



Tackling taro on the Canning

By Jason MacKay, South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL)

NATIVE plant communities along the Canning River and its tributaries are being threatened by infestations of *Colocasia esculenta*, commonly known as taro. To combat this problem, community representatives and natural resource management groups have developed a project in conjunction with local and State government.

Taro is a fast growing plant originally from India and south-east Asia that is capable of becoming a serious weed. It forms dense stands along watercourses and on the edge of lakes and swamps, displacing native plant species. Taro has spread rapidly along the Canning River in spite of control attempts by concerned community groups over several years.

This project, facilitated by the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL), has been successful in gaining funding of \$31,500 through the Swan River Trust's Riverbank program. It has brought the many stakeholders together to work cooperatively on taro management. Individually, the stakeholders did not have the resources to effectively tackle the problem, but it is hoped a cooperative approach will control this serious weed and lead to regeneration of the native vegetation.

In order to understand the full extent of the problem, community volunteers from Canning River Regional Park Volunteers, SERCUL staff and other stakeholders mapped the location and severity of the taro infestation, and then identified priority sites for control. Most infestations were found in a stretch of approximately five km of the Canning River between the Kent Street weir and Roe Highway in the local government areas of Canning and Gosnells.

The project is focussing on protecting the native plant communities in this area through the removal of taro and the prevention of its spread. The control method selected is based on a project at Gingin Brook, plus trial work undertaken by SERCUL at Yule Brook. Most of the taro infestation is being sprayed with a mixture of RoundUp® and Brush-off® during the warmer months this year. In following years it will be necessary for landowners/managers to be vigilant and remove new taro plants as they appear.

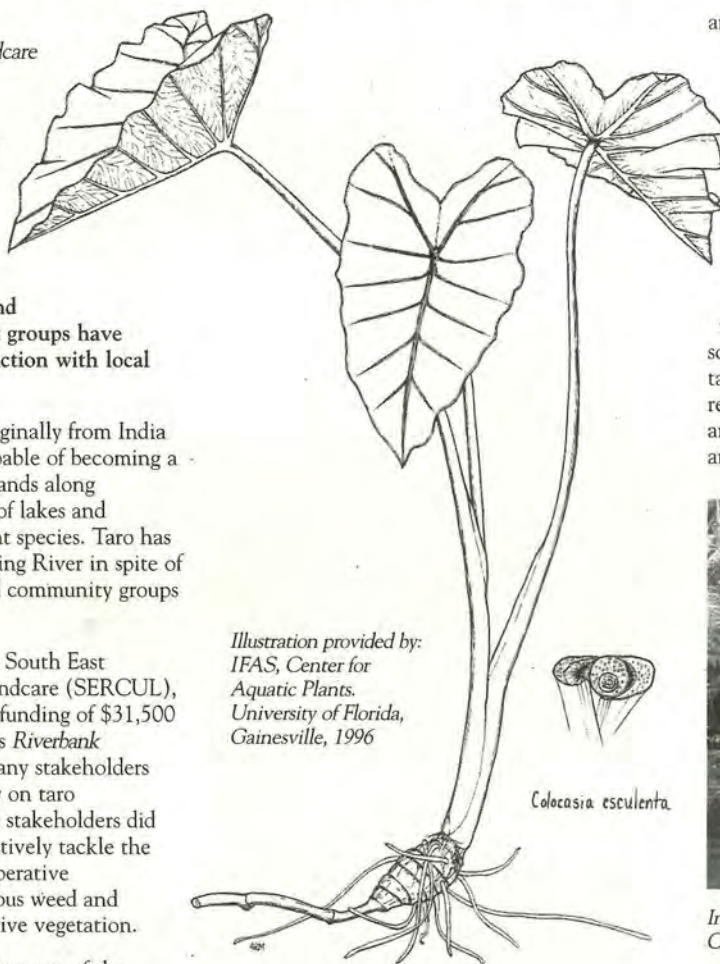


Illustration provided by:
IFAS, Center for Aquatic Plants,
University of Florida,
Gainesville, 1996

another project which has lowered the weir level downstream, and thus the water levels in the project area. This has allowed access to, and treatment of, taro in previously inaccessible areas along the watercourse.

Expectations and outcomes

It is not expected that this project will completely eradicate taro from the Canning and its tributaries. What it will do is reduce the infestations to manageable sizes so individual stakeholders will be able to tackle smaller outbreaks. Treating the remaining (and new) smaller taro infestation areas will help restore the native vegetation and ultimately the Canning River.



Inspecting treated taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) on the Canning. (Photo: Tom Atkinson)

The work at Gingin Brook began in 1999 involving the Environmental Weeds Action Network and Friends of Gingin Brook. This successful taro control project showed that when small infestations of taro are removed from relatively intact understorey, the area is rapidly recolonised by native species. Refer to the brochure on taro enclosed with this edition for further details.

The Canning River project area contains large populations of taro, and it is likely that their removal will leave significant areas of bare ground vulnerable to erosion and recolonisation by other weeds. In areas such as this, ongoing weed management and in-fill planting will be required to assist restoration of native plant communities.

Progress to date

The project is well under way, with approximately five km of the river having had its first and follow-up treatment. Works have been assisted by

The South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) was formed in 2003 as an independent Natural Resource Management body to bring together community, local governments, business and State agencies to develop and implement projects that will improve our environment.

SERCUL's aim is to promote and actively participate in an integrated approach to catchment management within the 13 local government areas in the southern metropolitan area. This will see improvements to the health of our waterways and other ecosystems, as well as a cultural change in how the community views and interacts with our environment.

Contact Jason MacKay on 9458 5664, Fax 9458 5661. Website www.sercul.org.au.

Urban Nature update with Karen Sanders



The Urban Nature team has planned a very busy 2006.

In addition to publishing this newsletter four times a year, and delivering Skills for Nature Conservation courses (in partnership with Greening Australia WA and the Department of Environment's Swan Catchment Centre), we are hoping to increase technical assistance and advice to community and professional land managers. Our new staff member, Karen Bettink will partly fill this role. Welcome Karen!



As a part of expanding the Urban Nature program we have planned a series of one-day workshops, including the 'ecology, biology and management of invasive bulbs' in June, a *watsonia* workshop in August and a course on 'introduced and native grasses' in November.



Our nationally accredited course *managing weeds in bushland*, delivered through the Department of Conservation and Land Management's (CALM) training centre in October, will be open to local government officers this year.

Ecology, biology and management of invasive bulbs seminar

A one-day seminar will be held on Monday 26 June at Wollaston College Conference Centre, Mt Claremont. It will provide an opportunity for the exchange of information on invasive bulbs (geophytes) in south-western Australia.

The program will cover biology, ecology, impacts and fire response of invasive bulbs. A series of case studies focusing on control and management of these weeds in native plant communities will be presented. Speakers include Will Stock (Edith Cowan University), Bob Dixon and Brett Neasham (Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority), Susie Warner (CSIRO, Townsville), John Moore (WA Department of Agriculture), Greg Keighery and Kate Brown (CALM).

The seminar, organised by Urban Nature, will be free of charge with sponsorship generously provided by the Weeds Society of Western Australia. For more information or registration please contact CALM Swan Region on 9368 4399 or email: urbannature@calm.wa.gov.au.



We will continue the bushland restoration training days at two of our demonstration sites – Talbot Road and Brixton Street. These workdays provide valuable information sharing through on-ground works programs (see article on page 4).



A sincere thank you to those who completed the questionnaire sent out in the summer edition of *Ecoplan News*. We have enjoyed reading your comments and are aiming to incorporate as many of your suggestions as we can. One of the most common requests was to increase the font size, so you may notice that the next edition will be easier on the eye!



A summary of your comments will be prepared for the winter edition, but for now we want to announce the four winners of the book prizes: Congratulations to Natalie Adair, Benjamin Seabrook, Bob Shaw, and Maureen Francesconi.

