



The Urban Bush Telegraph

Newsletter of the Urban Bushland Council WA Inc

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Spring 2010



On 28th September, the Cockatoo Coalition launched the action website www.cockatoosneedyou.org.au - addressed to Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke and WA Premier Colin Barnett. Members of the public can use the website to add their voices to the call to protect WA's unique black cockatoos and their habitat. The coalition is made up of community, state, national and international organisations with the single aim of protecting the habitat of WA's threatened black cockatoos.

"From the forests of the Southwest, to the Swan Coastal Plain and urban bushlands around Perth, the habitat of the charismatic black cockatoos is being lost," Conservation Council of WA Campaign Coordinator Louise Morris said.

"What people may not realise is that all three species of black cockatoos in Southwest WA face the real threat of becoming extinct. The www.cockatoosneedyou.org.au community action site has been created so all of us who care about the cockatoos and their habitat can be part of saving them.

"Forests such as Helms in the Southwest - where rehabilitated black cockatoos will be released by the Department of Environment and Conservation on Thursday - are scheduled for logging in the coming year. This just highlights the threats posed to the habitat of these birds and other species dependent on our native forests, bushland and woodlands," concluded Ms Morris.

WWF WA Director Paul Gamblin added: "Urban sprawl is driving countless species, including black cockatoos, ever closer towards extinction. Well over a football field of native vegetation is being cleared for urban development in Perth every day. We need to protect the last remaining stands of habitat in and around the metropolitan region and identify already cleared, degraded or developed sites that are more suitable for development instead."

Black Cockatoo Preservation Society President Glenn



Dewhurst said: "Having rehabilitated and released over 250 endangered black cockatoos and been involved in over 650 rescues over the past six years, I am noticing a rapid decline in their numbers due to habitat loss."

Margaret Owen from Friends of Underwood Ave Bushland and the Urban Bushland Council of WA said: "The proposed clearing of the UWA Underwood bushland is an example of why cockatoo numbers are continuing to decline. I can picture cockatoos flying to the top of the hill to be met by bulldozers. Action through this website is one way we can stop this horrible thing from happening. The cockatoos need us all."

To view the action site go to:
www.cockatoosneedyou.org.au

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and more...

Editorial

To help us celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity, a generous grant from Lotterywest will enable the UBC to build a much needed new website, design and acquire new promotional and educational materials and to hold two public education seminars. The first seminar to be held on Friday 19th November will focus on the three south west species of Black Cockatoo. The second seminar will be held early next year.

The State Government budget surplus just announced was \$500 million more than the figure predicted by State Treasury just a few months ago. Surely it is time for Treasurer Barnett to ease the savage budget cuts and black holes in the management of our precious natural bushland environment.

Now that the Bush Forever Amendment has finally passed through Parliament, the implementation of Bush Forever sites needs a massive injection of public funds. Firstly from the Metropolitan Region Improvement Fund (MRIF) for the WA Planning Commission to secure and fence the remaining sites, including rural zoned sites. Secondly DEC urgently needs a substantial new allocation of funds to *properly* manage its additions to Perth's conservation estate. Thirdly local government and other agencies need to make bushland management a higher priority in their budgets. Management plans are needed for *all sites* and adequate resources for their implementation allocated from *new* operational funds.

The rapid growth of Perth will put unrelenting pressure on urban bushland reserves. We know that prevention of degradation is by far the most cost effective means of management so why does government not recognise this?

The UBC has been talking with Ministers and land managers to encourage much greater funding for management.

Here we are in spring after a very dry wet season in Perth and the south west. Another 400mm of rain will need to fall in Perth this year if we are to reach the annual average

and restore soil moisture levels. Perhaps we are heading for a long hot dry summer and high fire risk. Are we prepared? Friends groups are reminded to check updated fire management plans and to contact their local fire station staff from FESA as well as the land manager so that they are all familiar with entrances, revegetation sites and sites of special significance.

It seems we still need to impress on FESA the need to extinguish bushfires as quickly as possible, by use of ground crews as well as water bombers wherever possible. Land managers need to be called in the event of fire and an uninterrupted presence is critical for effective mopping up. In summer, winds change during the night and there are too many cases of unattended fire scenes that have flared up again when unattended.

After the big fires in Kings Park last summer, tensions emerged between the land manager (Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority BGPA) and FESA concerning fire management practices. To resolve this an 'External Review of BGPA's Fire Management Guidelines' is being conducted. The UBC was pleased to be invited to meet the review committee chaired by Dr Peggy Fiedler from Oakland California. We strongly support BGPA's current management practices which includes a 'no prescribed burning' policy. We suggested however that there are some significant gaps in current practice, especially the lack of focus on arson. Details of the UBC submission is given on page 6.

