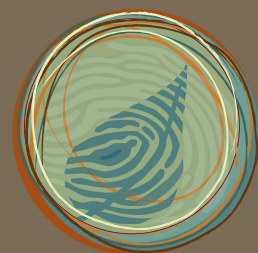


BURLONG POOL ON THE GULGULGA BILYA



wheatbelt
natural resource
management



Australian Government

BURLONG POOL

Located 5 kilometres west of the Northam Townsite, Burlong Pool is a semi-permanent body of water and a site of significance to both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of Northam.

Aboriginal spiritual beliefs are that Burlong is the “Summer home for the Wargal”

‘...during the winter floods the snake lived deep in the flowing springs at Bolgart and haunted the rocky slopes of Boolegin nearby. On the approach of summer the brooks ceased to flow and the creek beds dried up. Then the giant snake slowly made his way underground, down the Toodyay Brook to the Avon, and upstream along that river to the deep pool at Burlong near Northam.’

Rica Erickson (1974, Unknown Publication).

The site was also used as a training location in water crossings by the military and for recreational activities for the local Northam community in the 1940’s and 50’s.

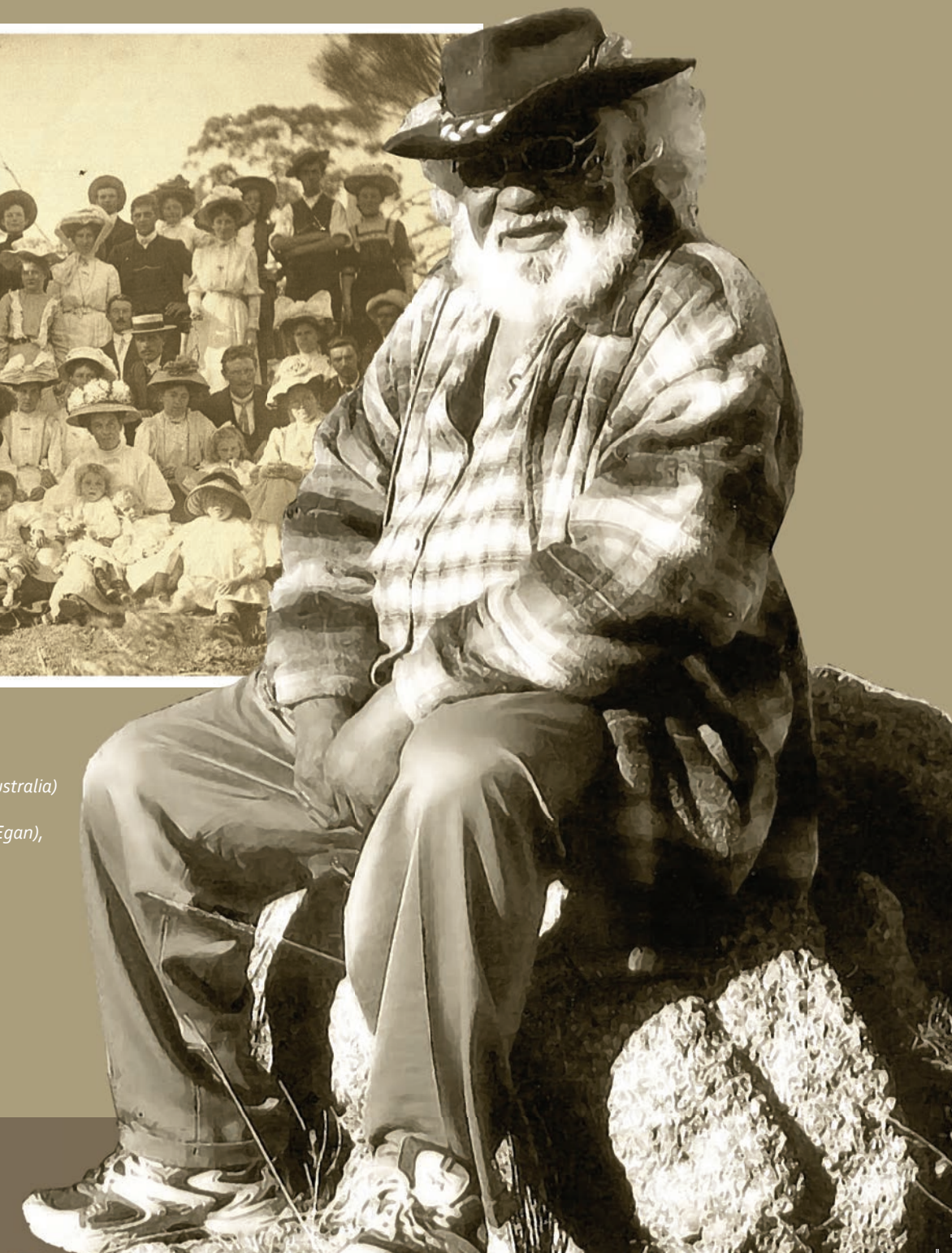
Wheatbelt NRM (formally known as Avon Catchment Council) in association with its partners has installed 12 interpretive signs at Burlong Pool that are re-printed here in this booklet. The site has also undergone a major cleanup and development. This project was a joint initiative involving the local Aboriginal community, Shire of Northam, Avon Valley Environmental Society, Department of Water, Avon Valley Contractors, Green Corps and Wheatbelt NRM.



(Back to front):

Picnic at Burlong Pool (Courtesy State Library of Western Australia)

*Steve Egan Ballardong Elder (Permission granted by Betty Egan),
Photo courtesy Marilyn Chester*



WELCOME TO BURLONG POOL ON THE GULGULGA BILYA



Nyaarn, ngany djoorap noonook djinanginy
Hello, I am happy to see you

Nidja ngalang Australia bojdera
Ngalang djoorap korl ngala miya-k-ngat nyininy
Our land Australia

We are happy for our beautiful country
We are happy to name it our home where we live

Koora, koora, yeyi, kahyakool noongar
Moort boodjera-k-ngat djinanginy
Ngulak Ngaank Nidja Biidja
Long long ago, now and forever *Nyungar* people
looking after the land

Kathy Yarran (*Nyungar* Elder)

Respect for the Wargal

Nyungar belief says that the *Wargal* can be a destructive force if not respected and if it's resting place is harmed the country could dry up.

For some, throwing a handful of sand into the water shows respect for the *Wargal* and lets him know that you are there and do not mean any harm.

When people have been known to travel through the home of the *Wargal* they would lay fresh rushes or pieces of meat at the water's edge or near sacred rocks to appease it.



Sand thrown into Burlong pool to show respect for the *Wargal*

Wargal Real or Myth?