Happy reading!

Nyoongar seasons were determined by the weather and food available, not the time of year as is the case with the European calendar. During Djeraan (April/May) the weather cooled and winds generally blew from the south-west. Mias were built or repaired, and kangaroo skins and coats were prepared for winter. When the first rains came hardi grubs were collected as they climbed up the stems of plants. It was easier gathering hardis then, rather than digging them out from plant roots.

During Makuru (June/July) the weather became cool and wet with squally westerly gales. It was the time to dig pink tubers (*Tribonanthes* spp). Swans began moulting in June and, being unable to fly, made easy prey.

Are your details correct?

Can you please check your mailing details and let us know if we need to change anything by phoning us on 9474 7052. If you'd prefer to receive this newsletter electronically please send us an email titled 'email me' to Ecoplan@calm.wa.gov.au.

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email: wildflowers@ozemail.com.au

Winter Ecoplan News

Please forward your news, activity calendar, regional reports and photos for the Autumn issue of *Ecoplan News* by Thursday 1st June 2006. Fax, email or write to Urban Nature. Please keep regional reports under 250 words and articles as brief as possible. Thank you.

Compiled and edited by Jo Tregonning.

Carnaby's cockatoos: how many and what do they eat?

By Bansi Shah

We received approximately 220 forms back from the 'Great Cockey Count' survey on 12 February, with more than 400 people participating. Individual flocks as large as 300 were reported by several people, with the highest number of birds observed being close to 500 in the northern parks. As can be expected, the largest flocks were seen in and around the large northern and southern parks, including pine plantations.

More volunteers are needed for the 14 May 'Great Cockey Count' on the Swan Coastal Plain from Gingin to Bunbury. Call 0428 946 001 to register for the 'Great Cockey Count'. For further information and to download 'Cockey Count' and feeding forms, visit www.carnabyscockatoo.org.

Right: Two male Carnaby's cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*). (Photo: John Lauri)



Banksia Environmentalist Awards 2006 – nominations close 10 May 2006

Projects eligible for the Prime Minister's Award will be those that have played an important role in conserving and protecting a significant place, and also provided education and raised awareness of the issues of protection and conservation of Australia's significant heritage and environmental places.

Environmentalist of the Year award is open to any Australian individual, organisation or group that has been involved in: protecting and conserving a nationally significant natural, historic or Indigenous heritage place; protecting and conserving water systems; protecting biodiversity or Australia's oceans. For information visit <http://www.banksiafdn.com/index.php?page=10>.

Feral bee control strategy – have you got feral bees at your place?

European honey bees are one of the lesser known feral animals that negatively impact on the environment.

Bees have been kept in Australia since the 1820s for honey production, and to help pollinate crops, but over the years some bees have swarmed from the domestic hives to form feral bee colonies. Although they are the same species, feral bees differ from managed bees in that they are more aggressive, have a tendency to swarm, and are of little commercial value for honey production. They also take over tree hollows and evict native birds and mammals.

With financial support from the Water Corporation, CALM is researching feral bee control, and is planning to develop a feral bee control strategy. The aim is to reduce feral bee numbers in areas where they negatively impact on native flora and fauna without affecting the beekeeping industry. In the meantime, if you have feral bees on your property, CALM would like to know. Contact Jacqueline Hay 9334 0103 or jacquelineh@calm.wa.gov.au.



Wetland Watch: private property owners take action to manage their wetlands

By Christina Mykytiuk

Wetland Watch is a wetland conservation project of WWF-Australia in partnership with the Cities of Armadale, Cockburn and Rockingham and the Town of Kwinana. The aim of the project is to assist private property owners with wetland management and conservation.

Through the first round of *Wetland Watch* grants, ten wetland management and restoration projects have been funded covering an area of approximately 12.5 hectares. Activities include revegetation of degraded wetland and bushland areas with more than 5000 local native seedlings, and controlling invasive weeds.

A second round of grants opened in March 2006 with up to \$10,000 per property available to eligible wetland landowners within the local government areas of Armadale, Cockburn, Rockingham and Kwinana. The project is funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust through the Swan Catchment Council. In July 2006 the project will be expanded to include the Ellen Brockman Catchment.

For further information on the *Wetland Watch* project or the *Wetland Watch* grants program please contact Christina Mykytiuk on 9439 0420 or cmkytiuk@wwf.org.au.

Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Project update

The PUBF project is continuing in 2006 with reduced funding for education and no funding for a professional mycologist. We are anticipating mycological support from one of our partners, CALM, which is in the process of appointing an ecologist/mycologist.

Many interesting fungi have been appearing after sporadic rain incidents, and we now look forward to the autumn and winter fungi which will be appearing with the rains and cooler weather. Two public workshops and a number of fungi walks in local urban bushland areas are being planned.

All the 2004/05 bushland fungi reports, as well as the *Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Field Book* (revised November 2005), and information on events and how to participate can be downloaded from our website at www.fungiperth.org.au.

Volunteers needed for bird banding project 7–20 August 2006

Between May 1985 and June 1995 CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology, headed by Dr Denis Saunders with support of the Earthwatch Institute and the Kellerberrin/Doodlakine Landcare Community, carried out a major banding program to investigate movements of birds over a 625 sq km area between Kellerberrin and Trayning. There is now an opportunity to participate in further field work to examine what changes there have been to these bird communities since then.

Two banding teams will operate with a least one A-class bander on each team and another experienced bander supported by three volunteers. The project has attracted support from CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems and other organisations in the form of accommodation and meals for volunteers. Wallatin Wildlife and Landcare Inc. are looking for 12 volunteers to support the teams for approximately one week each.

Please contact Mike or Sue McFarlane 9045 8244, Kit Leake 9045 9031 or Rose Bowen 9045 8254 to express your interest.

Funding opportunities

2007 Swan Alcoa Landcare Program

A total of \$550,000 is available through the combined sponsorship of Alcoa of Australia Ltd and the Swan River Trust for community groups involved in on-ground revegetation and rehabilitation projects within the Swan and Canning catchments. Applications for funding close at 4.30pm on 1 May 2006. Guidelines and application form can be downloaded from www.swancatchmentcouncil.org or by contacting the Swan Catchment Centre on 9374 3333.

Biodiversity project funding through WALGA

The WA Local Government Association is distributing funding for biodiversity conservation projects such as ecological assessments, on-ground management of reserves, strategic planning initiatives, or provision of specific staff training. Local governments are eligible to apply for projects individually or in partnership with each other and/or with local community groups. Applications for both south west and Perth projects close on 12 May.

South west – \$65,000 available over 13 local government areas. Download forms at:

http://www.councils.wa.gov.au/directory/walga/index.html/sw_lg_bp/targeted_grants/. For more information contact Natalie Olsen or Russell Venn on 9780 8282.

Perth – \$100,000 available to metropolitan local governments and the Shire of Chittering. Download forms at: <http://www.councils.wa.gov.au/directory/walga/index.html/pbp/grants/>. For more information contact Danielle Witham on 9213 2047 or email dwitham@walga.asn.au.

Envirofund Round 8

Up to \$50,000 is available to conduct local environmental projects for incorporated groups, businesses, or individuals (NOT government, although local government can be a partner, sponsor or contractor). Applications due Friday 28 April 2006. Successful applicants will be notified in July so that projects can start in August. Download guide and forms at www.nht.gov.au/envirofund or phone 1800 065 823.

TSN community grants program

Threatened Species Network is a partnership between WWF-Australia and the Australian Government which provides up to \$50,000 for communities to implement on-ground actions and raise awareness of threatened

species issues. Funded activities include: habitat restoration; weeding; feral animal control; fencing; fire management; and monitoring and surveying species populations. Community grant applications close Friday 2 June 2006. Download guidelines and application form from wwf.org.au/tsn or contact Kathy Howard on 02 8202 1233.