Another important strategy for reducing summer fire risk as well as protecting biodiversity is to focus on removal of annual weeds, such as veldgrass. Friends groups are busy weeding now and land managers should have already carefully sprayed major infestations. However moving around our suburbs it is striking to observe many reserves where veldgrass is uncontrolled.

PERTH HILLS PLANNING BILL 2010

Greens MLC Alison Xamon introduced the Perth Hills Planning Bill 2010 ('Hills Bill') into the Legislative Council on 20th May 2010. The Hills Bill was developed in response to residents of the Perth Hills region who expressed enormous concern about the steady increase of inappropriate development and land use in the Perth Hills area. As such the object of this Bill is to promote sustainable, appropriate and integrated land use planning and development in the Perth Hills area across the several local government areas that represent the Hills region and recognise the Perth Hills as an area of special significance. It would create a Perth Hills Planning Committee ('Committee') to develop, in consultation with the community, a whole of Perth Hills Plan, including sensible planning principles.

The planning principles include the preservation of our water catchment areas, the preservation of the Hills unique biodiversity of flora and fauna, the natural character and

appearance of the Hills and the protection of Aboriginal cultural sites. The long-term plan should reflect the intentions of those people living in the Perth Hills area and aims to provide a vision for the Perth Hills Zone to the year 2050. The Committee would provide advice to local and State government as to the consistency of any major planning proposals with the Perth Hills Plan. The Committee would be comprised of 10 members including people to represent Perth Hills residents, State and local government, the Aboriginal interests in the area, the fields of conservation, natural resource management, recreation, tourism, planning and other matters of interest to the Perth Hills community. The Hills Bill also creates a system where the Minister will have the power to order councils to bring their planning schemes in line with the Perth Hills Plan where appropriate. To find out more about the Bill and for a copy of the Hills Bill and its Explanatory Memorandum, please visit <http://alisonxamon.org.au/>.

Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Project (PUBF) Activities 2010

Text and photos by the PUBF Team



Perth Urban Bushland Fungi activities in 2010 were conducted by Dr Neale Bougher, Mycologist at DEC and Roz Hart, Community Education Officer, supported by 12 volunteer Fungi leaders and many other fungi volunteers.

In addition to the Fungi walks below, which were open to all interested members of the public, a select group of experienced volunteers assisted Neale Bougher in 10 non-public survey days at Kings Park and Bold Park.

The number of participants in 2010 was 217. Absolutely no advertising of events was done in 2010 due to lack of funding and yet all public events were booked out in advance by web and email requests.

The five events held for the public were all held in conjunction with a local community group (numbers attending, including Fungi leaders): Talbot Road Fungi walk (60), Craigie Bushland Fungi walk (35), Lake Gwelup Fungi walk (43), Katanning Fungi weekend (25), Mundaring Truffle Fair Fungi walk (37).



Fungi survey participants taking measures to minimize the risk of spreading dieback, Talbot Road bushland.

Photo by Jeff Langley



Fungi survey participants at Craigie Bushland.

Photo by Karen Clarke

The number of fungi recorded in 2010 by PUBF was 297. 120 fungi were vouchered for the WA Herbarium during the 2010 season, some of which were from PUBF events.

The funding provided by the WA Naturalists' Club and member donations was crucial for the organisation and running of PUBF events in 2010.

The Fungilab including PUBF facilities and operations will be moving to the new State Biodiversity Centre at Kensington, probably in December 2010.

In 2010 the other PUBF event was an Amanita workshop on 17 July organised by Elaine Davison to teach how to understand this large genus of fungi which are very common locally but hard to get to grips with. It was held in the student labs at Curtin University. 17 people took part, leaders and several interested members of the fungi crew

Numerous enquiries by email, phone and personal contacts continue to flow into the Fungilab, and we hope to continue PUBF in 2011 with the support of the WA Naturalists' Club, Urban Bushland Council, and Department of Environment and Conservation.



Amanita workshop participants at the Curtin University laboratory.

Photo PUBF

DIEBACK AND URBAN BUSHLAND

By Kevin McLean

With an extensive array of management challenges facing any community group striving to sustain and enhance the ecological values of urban bushland around the Perth region, perhaps the issue that is most unsettling and in some ways most difficult to confront is the spread of the fungal disease *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, commonly known as Jarrah Dieback.

The disease affects around 40% of our native species in the south west and has proven virtually impossible to eradicate once established in any particular area. It can be spread inadvertently in transported soil, mulches, potting mixes, or in infected plant material and in the right conditions and under the right circumstances it can spread very readily with or without human assistance. It is claimed that most of the larger bushland remnants and many of the smaller bush blocks around Perth show at least some signs *Phytophthora cinnamomi* infestation. Even if the extent of this infestation problem were a fraction of that estimated by - presumably - reliable sources it would be cause for grave concern.

But most people having any association with bushland management around Perth are aware of the aforementioned information. The question that has to be asked is why so little is done to prevent this scourge from spreading further and more rapidly throughout the metropolitan region and beyond when so much is known about how the disease spreads and how the risk of its spread can be significantly reduced? It is very difficult to escape the conclusion that most of our politicians and environmental bureaucrats and managers either don't really care or don't really want to face up to some of the difficult decisions that might help put the brakes on the spread of this intractable ecological problem throughout the Perth region and elsewhere throughout the south west.

Community groups wanting to protect their bush blocks from dieback should be aware that the more this disease is spread throughout suburbia by means of various horticultural or horticulture-related practices, by earthmoving operations associated with building and construction, by the transfer of soil matter containing the disease, and by some recreational activities - to name some of the causative agents - the more likely they will be faced with the vexing problem of treating and containing the disease in their own patches.

Every level of government has some responsibility to regulate industries and activities that are currently most likely to be facilitating the spread of dieback throughout the city and that includes, among others, the nursery industry, the garden products industry, the landscaping industry, and the construction industry. Nurseries and related garden centres - and even informal small plant stalls - should not be allowed to sell plant material that has not been certified as being free of dieback. Landscapers should not be using soils and mulches unless they have been similarly certified. And any business selling or moving plant material or soils or mulches to any other site in the city should have to prove that the material has been tested and shown to be free of dieback. Inconvenient for some? Certainly. But are we serious about protecting our natural heritage or not?

The recreational use of off-road vehicles in dieback affected areas persists and vehicles returning from escapades in such

areas are a prime source of inoculum for other bush blocks and suburbia in general. Effective quarantine measures and genuine efforts to deal with recreational off-road vehicle use in forests and catchments might not only help protect these environments but those to which the "bush bashers," pig hunters, and other sophisticates return.

Local Government should be taking the lead in preventing the spread of dieback but it appears only a few councils in semi-rural areas have adopted formal strategies. Even the more urbanised LGA's should have specific dieback prevention strategies and not only for the sake of their indigenous trees and bushland remnants. Dieback affects many species of ornamental plants and it is not something people would want in their gardens whether they were predominantly stocked with native plants or not.

However, what is most disturbing is that some Local Government Authorities, replete with Environmental Officers and environmental works teams, can still be observed to undertake no particular dieback prevention strategies whatsoever when it comes to managing their bushland. The need for strategic fencing to protect bushland from rubbish dumping and the muddy shoes of countless pedestrians is ignored. Works teams drive into bush blocks with no wheel disinfection procedures undertaken, neither disinfecting footbaths nor sprays are employed, earth-caked tools are produced and bush regeneration commences. Council chippers and mulch are used in the bushland and plants are procured with no thought given to ascertaining whether they could be reasonably classified as dieback free. Volunteers turn up with trowels and spades uncleaned and no disinfecting treatments interfere with the smooth flow of the planting or weeding activities.

Council mulch is a particularly problematic area. It was recently pointed out by a plant pathologist at the Dieback Information Group's July conference that dieback lesions have been found in tree trunks and stems more than a metre above the ground. If infected trees are put through a chipper, therefore, the resultant mulch, which is generally not composted with a view to killing plant pathogens, becomes another agent for spreading the disease.

The chemical Phosphite has a very fortunate capacity to help plants protect themselves against the disease but prevention is far better than on-going treatment. Nevertheless, land managers can probably help slow the spread of the disease if they carry out Phosphite treatments in dieback affected areas. Less infected plants means less inoculum for further infections to occur.

Overall it is a very disappointing picture. Scientists are working on developing ways of preventing and possibly even eradicating the disease in specific areas but to slow the spread of the disease in the meantime there needs to be some serious regulatory adjustments at the industrial and commercial level and the adoption of effective protocols and strategies by land managers. Not only is much of our native flora at risk but also the many species of native fauna that depend on this flora for their survival.

What Is the World Saying About Biodiversity and How Does This Compare to Western Australia's Record?

