

## Special protection for banksia woodlands

By Rebecca Ong and Val English

**On the Swan Coastal Plain, remnant patches of banksia woodland support over 600 native plant species and provide crucial habitat to 32 fauna species, many of which rely on the woodlands for their survival including the turtle frog (*Myobatrachus gouldii*) and honey possum or Noolbenger (*Tarsipes rostratus*). Banksia woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain are now offered greater protection thanks to an update to the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. As part of the update, the ecosystem was listed as a threatened ecological community (TEC), rank endangered.**

### What does this mean?

This new national listing complements the State vegetation laws by enhancing protection of specific areas of banksia woodlands. In certain cases, activities that may damage banksia woodland will now need to be referred to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy for assessment under the Act.

### What is protected?

The national listing protects patches of woodlands that meet key criteria, including diagnostic characteristics, size and condition.

In order to be considered a 'Matter of National Environmental Significance' (MNES), as defined under the EPBC Act, patches ranked 'Good' condition need to be at least 2ha in size; 'Very Good' patches must be at least 1ha in size; 'Excellent' condition patches need to be at least 0.5ha. There is no minimum patch size for areas in 'Pristine' condition

Some very degraded or modified patches can still retain important natural values that are crucial for certain species or habitats. These areas should not be excluded from conservation actions as management may improve the condition of these patches so that they may then be regarded as part of the TEC.

The presence of rarer sub-types such as sub-communities listed as TECs or Priority ecological communities in WA may be considered in the assessment of development proposals under the EPBC Act.

### Are all banksia woodlands protected under this listing?

The banksia woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain TEC is located largely within the Swan Coastal Plain IBRA



*Firewood banksia (Banksia menziesii) flowering in Shenton Bushland. Banksia woodland on the Swan Coastal Plain has recently received further protection through listing as endangered under the EPBC Act. Photo – Kate Brown*

bioregion which extends from around Jurien Bay in the north to Dunsborough in the south, then east into the Whicher and Darling escarpments of the jarrah forest IBRA bioregion.

A key feature of the TEC is a prominent tree layer of candlestick banksia (*Banksia attenuata*), firewood banksia (*B. menziesii*), acorn banksia (*B. prionotes*) or holly-leaved banksia (*B. ilicifolia*), often with other trees present. Swamp banksia (*B. littoralis*) may also be co-dominant but where it becomes dominant it typically indicates a different dampland community. Buerdett's banksia (*B. burdettii*) from the Dandaragan plateau can be a co-dominant banksia species, however where it becomes dominant it typically forms a tall shrubland and not the banksia woodlands TEC. The understorey is a species rich mix of shrubs and herbs, characterised by high endemism and considerable localised variation in species composition across its range. For example, banksia woodland near Perth contains an average of 50 different plant species within 100m<sup>2</sup> (Keighery and Keighery 2016).

### Where can I find out more?

For more information about this TEC, including threats, what should be referred for assessment and priorities for protection, please see [Species Profile and Threats Database](#).

### References:

Keighery G & Keighery B (2016). How many banksia woodlands? Floristics of Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain. In Stevens JC, Rokich DP, Newton VG, Barrett RL & Dixon KW (eds) (2016, in press). Restoring Perth's Banksia woodlands. UWA Publishing. Crawley, WA.

Issue 100

**Summer** 2016-2017

*Time of Birak and Bunuru in the Nyoongar calendar.*

**Urban Nature update** Page 2

**Weedwatch: Amazon frogbit** Page 3

**A win for the fight against traps** Page 4

**Hazards of Hardenbergia in wetland contexts** Page 4

**An unusual visit to Shoalwater Islands Marine Park** Page 5

**What's on** Page 6

**Funding opportunities** Page 7

**Regional reports** Page 8

**Five years of restoring banksia woodland** Page 10

**Group profile: Rottneest Voluntary Guides Association** Page 11

**Resources** Page 12

**Look out for: native bees** Page 12