Swan Coastal Plain biodiversity project

Provides cash incentives and technical advice to private land owners in the Peel-Harvey Catchment for on ground works that address the decline in quality and quantity of vegetation on the Swan Coastal Plain.

The project is also being run in the Leschenault Catchment and has been funded through the South West Catchments Council. Land owners will have the opportunity to: learn about plant and animal species and vegetation type/s on their property; fund on-ground actions such as fencing, weed control, and planting; access advice on flora surveys and bushland management techniques; and have a management calendar prepared for your bushland area. Contact Carol Bryant at the Serpentine-Jarrahdale Community Landcare Centre on 9525 5786.

Learning opportunities

2006 Bushland restoration training days – for everyone!

CALM's *Urban Nature* program will be holding a series of bushland restoration training days at Brixton Street wetlands and Talbot Road bushland.

Restoration activities in the last eight years have been carefully recorded at these significant sites and now there is an opportunity, through a series of practical training days, for others to learn from the information gathered.

Activities will include learning about the flora and vegetation, weed management, monitoring and mapping, direct seeding and planting into small restoration sites. Learn how the bushland restoration techniques used at these sites may be applied in other bushland areas.

Training days are held 9am–12 noon on the first Wednesday of the month at Brixton Street and on the last Friday of the month at Talbot Road, between May and November 2006. Wear a hat, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt and sturdy footwear (no thongs or open shoes). All

tools and equipment (and morning teas!) are provided. Bookings: *Urban Nature* on 9474 7052 / 9474 7032 (places limited). See 'What's On' section for activities and dates in April, May and June.

Natural Resource Management training to be held in Albany

Three training courses are being offered by Green Skills in 2006: Environmental Monitoring; Managing Natural Resource Projects; and Facilitation. All courses are nationally accredited from Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management and aimed at Natural Resource Managers, landowners and volunteers. Venue: Green Skills Training Room, 146 Aberdeen Street, Albany. Contact Annabelle Newbury on 9360 6667 or email anewbury@greenskills.green.net.au.

Volunteer Risk Assessment program

With the support of the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust, Conservation Volunteers Australia is delivering a national program to help community

conservation groups learn about volunteer risk assessment. The program includes: a risk assessment handbook; three-hour workshop; and an email 'help desk'. A workshop will be held in Perth on 21 April, and in Bunbury on 26 April. Visit www.conservationvolunteers.com.au for more information.

Tools and techniques for working with the community

A project on innovative community engagement methodologies aims to enhance the community's ability to take on the challenges of decision-making. It will also provide the community with a sense of control and influence in managing natural resources. Engaging the community means that those seeking sustainable environmental outcomes will need to critically analyse and lead others in determining key stakeholders. Establishing partnerships between individuals and organisations with a shared commitment to actions is the key to achieving agreed outcomes. For more information contact Fran Jones at the Serpentine-Jarrahdale Community Landcare Centre on 9526 0012.



Econotes: Knotweeds that are not weeds

By Kate Brown

Bushland Management Advisor, Urban Nature

Knotweeds (*Persicaria* species) are common components of the fringing vegetation of wetlands in south-west Australia, and they are often the first species to recolonise bare ground after disturbance.

With their weedy attributes, there is a common misconception that they are all introduced exotics. In fact the most commonly encountered knotweeds in south-west Australia are not weeds.

On the Swan Coastal Plain there are three native species of *Persicaria* - *Persicaria decipiens* (slender knotweed), *Persicaria hydropiper* (water pepper) and *Persicaria prostrata*. All three are reasonably common in the understorey of the fringing vegetation of creeks, rivers, lakes and swamps.

They are disturbance opportunists that will rapidly occupy bare ground that has been created as a result of rising or falling water levels from flooding events, or following loss of canopy cover. Knotweeds also colonise bare ground created by human disturbances such as vegetation clearance or soil disturbance.

This ability to rapidly recolonise bare ground makes these plants a valuable tool in wetland restoration projects. They are able to colonise areas exposed as a result of large scale removal of weeds, and form a dense native cover before other weeds can move in. In work carried out along Gingin Brook north of Perth for example, *Persicaria decipiens* was one species that rapidly colonised bare ground left following removal of large volumes of taro (*Colocasia esculenta*).

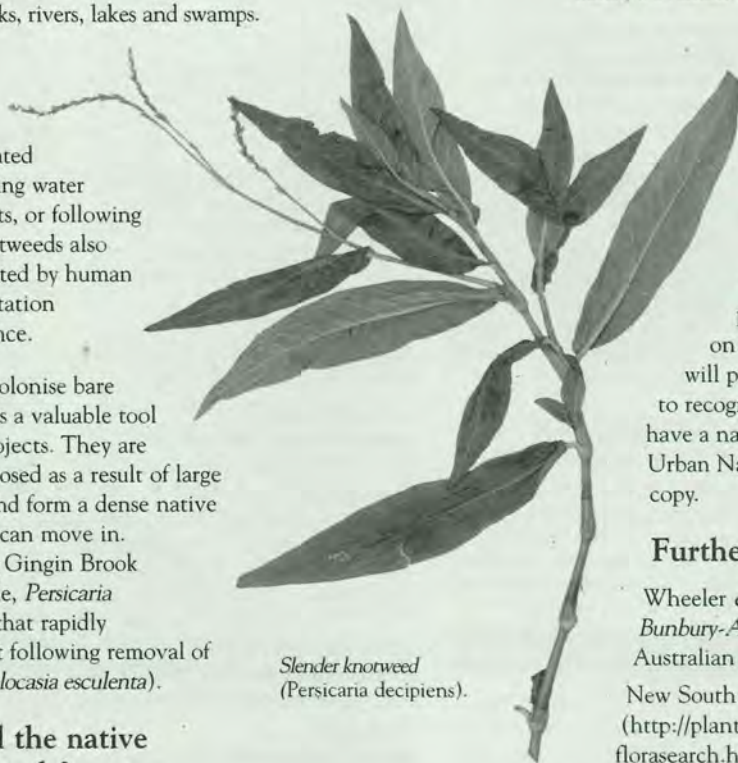
So how do you tell the native species from the weeds?

It is not all that difficult (well, in most cases...). The four introduced species are not very common in remnant vegetation and two are very distinctive. The weed *Persicaria capitata* is a common garden plant and differs from the native species in its dense, round, bright pink flower spikes. All three native species have pale pink to white cylindrical to elongated flower spikes. *Persicaria orientalis* is another apparently uncommon weed. It has oval leaves while the native species have narrow linear leaves.

The third weedy species in the region, *Persicaria maculosa* is more difficult to separate, especially from the common native, *Persicaria decipiens*.



The native slender knotweed (*Persicaria decipiens*) rapidly recolonises bare ground, making it a valuable tool in wetland restoration. (Photo: Kate Brown)



Slender knotweed (*Persicaria decipiens*).

The latter has narrower flower spikes to 5mm (compared to 7-10mm in *Persicaria maculosa*) and leaf hairs restricted to margins and main veins (rather than a sparse covering across the surface).

The fourth introduced knotweed, *Persicaria lapathifolia*, has only been collected from cultivated market gardens and as far as we know, has not been recorded invading native vegetation. Unlike any of the native knotweeds the leaf under surface is densely hairy.

If you have any problems identifying *Persicaria* species, you will need to consult specialist texts such as 'Flora of the South West' (Wheeler *et al.* 2002) or the New South Wales Flora Online.

The *Urban Nature* team is currently putting together an information sheet on 'knotweeds that are not weeds' that will provide detailed information on how to recognise these plants and discover if you have a native knotweed in your patch. Contact Urban Nature on 9474 7052 if you would like a copy.