By Judy Fisher PhD

As we enter October it is time to look at the way the world is discussing biodiversity. A significant meeting, the 10th Meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity will occur in Nagoya Japan, between the 18th and 29th October 2010, with 193 countries being represented. As an observer at the 9th Meeting in Bonn in 2008, it cannot be underestimated how important this meeting is in setting the future direction for the world's conservation of biodiversity. Australia is one of the 193 countries which attends, contributes and makes commitments.

Some quotes of interest appear below from the high level United Nations meeting (held on 22nd September 2010) which was a lead up meeting to the upcoming October meeting of the Biological Diversity Convention.

“United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon implored world leaders this morning to commit to reversing the alarming rate of biodiversity loss and rescuing the natural economy before it was too late.”

“Allowing biodiversity to decline was like throwing money out the window, he continued. “We must stop thinking of environmental protection as a cost. It is an investment that goes hand in hand with the other investments that you, as Heads of State and Government, must make to consolidate economic growth and human well-being in your countries.”

“Warning that the 2010 deadline for substantially reducing the rate of biodiversity loss would not be met; Mr. Ban urged leaders to muster the political will to turn that goal into reality, as their legacy and 'gift to generations to come'. He also called on them to push forward the strategic plan on biodiversity and the 2050 biodiversity vision expected to be adopted at the Tenth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, next month.”

“He said preserving biodiversity was inseparable from the fight against poverty and the struggle to improve health and security for the present and future generations. Preserving biodiversity is not a luxury, it is a duty,” he said, lamenting that worldwide human activity and climate change were destroying it,.....”

Also attending the meeting Izabella Teixeira, Brazil's Minister for the Environment said... “Particularly worrying was the fact that, in the past century, certain economic sectors had benefited from exploiting biodiversity, leaving ecosystem degradation and increased poverty in their wake. We need strong and determined responses and political will to change this scenario.....”

The Secretary-General continued.....“The third *Global Biodiversity Outlook* report indicated that the global decline in biological diversity was accelerating, while science showed that humankind's actions had pushed extinctions up to 1,000 times the natural background rate. Human activity, including deforestation, changes in habitat and land degradation, was to blame, and the growing impact of climate change was compounding the problem.”... “We need to show that protecting ecosystems can help us achieve the

Millennium Development Goals and build resilience to climate change.”...“We are bankrupting our natural economy. We need to fashion a rescue package before it is too late,” he stressed.

Maintaining and restoring the planet's natural infrastructure could provide economic gains worth trillions of dollars annually, he said, emphasizing that allowing it to decline was “like throwing money out the window”. He said in conclusion: “I urge all leaders present today to commit to reducing biodiversity loss. This will be your legacy — your gift to generations to come.”

José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission, spoke on behalf of the European Union, “warning that the world was standing at a crossroads. Either the international community took concerted action to reverse biodiversity loss as soon as possible, or it compromised its own future and that of future generations. “Nagoya is our chance to turn the situation around. It is our chance to make decisions that will strengthen implementation of the Convention's three key objectives,” he said. It was important to adopt a new and effective strategic plan that encouraged collective action and enjoyed the support of everyone who benefited from biodiversity or whose activities had an impact on it.”

Being aware of the international community's approach to biodiversity can only benefit the way in which we preserve biodiversity in our southwest hot spot. It is this same international community which has identified the south west as the only biodiversity hot spot for conservation priority in Australia.

The recently released WA 2020 Special Report by Peter McMahon found Western Australia to be one of the least sustainable societies in the world. The report “Into Oblivion? The Disappearing Native Mammals of Northern Australia” by James Fitzsimmons, Sarah Legge, Barry Traill and John Woinarski found that.....

“Since European settlement, the deepest loss of Australian biodiversity has been the spate of extinctions of endemic mammals. Historically, these losses occurred mostly in inland and in temperate parts of the country, and largely between 1890 and 1950. A new wave of extinctions is now threatening Australian mammals, this time in northern Australia. Many mammal species are in sharp decline across the north, even in extensive natural areas managed primarily for conservation.”

The Meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in two weeks provides an excellent opportunity for us to highlight the importance of our own unique biodiversity. The Convention, and the decisions reached at the end of October 2010, should become a critical part of the State's Policy Development and Decision Making. I look forward to the adoption of these decisions by the West Australian Government towards the end of 2010.

Fire management for biodiversity?

