## BUSHTELEGRAPH

## DATABASING SOUTH-WEST INSECTS



More than 15,000 insect specimens found in Western Australia's south-west forests are being databased for the first time. It will make this large resource of insect fauna accessible, not only to the scientific community, but also to the general public. The community will be able to access key information about the biodiversity of insect fauna in WA's jarrah, karri, wandoo and tingle forests, that will serve to stimulate and facilitate further studies of insects and the role they play in our forest ecosystems.

Well-known forest entomologist Stephen Curry began the department's forest insect collection in 1965, while he was working with the Department of Agriculture. The collection is now managed by Department of Conservation and Land Management Senior Technical Officer Tom Burbidge, and is housed in special controlled temperature rooms at Kensington.

Tom said the collection contained a wide range of insects found in WA forests, such as spring beetles, parasitic wasps, various butterflies and moths, and timber borers.

"The majority of insects are stored as pinned specimens or in containers of preservative spirit," he said.

"There are also some wood specimens in the collection to show the

damage that some insects do to forests. Eventually, these will also be databased as part of the main forest insects collection."

The database is made possible by a \$30,000 grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation, which is administered by the WA Lotteries Commission. The grant was awarded to the WA Insect Study Society to assist the department in the compilation of a database of its extensive insect collection, and to fund the employment of part-time worker, Meriel Falconer, to database the entire collection. (Meriel is also a dedicated part-time volunteer at the department's WA Herbarium.)

Department of Conservation and Land Management Senior Technical Officer Tom Burbidge inspects a selection of WA insects in the large collection that is being recorded on the department's electronic database.

Photo – Don Palmer, courtesy of The West Australian Newspapers Ltd

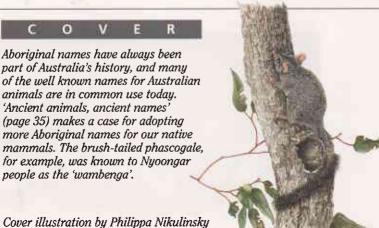




Thirteen years in the making, the Cape to Cape Track offers a unique view of WA's most popular national park. See page 28.



Does the delicate work of Western Australia's botanical artists have a place in the high-tech world of science? See page 23.



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

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Karijini's new visitor centre provides a cultural and environmental focus point for visitors. See 'Karijini Calling' on page 10.

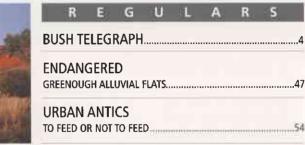


Dirk Hartog Island is our largest island. It has a fascinating history and a valuable biodiversity. Find out why on page 17.



'Landscape at the Heart' is an account of the first LANDSCOPE Expedition to the Carnarvon Range at the edge of the Little Sandy Desert. See page 40.

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