Nyungar people believe the *Wargal* is sacred and should never be harmed or killed. It created the waterways, and was the giver of life. In 1929 the *Wargal* was thought to have been seen in the water and the townspeople of Northam kept a vigil over the river and at Burlong Pool. Fossil records show that during the Pleistocene there was a medium to gigantic sized snake that lived in Australia and is known in scientific circles as the *Wonambi*.

Dream Time Story

At the time of the Earth's formation there were huge explosions at York, the ground erupted and out of it came the *Wargal*.

With it's huge body as thick as tree trunks, the *Wargal* created sacred sites.

These sites held *wirrin* (spirits to look after the land) and were both places of *quop* (good) and *warra* (bad).

The *Wargal* went *kardup budjar* (under the earth) and sometimes *yira budjar* (over the earth) forming the *bilya* (rivers), the *kaart* (hills) and the *ngama* (waterholes).

These signs can be seen in the Earth today at places such as York, Spencers Brook and Toodyay where the *Wargal's* mark has been left in the hillside.

The *Wargal* travelled vast distances creating the universe and gave life and sustenance to the *Nyungar* people who were the custodians of this region.

Nidja Nyungar budjar nguny wangkiny
(this is *Nyungar* land and stories)

Wargal kierp wirrinitj
(the water snake belongs to the water)



Entrance to Boyagin Rock (near Brookton)

Wargal Travels

Bolgart, a town 65 kilometres north of Northam, means magic and refers to one or two places where there are boggy springs. The *Wargal* lived at Bolgart during the winter. You knew when he would return as he caused the autumn thunderstorms.

When the hot, dry summer came the *Wargal* would head to the deep water of Burlong Pool. You could see the path where the *Wargal* had been, because springs would break out in dry river beds at places like the Toodyay Brook.



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NYUNGAR PEOPLE - BURLONG POOL



Traditional Nyungar people lived sustainably off the land; they did not wander aimlessly but travelled through country, with regard to the seasons, which provided them with sustenance for daily life. Their living was made by hunting animals such as kangaroo, possum and echidna and by fishing, collecting and gathering an extensive range of edible bushfoods. Nyungar people lived in a clan group, which is larger than a family group but based on links with common ancestry.

Nyungar Seasons

Birak (December to January)

Bunuru (February to March)

Djeran (April to May)

Makuru (June to July)

Djilba (August to September)

Kambarang (October to November)

Dry and hot

Hottest part of the year

Cooler weather begins

Usually the wettest part of the year

Often the coldest part of the year

Warming trend accompanied by longer dry periods

Aboriginal Heritage Act (WA) 1972

This site is protected under the Western Australian Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972. This allows for the preservation on behalf of the community, places and objects of traditional value to the original inhabitants of Australia and their descendants. A registered site is a place of importance connected with the traditional or cultural life of the Aboriginal people. Fines apply for the desecration of sites such as Burlong Pool including excavation, destruction, damage or removal of artefacts.



Nyungar tools



Buka-Kangaroo cloak

Sites of significance

Burlong Pool was a significant site for the Nyungar people because it was the summer home to the Wargal. The Wargal was a dream time being that helped form the World as the Nyungar people knew it. This site would not have been a site for camping but would have been well known by the Nyungar people.

Nyungar tools and uses

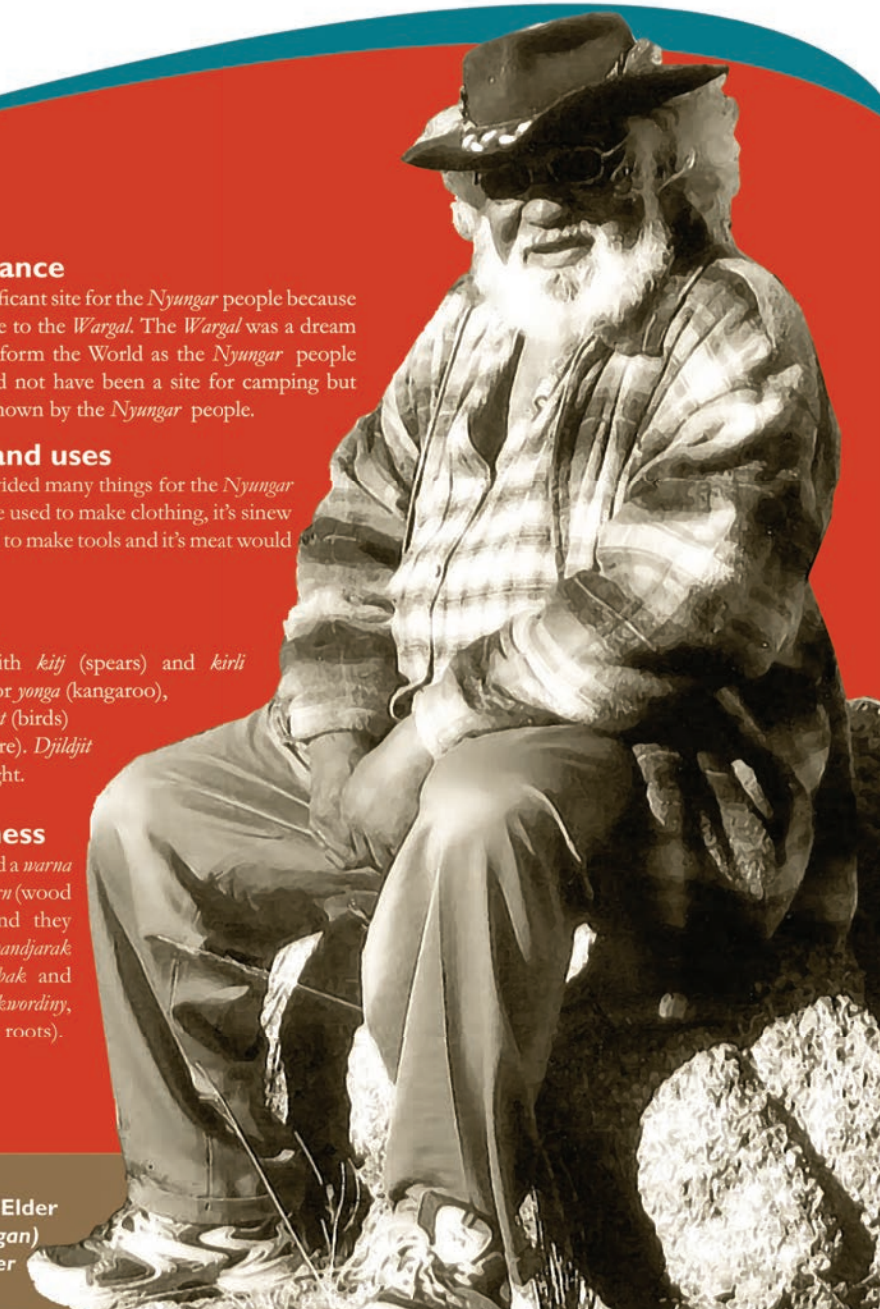
A yonga (kangaroo) provided many things for the Nyungar people; the skin could be used to make clothing, it's sinew and bones could be used to make tools and it's meat would feed the family.

Mens Business

The men hunted with *kijj* (spears) and *kirli* (boomerang), looking for *yonga* (kangaroo), *waij* (emu) and other *djet* (birds) sometimes using *karl* (fire). *Djildjit* (fish) could also be caught.

Womens Business

Women used a tool called a *warna* made from *mindalong boorn* (wood of acacia branches) and they collected foods like *mandjarak* (figs) and dug for *djabak* and *kona* (bush potatoes) or *kwordiny*, *djabak* and *kuwin* (edible roots).



Right: Steve Egan Ballardong Elder
(Permission granted by Betty Egan)
Photo courtesy Marilyn Chester



Warna-digging stick used for getting bush foods

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FLORA OF BURLONG POOL

The Nyungar people of the South West of Western Australia used the plants of this region in a number of ways. They provided a range of various food sources and important materials for tools and shelter and were an important aspect of traditional life. With the settlement of Europeans in the early 1800's the environment started to be used in a markedly different way.



**Bibool
Paperbark**
Melaleuca raphiophylla

Paperbarks were very common and useful for the Aboriginal people in this region. Bark could be stripped from these trees in large sheets for roofing, made into a cup shape to hold water, and it proved very useful to keep food clean and seal in flavour when cooking. Fish were wrapped in soft bark and placed in hot ashes until cooked. *Dhundjar* (frogs) and parts of the *yonga* (kangaroo) were also cooked in this way. Suitable wood could also be used to form spears.



**Kwel
Sheoak**
Casuarina obesa

It is said that these trees would not be cut down by the Nyungar people as they could hold the *mundung* (spirits) of ancestors. These trees also provided a source of *djoollbar* (gum) for the Nyungar people. This wood has been regarded as being superior to other wood with little shrinkage. It was however susceptible to *karl* (fire). It's main use in settler times was for roofing as termite resistant shingles.

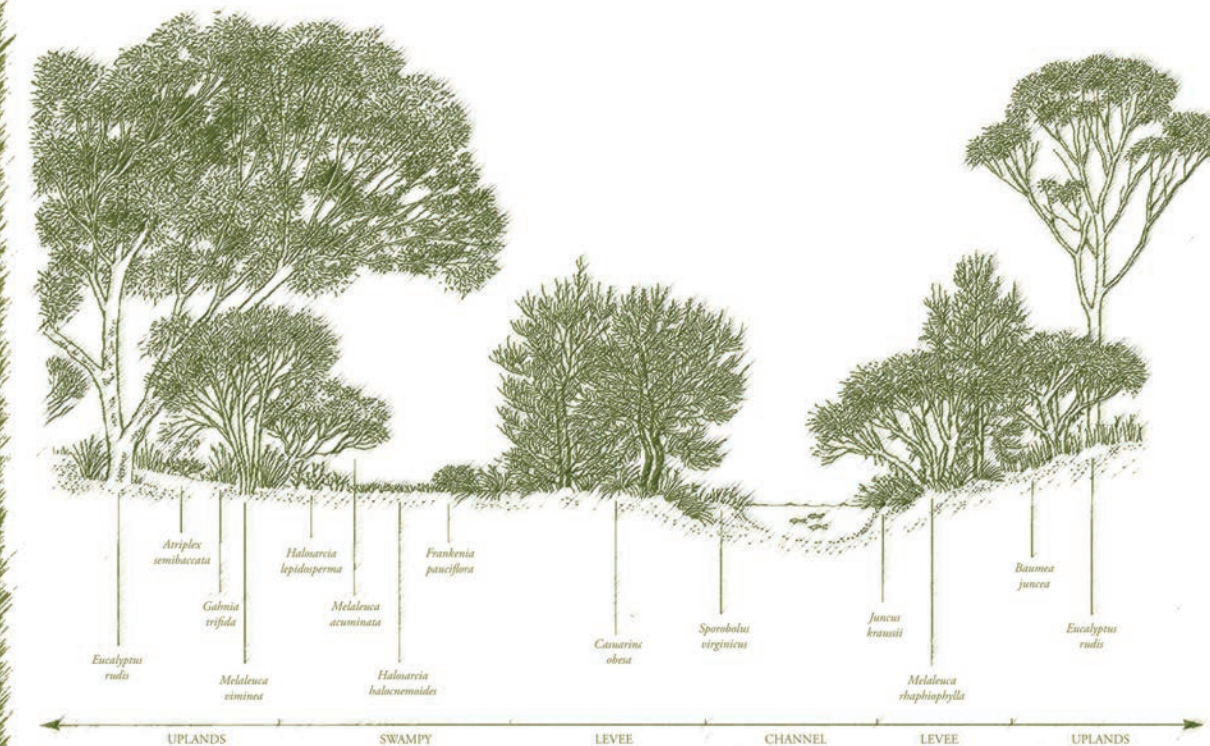


**Ngarant
Flooded Gum**
Eucalyptus rudis

The Nyungar people had a number of uses for this tree, the most important was as a food and water source. A large tree may retain enough moisture to provide *kep* (water) which can be drunk if one knows how to obtain it. The tree also produces a sweet fluid that can be *nganiny* (eaten). This tree was recommended to be grown for plantation in the late 1800's and can be used to stabilise soil around eroded water courses. It also provides food for a variety of insects, mammals and birds.



**Splendid Fairy Wren in
Bibool tree at Burlong Pool**



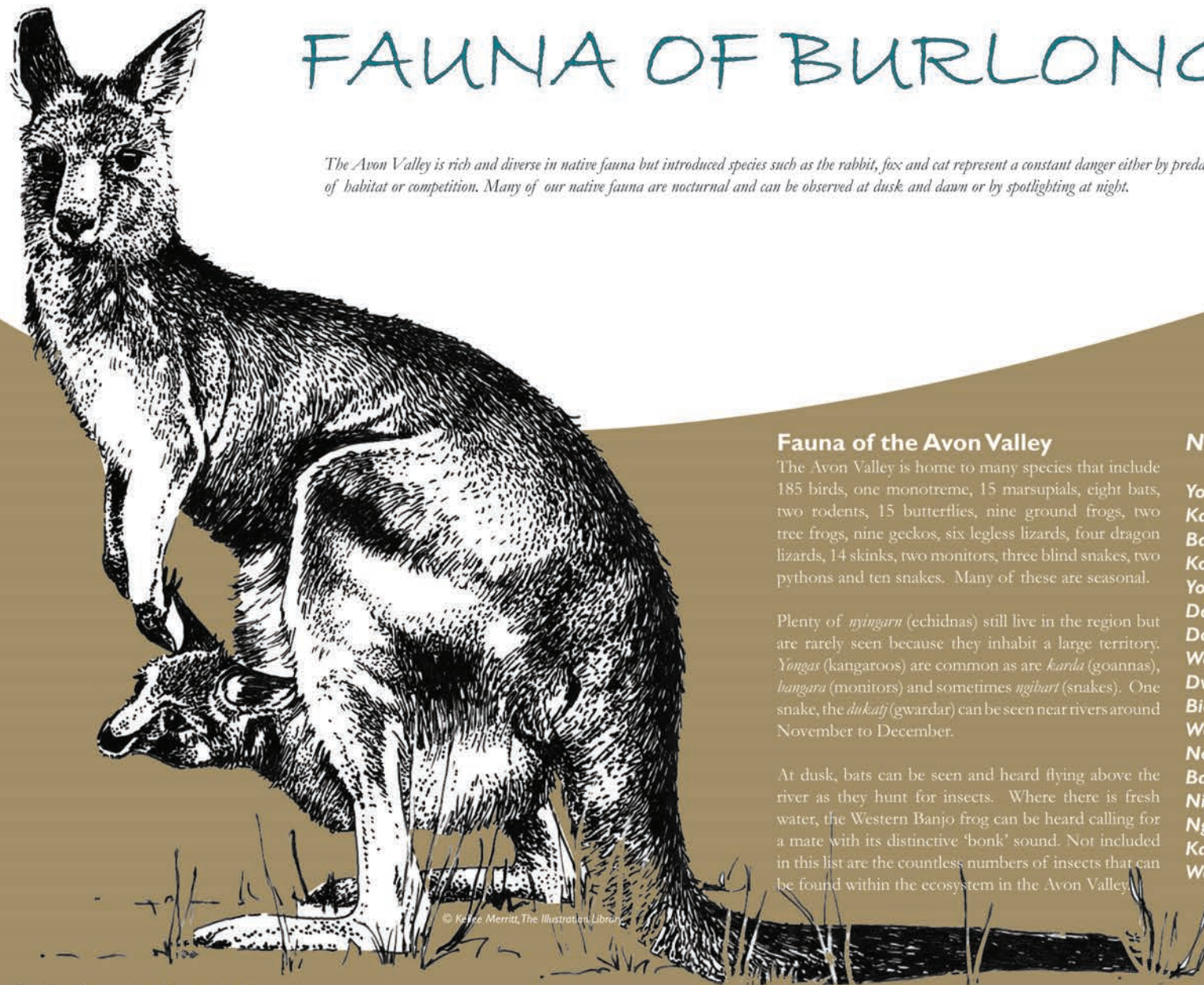
Cross-section of the Gulgulga Bilya (Avon River)

This is a typical cross section of the *Gulgulga Bilya* (Avon River) showing the main channel and flood plain. Above this flood plain level the vegetation can change dramatically. Once the land rises beyond the riparian zone the vegetation changes to *djaanit* (york gum), *mangart* (jam tree) and *djiraly* (native grasses). Today most of this country is cleared farmland.

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FAUNA OF BURLONG POOL

The Avon Valley is rich and diverse in native fauna but introduced species such as the rabbit, fox and cat represent a constant danger either by predation, through destruction of habitat or competition. Many of our native fauna are nocturnal and can be observed at dusk and dawn or by spotlighting at night.



Yonga (Kangaroo-Macropus fuliginosus)

Fauna of the Avon Valley

The Avon Valley is home to many species that include 185 birds, one monotreme, 15 marsupials, eight bats, two rodents, 15 butterflies, nine ground frogs, two tree frogs, nine geckos, six legless lizards, four dragon lizards, 14 skinks, two monitors, three blind snakes, two pythons and ten snakes. Many of these are seasonal.

Plenty of *nyingarn* (echidnas) still live in the region but are rarely seen because they inhabit a large territory. *Yongas* (kangaroos) are common as are *karda* (goannas), *bangara* (monitors) and sometimes *ngibart* (snakes). One snake, the *dukaij* (gwardar) can be seen near rivers around November to December.

At dusk, bats can be seen and heard flying above the river as they hunt for insects. Where there is fresh water, the Western Banjo frog can be heard calling for a mate with its distinctive 'bonk' sound. Not included in this list are the countless numbers of insects that can be found within the ecosystem in the Avon Valley.

NYUNGAR ENGLISH

Yooran	Bobtail
Karda	Racehorse Goanna
Bangara	Monitor Goanna
Koomal	Brush-tailed Possum
Yonga	Grey Kangaroo
Dalkitj	Bilby
Dobitj	Dugite
Wargal	Carpet Snake
Dwert	Dog
Bidit	Ant
Woodiny	Ant hill
Noordu	Flies
Baan-baan	Butterfly
Nindjaliny	Scorpion
Ngoowak	Bees
Kara	Trapdoor Spider
Warrkaly	Frog



Koomal (Brush-tailed Possum-Trichosurus vulpecula)



Nyingarn (Echidna-Tachyglossus aculeatus)

Hollows and Habitat

Harmless *wargal* (carpet snakes) and *koomal* (brush-tailed possum) can be found in old hollow flooded gums. Smaller marsupials can live in paperbark trees if they have large hollow limbs. Hollows were also used by *Nyungar* people and early settlers to store goods for later retrieval.



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BIRDS OF BURLONG POOL

At least 124 birds species have been known to nest during the breeding season (August to December) in this area. Birds are highly visible and mobile creatures and by observing their population dynamics one can measure the degree of environmental change that affects all living things. There have been at least 53 different bird species identified at Burlong Pool. These include nomadic, irruptive and resident bird species. This highlights how important the river system is as habitat.

Kulbardi Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*

This bird is common in the greater South West with eight sub-species.

It prefers open woodland, is extremely territorial and can defend feeding areas aggressively.

It's nest is high up in the trees and is made of twigs and lined with fine grass and plant material.

It is thought that if you see a single *kulbardi* it can be bad luck.

Migrants

Birds that are migrants move seasonally from one place to another. The opposite of a migrant bird is termed a resident bird.

Nomads

Some birds are known as locally nomadic during the year and will only move as far as the nearest food supply. Some nomads can also remain as a resident, if the conditions are good and there is plenty of food.

Irruptive Birds

Birds that are extremely nomadic and roam over vast areas of arid inland Australia such as the Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus axillaris*) are said to be irruptive. They move to where the food is plentiful.



Black-shouldered Kite
(*Elanus axillaris*)



Kuran Smoker Parrot *Polytelis anthopeplus*

This colourful and fast flying parrot has a very long dark blue tail with males being a brighter lime green than the females, which have a bright red on the wings.

The *kuran's* call has been described as a 'soft screech'. It has an intricate courting behaviour. They can eat a range of food from insect larvae to buds and flowers, but are primarily seed eaters of Eucalyptus and Acacia trees.