By Mary Gray

In the aftermath of the big fires in Kings Park last summer, an External Review Panel was appointed to review the fire management guidelines and policy of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority at Kings and Bold Parks. The UBC was pleased to be interviewed by the Panel.

The 'Rationale for the BGPA Fire Management Guidelines, 2009' states:

'A history of various fire management strategies in the Kings Park bushland and frequent fire events in the Bold Park bushland underpin the evidence based approach used by the Authority for managing fire in the urban bushland areas under its care and control. The collective research within the BGPA bushlands demonstrates that:

- i) prescribed burning has not influenced the incidence of wildfires,
- ii) frequent fire events have decreased biodiversity values, and
- iii) frequent fire events have increased weed risk and flammability.

...the BGPA has since 1985 undertaken an approach to minimise the threat of wildfire while maintaining the biodiversity values of the bushlands at Kings Park and Bold Park in the absence of prescribed burning through an integrated fire management strategy (reduction of weeds and weedy biomass, maintenance of fire breaks, early fire detection and rapid response, education and vigilance).

The UBC strongly supports BGPA's 'no prescribed burning' policy and its integrated fire management strategy. Friends groups report similar experience and find that weed control is critically important in minimising fire risk. Indeed the research and fire management practices at Kings Park are seen as a role model for bushland on the Swan Coastal Plain. There are however some gaps in current fire management.

The UBC emphasised the following issues to the External Review Panel:

- Community expectations are that Kings Park will be protected as a natural landscape and wildlife icon of Perth and WA. A natural bushland area on the edge of the CBD is a unique and well known feature of Perth. Bold Park is also a highly valued landscape icon but is not so well publicised. Both parks are icons of biodiversity of the Perth region and the south west whose ecological values are to be protected.
- Greatly increased resources are needed for effective weed control in both Parks, and especially in Bold Park which has suffered years of neglect prior to BGPA management.
- Extensive research is needed in restoration of degraded understorey heavily infested with veldgrass and pelargonium in Bold Park
- After hot summer fires, a strategic focus on weed control during regrowth is effective, as shown in the NW area of Bold Park burnt in 2000 - a practise developed on the basis of weed seed research by Judy Fisher.
- More focus is needed on research and monitoring of fauna populations and the effects on fauna of fire and chemi-

cal weed control. Use of extensive research findings by Ric How (WA Museum) deserves recognition and use in management strategies. We suggested a new focus on refugia for birds, reptiles, invertebrates after disturbances such as storm events and fire, and feral animal control (foxes, dogs, cats, Rainbow Lorikeets etc).

- Connectivity of Kings Park to Bold Park is vitally important to survival of species and the whole landscape unit should be considered and managed as a whole, including the ecological linkages from Kings Park through suburban trees, Shenton bushland, Bedbrook Place, Underwood Avenue, A-K Reserve and Perry Lakes area to Bold Park and the coastal zone.
- Fungi play an important role in the decomposition of the litter layer, reduction of fire fuel load and nutrient recycling. Fire disturbs this. Research is needed in the role, persistence and functioning of fungi in both parks.
- In terms of early fire detection and rapid response, a 24/7 fire watch system during the summer fire season is recommended for both Kings Park and Bold Park. The Sir Charles Gardner Hospital building or a purpose built watch tower for Kings Park and Reabold Hill in Bold Park could be vantage points. The cost of this initiative is very small compared with the cost of fighting a big fire, ecosystem restoration, species loss and potential damage to infrastructure after fire. It could also enable tracking and arrest of arsonists who ignite fires at multiple points.
- What happens in the first 10 minutes of a fire is what matters. The use of water bombers as early as possible is supported for both parks.
- Closing Bold Park and Kings Park bushland and road access on days of extreme fire risk is recommended because of their position in a city landscape and presence of scarp features where fire can spread so rapidly. This could include Mounts Bay Road. Preventing fires from being lit by arsonists is the best approach.
- **Gaps in fire management: Focus on arson.** The bushland of both parks is inherently flammable and summer fire risk cannot be completely removed. Human beings are the problem, not the bush and its fauna. The fires in Kings Park last summer were all deliberately lit but there was no data provided on locations and patterns of ignition. Arson is an age old issue and a sensitive issue in society, generally sex linked to males. It must be confronted. A major investment by BGPA and FESA in local arson research and treatment is strongly recommended instead of other suggested measures (canopy thinning, planting of less flammable species etc). Programs such as the JAFFA program focusing on juveniles should be increased with employment of specialist psychologists and resources for community surveys and monitoring and counselling of known arsonists.
- An investment each year in community awareness and education about fire is essential, especially in a drier and warmer climate.

