

endangered

by Monica Hunter



Rare banksia and eucalypt woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain

Some of the most recognised tree species in bushland in and around Perth are banksias and eucalypts. A series of woodlands dominated by these trees, in particular types that only occur close to the Darling Scarp, are identified as threatened ecological communities because they have been extensively cleared. One such community is the species-rich 'Banksia attenuata and/or Eucalyptus marginata woodlands of the eastern side of the Swan Coastal Plain'. Other conspicuous species that generally occur in this community include *Xylomelum occidentale* (woody pear), *Hakea stenocarpa* (narrow-fruited hakea), and the sedge *Mesomelaena pseudostygia*.

The significance of this species-rich woodland community was

recognised after detailed surveys of the vegetation of the Swan Coastal Plain in the early 1990s. This was followed by the listing of the community as endangered in 1996. The woodland type is regionally rare and very restricted, with only about 220 hectares remaining. The community's habitat is the conspicuous orange sandy soils found at the base of the Darling Scarp from Chittering in the north to Yarloop in the south.

The most significant threat to the community is clearing for residential areas and related infrastructure such as roads. This vegetation type is also threatened by too-frequent fires, weed invasion and some impacts associated with recreational use. Many of the occurrences of the community are surrounded by urban areas. This leads to a high frequency of fires lit by arsonists, damage by off-road vehicles and illegal rubbish dumping, which all adversely affect the health and structure of the woodland. Climate change may present a

particular threat to the community in the form of increased fires and drought impacts and possibly more weed invasion.

A recovery plan has been developed for the *Banksia attenuata* and/or *Eucalyptus marginata* woodlands with the aim of addressing the threats to the community. Recommended actions include monitoring of the woodland's health in response to specified management actions, active fire management and weed control. With only 85 hectares of the community recorded in nature reserves and other reserves specifically managed for conservation, protection of remaining areas from further clearing is a high priority. Of equal importance is raising awareness among landowners, managers and the general public of the importance of rare banksia and eucalypt woodlands and their special management needs.

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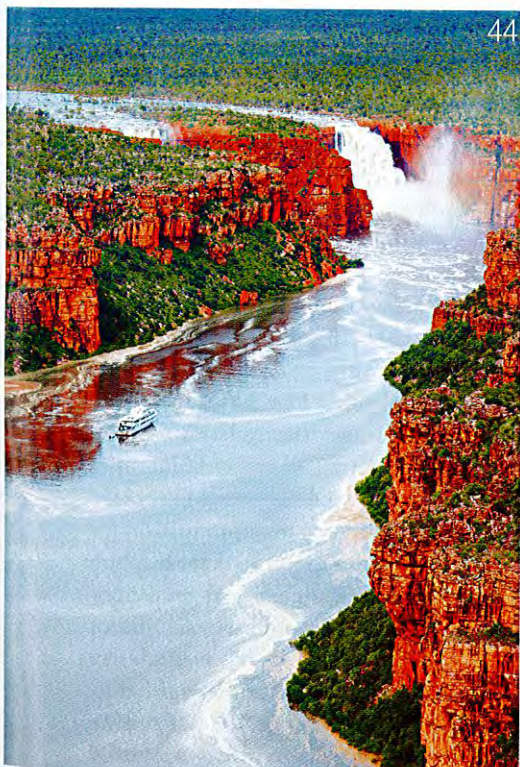
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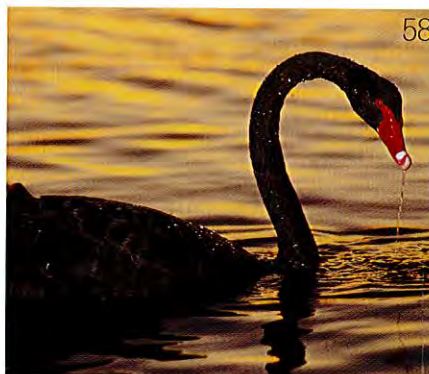
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