Kuran was once a common bird in the wheatbelt but was considered vermin and by the 1950's the population numbers had reduced substantially.



Kwiwok Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*

This is a medium sized bird around 20cm long, with its main colouring being green and blue. Both sexes are similar but the females are generally lighter in colour.

It has a variety of calls from an 'ek ek ek' when breeding through to a 'kee kee kee' when excited. It can be found in woodlands, mangroves and forests and forages mainly on land whilst occasionally capturing prey in the water.

It breeds between September and December and nests in tree hollows, often returning to the same location each year. They can have three to six chicks.

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Habitat and food sources

Hollow limbs can be used by a number of nesting birds including members of the Parrot Family, Owls, Sacred Kingfishers, Kestrels and Tree Martins. Whilst small knot holes are excellent for Striated Pardalotes.

The plants also provide an excellent food source and safety from predators. Honey Eaters are attracted to flowering trees and shrubs, their beaks and brush-tipped tongues being designed to extract nectar from these flowers.

The loss of woodplain and sandplain flora has greatly reduced the available habitat and food sources for birds and other animals of the region.

Demokarlitj Red Capped Robin *Petroica goodenovi*

This bird is easily recognised by its bright red forehead and is moderately common in the wheatbelt area. Some people think it sounds like a phone with a 'drrrrrit drrrrrit drrrrrit' call. The males can sing very loudly to mark the ownership of their territory which consists of a few acres. Their prey is commonly caught on the ground but they can swoop and catch creatures whilst airborne.

It likes to nest in Sheoak woodland and has a small compact nest that is tightly woven with grass, bark, fur, feathers and also spider's web and lichen. There can be two to three chicks in these nests and they are born blind. They breed in late winter and early summer.

Introduced Birds

The Laughing Turtle Dove from Asia, and Laughing Kookaburra from Eastern Australia, were introduced to Perth and arrived in Northam between 1898-1910. They are now common.

Feral pigeons were released earlier but have greater restriction in range, perhaps due to predation by raptors (Falcons).

White Swans were another introduced bird to Northam by a Russian Settler in the early 1900's.



Wardang Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*

This species is one of five crows in Australia, three of which occur in Western Australia.

The *Wardang* is a scavenger that eats carrion and any other meal opportunities. It works in small groups, preferring dense forested areas.

Its nest is bulky and loose, made of fine twigs, grass and other material that it may find. In its nest, some eight meters above the ground, it can have four to five chicks. It is a common bird in the wheatbelt region.

It is thought that its call 'Warrk Warrk' is because it has a croaky voice.

Kaa Kaa Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*

There are ten species of kingfisher with this one being one of the largest at around 45cm. It was introduced into the South West after being released from Perth zoo between 1897 and 1912.

It prefers heavily forested areas and open woodland and nests in hollows of living and dead trees with a clutch of two to four chicks.

It preys on snakes, reptiles, worms, beetles and other insects with a 'wait and pounce' technique by perching on a prominent place with a good view. It will then use its strong beak to pacify its prey by striking it on a rock.



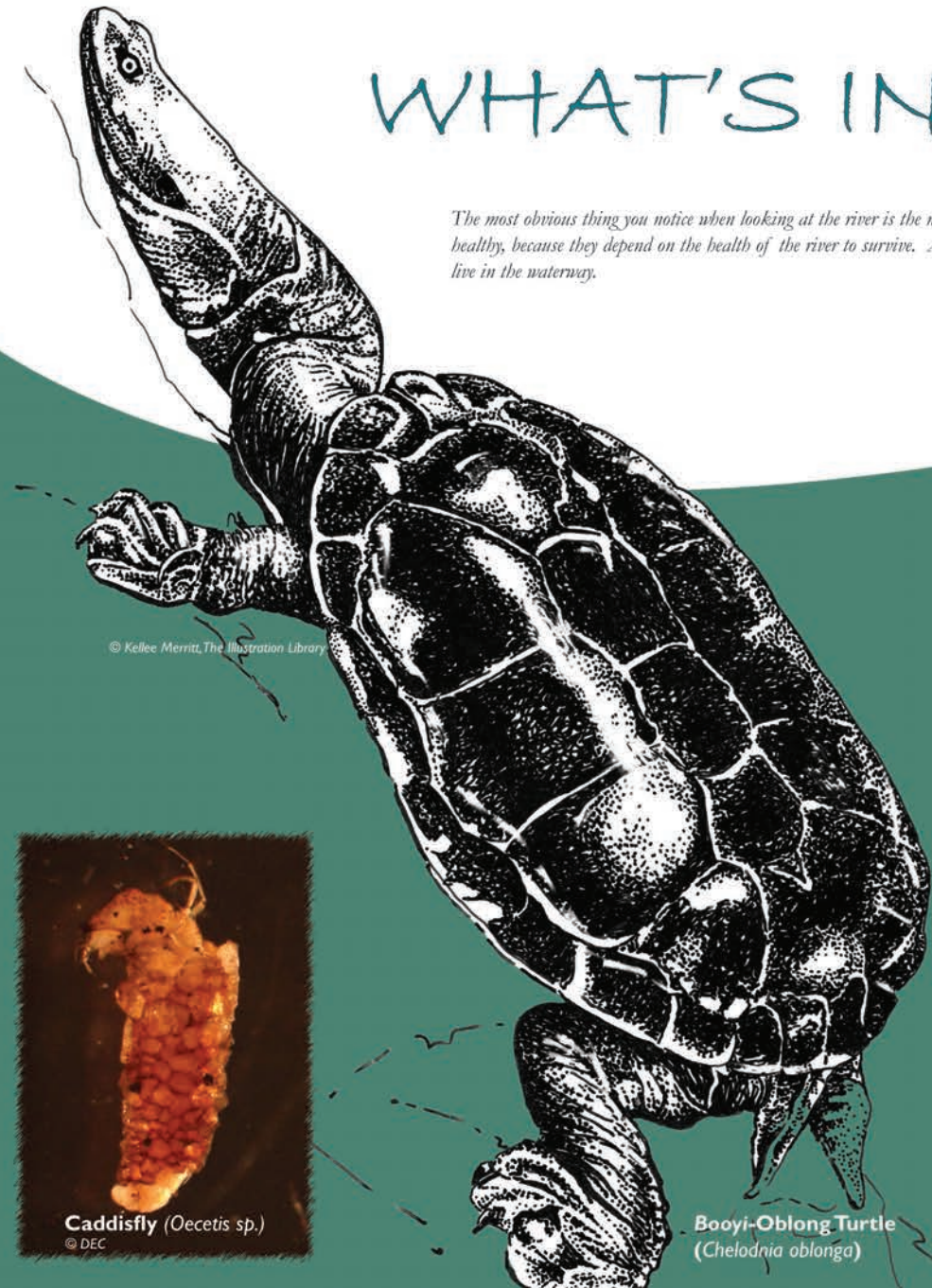
Splendid Fairy Wren *Malurus splendens*

A breeding pair of wrens, the male is bright blue.

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WHAT'S IN THE WATER?

The most obvious thing you notice when looking at the river is the number of birds. The presence of birds indicates the river is reasonably healthy, because they depend on the health of the river to survive. A great deal of what they eat comes from the creatures and plants that live in the waterway.



© Kellee Merritt, The Illustration Library



Caddisfly (*Oecetis* sp.)
© DEC

Booyi-Oblong Turtle
(*Chelodina oblonga*)

So what is in the water?

There are many plants and *Yerderap* (ducks) like to forage on these. If you observe them patiently, you will see them dive under the water and come back to the surface with a beak full of water plant.

Some of the birds also like to forage for the vegetation on the banks. The Eurasian Coots (*Fulica atra*) often do this.

Some birds thrive on small creatures and fish, like the Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*). They move through the water, waving their beaks from side to side, filtering what they catch.

Others birds such as the Australian White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*) and Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* and *Microcarbo melanoleucos*) dive for their prey or quietly walk the shallows to spear their chosen meal.



Djilgi (*Cherax quinquecarinatus*)

© DEC

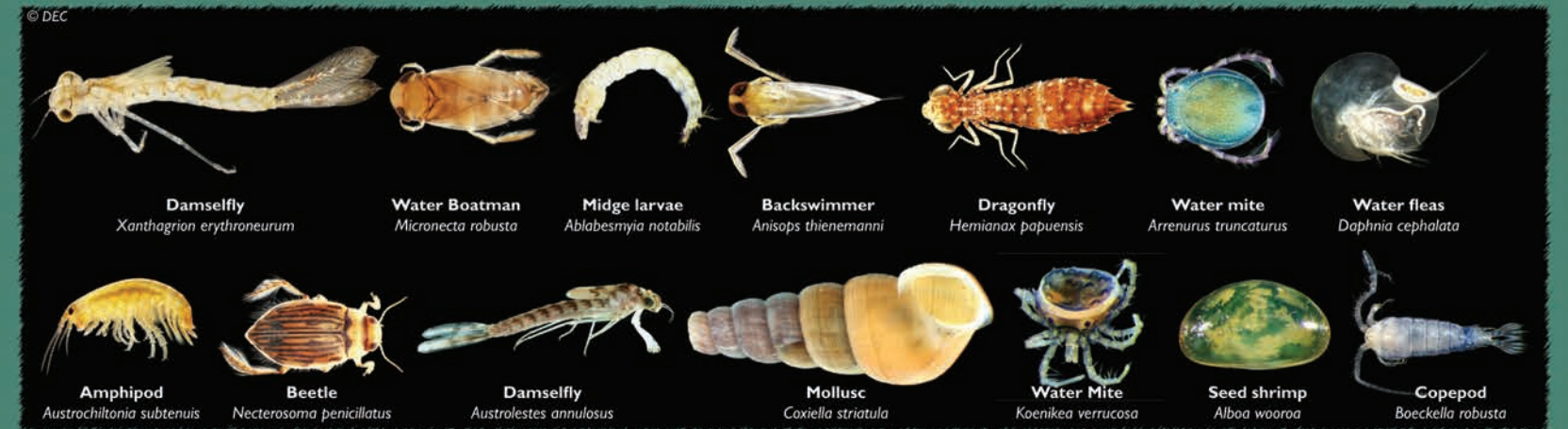
Life in the water

The largest creature is the *Booyi* or Oblong Turtle (*Chelodina oblonga*) which still thrives in these waters. Like all turtles, they leave the water at breeding time, lay their eggs on the land, bury them, and then take no further interest. The young eventually hatch and make their way to the nearest water. They largely feed on detritus at the bottom of the waterway.

The next largest creatures are the fish. The most common is the introduced species known as the mosquito fish (*Gambusia holbrooki*) and they are present in large numbers. They tend to be in large schools so if you see fish, chances are this is what they are. Native fish such as the Western Minnow (*Galaxias occidentalis*) and the Night fish (*Bostockia porosa*) are still found but are quite rare.

Macroinvertebrates

If you look carefully at the water you will see tiny things moving in the water. These are the macroinvertebrates and are defined this way because they have no backbone and are small enough to be seen with the naked eye. Their presence is a good indicator as to the health of the river. They can be present in their thousands. Some are larger, such as the shrimps and the molluscs but many can only just be seen as a moving dot in the water. They are an important food source for creatures further up the food chain. There are also many creatures and plants too small to be seen, however they are also an important food source.



© DEC

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RECREATION AT BURLONG

Located five kilometres upstream of the town of Northam, Burlong Pool, since settlement, has been used for many recreational activities. Farmers, swimmers, miners, railway workers, the military, Afghan cameleers, stock workers, picnickers all enjoyed local events at this location. It was considered the place to be on weekends!



Courtesy office of Hon. Max Tregear, MLC



Courtesy Northam Historical Society



Courtesy State Library of Western Australia, Batty Library



Courtesy State Library of Western Australia, Batty Library



Courtesy Northam Historical Society

Military use

When the World Wars broke out the Northam Army Camp was situated above Burlong Pool. The Australian Army used the pool to train soldiers to cross rivers. In this photo you can see the soldiers crossing with a full pack and rifle.

Mechanised units and the 10th Light Horse Regiment would also cross the river. On one occasion a tank went into the river. It is thought some of the soldiers' gear that was being carried across remains at the bottom of the pool, although it would now be covered in sediment.

Recreation

Once upon a time Burlong Pool was approximately 50 metres wide, one kilometre long and in some places six metres deep. Looking into the depths of the pool in certain spots you would have been able to see springs bubbling with fresh drinking water. At this time the water was clear and clean and you could dive in and not touch the bottom!

It was a favourite location for the townsfolk of Northam for water activities. Swimming carnivals were held, swimming lanes

were put up and swimming clubs were formed. There were change rooms and bathing sheds – the relics of which you can still see today, north of the pipeline.

There were canoes and some people in Northam can still remember a Flying Fox crossing the river. One local Northam person even tells the story of an old Buick car that was accidentally driven into the pool!

Burlong Pool was known as the best playground for people, especially on the weekends when there were bands, concerts and other events held there with hundreds of people attending.

In memory

Sadly, there have been people who have died here at Burlong, either by accident or suicide.

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STEAM TRAINS AT BURLONG

This site was used by numerous groups heading to the gold fields in search of gold. When the goldfield operations were in full swing there were up to half a dozen trains leaving Burlong Pool each day filled with water. When the steam trains would come to fill up at Burlong Pool the level of the pool could be seen to drop up to 20cm. This site was important because it was the only source of fresh water between Perth and Kalgoorlie.

