

AND THE CREEKS ARE ALIVE...

Two species of frogs the size of a thumbnail are the subject of a special search by officers from the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The white-bellied and yellow-bellied geocrineas are the only species of frogs on the threatened faunal list in Western Australia.

The frogs are found only in a few damp sites near Witchcliffe and Karridale in the south-west.

The white-bellied frog has so far been recorded from 26 sites, of which 19 are on privately owned land. Six appear to have lost their frog populations since they were first surveyed in 1983.

"One of my main tasks has been to visit and talk to farmers in the area who might have frogs on their properties," CALM technical officer Ian

Wheeler said.

"We are keen to identify all locations where the frogs are currently found as well as survey sites where they could potentially exist but are currently not found."

Much of the area is privately owned and subject to clearing for farming, which destroys the frog habitat. Protection of suitable creeks in the area will be essential to maintain the habitat and ensure the survival of this species.

The survey is a vital first step in a recovery plan for the frogs, drawn up by CALM with funding from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. The recovery plan, which will operate for the next ten years, aims to prevent both species from becoming extinct by protecting existing populations from further loss of habitat and establishing



new populations in suitable areas.

The frogs are unusual in that they never enter water, preferring to lay their eggs in moist soil depressions. When hatched, the tadpoles remain in the jelly surrounding the eggs, drawing on food reserves in the egg yolk.

*Above and below: The endangered yellow-bellied geocrinia (Geocrinea vitellina) is one of the most restricted vertebrates in Australia, with a total distribution of less than 30 hectares.*

*Photo - Grant Wardell-Johnson*



# LANDSCOPE

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Twenty-three captive-bred chuditch were recently released in the Julimar forest in an attempt to establish a new population. The story of the 'Return of the Chuditch' is on page 10.



'Back in the Outback' (page 34) follows the trail of endangered mammals recently reintroduced into the Gibson Desert from Barrow Is.



In a remote corner of the Gibson Desert lies Lake Gregory, a birdwatcher's paradise. See page 16.



A silent workforce of volunteers assist CALM with a multitude of projects. Colin Ingram tells us more about these 'Volunteers for Nature' on page 28.



The urban cat vies with its feral cousin and the fox for top spot in the predator stakes. See 'Masterly Marauders' on page 20.

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The chuditch (*Dasyurus geoffroii*) was once found in every State and Territory of mainland Australia. Now it is only found in the jarrah forest and parts of the southern wheatbelt in the south-west of WA - about two percent of its former range.

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