Further information

Wheeler *et al.* (2002). *Flora of the South West: Bunbury-Augusta-Denmark*. Volume 1 & 2. Australian Biological Research Study, Canberra.
New South Wales Flora Online (<http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/search/florasearch.htm>)



Kate Brown at the edge of a patch of *Persicaria decipiens*. This native knotweed is often found in highly disturbed areas such as this parkland along Gingin Brook. (Photo: Neil Gibson)

Opportunities for you to participate! Visitors always welcome. Please confirm activities with contact before the event as details may change. Most activities are FREE!

REGISTRATION/CONTACT DETAILS

for organisations providing a series of activities are as follows:

- ♣ **Bush Skills for the Hills (BSFH)** offers free hills-focused workshops for the community. Contact Robbie 9424 2216 or email Roberta.Circosta@emrc.org.au.
- * **Nearer to Nature (N2N)** CALM. Affordable prices for all activities. Bookings 9295 2244 or visit www.naturebase.net/nearertonature.
- § **Urban Nature (CALM)**. Bushland restoration training days. Brixton St wetlands (Alton St, Kenwick) and Talbot Rd bushland (cnr Talbot Rd and O'Connor St, Swan View). Call 9474 7052 or 9474 7032.
- ☉ **Friends of Lake Gwelup**. Meet at Scout Hall carpark, Huntriss Rd, Gwelup. Call Betty 9444 5640.
- ♣ **Skills for Nature Conservation (SFNC)** A partnership between the Swan Catchment Centre (SCC), CALM and Greening Australia (WA). FREE training courses. Download calendar at www.calm.wa.gov.au/urbannature/learning_opportunities.html. Bookings SCC on 9374 3333.
- ▲ **Kwinana Rockingham Mandurah Branch (KRMB) of the WA Naturalists' Club** at Rockingham Regional Environment Centre, Safety Bay Rd, opposite Lake Richmond, Peron. Contact 9591 3077 or www.wanats@inet.net.au.
- ★ **Friends of Star Swamp Bushland**. Meet at Henderson Environment Centre, Groat St, North Beach. Call Christine 9447 2983.

The categories bring similar types of activities together in chronological order:

- Listen, Look and Learn** – talks, walks and seminars
- Get Your Hands Dirty** – bushland, river, wetland and coastal hands-on care
- Develop Your Skills** – courses, workshops, training and development
- Delivering the Message** – expos, festivals, conferences and 'theme weeks or days'

Listen, Look & Learn

April

7 Friday 7.30pm
Perth Biodiversity Project. Meeting of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club at 7.30pm in the Hew Roberts Lecture Theatre, Clifford St, Nedlands (UWA Extension). Contact 9228 2495.

15 Saturday 8am
Guided nature walk with the Friends of Lake Gwelup. ☉

16 Sunday 10.30am-12 noon
Touch pool on the beach with the Friends of Marmion Marine Park. Meet in front of the MAAC building West Coast Drv, near Gull St. Call Lynda 93428684 to confirm.

19 Wednesday 7.30pm
Quinns Rocks Environmental Group Inc. **General meeting** with guest speakers from FESA. Fire management in urban bushland at Gumblossom Community Centre, Tapping Way, Quinns Rocks. Call Renata 9305 9382.

21 Friday 8pm
Free talk: 'A community group in action: The Cockburn Wetlands Centre'. Guest Speaker: Denise Crosbie. Hosted by KRMB Naturalists' Club. ▲

22 Saturday 8am
Guided walk with Friends of Star Swamp. See birds, insects and autumn flowers. ★

25 Tuesday
Guided nature walk with the Friends of Paganoni Swamp. Call Leonie 9537 1831.

29 Saturday 9am-1pm
Post-fire management in Urban Bushland with the Urban Bushland Council. Practical demonstration of post-fire bushland recovery, weed control, prioritisation, dieback, recording fire history and updating a Fire Response Plan. Bookings essential 9420 7207 or ubc@inet.net.au.

May

Date TBA
Fungi Foray/workshops in collaboration with the Urban Bushland Council. Call WA Naturalists' Club in May on 9228 2495 or wanats@inet.net.au.

5 Friday 7.30pm
Rottnest truffles and quokkas, Sandra Thomas. Meeting of the WA Naturalists' Club in the Hew Roberts Lecture Theatre, Clifford St, Nedlands (UWA Extension). Contact 9228 2495.

6 Saturday 2.30pm
Weed and plant identification walk with the Friends of Periwinkle Bushland, Charonia Ave, Mullaloo. Call Dot 9401 3724.

14 Sunday 9am-2pm
MP3 Forest quest with N2N at the Hills Forest Discovery Centre. Forest trail walk with MP3 guide on flora, fauna, answer a quiz and find hidden items. Sausage sizzle and drink included. Cost: \$12 pp or \$10 Discovery Club member. *

19 Friday 8pm
Free nature talk – hosted by KRMB of the WA Naturalists' Club. ▲

20 Saturday 8am
Guided nature walk with the Friends of Lake Gwelup. ☉

26 Friday 7.30pm
Night walk with Friends of Star Swamp. Features spiders, nocturnal birds and frogs. Bring a torch. ★

27 Saturday 8am
Guided walk with Friends of Star Swamp. See birds, insects and autumn flowers. ★

28 Sunday 10am-2pm
Guided walk on the history of John Forest National Park with N2N. BYO picnic. Cost: \$22 pp or \$18 Discovery Club member. *

30 Tuesday
Guided nature walk with the Friends of Paganoni Swamp. Call Leonie 9537 1831.

June

3-5 long weekend
Excursion to Jurien Bay and Mt Leseur. Call WA Naturalists' Club on 9228 2495 or wanats@inet.net.au.

9 Friday 7.30pm
Relationship between soils and vegetation in WA, Penny Hussey. Meeting of the WA Naturalists' Club at the Hew Roberts Lecture Theatre, Clifford St, Nedlands (UWA Extension). Phone 9228 2495.

16 Friday 8pm
Free nature talk – hosted by KRMB of the WA Naturalists' Club. ▲

17 Saturday 8am
Guided nature walk with the Friends of Lake Gwelup. ☉

21 Wednesday 7.30pm
Neerabup National Park guest speaker. **General Meeting** of the Quinns Rocks Environmental Group Inc. Meet at the Gumblossom Community Centre, Tapping Way, Quinns Rocks.

24 Saturday 8am
Guided walk with Friends of Star Swamp. See birds, insects and winter flowers. ★

27 Tuesday
Guided nature walk with the Friends of Paganoni Swamp. Call Leonie 9537 1831.

Get Your Hands Dirty

Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) 20 Stack St, Fremantle. CVA has many opportunities in the Perth metropolitan area and longer excursions in the state's north. Too numerous to list here this issue. Call Linda 9336 6911 or perth@conservationvolunteers.com.au.

April

1-30 April
Identify Carnaby's cockatoo food plants – record plant information each time you see Carnaby's feeding or follow flocks in your reserves to record feeding preferences. Download record forms from www.carnabyscockatoo.org or call 0427 707 047.

9 Sunday 8am-10am
Bush care by the beach at Mindarie Park, Quinns Rocks. Meet corner of Starrs Rd and Mindarie Drv. Help Quinns Rocks Environmental Group Inc. eradicate weeds resprouting after a recent fire. Call David 9305 9575.

15 Saturday 9am-12 noon
Bushland activity day with the Friends of Brixton Street wetlands. Meet at Alton St (far gate) Kenwick. Morning tea provided. Call Regina 9459 2964.

16 Sunday 10.30am-12.30pm
Busy bee with Friends of Piessie Brook. Bring gloves and wear closed-in boots. Call Linda 9293 2517 for meeting point.

May

1-31 May
Vegetation surveys for Carnaby's cockatoo – participate in vegetation surveys in banksia woodland to help determine food resources available to Carnaby's in the Swan Region. Visit www.carnabyscockatoo.org or call 0427 707 047.

3 Wednesday 9am-12 noon
Bushland restoration training day with Urban Nature at Brixton Street wetlands. Tambookie grass control: a history of the weed in the reserve and a practical session on hand removal and preparation for chemical control. §

14 Sunday 3-5.30pm
Great cocky count as part of a Birds Australia conservation project. Count Carnaby's cockatoos on the Swan Coastal Plain from Gingin to Bunbury. See www.carnabyscockatoo.org or call 0428 946 001 to register.

14 Sunday 8am-10am
Bush care by the beach at Gumblossom Reserve in Quinns Rocks. Meet Quinns Rocks Environmental Group Inc. members at the carpark off Tapping Way. Call Renata 9305 9382.

20 Saturday 9am-12 noon
Bushland activity day with the Friends of Brixton Street wetlands. Meet at Alton St (far gate), Kenwick. Morning tea provided. Call Regina 9459 2964.

21 Sunday 10.30am-12.30pm
Busy bee with Friends of Piessie Brook. Bring gloves and wear closed-in boots. Call Linda 9293 2517 for meeting point.

26 Friday 9am-12 noon
Bushland restoration training day. Urban Nature at Talbot Road bushland. Control methods for woody weeds. §

June

1-30 June
Vegetation surveys for Carnaby's cockatoo – participate in vegetation surveys in banksia woodland to help determine food resources available to Carnaby's in the Swan Region. Visit www.carnabyscockatoo.org or call 0427 707 047.

7 Wednesday 9am-12 noon
Bushland restoration training day with Urban Nature at Brixton Street wetlands. Tambookie grass – follow up using chemical control. §

8 Thursday 1.30pm
School planting day with the Friends of Periwinkle Bushland, Charonia Ave, Mullaloo. Call Dot 9401 3724.

10 Saturday 9.30am
Planting day with the Friends of Periwinkle Bushland, Charonia Ave, Mullaloo. Call Dot 9401 3724.

11 Sunday 8am
Bush care by the beach at South Mindarie Foreshore Reserve. Meet Quinns Rocks Environmental Group Inc. at carpark off Alexandria View, Mindarie and help replant degraded dunes. Call Renata 9305 9382.

17 Saturday 9am-12 noon
Bushland activity day with the Friends of Brixton Street wetlands. Meet at Alton St (far gate), Kenwick. Morning tea provided. Call Regina 9459 2964.

30 Friday 9am-12 noon
Bushland restoration training day with Urban Nature at Talbot Road bushland. Controlling perennial grasses along Blackadder Creek. §

Develop Your Skills

April

1 Saturday 8am-5pm
Subterranean safari – exploring the karst and cave systems of the Swan Coastal Plain with SFNC at Point Walter Golf Course, Bicton. Australian Speleological Federation will present information on flora, fauna, hydrology and geology. ♣

5 Wednesday 6.30-8.30pm
Frog friendly garden workshop sponsored by LandCorp and the City of Cockburn. Venue: Harvest Lakes Community and Environmental Centre, Aurora Drv, Atwell. Further information and registration 9284 0910, or email admin@creatingcommunities.com.au.

7 Friday 7pm-8.30pm and 8 Saturday 10am-3.30pm
Strawbale building course. Theory and practical. Naragebup Rockingham Regional Environment Centre, Safety Bay Rd, opposite Lake Richmond, Peron. Call 9591 3077 or email rec@naragebup.org.au.

8 Saturday 1-4pm
Heavenly hectares Landcare Seminar Pickett Park Hall, Old Chittering Rd, Bullsbrook. Bookings Chris Morton on 9368 3993 or cmorton@agric.wa.gov.au.

8 Saturday 9am-12.30pm
Focus on funding – fine tuning your grant application (part 2) with SFNC. Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre, Bibra Lake. ♣

22 Saturday
Revegetating your property - Field Day at Mandurah with Green Skills. A FREE half-day field walk at a local property. Bookings 9525 5978.

May

5 Friday 5.30pm-9.30pm at Lake Clifton
6 Saturday afternoon at Wandering **Heavenly hectares** Mini Expos with Green Skills. A FREE introduction for small landholders to managing your house, garden and property smarter. Bookings: Waroona Landcare Centre on 9733 2628 (Lake Clifton Expo); Hotham Landcare Centre on 9883 9710 (Wandering Expo).

7 Sunday 9.30am-3pm
Coastal capers – how to run a coastal planting day with SFNC at the WA Ecology Centre, Bold Park. Presenter: Brett Dal Pozzo. ♣

10 Wednesday 6.30pm-9.30pm
How to get schools involved in your environmental projects with BSFH. Venue: Landcare Centre, ERBEAC Building, 23/8-12 Stafford St, Midland. ♣

13 Saturday 12 noon-5pm
Bushland regeneration workshop with BSFH at Glen Forrest Hall. Regeneration and revegetation, weed management, basic plant identification and planning your project. ♣

19 Friday 5pm – 20 Saturday 12.30pm
Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a night. Resources provided that fulfill school Curriculum Framework Outcomes of all learning areas. Hills Forest Discovery Centre, Mundaring. Call EcoEducation 9295 6149 or 9295 6300 or ecoeducation@calm.wa.gov.au.

20 Saturday 9am-4pm
Stepping stones – creating healthy habitats – returning life to the suburbs with SFNC at Piney Lakes Environmental Education Centre Winthrop. ♣

27 Saturday 9am-12 noon
Birds II workshop with BSFH at Lake Leschenaultia, Rosedale Rd, Chidlow. Presentations on water birds, bush birds and birds of prey followed by a field walk around the lake. ♣

27 Saturday 9am-3pm
Managing feral animals with SFNC at the WA Ecology Centre, Bold Park. ♣

June

17 Saturday 9am-1pm
How to recruit volunteers and keep them interested with SFNC at Swan Catchment Centre, Middle Swan. ♣

23 Friday 9am-12 noon
Controlling weeds on your property with Green Skills at a property in Serpentine. Practical hands-on techniques, demonstrations, weed identification, control methods. Bookings 9525 5978.

24 Saturday 9am-3pm
Community and government – working together to get results with SFNC at Swan Region Headquarters, CALM. ♣

25 Sunday 9am-4.30pm
Property planning course with Green Skills, Mandurah. How to put your new property plans into action or retro-fit your existing design to work better. Bookings 9525 5978.

HIGHLIGHTS

22 April Saturday
Earthday 2006 aims to have 10,000 climate change events worldwide. Visit www.earthday.org/.

22 May Monday
International Day for Biological Diversity – working to protect biodiversity in drylands. Guidance on actions to stop desertification, sustain dryland biodiversity and realize the goal of reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by the year 2010. www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2006.shtml.

5 June Monday
World Environment Day – United Nations International Year of Deserts and Desertification. United Nations Association of Australia World Environment Day awards presented to those whose work serves to protect, manage or restore the environment. 'Think Global, Act Local.' Banksia Award finalists announced.

8 June Thursday
World Oceans Day. Visit www.gdrc.org/oceans/oceans-day.html.

9 June Friday
Arbor Day is recognised in more than 50 countries and demonstrates the importance of trees in the environment. Community groups celebrate the day by planting trees or shrubs. They can also adopt a patch of bush, remove weeds and rubbish, prepare firebreaks, erect fences and make paths. For more information visit www.calm.wa.gov.au/forest_facts/arbor_day.html

17 June Saturday
World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is part of a United Nation's led international campaign to increase awareness of land degradation. Visit <http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/menu.php>.

28 Wednesday 5pm-9pm
Heavenly hectares Mini Expo with Green Skills at Byford. A FREE introduction for small-landholders to managing your house, garden and property smarter. Bookings 9525 5978.

Delivering the Message

2 April Sunday 10am-2pm
Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Community Expo, Riverside Gardens, Bayswater. Call Kelly 9278 0969 or kelly.richmond@environment.wa.gov.au.

