

## FAUNA

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*Virtually nothing is known about the effects of fire on some species, such as this day-flying forester moth (photo: Phyllis Robertson)*



*The fringed blue butterfly appears to be heavily impacted by fire and is most abundant in long-unburnt areas (photo: Trevor Lundstrom)*

Kensington Bushland is depauperate in butterflies, having only about 5 resident species, with many species now locally extinct. I am currently planning to re-introduce blue iris-skippers to Kensington bushland in November 2003.

Over the past two years I have devised and tested a standard survey technique to assess the abundance of butterflies. I have found that using existing tracks and firebreaks to conduct the surveys is adequate, and is both faster and causes less disturbance than transects through the bushland. Warm, sunny weather

is needed for the surveys. Days with maximum temperatures between 23 and 30 °C are ideal. Surveys vary from 1 to 4 km in length and are conducted between 10 am and 3 pm. The main flight period for butterflies is mid September to mid December, with peak activity in early November, but additional surveys around March are needed to detect some autumn-flying species such as the graceful sun-moth and wedge grass-skipper.

Now that I have finalised a standard survey technique, more reserves in the Perth metropolitan

area will be added to my list of study sites in the coming year. The help of volunteers in conducting these surveys is always welcome, and if you would like to assist me with these surveys, and learn how to identify some butterflies along the way, please get in touch with me.

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