

Conservation of the graceful sun-moth

By Carly Bishop

Between February and April 2010 more than 120 volunteers carried out surveys of bushland remnants (mostly Bush Forever sites) across the metropolitan region, searching for the endangered graceful sun-moth (*Synemon gratiosa*). The surveys aimed to clarify the distribution of the species and better determine its conservation status. DEC staff conducted surveys of existing and proposed national parks and nature reserves from Australind to Kalbarri. These combined efforts surveyed well over 1,000 ha of potential habitat, with the volunteers covering much more ground than DEC staff!

The graceful sun-moth was found to occur in two types of sites. One is banksia woodlands in the western half of the Swan Coastal Plain, where the moth is very scarce (a total of 13 moths were found at only four sites). The other is coastal heathlands, where densities were higher (291 moths seen at 13 sites). New populations of the sun-moth were found both north and south of the previously known distribution, but they could not be found at several sites where they had been recorded in the past. The data are now being collated and analysed to enable a conservation plan to be developed for the species. For more information contact Carly Bishop at carly.bishop@dec.wa.gov.au.

Spring Bushland News

Winter *Bushland News* contributions should be sent to Urban Nature at urban.nature@dec.wa.gov.au by

Wednesday 25 August 2010.

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