6 April Thursday
Earth Day Expo, Edith Cowan University, Mount Lawley. Opportunity to showcase your organisation's programs through hands-on activities with primary-aged children. Call Jennifer Pearson on 9370 6726 or j.pearson@ecu.edu.au.

18-22 September
Wildflower Society of WA **5-day Eastern tour** (Merredin). To register your interest or for more information visit <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~wildflower/Eastern.htm> or call 9383 7979.

4-6 October
Australian Association for Environmental Education 2006 Conference, Bunbury. Call Monica on 9291 8249 or mdurcan@inet.net.au.

Bunbury/Busselton Region

Bunbury Naturalists' Club meetings and natural history talks are held every second Tuesday evening of the month at 5.30pm in the conference room, Lotteries House, 101 Victoria St, Bunbury. Club excursions occur every third Saturday. Call Gordon 9797 0673. The club's Herbarium group meet every Tuesday morning at the South West Regional Herbarium at CALM. Call Shirley 9791 5915. Visitors most welcome.

For Busselton Naturalists' Club activities confirm details by checking the Busselton Margaret Times or Call Bernie on 9727 2474 (h) or 9752 1949 (w), bmasters@inet.net.au. Meetings are held at the RSL Hall, Causeway Rd, Busselton. Visitors welcome.

Leschenault Community Nursery Inc. For further information call Shirley 9791 5915 or Mark 9791 4670.



Please send us your July, August, September events by 1 June 2006.

REGIONAL REPORTS

All groups welcome visitors
and new members.

EWAN's tenth AGM

By Diane Matthews

The Environmental Weeds Action Network (EWAN) held its tenth anniversary AGM in February. It was a proud and happy event at which some original members were able to attend.

Joanna Seabrook who has been a pivotal character in 'spreading the word not the weed' was unable to join us because of illness but we did not escape her emailed instruction that 'there is still work needing to be done'. With the proposed *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Bill* and *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy* being prepared, we had to agree.

There have been many developments during the last 10 years. Margo O'Byrne presented a reflection on the early days of EWAN at the AGM which generated a great deal of comment. In 1995 there was no Western Weeds - the weeds identification bible produced by the then Plant Protection Society of WA, or EWAN's own manual *Bushland Weeds, a practical guide to their management*. There was no *National Weeds Strategy*, *State Weed Strategy*, *State Weed Plan* or WA Weeds Committee. What we did have was a strong team of determined people who commenced an awareness-building program of the damage being caused to the State's biodiversity by environmental weeds, and who have given significant leadership towards the State's future scientific research into their management.

EWAN committees have established productive partnerships between individuals from within agencies and the community. Many of these people have become involved with the increasing number of activities surrounding land management issues. Currently a reduced committee has been charged with the responsibility of defining the future role of the network and how this is to be achieved. It is encouraging that in its tenth year, there is a real opportunity for a change of energy that reflects the matching changes in the ongoing "war on weeds". We encourage you to keep in touch.

Contact Diane Matthews, Chair 2005 EWAN
on 9457 2896.

Central

Goodbye to Friends of Baigup

By Harry Bastow

The Friends of Baigup Wetlands/Hinds Reserve and Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary regrettably disbanded in January 2006. I would like to personally thank you all for your tremendous support during the last five years. It is only through support and strong partnerships that groups like ours can continue to address environmental issues.

See Harry's report *Ecoplan Issue 55* - their positive hard work at these reserves leaves a legacy for future generations to enjoy.



Bennett Brook near the mouth at Eden Hill, December 2005. (Photo: Ben de Haan)

North East Region

Survey of native freshwater fish

By Ben de Haan

Bennett Brook, Caversham provides an important link through Whiteman Park to the Swan River. In September 2005, the North Metro Catchment Group began a study to determine the presence of native fish in Bennett Brook. This work is based on a similar study carried out in 1998 (Bamford, M. Morgan, D. and Gill, H. 1998 *The freshwater fish fauna of Bennett Brook*). The field component of the study is now nearing its end, with at least 25 sites along the brook surveyed. This project has involved many volunteers, who can be frequently found in waist height waders scooping the waters of the brook.

The study will compare results to the 1998 survey and note any changes. The upper reaches of the catchment are located in Whiteman Park and unlikely to be impacted by future development. However, land use in the lower parts of the catchment changes from semi-rural to new subdivisions and then suburban areas. The threats to biodiversity in the brook increases downstream to the mouth where it enters the Swan River in the Town of Bassendean.

Four species of native fish have been found during the survey, with the western pygmy perch being most common. Other native fish recorded were the western minnow, nightfish and Swan River goby. Unfortunately the most abundant fish in the brook are the introduced mosquito fish (*Gambusia holbrooki*).

Numerous tadpoles have been found plus several gilgies, glass shrimp, macro-invertebrates of all descriptions, fresh-water mussels and a blue yabby.

The results to date are encouraging, indicating that native fish can survive in a catchment located so close to the Perth CBD. The study will be completed in March 2006 and a final report produced. This report will also address threats to the fish biodiversity, along with recommendations for the long term future of native freshwater fish in other tributaries in the Swan Region.

If you would like further information please contact Ben de Haan, Biodiversity Project Officer at the North Metro Catchment Group on 9271 7922.

Friends of Yellagonga provide plants

By Jennifer Hawkes

The Friends of Yellagonga and others joined the City of Wanneroo for the Times Past event as part of the Safer Cities program. The Friends gave plants grown in their nursery from locally collected seed to the general public. People were able to choose a local native plant suitable for their needs.

Environment Park on the shores of Lake Joondalup was a magnificent setting for the event, and many people came to enjoy the day. As the sun was setting on the lake, several flocks of Carnaby's cockatoos flew overhead and people stopped to watch. They were followed by the cries of many birds, and the sky became black with the biggest flock I can ever remember seeing.

REGIONAL REPORTS

It was truly awe-inspiring and a great pity it was not a day for a 'Cocky Count'. That sight made Friends of Yellagonga more determined that we must provide as much favourable habitat and food in the park as we possibly can for this threatened bird.

For more information contact Jennifer Hawkes on 9448 0058.

Gill Brennan – a catalyst for the Friends of Queens Park Bushland

By Joan Payne



After 13 years, Gill Brennan – the founder of the Friends of Queens Park Bushland – has stepped down from her role as president. Gill was the catalyst for many of the actions which enabled the Queens

Park/Maniana and Welshpool bushlands to be protected, initially as local bushland, and finally as *Bush Forever* sites, totalling 22.5 ha.

Plans to develop bushland in the City of Canning as a regional recreation area prompted Gill to begin campaigning for protection of the bushland area.

The aim of the group was to protect the bushland and participate in its management. The group was not opposed to recreational facilities, provided bushland was not impacted.

Because of the proposed impacts on the bushland the Friends group made a submission on the regional recreation plan. The plan was referred to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for assessment but did not constitute a formal proposal under the Act so the EPA was unable to assess it. Meetings were then held with the Ministry for Planning and the Conservation Council, which resulted in the Ministry supporting the retention of bushland within the plan. A later study area plan identified a bushland conservation area of 9.5 ha and proposed compensating basins to handle drainage. The basins were developed by Main Roads, with considerable input from local naturalist Karl Karu, and support of the Friends group. The final result was a productive wetland for waterbirds which also met its function as a drainage basin.

Polite persistence was rewarded when the City of Canning resolved to protect part of the Queens Park bushland, and to establish a working relationship with the group. The development of an effective partnership resulted in an ecological area being fenced, the provision of a formalised pedestrian access and access to essential services such as the fire brigade. Weed control programs, flora and



'Ecologists' with tools from their survey kits – measuring tapes, water bottles and scrubbing brushes. Eco-muster at Wongamine Nature Reserve, October 2005. (Photo: Bob Huston)

fauna surveys, and the development of interpretive material are issues which have, and are, being pursued.

