

**WHERE DID THE 20TH CENTURY GO?**

*It seems like only yesterday that Rachel Carson was virtually launching the modern environment movement with Silent Spring, that Marshall McLuhan was dazzling us with his vision of the world as a global village, and that Alan Toffler was predicting the impact of the then emerging information society in Future Shock. Where did the 20th century go? It was here just a moment ago.*

*I begin the new millennium with a very positive feeling and I must confess that I can't help believing that Western Australia is one of the most special places on this planet.*

*Consider 'The Best Of The South-West' by veteran LANDSCOPE writer Carolyn Thomson-Dans. Carolyn has written and edited numerous CALM books and in this issue of LANDSCOPE writes about some of the wonders of the south-west featured in her latest CALM publication Wild Places, Quiet Places. The new book, which is a complete reworking of one of the biggest selling publications on Western Australia ever produced, introduces readers to some of the best and lesser known beauty spots managed by CALM in the south-west. One of my favorites is the beautiful and surprising Meekadarabee Falls in the heart of Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, known to Aboriginal people as 'the bathing place of the moon'.*

*But you might ask yourself should we be visiting and enjoying such beauty spots at all? Some would say no.*

*Open any popular nature book, tract, or fund-raising letter, and you do not have to read far to encounter the phrase 'balance of nature' or, if not those precise words, some equivalent statement of the notion that nature, if only left alone and free from human influence, tends towards a state of harmony, balance, and beauty—and conversely, that wherever man or woman treads is trouble. These ideas have become such an accepted part of our culture that they are now the routine stuff of advertising and commerce, good for hawking a thirty dollar 'All Things Are Connected' T-shirt or a multi-million dollar Disney movie featuring ecologically conscious lions who pontificate about the 'circle of life'.*

*This picture of nature as a place of eternal order, balance, and separate purpose, a place whose very survival depends on the absence of man/woman and his/her works, is one that finds little acceptance among ecologists today, if indeed it ever did. These are beliefs that predate the emergence of ecology as a science. They have persisted in spite of what ecology has taught us. They form a contemporary 'mythology' about nature and the environment. It is good poetry, but bad science. The truth is that without conservation management, without the hard work and inspired effort of women and men throughout this State, our wonderful environment would be in a sorry state indeed.*

*In this issue of LANDSCOPE, in 'Isle of Cats', Dave Algar writes of the ground breaking work to rid the Montebello Islands of feral cats and the reintroduction of native species to areas where they've long been extinct.*

*And in 'Making Room For Nature', Penny Hussey documents how only if the community wants native flora and fauna to survive will there be enough effort for it to really happen.*

*Dr Neville Marchant, a frequent and popular contributor to LANDSCOPE, writes in 'Name That Plant' of the unique network of community and conservation groups that is working to fill in gaps in knowledge about the State's plants and to set up a unique system of regional herbaria.*

*There is more, much more, in this issue of LANDSCOPE, the first of the new millennium. I hope that you, our readers, will be interested in, and inspired and delighted by what we have to offer.*

*Ray Kennell*  
Executive Editor

**CATSPAW SURVIVAL IS ASSURED**

About 2,000 plants of the vulnerable golden catspaw (*Anigozanthos humilis* subsp. *chrysanthus*) have been located in remnant bushland near New Norcia.

The Benedictine Community owns the land, and thanks to their foresight in setting it aside for conservation, the rare catspaw's long-term conservation appears to be assured.

Before the new discovery, golden catspaw was known from 11 highly fragmented populations, totalling 3,000 plants. Many of these populations are in small, degraded areas of remnant bushland, such as along narrow road reserves.

The discovery came about when, in early 1999, the WA Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group (WANOSCG) contacted Dom Christopher Power to ask if its members could conduct surveys in several thousand hectares of bushland owned by the Benedictine Community. The surveys were mainly for orchids, but it was also an opportunity

for the group to search for more populations of the critically endangered greenhill thomasia (*Thomasia* sp. *Greenhill*), which is known from only two small subpopulations on the Benedictine Community's land.

In August 1999, CALM botanist Andrew Brown and ecologist Val English accompanied WANOSCG members to one of the bush blocks. Although no more thomasia populations were located, numerous golden catspaw plants were found growing in an area of sandy soil in the middle of the bushland. At that time the plants were in bud and early flower.

Val and Andrew returned to the site later in the year to conduct a full survey of the subspecies. The golden catspaws were in full flower and the pair conservatively estimate that there were more than 2,000 flowering plants spread over 30 hectares of land. The bushland was in excellent condition and no major threats were observed.

Below: Golden catspaw. Photo – Babs & Bert Wells/CALM



Winner of the 1998 Alex Harris Medal for excellence in science and environment reporting.

# LANDSCOPE

VOLUME FIFTEEN NUMBER 3, AUTUMN 2000



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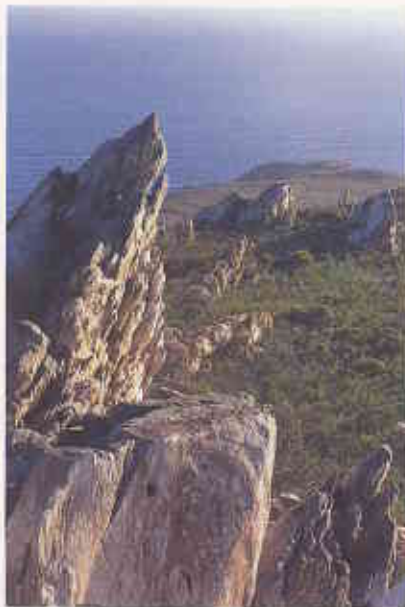
**Executive Editor:** Ron Kawallak**Managing Editor:** Ray Bailey**Editor:** David Gough**Story Editors:** Mandy Clews, Verna Costello, Sandra Toby, Carolyn Thomson-Dans, Mitzi Vance**Scientific/technical advice:** Andrew Burbidge, Ian Abbott, Neil Burrows, Paul Jones and staff of CALMScience Division**Design and production:** Tiffany Aberin, Maria Duthie, Sue Marais**Illustration:** Gooitzen van der Meer**Marketing:** Estelle de San Miguel ☎ (08) 9334 0296 Fax: (08) 9334 0498**Subscription enquiries:** ☎ (08) 9334 0481 or (08) 9334 0437

Colour Separation by Colourbox Digital

Printed in Western Australia by Lamb Print

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Visit LANDSCOPE online on our award-winning Internet site NatureBase at <http://www.calm.wa.gov.au>Published by  
Department of Conservation and Land Management,  
Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington, Western Australia

One of the best selling books from CALM has recently been fully revised. See 'The Best of the South-West' on page 10.



Satellite imagery is helping us to fight maritime pollution. See 'Looking Through the Surface' on page 41.



A new weapon against the scourge of feral cats was recently tested on Hermite Island. See 'Isle of Cats' on page 18.



In the far north of WA, there is evidence of not one, but two cosmic impacts. See 'Cosmic Impacts in the Kimberley' on page 28.



A unique network links volunteer groups and regional herbaria with the CALM flora database. See 'Name That Plant' on page 35.

## COVER

Western Australia is aptly described as the Wildflower State. Some 12,500 different species are known from the wild, with a huge range of colours, shapes and characters. But many species once found are lost again, and it's always an event when a species thought to be extinct is rediscovered. See 'Lost Jewels in the Bush' on page 23.



Illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky