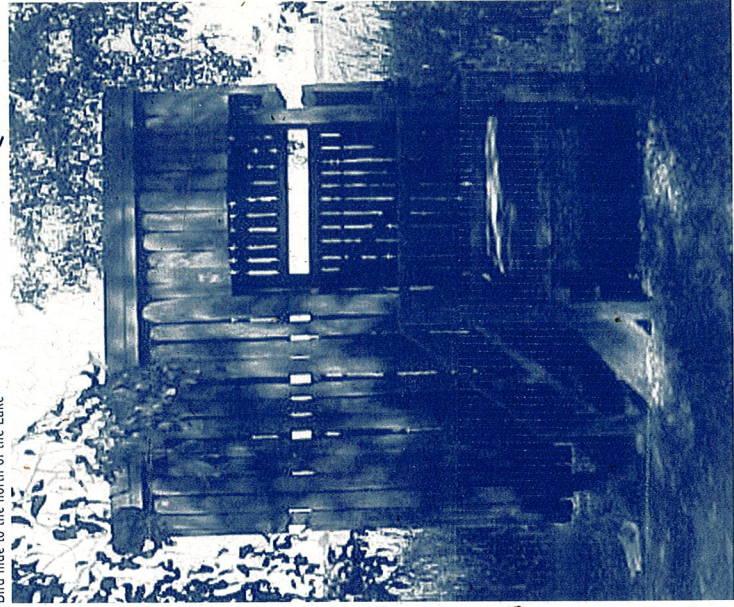


# LIBRARY

Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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Bird hide to the north of the Lake



Moonhen

Gould League volunteers look after the Wildlife Centre during weekends so people can use the facilities. Entry is by donation to assist with costs. Groups may hire the centre for evening or weekend meetings and lectures.

The Wildlife Centre is a popular place for tourists interested in wildlife, as it has a wide array of wetland animals and is in easy proximity to the City.

A shop in the Wildlife Centre has a range of posters, Gould League educational material as well as books, charts and souvenirs.

School Groups and members of the public are welcome to use the Wildlife Centre. Living and static displays illustrate aspects of the Lake's ecology while the observation deck is ideal for bird watching or to view the Lake. A raised boardwalk to the east of the Centre enables you to observe plant life, birds and frogs.

## How you can use the Wildlife Centre

### How the Wildlife Centre began

In 1970 the Gould League proposed to the WA Government that Herdsman Lake be preserved for scientific and educational purposes and the associated Crown Land be a wildlife refuge. In 1974 the Gould League recommended setting up a Field Study Centre at Herdsman Lake and in 1980 the World Wide Fund for Nature agreed to help raise funds for the Centres construction. Private companies, the WA Government, and individuals contributed to the project and the Wildlife Centre was completed in 1984.

The W.A. Gould League manages the Wildlife Centre in partnership with the Education Department. The Dept of CALM maintains the grounds and the City of Stirling the Lake surrounds.

### Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre

The Centre is available for use as an Environmental Education and Wetland Field Study Centre to demonstrate:

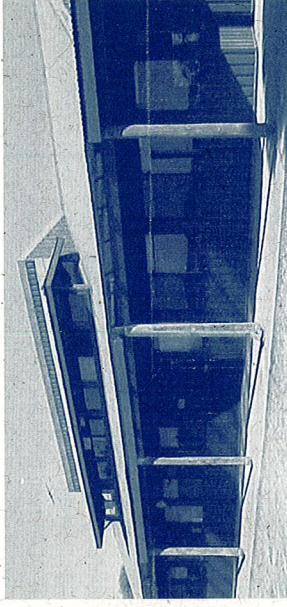
- how the lake's animals and plants interact
- human impacts on an urban wetland system
- how an urban wetland catchment functions
- feeding patterns between organisms
- the types of plants and animals in wetlands
- the local history of the area



Swallow

School group collecting aquatics





**ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOULD LEAGUE Inc.  
Tel 9387 6079, Fax 9387 3492, Email wagl@starwot.com.au

**LOCATION**  
HERDSMAN LAKE WILDLIFE CENTRE is only 7 kilometres from Perth, situated at the corner of Selby and Flynn Streets, Wembley 6014.

**OPENING TIMES**  
The Wildlife Centre is open from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm week days and on Weekends from 1.00 pm to 4.30 pm and most Public holidays.  
**Telephone: 9387 6079**  
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Environmental Education and Wetland Study Site



## HERDSMAN LAKE WILDLIFE CENTRE

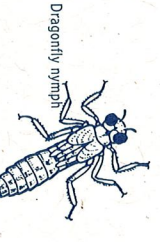
# Herdsman Lake

HERDSMAN LAKE WILDLIFE CENTRE (Inc)  
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOULD LEAGUE (Inc)

Herdsman Lake is an almost oval shaped lake, measuring 2.5 km from north to south and 2 km from east to west, with an area of just under 370 ha.

### Description

Almost 80 per cent of the lake is covered with bulrushes, a 2-3 m tall reed that grows in shallow water. In the late summer and autumn, much of the lake becomes dry. 15 per cent of the lake is permanent deep water (2-5m) and is free of reeds. 5 per cent is shallow water, which dries to grassland in autumn and mudflats in summer. The macro-habitats at the lake include: Bulrushes, Paperbark thickets, Open drains, Baumea clumps, Deep water, Shallow fens, Lawns, Pasture areas and Banks-of drains.



Dragonfly nymph



Boardwalk on Olive Seymour walk

### A brief History of the Lake

1829 the first European settlers arrived in WA, Herdsman Lake was an open body of water, utilised by Aboriginal people. 1830's the Lake was a possible water supply for Perth but the scheme was abandoned. Among the early settlers were Thomas Walters, Henry Trigg and Walter Padbury who ran cattle. 1854 Benedictine monks established orchards and vineyards.

1875 William Osborne established market gardens. Much of the land was still home to kangaroos, possums and snakes. Cattle were grazed here and driven north to Champion Bay (Geraldton). 1870's Father Gibney (who had ministered to Ned Kelly) purchased land including the Lake, on behalf of the Catholic Church. 1890's, the gold rush saw an increased demand for meat, settlers grew crops and raised pigs, poultry and dairy cattle.

1912 Osborne Park is made suitable for market gardening by drainage into Herdsman Lake. 1919 Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Nurses Association urges the government to buy and drain Herdsman Lake, to allow it to be used as market gardens and be settled.

1921-25 the lake was drained to overcome flooding problems and a tunnel mined to Floreat Beach. 1936, the Federal government investigated the use of the lake as an alternative airport for Perth, but this was rejected due to the high cost.

1953 the last kangaroo is seen. 1979 start of the Floreat Waters residential Development. 1984 Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre opened 9<sup>th</sup> November. 1999 Herdsman Lake is declared a Regional Park. 2000 Management Plan is developed.

### School Groups

The WA Gould League provides a range of materials on topics in environmental and wetland education for primary and secondary students. The Centre has an activities room, observation deck and display area. Study topics include ecosystems, bird identification, food pyramids, human effects, water quality, wetlands, frogs, macro-invertebrates, habitats, ecology and plants.

The Gould League of Western Australia, is a not-for-profit community group working in partnership with the Education Department. The League specialises in environmental education for school children and the general public. The Gould League conducts monthly birdwalks from the Centre, as well as sleepovers and excursions. Established in 1939 the Gould League is the oldest environmental education organisation in the State. The staff will be happy to help you and your group understand the Lake's biology.

### Birdwatchers

For years, birdwatchers have been aware of the wealth of bird life that lives and breeds at Herdsman Lake. The observation deck allows study of birds in the central wetland and hides are located at the edge of the lake.

### How the Wildlife Centre began

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Birdwatchers on Maurice Hamer trail

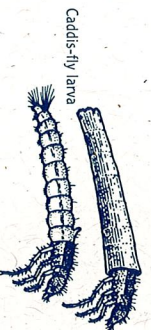
## Walks around the lake

The Wildlife Centre is an ideal starting point, before setting out on your walk, to obtain further information. Parking is available during office hours and weekends. There are no toilets or drinking water taps around the Lake.

**Olive Seymour walk (1)** east of the Wildlife Centre, is 500 metres of-path and raised boardwalk, which takes you through the Lake to view *Melaleuca* woodlands, bulrushes, honeyeaters, grassbirds and reed warblers.

**Southern walk (2)** crosses Billy Goat Gruff Bridge and follows the shoreline to the playground and island in the southwest corner. Here a short walkway affords excellent viewing of egrets, ibis, blue bill and musk ducks and a range of other waterbirds. Look for swamp harriers.

**Maurie Hamer trail (3)** along the west side of the Lake offers good viewing of waders. Follow the main path left to the Floreat Drain or Pioneer Cottage.



Caddis-fly larva

Scoop netting in the Lake



## Aquatics

The Lake contains a variety of aquatic life from minute water fleas to long necked turtles with shells up to 30 cm long. Macro-invertebrates include scuds, pond snails, water boatmen, back-swimmers, leeches, damselflies, dragonflies, water tigers, midge larvae, water mites, and diving beetles. Introduced fish like *Gambusia* and goldfish are common, while carp up to 30 cm are less common. Native goby fish to 4 cm long can be found in the Lake.

