queensland on that trip.

They are very rare in Victoria but you may remember that in March 2011 a female plains wanderer was found in the Woodgrove shops and given a health check at Melbourne Zoo before being released. We sought advice on the best wanderer habitat in a 20 km radius of Woodgrove and chose an isolated stony rise down in the Wyndham shire. I was down that way again with the CFA fighting the 14 January fire. Late in the afternoon we had it under control and were patrolling the burnt edge looking for hot spots. I was reflecting on the fact that we had stopped the fire just a few hundred metres short of the stony rise where we released the female wanderer. Imagine my amazement when a male plains wanderer walked out of the grass and came across the burnt ground towards our truck. There was no mistake, the sun was shining brightly and the wanderer came to within four or five metres of the truck before turning and walking back into the grass. Perhaps it had fled before the fire and was attempting to return to its home range. I am heartened by the incident. The release site we chose for the Woodgrove female is clearly suitable for wanderers and she has at least one potential mate nearby. These birds are incredibly rare but they are still out there.'

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Female Plains Wanderer found in Melton 2011



Male Plains Wanderer photographed by Simon Jolly in Queensland

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