

STRIVING TO GET BETTER WITH AGE

When people get older, there are tell-tale signs: many of us slow down a bit, the eyes may not be as sharp, our hearing may become more selective and, whereas once the hair was thick and the waist was thin, the opposite is now often the case.

Magazines age too, but in a different way. The look, feel and approach of a magazine can remain exactly the same over a number of years, frozen in time, but what may have once been fresh, exhilarating and delightful 10 years ago can seem dated today. Paradoxically, a magazine ages by not changing.

While we at LANDSCOPE have continuously tinkered with our approach to the magazine to try and keep it a "must read" concerning conservation, parks and wildlife in Western Australia, the magazine has not had a major cover-to-cover examination and rethink since the early 90s.

That's where you come in. One of the benefits of reading this column (I hope you can find others) is that I'm asking you to provide your views on what you especially like about LANDSCOPE, what you think could be improved, and what may be currently missing that you'd like to see in the magazine in the future.

Are you finding what you want to read in LANDSCOPE? Are the feature stories too long or too short or just right? Do you like the distinctive cover of the magazine, with its use of illustrations by some of WA's prominent nature illustrators?

Does the magazine give you a better understanding and appreciation of natural WA and, if it doesn't, what can we do about that? Would you like to see more reviews of books about nature and conservation science in WA? Would a feature in each issue designed for school use and students be worthwhile?

We welcome your comments on any aspect of the magazine. Please send them to me on email at [ronk@calm.wa.gov.au](mailto:ronk@calm.wa.gov.au) or to the following address:

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If you use this address, no stamp is required if your letter or card is posted in Australia.

In this issue of LANDSCOPE, we go from the highlands to the coast in WA, and then beneath the water line, to explore the unique biodiversity to be found in the State.

In "A Stirling Climate: Clouds, Snow and Fire", Joe Courtney provides an insight into why some threatened species continue to thrive on the peaks of the Stirling Range and nowhere else.

The Geopraphe Bay, Leeuwin-Naturaliste, Hardy Inlet area has distinct coastal types and a wide range of habitats with very high conservation values. In "The Capes Coast", Carolyn Thomson-Dans, Kylie Ryan and Andrew Hill explore why the area is being considered as a marine conservation reserve.

Looking beneath the waters surface, Peter Morrison provides a fascinating insight into life on the jetty pile how marine plants and animals colonise these areas in "Last In, Best Dressed".

This is just a sample of what's in LANDSCOPE this time around. Enjoy the read, I look forward to your feedback on the magazine, and we'll see you again in autumn.



Ron Kawalilak  
Executive Editor

THE MOLE PATROL

With no eyes, but bristling with 'touch sensors' and two huge claws on each front foot, marsupial moles tunnel through desert sand in search of larvae, ants and termites. These mouse-sized golden diggers rarely surface where they can be observed, making them a difficult species to study!

Like other digging marsupials, they possess a pouch that faces backwards so it does not fill with sand. Despite a widespread distribution in Australian deserts, we still know little about their subterranean life or their conservation status.

There are two known species of marsupial mole. The kakarratul, or northern marsupial mole (*Notoryctes caurinus*), is confined to Western Australia; whereas the more widespread itjariitjari, or southern marsupial mole (*Notoryctes typhlops*), occurs from central WA south to Queen Victoria Spring and then across the sandy deserts into the Northern Territory, South Australia and western Queensland. Efforts to determine the distribution of moles in Western Australia have relied on the memories and skills of desert Aboriginal women,

who occasionally observe moles when out hunting or see its distinctive tracks.

In the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands of South Australia, Aboriginal people and EarthWatch volunteers worked with researcher Joe Benshemesh to develop new survey techniques to gain an understanding of the distribution and abundance of moles across Australia.

A recent initiative is the 'Mole Patrol' Project, funded by a Natural Heritage Trust grant, which will rely on volunteers to report mole sightings. Collected information will be valuable in helping to conserve marsupial moles.

If you are interested in participating in this survey, or would like further information on these unusual animals, an information package containing photos and descriptions of mole signs can be obtained by contacting the Threatened Species Network, Alice Springs, by email [tocolabaheco@aol.com](mailto:tocolabaheco@aol.com) or by phone on (08) 8952 1541.

Marsupial mole tracks.

Photo - David Pearson



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

# LANDSCOPE



VOLUME EIGHTEEN, NUMBER 2, SUMMER 2002-2003



The first stage of a long-distance mountain bike trail, that will ultimately lead from Mundaring to Albany, is now open. See page 49.



Discover the underwater wilderness of the Geographe Bay, Leeuwin-Naturaliste, Hardy Inlet area, a potential marine conservation reserve, on page 18.



Little was known about the distribution of the dalgyte, or bilby, in the south-west forests until scientist Ian Abbott interviewed old timers. Turn to page 28.



Older piles of the Busselton Jetty are crowded with marine life, but it was not always so. How do marine animals gradually colonise the piles? See page 34.



The Stirling Range National Park experiences many extremes of weather, from snow falls to bushfires. Find out why on page 10.

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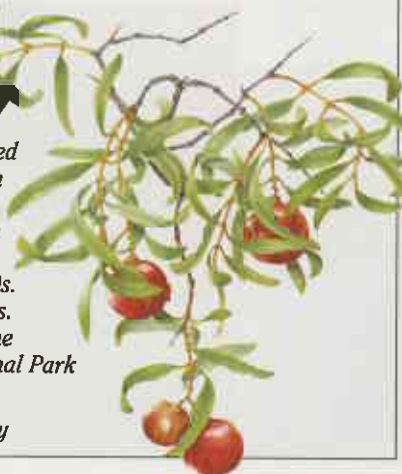
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## COVER

*Quandong* (*Santalum acuminatum*) is one of the most widespread plants in Australia. This small, upright tree is most easily recognised by its bright red fruits, which are edible and also contain a nutritious nut. It belongs to the same genus as the famous sandalwood, which was one of Western Australia's major exports in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Members of this genus are root parasites. *Quandong* grows in dense stands in some areas within the Woodman Point Regional Park (see story on page 42).

Cover illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky



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Colour Separation by Colourbox Digital.  
Printed in Western Australia by Lamb Print.  
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Please do not send unsolicited material to LANDSCOPE, but feel free to telephone the editors.  
Visit NatureBase at [www.naturebase.net](http://www.naturebase.net)  
Published by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington, Western Australia.