The Queens Park, Maniana and Welshpool Road (McDowell Street) bushland was included in *Perth's Bushplan* and in the final *Bush Forever* (2000) plan. Several local reserves were rezoned from 'Urban' to 'Parks and Recreation' under Metropolitan Regional Scheme Amendment 1005/33 (1999). This was a significant initiative because it expanded the bushland area under protection.

Gill is hoping that the Friends group will continue as a strong and effective advocate for bushland management by the appointment of a replacement president willing to lead the group into the future. Congratulations on your achievements Gill, and best wishes to Anna-Marie Penna and the Friends group for the future.

Contact Anna-Marie on 0411 040 706.

Wongamine Nature Reserve eco-muster

Nearly 40 community members from Toodyay, Northam and the city joined CALM officers in October for a two-day eco-muster at Wongamine Nature Reserve, located 14 km east of Toodyay.

The focus of the work was to gather information that would enable CALM to effectively manage the reserve. Volunteers were formed into multi-skilled eco-muster teams. They were taught simple, effective survey techniques.

"Once trained, the eco-muster teams had the task of conducting a set of survey activities along a predetermined route," Bob Huston, from CALM's Mundaring office, said.

"Matters that needed to be determined in the preliminary stage included the specific vegetation communities that exist in the reserve, the trend of canopy health, the pattern of damage to grass trees and the extent of dieback."

At the end of each day, the survey teams debriefed the manager of the eco-muster survey, CALM Swan Region Ecologist, Dr Mark Garkaklis.

Dr Garkaklis said the preliminary findings have been surprising and included the identification of significant damage to balga (grass trees) caused by ringneck parrots in one portion of the reserve.

"Mapping the distribution of this parrot damage has been an important early outcome from the eco-muster. Balga are a very important part of the way our ecosystems function – they provide habitat and food for a range of invertebrates and small mammals," Dr Garkaklis said.

This eco-muster is the first in the Perth Hills. Future surveys are planned for 2006 and 2007, with reserves in the York region and Land for Wildlife areas the possible target of the next eco-muster.

For further information contact Bob Huston (CALM, Mundaring) on 9295 1955 or Mark Garkaklis on 9368 4399.

REGIONAL REPORTS

South East Region

Battling giant reeds along Wright Brook

By Sue Williams

The Friends of Wright Brook was formed in early 2004 under the auspices of the Armadale-Gosnells Landcare Group. The initial aim of the Friends group was to clear a 300 m stretch of Wright Brook and its banks of watsonia, exotic weeds and grasses such as the giant reed, and to revegetate with native species. Last winter about 3000 seedlings, including sedges and grasses, were planted and unwanted vegetation was sprayed on several occasions, resulting in a marked improvement.

Funding from the Bushcare and Environmental Advisory Committee (City of Armadale) allowed for two signs to be placed on either side of the brook. They will be installed as soon as the autumn rains soak into the soil, making it possible to dig holes in the heavy clay.

The group numbers fluctuate, but there is a core of dedicated workers who have contributed more than 200 hours in the past year. The results are gratifying, with the brook transforming from an 'eyesore' to a 'beauty spot' and haven for native flora and fauna.

The major task for the group over the past few months has been removal of vast stands of giant reed by cutting and painting with Glyphosate®. This has proven to be extremely difficult because in spite of repeated Glyphosate® applications, new growth persists. The remaining cut stems have proven treacherous to negotiate but there is good evidence of our efforts and, with persistence, we hope to win the battle.

Our plan for the forthcoming autumn and winter is to concentrate on the next 150 m to 200 m downstream of the brook and thus continue to reveal Wright Brook and its glory.

For more information contact Sue Williams on 9390 1843.

South West Region

Paganoni Swamp Herbarium

By Ann Gunness

A group of volunteers and CALM staff visited Paganoni Swamp in January to collect more specimens for the field herbarium, and in particular to study the central wetland ('swamp'). This runs in a north south direction down the centre of the park and constitutes about 30 per cent of the land area. Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) woodlands surround the swamp extending to the western



Michael Scott, standing by a 500 year old tuart with seasonally inundated wetland area behind that he wishes to fence off from cattle as part of wetland management in the Geographe - Leschenault. (Photo: Nicole Lincoln)

boundary of the park; while to the east tuarts give way to banksia woodlands.

Vegetation of the wetland appears to be related to soil type and depth, and soil moisture or period of inundation and waterlogging. In good seasons there is standing water in the wettest zones and at the time of our visit there was still water lying in the southern section. Magnificent swamp paperbarks (*Melaleuca thaphiophylla*) occupy the central wettest zone and in January there was a lush green understorey of sea celery (*Apium prostratum*) and *Lobelia alata* with jointed twig-rush (*Baumea articulata*) in the wettest sites.

Beyond this the understorey changes to pithy sword-sedge (*Lepidosperma longitudinale*). Tuart and swamp banksia (*Banksia littoralis*) mix with swamp paperbark on the outer fringes of the swamp, and the understorey becomes dominated by coast saw-sedge (*Gahnia trifida*). Beyond the swamp boundaries, a profusion of blue lace flower (*Trachymene coerulea*) forms a mauve haze through the tuart woodlands from late January through February.

Tall open scrub and heath areas of mixed melaleucas also occupy areas in the wetland zone. These probably occur on shallower soils with shorter periods of waterlogging. At the northern end of the shrublands is an area with some surface ironstone (shallow soils) and a very weedy understorey, suggesting some form of past disturbance. This stimulated an interest in pursuing more of the history, including the grazing of the area.

For further information on our activities, please call Leonie Stubbs on 9537 1831.

Hills Region

Friends of Piesse Brook

By Linda Stanley

The Friends of Piesse Brook group is now in its sixth year. Weed control along Piesse Brook to the end of Schipp Road has been achieved a year ahead of schedule. The Friends plan to continue maintenance on the areas they have been working on for the past five years. In addition, this year they hope to start work on private landholdings upstream of Hummerston Road along Piesse Brook with concerned and interested land owners.

Please contact Linda for further information on 9293 2517.

Geographe and Leschenault

Funding available to protect our wetlands

By Nicole Lincoln

An exciting new wetlands project has commenced aiming to improve the long-term ecological health of priority wetlands in the Geographe and Leschenault Catchments, and to increase community awareness of the values and importance of these wetlands. Conservation category wetlands on the Swan Coastal Plain are disappearing at a rate of 440 ha a year. That is about one cricket ground per day!

The 12-month project is coordinated by GeoCatch in partnership with the Department of Environment and the Leschenault Catchment Council, and is funded through the Natural Heritage Trust. The project is supported by a technical working group with representatives from partnership organisations, CALM, the community and local farmers.

GeoCatch is available to assist private landholders, community groups and land managers formulate wetland management plans on how to best manage wetland areas. Landholders can access funds with matching incentives (1:1 in-kind or cash matching) for fencing, weed control, feral animal eradication and planting of native wetland species on private land. Public land managers and community groups can access funding for fencing, buffer vegetation, habitat assessments and weed control on wetlands of international, national and regional significance such as the Vasse-Wonnerup RAMSAR wetland system, the Busselton Wetlands, and wetlands with strong community involvement.

For further information please contact the Nicole Lincoln, Wetlands Officer, GeoCatch Busselton on 9781 0111.

Group Profile: Friends of Forrestdale

THE FRIENDS of Forrestdale is a community group of 12 members dedicated to conserving Forrestdale Lake Nature Reserve and adjoining reserves. The group was launched in April 1990 following a recommendation in the *Forrestdale Lake Nature Reserve Management Plan (1987)*. Since this time, the group has played an active and valued role in the planning and management of the reserve and surrounding bushland areas.

