

Greetings!

LFW celebrated reaching a significant milestone when the 2,000th property was registered. The Minister for the Environment presented a certificate to Glenn Dewhurst of the Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre, surrounded by well-wishers and very noisy cockatoos. See page 3 for more details.

Just what is a 'biodiversity hotspot'?

We probably all know by now that the south-west of WA has been identified as a 'global biodiversity hotspot'. We tend to be really proud of this, as it celebrates our truly outstanding natural diversity, but we should not forget that the definition of these 'hotspots' does not just relate to the flora and fauna. The term refers to an area where "exceptional concentrations of endemic species are undergoing exceptional loss of

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habitat".* Certainly, let's celebrate the biodiversity, but how have we changed our land use activities to reverse the exceptional loss of habitat?

Why, for example, are we permitting the removal of huge old roadside or paddock trees whose hollows provide nesting sites and, if marris, whose blossom sustains nectar-feeding fauna including honeyeaters throughout the autumn feed gap? Isn't this somewhat short-sighted? In the WA Centenary publication *The Story of a Hundred Years* (1929) the then Director of Agriculture, G. L. Sutton says "So great has been the desire of the settler to conquer the forest and produce crops that far too little timber has been left for the purposes of shade, shelter and firewood. This defect is recognised by many of the later settlers, who are leaving clumps of trees in the paddocks as well as strips of uncleared land, one chain or more wide, on the boundaries of their paddocks. This practice is most desirable and should become general. It adds alike to the usefulness and the attractiveness

of the holding". Eighty years on, it is these 'desirable' trees that are being removed.

As well as the international biodiversity hotspot list, Australia has also listed 15 sites that are national hotspots. The Pilbara is one of these. Read Stephen van Leeuwen's summary of findings from the recent Pilbara Biological Survey to see just why this area qualifies. From the same region, Stephen Davies reminisces about one of the region's interesting animals, the pebble mound mouse.

We continue to get fascinating stories from members, and in this issue you will read about boodies, phascogales (two species), leucistic cockies, ants and another snake tale. And note how the real-life bush detective led to information about a fascinating group of creatures. Have you got a story you would like to share? What about something botanical?

Penny Hussey

[* For ref, contact Ed.]

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