Gold Rush

Gold was first discovered in Western Australia between Northam and Southern Cross by a man digging post holes on a property in the 1880s.

By 1891 the mines in Southern Cross were in full operation and many people went to find their fortune.

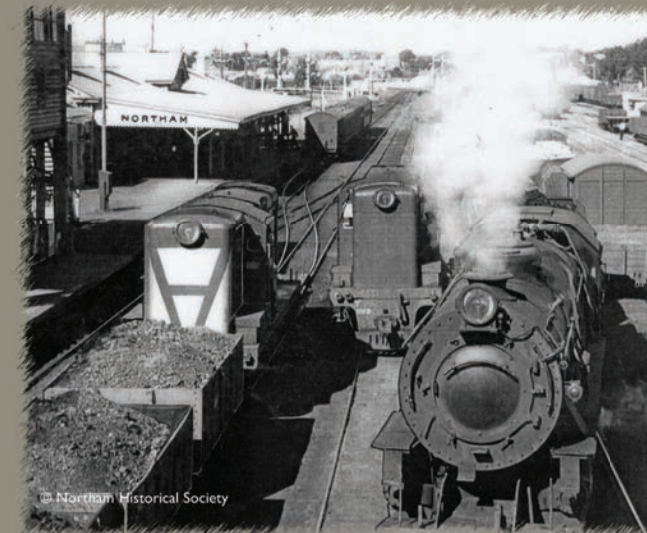


Pipes for the Goldfields pipeline

To the Goldfields

In 1891 Sir John Forrest announced that Northam would be the departure point for a railway to the goldfields. CY O'Connor surveyed the area and proposed a railway route to Southern Cross and decided Northam would receive the railway network, York would get the road network to the goldfields. At this time no water existed east of Burlong Pool until a dam was constructed at Merredin. Prior to the construction of this dam water was supplied to the goldfields from here at Burlong Pool.

Heading to the goldfields every day from Burlong Pool were horses, miners and railway contractors, it was also said that Afghan cameleers would use this pool as a watering point before heading inland. In a single camp there could be up to 1000 people using Burlong Pool before departing for the goldfields.

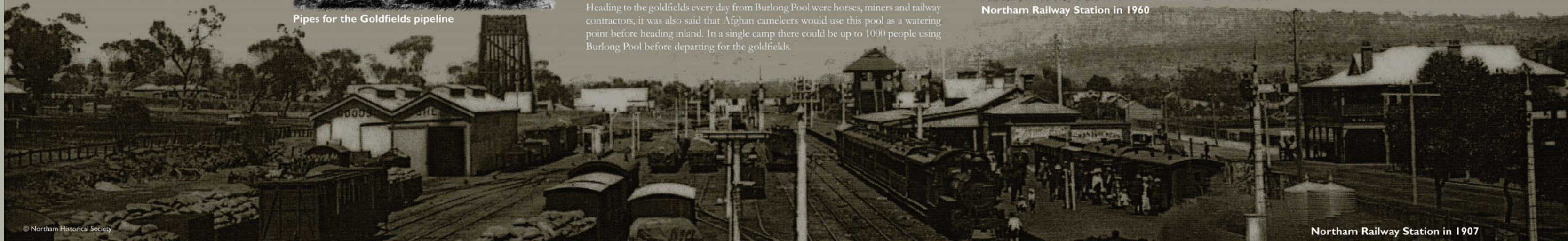


Northam Railway Station in 1960

Spencers Brook to Northam

The railway from Spencer's Brook to Northam was opened on the 13th of October 1886. Burlong Pool was used as a source of water for locomotives almost as soon as the railway opened. In the early years it was the last permanent water supply beyond Northam. When construction began on the Northam-Southern Cross railway in November 1892 there was still no locomotive water available past Burlong and all trains had to tow enough water in tankers to be able to go out and return along this section. This was still the case when the railway line opened to Southern Cross in July 1894.

Most of the load of a goods train was taken up with water for the forward and return journey. Contractors completed dams during 1895 and 1896 along the route and this solved the problem of where the water would come from.



Northam Railway Station in 1907

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RIVER TRAINING SCHEME



Flooding of riverside towns (Beverley, York, Northam and Toodyay) and of agricultural land along the river was the main concern that led to the River Training Scheme. This scheme involved the removal of channel vegetation, dead trees, logs and debris to a width of 60 metres, ripping of the river bed to induce erosion of a deeper watercourse and removal of minor kinks and bends in the river.



© Mildred Heath

River Training Scheme

This Scheme was started after a major flood in 1955 and the Avon River Development Committee was formed. Between the years 1957-1972 the riverbed had the trees, sediment and debris removed for nearly 200km to enable the river to flow more rapidly and reduce the duration of flooding events. This occurred between Toodyay and Brookton.

This scheme helped to increase the velocity and erosional power of the river which helped to scour out the base of the river. There was the suggestion that an advantage of the River Training Scheme was that flood water would go down quicker than before. People now know that the River Training Scheme did more harm than good. Millions of tonnes of sediment were mobilised and as a result of this the river pools became sand traps and continue to fill with sediment to this day.



© Mildred Heath

An accident during the River Training Scheme



© Northam Historical Society



© Northam Historical Society



© Northam Historical Society

Avon River Pools

Seven of the major river pools along the Avon River have been filled with extra sediment and many others are now partially filled. This was a result of extensive land clearing and elements of the River Training Scheme. At Burlong Pool a dredging operation continues to remove this sediment.

Salinity

Salinity is a feature of the modern Western Australian landscape. It is thought that the ocean winds can take salt from the ocean and deposit more than 15kg of salt per hectare per year onto the land. It is this salt that continues to be deposited in the landscape that has to be dealt with.

This salt would have been underground, but with the removal of deep rooted perennial trees, ground water has been allowed to migrate to the surface bringing with it the salt that has been stored for a long time underground.

The water pools are now classified as Highly Saline which is measured as 11,000-30,000 milligrams of salt per litre. Freshwater is classified as 0 - 1000, seawater contains 36,850 and the Dead Sea contains a massive 73,700 milligrams of salt per litre.

Would you like to drink out of the river pools?

This site has been developed through a partnership between the local Aboriginal Ballardong Community, the Avon Valley Environmental Society, the Shire of Northam, the Department of Water and Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management. Funding was provided through the Australian Federal and State Governments National Heritage Trust program.

AVON RIVER CARE

River care is an integral part of the management of the Avon River Basin. On-going river care has been happening in the Avon River Basin for a number of years with community leading the way. Burlong Pool is one site where environmental remediation work has been taking place to restore and repair the river.

