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Elphin Gravel Pit Rehabilitation

Many populations of the Critically Endangered Wongan cactus (*Daviesia euphorbioides*) have declined or disappeared, partly because of the species' short life span. The Wongan cactus is apparently a 'disturbance opportunist'. This means it regenerates from seed only after soil has been disturbed, or a fire has swept through the area. Many plants in the population at the Elphin Nature Reserve are dead. An Interim Recovery Plan for the species recommends rehabilitation of a gravel pit in the reserve, partly in an effort to stimulate seed germination.

A grant from the BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card Trust Fund was used to hire a bulldozer to work, under CALM supervision, in ripping the gravel pit base and spreading stockpiled topsoil. Seed germination will be monitored, and a CALM flora translocation research project will plant out seedlings of the Wongan cactus, raised at Kings Park and Botanic Garden from seed collected nearby.

Posters

CALM is preparing and implementing Interim Recovery Plans (IRPs) for all threatened species ranked as 'Critically Endangered' by CALM's Threatened Species Scientific Committee. Ranking is carried out according to internationally accepted criteria, produced by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). As at May, 1998, there were 95 plant species, subspecies and varieties ranked as Critically Endangered.

Each plant IRP has a section on information dissemination, which includes a public awareness campaign. It is believed that this can be best implemented by using local print and electronic news media, as well as setting up poster displays in venues where local people are likely to see them.

A grant from the BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card Trust Fund enabled the production of colour posters for 13 species of

Critically Endangered plants. Each poster is an A4 double-sided sheet containing photographs of the plant, its flowers and its habitat, as well as information on the plant's distribution, appearance, flowering times and habitat requirements. Essential and desirable recovery actions, as prescribed in each plant's IRP, are also described.

The posters are being displayed in areas near where populations of the plants are known or thought to occur.

Gilbert's Potoroo Study

Gilbert's Potoroo was rediscovered only a few years ago at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve, and is Australia's most endangered native mammal. Funding from the BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card Trust Fund helped purchase equipment for monitoring the behaviour of animals in the captive breeding colony, where breeding success has been lower than desirable. A pilot behavioural study was carried out by Edith Cowan University from August to October 1997, and a detailed study of reproductive behaviour was carried out in November 1997, during which time a joey was conceived. It seems that Gilbert's Potoroo may be monogamous and the females are very choosy about with whom they will mate! The study has contributed significantly to knowledge of the behaviour of the species and will have implications for managing the colony. SONY (Australia) Ltd contributed to this work by lending some specialised equipment.



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Giving Nature a Helping Hand

The BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card

Progress report - November 1998



Gilbert's Potoroo



Department of Conservation
and Land Management

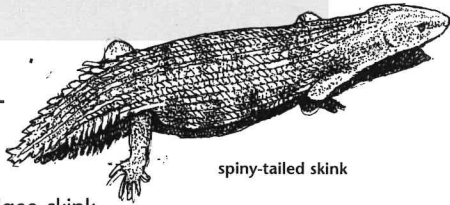
Since its successful launch in June 1993, the BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card has provided funding for several important nature conservation projects in Western Australia. Thanks to your continued support the following new projects have benefited.

Saving the Spiny-tailed Skink

On the mainland, the spiny-tailed skink or gidgee skink (*Egernia stokesii badia*) has suffered a considerable decline over the past century as a consequence of land clearance. It was encountered on only one reserve out of 23 surveyed by the WA Museum during the 1970s, and there has been a marked decline in the number of specimens acquired by the Museum over the past 40 years. This decline has raised concerns about the long-term survival of the skink, which has been officially listed as Threatened, and ranked as Endangered.

A recent project carried out by scientists from the Western Australian Museum of Natural Science has assessed the current whereabouts and numbers of the subspecies, collected material for classification purposes and raised local community awareness of the skink and its habitat needs. Field surveys were undertaken in January and April 1998, the latter with the help of people with a particular interest in reptiles.

The results indicated that the spiny-tailed skink is still present over a large part of its known range in the central northern Wheatbelt, and as far east as Kalannie. All were in York gum woodland, the best habitat having numerous hollow logs and no grazing by stock. The skink can persist in very small remnants of York gum woodland, although not all small patches of this woodland contained populations.



spiny-tailed skink

A grant from the BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card Trust Fund showed that, although the spiny-tailed skink has declined considerably because of clearing, it is not in imminent danger of extinction.

Ancient Organisms Rescue Mission

Some caves in Yanchep National Park contain unique communities of equally unique species of invertebrate fresh water organisms. One minute species of crustacean has been listed as Threatened, and ranked as Critically Endangered. One of these communities lives in very finely matted tree roots, submerged in water, in the caves of the Swan Coastal Plain.

Monitoring water levels in the caves is an important step to understanding and managing the water requirements of these aquatic communities, which are under considerable threat because of falling water tables.

A grant from the BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card Trust Fund has enabled a theodolite survey to be conducted by Ron Glasson, on behalf of Murdoch University. He was assisted by CALM staff. The results will help the department to implement an Interim Recovery Plan for the threatened ecological community.

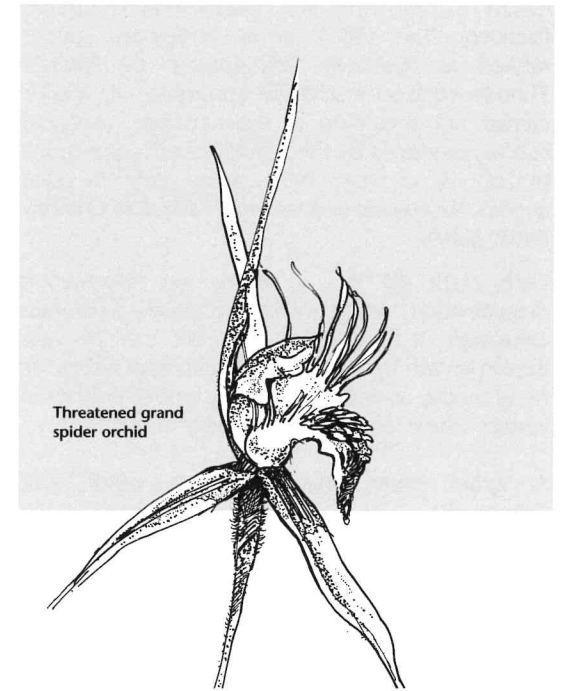
Johnson Rd Reserve Rabbit Control

A small area of bushland beside Johnson Road, Kwinana, is managed by CALM, mainly for the conservation of the threatened swamp donkey orchid (*Diuris micrantha*). This orchid population has been declining because of rabbit grazing and the BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card Trust Fund allocated money for the purchase of rabbit-proof netting, which was attached by CALM staff to the existing ring-lock fence. No rabbits actually live in the area, as it is seasonally inundated, and the fence

should prevent further damage to the plants. CALM will inspect the area to ensure that no further grazing occurs.

Talbot Rd Reserve Dieback Survey

The Talbot Road reserve is an important area of remnant bushland in Stratton, an eastern suburb of Perth. The reserve contains two threatened ecological communities ranked as Critically Endangered and a population of the threatened grand spider orchid (*Caladenia huegelii*). A management plan being written for the area is a joint effort by the Shire of Swan, Friends of Talbot Road, Blackadder-Woodbridge Catchment Management Group, the Fire and Rescue Service and CALM. Information on the occurrence and distribution of dieback disease, caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, is considered very important for future management of the area. A grant from the BankWest LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card Trust Fund paid for the costs of a dieback survey by experts from CALM. This information is being used in preparing the management plan.



Threatened grand spider orchid