

# "Do it with Dung"

FROM THE MOUNTAINS  
TO THE MURRAY

<http://northeast.landcarevic.net.au/dungbeetle>

## NEWSLETTER

Issue 11: September 2010

### Our final issue...

Welcome to the final edition of the "Do it with Dung" newsletter, as it has been said, "All good things must come to and end", and so it is with this Project. The benefits however will be ongoing as our 200,000+ released beetles continue to breed and spread throughout the region.

The dung beetle monitoring results and maps will provide an invaluable database of dung beetle activity in our region, and represents the most comprehensive survey of dung beetle activity ever undertaken in Victoria.

In addition to dung beetle releases, the project also had a huge number of activities including:

- Field Days & Farm walks
- Monitoring & Identification Workshops
- Harvesting demonstrations
- Parasite Management Workshops
- Student Education Presentations
- Exhibits at Field days & Expos
- Monitoring results Feedback Forums
- Species trials using shade-cloth tents & soil cores
- Regular newsletters & resource development
- Regular steering committee meetings
- Sharing information through our project website

All in all, it has been a mammoth effort, and I would like to send a huge thank-you to everyone who has contributed to the success of the project. The contributors have been many and varied, and the overall level of support shown towards this project has been extraordinary. The final report is nearing completion and all monitors will receive a copy. If you would like to receive a copy, please let Belinda know.

### LAST CALL for monitoring results

If you have any outstanding monitoring results from Feb 2009 to May 2010, could you please forward these to Belinda as soon as possible.

The monitoring results maps are close to being finalised, and I would like to have **ALL** results (including nil results) included in the final report.

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### Beetle survives icy conditions

This photo from Lucyvale (July 2010) shows a *Geotrupes spiniger* dung beetle trapped in ice. It was thought that the beetle had perished, however on closer inspection, leg movement was observed. After gently freeing the beetle from the ice, this hardy little beetle appeared to make a full recovery!



*Geotrupes spiniger* beetle trapped in ice layer

Photo: Sharon Roberts

Large numbers of *Geotrupes spiniger* were released at Lucyvale in March 2008. Our icy beetle represents the second generation (a grandchild) of the 2008 releases. This is very encouraging, as it demonstrates successful breeding of the original releases, plus the ability of the next generation to find a mate and to produce offspring.

### Around the traps: (selected results): –

#### *Bubas bison*

Site 19	92 bison	9/5	Chiltern Valley
Site 14	42 bison	9/5	Byawatha
Site 72	37 bison	25/5	Meadow Creek
Site 21	23 bison	27/5	Byawatha
Site 98	21 bison	9/5	Dederang

#### *Geotrupes spiniger*

Site 98	1 spiniger	1/5	Dederang
Site 40	2 spiniger	10/5	Lucyvale

#### *Onitis aygulus*

Site 8	4 aygulus	13/5	Corowa
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#### *Onthophagus australis* (native beetle)

Site 39	6 australis	13/5	Lucyvale
Site 8	3 australis	28/5	Corowa

#### *Onthophagus binodis*

Site 38	16 binodis	3/5	Lucyvale
Site 28	10 binodis	15/5	Yackandandah

#### *Onthophagus taurus*

Site 28	8 taurus	15/5	Yackandandah
Site 44	6 taurus	10/5	Mitta Mitta

## Beetles flying at sunset

This photo was taken in the Tunnel Gap area at sunset. We are not sure what species of beetle they are, but there have been a number of reports of people seeing (and hearing) dung beetles flying around dusk. Many thanks to Stephen Routledge for sending in this great photo.



## Dung beetle traps available for loan

The project has about 50 dung beetle traps available for loan to Landcare groups & individuals. One way to increase beetles numbers is to harvest them from areas where they are in abundance. If you are interested in loaning the traps, please contact Belinda. The Project also has information on harvesting and release protocols, which outline best practice methods.



## Dung Beetle Resource Package on DVD/CD



The complete Dung Beetle Resource Package is now available on CD/DVD, and ensures that this valuable resource developed by the Lucyvale Better Beef Group continues to be available.

One thousand copies are available for distribution to individuals, schools & groups with an interest in dung beetles. Copies can be obtained by contacting either Belinda Pearce or Tom Croft:  
02 6024 9107 [tom.croft@necma.vic.gov.au](mailto:tom.croft@necma.vic.gov.au)

To date, copies have been sent all over Australia, and also further a field including America and New Zealand. The most recent request has been received from a Conservation Ecologist working at a zoo in Thailand. The Dung Beetle Resource pack is available free of charge.

## Where to from here?

Although the project may be officially drawing to a close, I am still interested in receiving any monitoring results, news, observations and photos that you may have. Of particular interest is the establishment of the species *Geotrupes spiniger*, and *Bubas bison*. So if you have any discoveries or observations, please let me know, as I will continue to collate results and observations.

We will also be following up on our soil core and tent trials with *Onitis caffer*, *Copris hispanus*, *Geotrupes spiniger* and *Bubas bison*.

## But wait, there's more...

The Kiewa Catchment Landcare Group was successful in obtaining a Community Action Grant to establish a number of nursery sites for the deep-burrowing earthworm *Aporrectodea longa*. This is a European pasture worm that is established in Northern Tasmania, but not in south-eastern Australia. As part of the project, there will be a quarterly earthworm newsletter, which will be sent to all of our "Do it with Dung" newsletter subscribers. There will also be an opportunity to include any dung beetle news in this newsletter.

Stay tuned for further information.

## Steering Committee – vote of thanks

Over the past 18-months, this project has benefited enormously from the guidance of our dedicated steering committee. We would like to acknowledge the following representatives for their contribution.

Chips Boucher: Lucyvale Better Beef Group  
Delwyn Clifton: Corowa & District Landcare  
Jim de Hennin: Talgarno  
Bob Gough: Kiewa Catchment Landcare Group  
Phil Horner: Ovens Landcare Network  
David Laverty: Lucyvale Better Beef Group  
Jos McAlister & Brian Lane: Bruarong  
Alby McIntosh: Springhurst  
James Neary: Murrumbidgee  
Stephen Routledge: Mudgegonga

I would also like to acknowledge the huge contribution of North East CMA staff in putting together the original application, the delivery of mapping training, assisting with workshops, catering at meetings, distributing dung beetle colonies and resources and promoting the project.



The "Do it with Dung – from the Mountains to the Murray" Project was funded by "Caring for our Country" from Jan 09 to Nov 09 and received additional funding via the Ovens Landcare Network and North East Catchment Management Authority to extend the project into 2010. It is managed by Kiewa Catchment Landcare Groups



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