



RESTOCKING WESTERN SCHOOL PRAWN

by Kerry Trayler

The western school prawn (*Metapenaeus dalli*) was once the focus of an important commercial and recreational fishery in the Swan Canning Riverpark, before stocks declined. Restocking was identified as a way to increase the population of western

school prawn and a collaborative project between DBCA, Murdoch University and the Australian Centre for Applied Aquaculture Research was established, with funding through RecfishWest, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.

Research was undertaken to refine understandings of the biology and ecology of the prawns, including environmental triggers for breeding, sediment preferences and predation. Optimal approaches to restocking were identified and 4.5 million prawns were released into the Riverpark between 2013 and 2016. The research also provided advice for sustainable management of this recreationally important species and monitoring is continuing to understand inter-annual dynamics of the prawn population.

A citizen-science project, *Prawn Watch* (run through DBCA's *River Guardians* program), was undertaken in conjunction with the restocking, and provided opportunities for community engagement and improved stewardship of the fishery and the Riverpark.

