

## CONSERVATION CARD

A special credit card recently launched by the Rural & Industries Bank of Western Australia (R&I) and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) will allow card users to help save endangered species without spending an extra cent.

This sort of affinity card is widely used by university and sporting groups, but has never before been used to support conservation projects. The money raised for endangered species does not come from participating credit card holders.

Every time the R&I's new LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card is used, anywhere in the world, the bank will place a percentage of the money spent in a trust fund to be used for saving the State's endangered species.

Two threatened plants, two threatened animals and a threatened ecological community will be the first to benefit from money raised by the LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card.

The Lancelin Island skink is found only on an island 110 km north of Perth, and there could be fewer than 20 left in the wild. Lancelin Island is only 7.6 hectares and the skinks have only been seen on or near limestone areas, which comprise about 1.5 hectares. Studies are needed to determine just how many skinks remain and the reasons for the species' rarity so as to develop a conservation program to ensure its survival.

The western ringtail possum is threatened by predation by the introduced fox and ever more intensive use of land near the south-west coast. It has disappeared from much of its range, but remains in scattered pockets,



mostly near the coast, including in and near the town of Busselton. Research into its distribution and the management needed to ensure its recovery has begun, but extra resources are required to speed this work up.

The Corrigin grevillea is critically endangered, with only two plants known from the wild. Kings Park and Botanic Garden scientists have grown grafted plants from one of the plants, but genetic mechanisms to stop self-fertilisation have prevented it from producing seed. Additional work with the second plant is needed, followed by conservation action to increase numbers in the wild.

The decline of the Wyalkatchem foxglove was probably due to land clearing for agriculture, and there are only 30 left in the wild. Resources are needed to investigate how best to conserve remaining populations and how to reintroduce plants grown in botanic gardens to the wild.

The community is Lake Toolibin, east of Narrogin, which is threatened by salinity. It supports 24 species of breeding waterbirds, more than any other wetland in the south-west.

The lake is the only remaining example in the southern Wheatbelt of a freshwater wetland with extensive thickets of living swamp sheoak. CALM's recovery plan for Lake Toolibin involves working with the local community to help catchment management, and pumping saline water from beneath the

*The western ringtail possum is one species that will benefit from the new LANDSCOPE Conservation Card.*  
Photo - Ray Smith

lake bed to stop it rising to the surface and turning the lake salty.

Western Australia has an incredible diversity of plants and animals, many of which are threatened with extinction. Some 271 plant species are threatened with extinction and a further 43 species are already thought to be extinct. Thirteen animals are presumed extinct and 73 species or subspecies are threatened.

Recovery plans already in place have proved successful, pulling species such as the noisy scrub-bird, western swamp tortoise and rose mallee back from the brink of extinction. Funds raised by the LANDSCOPE Conservation Visa Card will add to the list of species on the road to recovery.

# LANDSCOPE

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Wildfires are synonymous with Western Australian summers, but what can be done to lessen the threat to life and property? Lachlan McCaw discusses the problem on page 49.



Daisies belong to the Asteraceae family, one of the world's largest families of flowering plants. Suzanne Curry presents some of them in 'Delightful Daisies' on page 41.



Aborigines have eked out a living in the harsh Western Desert region for thousands of years. Their intimate knowledge of the desert is helping scientists learn more about its plants and animals. See 'Digging Sticks and Desert Dwellers' on page 10.



'Rainforests and Bats', on page 34, tells the story of the recent LANDSCOPE Expedition to the Mitchell Plateau.



Can images from space help locate desert mammals? See 'From Buckshot to Breakaways' on page 23.

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## COVER

Cape Barren geese live on the islands and rocks of the Archipelago of Recherche. A few years ago their numbers appeared very low and their survival was in doubt. However, a recent survey of the islands has brought good news with a marked increase in the bird's population.

The illustration is by Philippa Nikulinsky.



Managing Editor: Ron Kawallak  
Editor: David Gough  
Contributing Editors: Verna Costello, Kate Hooper, Carolyn Thomson  
Scientific and technical advice: Andrew Burbidge, Roger Underwood  
Design and production: Sue Marais, Stacey Strickland  
Finished art: Gooitzen van der Meer  
Illustration: Sandra Mitchell  
Cartography: CALM Land and Information Branch  
Marketing: Estelle de San Miguel ☎ (09) 389 8644 Fax: 389 8296  
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