

## Summer flowering natives – some Christmas icons

**New South Wales:** NSW Christmas bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*), Christmas bells (*Blandfordia grandiflora* and *B. nobilis*)

**Queensland:** Christmas orchid (*Calanthe triplicata*)

**South Australia and Tasmania:** Christmas bush (*Bursaria spinosa*)

**Victoria:** Victorian Christmas bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*)

**Western Australia:** Western Australian Christmas tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*)

For more information visit [www.anbg.gov.au/christmas/](http://www.anbg.gov.au/christmas/).

## A new online window into WA's biodiversity

By Paul Gioia

Countless WA surveys and research projects have resulted in many datasets and reports containing valuable information about managing our natural environment. Until now, much of this information has been hard to access. DEC, in partnership with the Western Australian Museum, has developed NatureMap, a free, easy-to-use website that moves us closer to a 'one-stop shop' for questions about biodiversity.

NatureMap contributes to conservation planning by providing planners, researchers and community groups with access to nearly a million records for close to 14,000 species from the main collections of the Western Australian Herbarium and Western Australian Museum, as well as 14 major DEC databases. There are tools to map species distribution and diversity across the State, download data, report on endemism, check invasive and conservation status and much more.

NatureMap has been primarily funded by DEC, with substantial support from the *Saving our Species* Biodiversity Conservation Initiative. Additional support to date has been received from the Avon



Catchment Council Baseline Natural Resource Management Project, for which DEC is the lead agency.

Most of NatureMap's development time has been spent on integrating data but the database is expected to expand rapidly. Future developments will include:

- New themes, including plant response to disturbance and Avon regional focus. Other possibilities include weeds and ferals, cane toads and climate change.
- New layers, such as pastoral leases and vegetation maps.
- Enhanced displays for relevant publications and reports, or scientific sites of interest for an area.

In addition, NatureMap could provide a mechanism for acquiring new data from the public about our environment, for example to monitor the impact of climate change.

Visit <http://naturemap.dec.wa.gov.au>.

## Rare sunmoth discovered in Sorrento

The discovery of a new population of the endangered graceful sunmoth (*Synemon gratiosa*) in Porteous Park, Sorrento, was the highlight of three years of surveys conducted by DEC. This diurnal moth is active from March to early April and typically inhabits banksia woodlands in Perth's northern suburbs. The new population surprised researchers by its occurrence in coastal heath vegetation, where it has not previously been located.

Funded by the Natural Heritage Trust through the Swan Catchment Council, the surveys have recorded low densities of the sunmoth at eight sites. The sunmoth is thought to only move up to 300 metres, which would make it unlikely to disperse between populations or re-colonise sites following local extinction. The 2008 surveys confirmed that two known locations continue to sustain populations of the moth despite two years of minimal sightings. DEC will conduct further surveys in suitable habitat in March and April 2009.

For more information, contact Nicole Willers on 9423 2900 or [nicole.willers@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:nicole.willers@dec.wa.gov.au).



The endangered graceful sunmoth (*Synemon gratiosa*) Photo – R. Kinsey

## Caring for our Country Open Grants recipients announced

Projects to receive funding under the Federal Government's Caring for our Country Open Grants were announced in November 2008, with WA receiving 10 per cent of the \$28.5 million. Successful WA projects included biodiversity management in the Western Desert and Rangelands, weed management in the Kimberley, conservation of the Gouldian finch through Indigenous fire management, habitat protection for the endangered Carnaby's black-cockatoo, education in the Blackwood Basin, sustainable brushwood production in Moore catchment and a regional conservation plan for the south-west global biodiversity hotspot. More details about funded

projects across Australia can be found at [www.nrm.gov.au/projects/open-grants.html#open](http://www.nrm.gov.au/projects/open-grants.html#open).

The Australian Government is now calling for investment proposals for projects that will achieve the targets outlined in the *Caring for our Country Business Plan 2009-10*. Visit [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au) for more information and updates about the business plan and details of how you can submit proposals. Contact Neil Riches (Caring for our Country Facilitator – Environment) on 9285 8487 or [neil.riches@nrm.gov.au](mailto:neil.riches@nrm.gov.au).