Outer city sanctuary

Forrestdale Lake Nature Reserve (Forrestdale Lake) is located approximately 25 km south-east of Perth, in the City of Armadale. It was gazetted as an A-class Nature Reserve in 1957 for the conservation of flora and fauna, and valued for recreation (particularly sailing). Today the reserve is recognised as one of the most important conservation areas in south-western Australia.

Forrestdale Lake and Thomsons Lake were listed as Ramsar wetlands in 1990. The two lakes constitute a major migration stop-over, semi-permanent drought refuge and breeding area for waterbirds. Seventy species of waterbird occur at these lakes with 21 of them breeding. More than 20,000 water birds have been recorded on Forrestdale Lake (22,196 in January 1986).

Key achievements

The management plan process for Forrestdale Lake – getting started, getting restarted, consulting, meeting, drafting, releasing, commenting, finalising and implementing – was long and protracted.

Delays and a lack of resourcing to put recommendations into practice frustrated Friends group members. Learning how to effectively mediate and negotiate with local and State government was essential to achieving a positive outcome. The Friends sat on the management plan steering committee and provided local knowledge and input during the process. They maintained pressure on local and state government to finalise the plan. In 2005 the final *Forrestdale Lake Nature Reserve Management Plan* was released. It deals with many issues of ongoing management and proposes inclusion of the adjoining reserve (to the east) into Forrestdale Lake Nature Reserve. This additional area

contains Declared Rare Flora, Priority flora, and two Threatened Ecological Communities.

The Friends group maintains an interest in all bushland areas within Forrestdale including Bush Forever sites 253, 262, 342, 344 and 345. The total area is larger than Kings Park but has no full-time employees. It supports wetlands, banksia woodland and heathland that are habitat for thousands of birds, bandicoots and frogs.

successful on-ground activities because it is a growing contribution to the area, and brings back wildlife such as bandicoots.

The Friends group includes people with a wide range of complementary skills in data gathering, hands-on activities, knowledge of flora and fauna, researching and writing. They have been working on a book of oral (cultural) and natural history of Forrestdale Lake and

surrounds. The book aims to not only preserve memories and recollections of present and former residents of Forrestdale, but also promote a sense of ownership, belonging, and place for current residents. The book is ready for publication and the Friends are seeking funding to enable its publication.

Why be part of a friends group?

Lasting memories, friendships with other members, and making a contribution to the future conservation of an area as a legacy for all to enjoy provides the driving force and philosophy behind the Friends of Forrestdale.

“Don’t give up — always keep trying,” is their advice to others.

Contact

Rod Giblett can be contacted on 9397 0094. Rod is presenting a community perspective of 'Community and Government - working together to get results' at the Skills for Nature Conservation training course on Saturday 24 June (refer What's On).

Compiled by Jo Tregonning from:

Giblett, Rod (pers.com.)
March 2006.

Giblett, R. (1993) Outer city sanctuary: Forrestdale Lake. In: *Landscape* magazine, Winter 1993. Department of Conservation and Land Management.

Giblett, R. (2005) Forrestdale Lake, the frustrations of the management plan process and the role of friends groups. In: *WA Wetland Management Conference 2005 Proceedings*. Cockburn Werlands Education Centre, Bibra Lake.

Forrestdale Lake Nature Reserve Management Plan (2005) #53. Conservation Commission of Western Australia and Department of Conservation and Land Management.



Forrestdale Lake. (Photo: John Snowden)



A wildflower and bird walk held at Forrestdale Lake by the Friends of Forrestdale and CALM. (Photo: John Snowden)

The group's activities aim to conserve the area's values, rehabilitate degraded bushland and wetland areas, and ensure that their management is adequately resourced. On-ground works include fence maintenance; weed surveys and eradication; bush regeneration; bird surveys; collecting water depth data; and picking up rubbish. Monitoring data collected by the Friends on the efficacy of different weed control strategies is being used by CALM as part of a weed management plan for Forrestdale Lake.

The Friends consider rehabilitating bushland around Forrestdale Lake as one of their most

Resources

Resources

- **Geo-referencing kits for Biological Surveys** available to any community group registered with the WA Herbarium. The kits produce an electronic or hard-copy record (link GPS, camera and computer mapping systems) of information collected during a biological survey. Kits contain a GPS, digital camera, training and support. Requirements: computer, map, registered copies of OziExplorer (<http://ozixplorer.com>) and OziPhoto Tool (<http://oziphoto.alistairdickie.com>). Contact John 0427 200 841 (training) then call Karina 9334 0500 (booking).

Publications

- **Bushland Weeds: A Practical Guide to their Management**, by Kate Brown and Kris Brooks, was published by the Environmental Weeds Action Network (EWAN) in 2002. To celebrate EWAN's tenth anniversary this highly regarded manual has been discounted to \$15 each (plus GST, postage and handling). Contact Wildflower Society of WA on 9383 7979 or wildflowers@ozemail.com.au. Further discount for EWAN members. If you would like to make a wholesale or bulk order of 10 or more contact 9457 2896 or gdmattthews@ozemail.com.au.
- **Perth Plants: A Field Guide to the Bushland and Coastal Flora of Kings Park and Bold Park, Perth, Western Australia** published by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority and written by Russell Barrett and Eng Pin Tay. This book describes and photographically illustrates plants of both native and naturalised species in the bushland of Kings Park and Bold Park. Retail: \$44.90.

- **Resources for Wetlands - Propagating, Planning, Constructing and Educating.** Although these publications are from the USA they may still provide a useful reference for WA. **Propagation of Wetland Plants:** This book is for those interested in propagating wetland plants from seed and perennial parts. The following are also available: *WOW!: The Wonders Of Wetlands, An Educator's Guide*; *POW! The Planning of Wetlands, An Educator's Guide* and *The Dos and Don'ts of Wetland Construction*. To order visit: <http://www.wetland.org/ecpubs.htm>.

Website watch

- **The Perth Regional Plant Biodiversity Project (PRPBP)** has collated comprehensive information on 40 Bush Forever reference sites, including soils, landforms, vegetation complexes, floristic community types and threatened ecological communities. Species lists are presented for each individual Bush Forever reference site and maps will be available once finalized. Visit: <http://www.councils.wa.gov.au/directory/walga/index.html/pbp/PRPBP/>.
- **The wetlands database project for WA** provides information on water chemistry, waterbirds, aquatic macro-invertebrates, hydrology, tenure, flora and fauna, maps and spatial data. Visit: http://www.naturebase.net/projects/wetlands_database.html.
- **Shared land information platform Natural Resource Management:** State NRM agencies have set-up a pilot system for accessing a number of data and information products. View NRM information over air photos and contours, generate reports. Visit: spatial.agric.wa.gov.au/slip (with no www.) For further information contact Damian Shepherd on 9368 3853.
- **Swan River Trust** website provides information about the Swan and Canning rivers, the scientific and regulatory role of the Swan River Trust (legislation, policies, programs), and how you can get involved to help keep our rivers healthy. The SRT encourage you to use and explore this site extensively and welcomes feedback. Visit: http://portal.environment.wa.gov.au/portal/page?_pageid=973,1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.
- **Perth Urban Bushland Fungi – A self-managed field book.** Download individual pages or the entire book in one simple-to-use PDF. <http://www.fungiperth.org.au>. The *Cottonwood Crescent Bush Fungi Report* (2004) available on this website provides an example of what is being done with the geo-referencing kits available for loan from the WA Herbarium.
- **Landcare Online** can be used to both provide and access a wide range of natural resource information and other resources. Although in preliminary stages, the site can be accessed by typing 'Landcare Online' into your search engine.
- **The State of Australia's Birds 2005: Woodlands and Birds** has been released by Birds Australia. The report presents an overview of the status of Australia's woodlands birds, the major threats birds face, and the conservation actions being taken to protect them. A link to the report is available online at <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/birds-05/index.html>.

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