Avon River Care

The Avon Rivercare Project started in 1995 as part of the Swan Avon Integrated Management Program with a survey of the main channel of the Avon River. Since then it has developed into a catchment wide project focussing on improving both land and river management practices to improve the riverine environment. Some of the issues that have been addressed are the protection of the riparian vegetation, revegetation of the banks and land next to the river and removal of sediment from the river pools. The project has also included preparing 22 River Recovery Plans for the whole length of the river, these plans contain recommendations for management of the river into the future.

Revegetation

The planting of local native trees and shrubs on the river bank and areas next to the river help to improve the river environment. By 2009 over 1 million plants had been planted with the help of community, some 1500 plants were planted at Burlong in 2009.

Sedimentation

Following the River Training Scheme the movement of sediment increased dramatically and most of the 26 river pools filled with sediment. The Avon Rivercare Project has focussed on removing sediment from these pools to allow them to regain their role in providing a refuge for aquatic life during the long dry summers. Removal of sediment has taken place at Burlong over the last 25 years.

Fencing

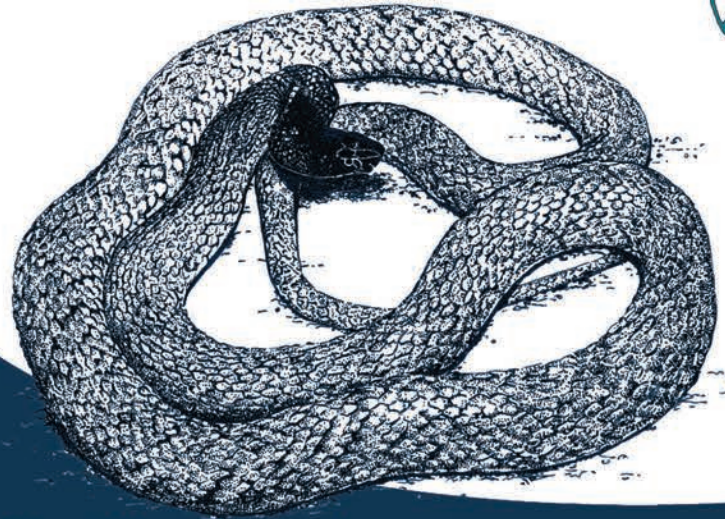
Following the channel survey in 1995 only 45% of the main channel was fenced to protect the river, in partnership with landholders this has now increased to 90% by 2009. The aim of the fencing is to protect the vegetation and keep livestock out of the river. Over the past 15 years over 650 kilometres of fencing has been supplied to landholders to assist in protecting Avon waterways.

Burlong pool rock riffle

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WALKING TRACK



This is the Burlong Pool section of the Dorntj Koorliny track. 'Nyungar for Walking Together'. It is approximately 18km long. This track has 14 bridges and ramps made from recycled material and the surface varies from a bitumen surface to a dirt track. The Avon River can be crossed in all weather at the Swing Bridge, Gairdner Street Bridge, Peel Terrace Bridge and the Bypass Bridge. It is hoped that the Pool Street Bridge will one day be made safe for pedestrian traffic. This track is a multi-purpose track for walking, riding, running and bicycling.

Motorbikes and other motorized transport are forbidden.

Dorntj Koorliny track

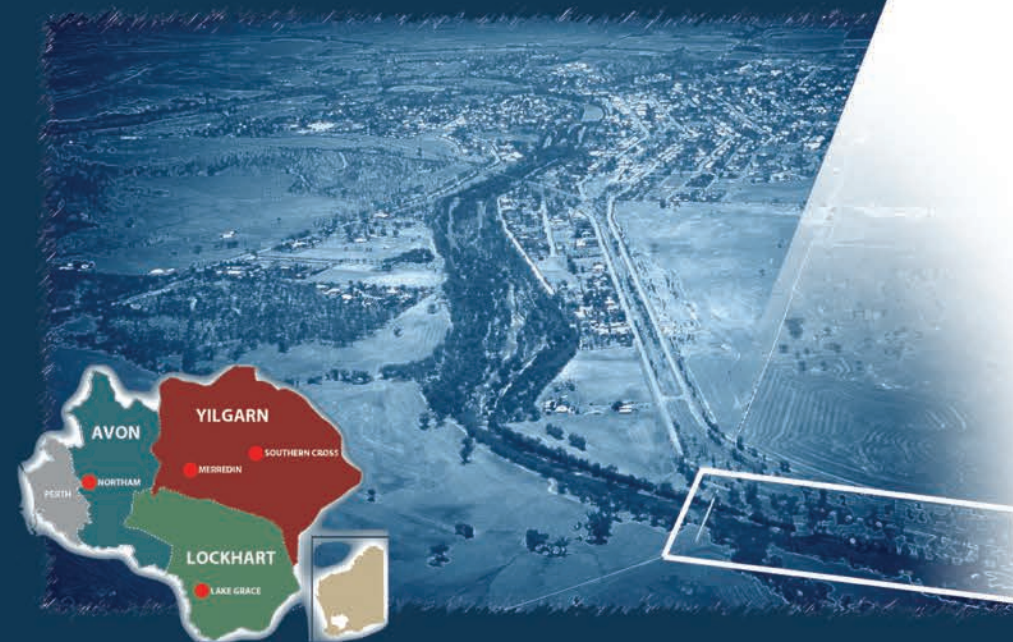
On this track you will be able to walk from the centre of Northam along the Eastern Bank to Burlong Pool. It is expected in the future that you will be able to walk along the Western Bank on the return trip to Northam.

Knowing the flow of the water course would be like being able to follow a map. If you knew it well you would know where there are good places to camp, where there are local food resources and what sites are taboo and therefore not allowed to be visited.

The *Nyungar* people have many tracks throughout this region. Sometimes they are known as dreaming tracks or song lines. The knowledge of these tracks has been handed down through the generations by stories and by walking. It is said that *Nyungar* people from as far as Southern Cross would come via this site. Sometimes people would travel these vast distances to attend ceremony. A ceremonial ground is within walking distance from where you now stand.

As you walk along this track be sure to look in the *mangart* (jam tree), *bibool* (paperbark), and *djaawit* (york gum) trees as this is where some of the animals can be seen.

We hope that you enjoy your *barn* (walk) along this *bidi* (path).



Burlong Pool Map



Map Key

- Resting Station
- 1 Entrance to Burlong
- 8 Dredge entrance
- 2 Walking Track Recreation at Burlong
- 3 Steam Trains at Burlong
- 4 Whats in the Water?
- 4 Birds of Burlong Pool
- 5 Avon River Care River Training Scheme
- 6 Fauna at Burlong
- 7 Flora at Burlong
- 7 Welcome to Country

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Splendid Fairy Wren
Malurus splendens

© Graeme Chapman

Nidja Nyungar budjar nguny wangkiny

(this is Nyungar land and stories)

Wargal kierp wirrinitj

(the water snake belongs to the water)



wheatbelt
natural resource
management