The Lake water is fresh, and over 50 species of aquatic creatures live in its waters. These form important factors in the food chains, many helping to break down the plant material of the Lake. In turn, these become the food for the meat-eating aquatic creatures, such as the dragonfly and damselfly nymphs.

## Amphibians

Only three species of frogs are still common. The slender tree frog (*Litoria adelaidensis*) grows to 60 mm and lives in the bulrush and twig rush. The western green and gold tree frog (*Litoria moorei*) inhabits more densely vegetated areas of permanent water. The banjo frog (*Limnodynastes dorsalis*) has a "boon boon" call and is found in winter in vegetation adjacent to water, and in summer burrows into the ground.



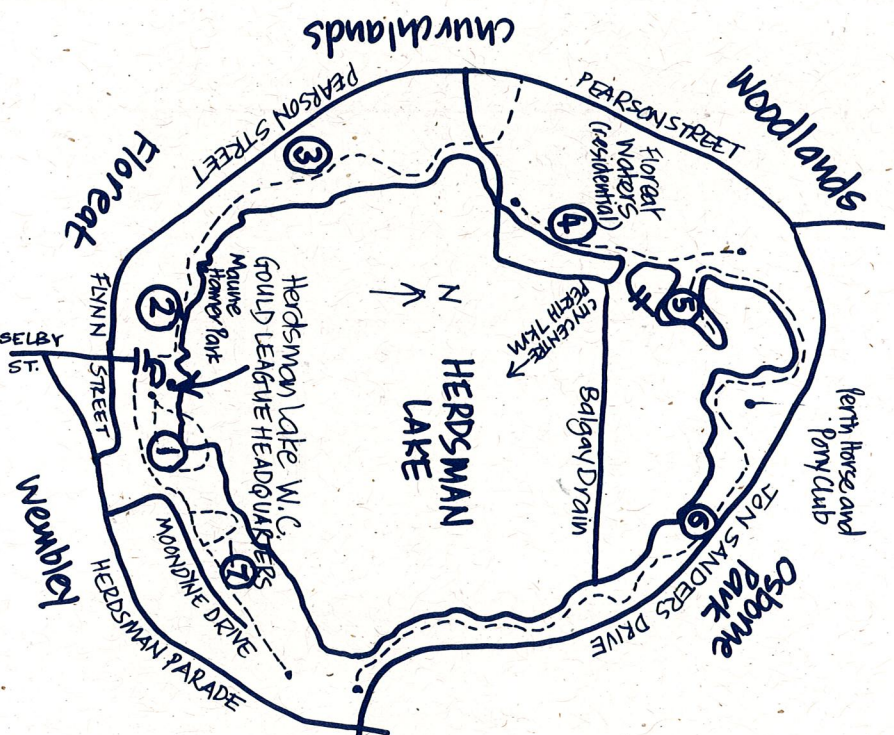
Living displays inside the Wildlife Centre

**Pioneer Women trail (4)** Head along the north side of the Floreat drain and follow the track to the statue to the Pioneer Women. The lakeside road north will bring you to the last remaining market garden around the Lake, and the main drain.

**Central Conservation Area trail (5)** can be reached via the Perth Horse and Pony Club parking area or adjacent to the Lake in which the statue to the Pioneer Women is placed. Be aware of snakes. Affords excellent viewing of a range of waterbirds.

**Jon Sanders Drive walk (6)** can be accessed from the east from the tennis courts on Hertsman Parade or from the Perth Pony Club car park, and walking east along bush tracks. The track is best used in cooler months, and bird hides are to be found. The track crosses Balgoy Drain via an attractive bridge.

**Duck Flat walk (7)** From the Wildlife Centre, walk past the Telstra compound then head east. Provides examples of what can be done to make drains more attractive, some excellent waterbird viewing sites (in dry weather) and a parkland vista.



## Spiders

Among the paperbarks, from spring to late autumn may be seen the huge orb webs of two spiders. One is the well-camouflaged garden spider (*Eriophora* species), which builds a web up to 50 cm across. During the day, the spider hides in foliage or bark, but at night takes up a position at the hub of the orb. The golden orb weaver (*Nephila edulis*) builds a large orb of golden web. She has a silver grey abdomen and remains in her web day and night. The small, but skilfully camouflaged long jawed spider (*Tetragnatha* species) builds orb webs among the reeds. Her abdomen is long and narrow, and her very long legs enable her to "disappear" as she becomes part of the reed in shape.

