

Chapter 6

Wetlands, rivers and creeks

Where riparian areas (that is creeks, wetlands and rivers) occur in woodlands, they have a different importance to the defined layers of woodlands such as the canopy or ground layer. These areas naturally connect to many other parts of the landscape (and beyond to other regions) through the transport of water and nutrients along watercourses. The concentrations of water, biomass, and nutrients in these areas makes them particularly attractive for some plants and animals (which often occur in large numbers). Riparian areas may be the only places where other species can survive. Therefore, these areas are very important, even though they occupy only relatively small parts of woodland landscapes.

RIGHT: River red gums are a characteristic part of the banks of rivers, streams and wetlands in many temperate woodland landscapes. Huge trees such as this provide sheltering and nesting places for more than 40 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and frogs as well as thousands of species of invertebrates.



LEFT: Native aquatic plants such as this native milfoil provide habitat for caddisflies, dragonflies and a vast range of other insects, as well as tadpoles and adult frogs. Aquatic plants also help filter sediments and improve water quality.