## Insects

In season, dragonflies and damselflies are commonly seen swooping or hovering over the water areas after small flying creatures. Wanderer butterflies can be seen flying about the Centre. The rich brown wings, strongly marked with black veins are easily identified.

## Reptiles

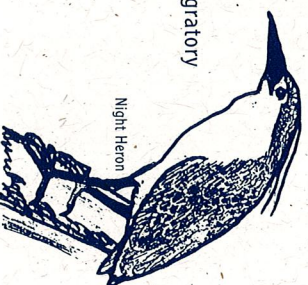
Tiger snakes are the most common reptile here and bear up to 20 live young at a time. Their favourite food is frogs. In the water the long necked turtle eats live food and is also a scavenger. Common scaly foot (Burton's legless lizards), western bearded dragons and striped skinks can be found in long grass.

## Birds

About 85 species of birds are seen at Herdsman Lake annually, but over the last 70 years, 162 species have been recorded in total. Most common are coots, swamphen, moorhen, mountain duck, black duck, musk duck, blue billed duck, little grebe, crested grebe, pelican, great egret, yellow billed spoonbill, sacred ibis, white faced heron, welcome swallow, tree martin, swamp harrier, reed warbler, little grass bird, darter, brown and singing honeyeaters. In the spring and summer, migratory waders from Siberia can be seen.



Martin



Night Heron

## Vegetation

Bulrush or reed-mace (*Typha orientalis*) is the dominant plant at the Lake. Its Aboriginal name is yanget after which Yangetup and Yangebup are named. It is green from late July to May when much of it dies with new green shoots beginning to show in June.

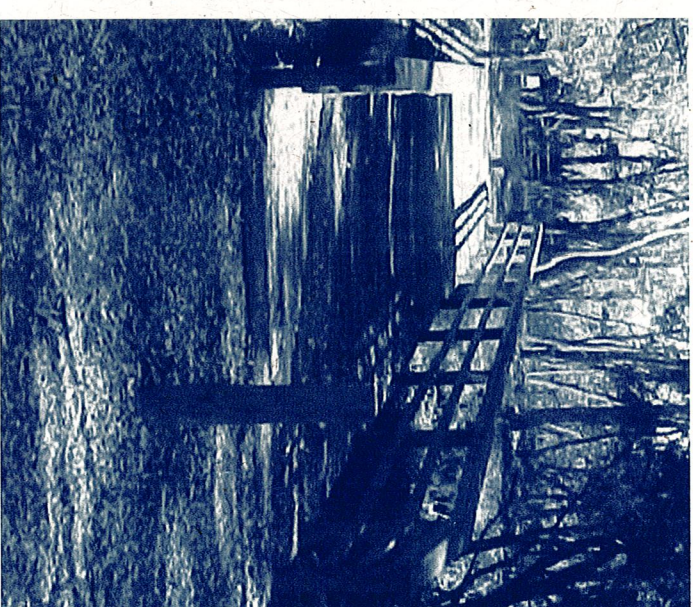
Small thickets exist around parts of the Lake, of a bamboo-like rush (*Baumea articulata*) commonly called twig rush, whose stems are cylindrical, and have nodes through it for strength.

Paperbarks (*Melaleuca thaphiophylla*) grow up to 6 m tall, and may have their lower trunks under water in mid-winter. The leaves are 2 cm long, and contain a strongly aromatic myrtle oil. The dense canopies of trees are ideal for nesting and day sleeping for nocturnal birds, such as the nankeen (rufous) night heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*).



Damselfly nymph

Bridge across Balgoy drain



## Management

Herdsman Lake is a Regional Park managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). The management plan for the Lake has inputs from CALM, Department of Planning, Water Corporation, City of Stirling, Birds Australia, W.A. Gould League, Habitat Herdsman, the public and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

Nearly 10 000 trees have been planted on the northeast corner of the Lake using local seed. The Lake animals need more trees for nesting sites, shade and protection. In parts of the Lake, paperbark is replacing bulrush and in time the Lake may become a paperbark swamp. Feral animals such as foxes, cats, mice, finches, mallards, geese, carp, yabbies, goldfish and koi fish exist in the lake environment, and how these will be managed needs careful consideration.

## Donations and volunteers

The WA Gould League relies on donations and entry fees to run the Wildlife Centre. Your donation will help provide information and services for school children, the WA community and environmental education.

Volunteers are always needed to help at the Centre. If you would like to help, please contact:

Western Australian Gould League Inc  
Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre  
Cnr Selby & Flynns Streets  
Wembley 6014



Swamp Harrier

Tel (08) 9387 6079 Fax (08) 9387 3492  
Email wagl@starwon.com.au  
Website www.wagl.starwon.net.au

Birdwatching from the observation deck