Our final plea was to take heed of the science and evidence for Kings Park and Bold Park.



When UWA finally does submit its proposal to the EPBC for assessment it should appear here: http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_...

To protect Underwood Avenue Bushland we would deeply appreciate it if you can prepare a comment to oppose the UWA proposal for housing in the bushland. The proposal must be referred to the Federal Department of the Environment Water Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) by UWA. When the proposal is referred, a notice will be put on the DEWHA Web Site with the proposal, the title and the reference number.

There will probably be two distinct periods when the public has the opportunity to comment.

(1) The first public consultation period will be for the Federal government to determine if the proposal is a 'controlled action'. (ie would the UWA proposal have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance?) The key factor in determining whether the proposal is a controlled action is 'nationally threatened species and ecological communities'. In 2007 the Federal government officers considered UWA's proposal to be a controlled action due to 'the potential

impacts on listed threatened species and communities.' (sections 18 and 18 A)

There are only 10 working days to put in comments.

(2) If the DEWHA officers determine that the proposal is a 'controlled action', (as they have done on two other occasions), then some type of assessment will follow and a decision will be made to determine if the proposal is acceptable. This is when we make more extensive submissions which may include environmental, social and economic factors. The Minister will also consider the precautionary principle and the principles of ecologically sustainable development. The Minister will err on the side of caution.

Again there are only ten working days to comment.

Please look at the dot points enclosed with this newsletter and use any or all or write your own comments in a letter. Start now and when the notice is put on the DEWHA website, include the title and reference number with your letter.



Photo by M Owen



Photo by M Owen

Transcript of Colin Barnett's conversation with Simon Beaumont on 6PR, 1st April 2010.

Simon Beaumont: 'Yesterday on the program, our premier was in the studio and he had this to say about environmental approvals and building applications and the Carnaby's Cockatoo. Let's remind ourselves'.

Colin Barnett: '...the other issue is a lot of urban subdivisions are being caught up with Federal legislation and I'm not shifting the blame but its all to do with Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos and it's just becoming ridiculous. If you go up high rise buildings in the city and look over the city it's a green city there's trees, parks, bushland areas everywhere and yet we are finding that property development and land subdivision are being restricted by issues of biodiversity and so called endangered species. I think its grossly exaggerated'.

It's their home.

The collared sparrowhawks had not been seen for some months but recently in Underwood Avenue Bushland, I inadvertently disturbed a Sparrowhawk which flew from a jarrah tree and then to my surprise, a second sparrowhawk followed.

Alarmed, other birds flew noisily from their branches because the diet of sparrowhawks is small birds and also insects. I lost track of the first bird but the second flew up to a tall tuart tree where it perched. Looking up I saw a nest of sticks. The nest is still in the making-stage as the final touches have still to be made, that is to be lined with fresh green leaves.



Photo by M Owen

I agree with comments made on the Birds in Backyards website that "Sparrowhawks are very calm at their nest, unlike the brown goshawk which is very aggressive." A brown goshawk in Warwick Bushland some years ago swooped me and when he touched my hat I realised that he was not just saying hello. He chased me right out to the edge of the bushland and I was running from tree to tree.

I remind readers that collared sparrowhawks can be distinguished from goshawks by having much longer middle toes.

On the very same day that I saw the pair of sparrowhawks, an Australian Hobby flew close by me and snatched a dragon-fly from the air a few metres away.

Underwood Avenue Bushland is indisputably home to collared sparrowhawks who nest there regularly. Sparrowhawks and all the other raptors who visit the bushland have a moral right to exist, if not a legal right in the eyes of our government.

Orchids at Underwood.

Very early in September the first spider orchid buds opened in Underwood Avenue Bushland. Orchids are part of our great and wondrous floral diversity.

The orchid family is the third largest plant family in the greater Perth region, with the eucalypt and banksia families at numbers one and two for the number of species within the two families*.

The Carousel Spider Orchid, *Caladenia arenicola*, grows mainly in an area of the bushland which is not within the proposed conservation area. Each year the plants die back and they re-sprout from their underground tubers the following year. These orchids are probably long lived and a related species has been documented as living for 20 years. There are many threats to these orchids at Underwood, with of course the chief one being destruction by bulldozer. Even without this threat, the incursion of weeds which have not been managed at all, is serious and it breaks a heart to see the extent and variety of weeds across the bushland.



Photo by M Owen

Most flowering plants provide nectar to pollinators to pay for the service of pollination. This is not the case for orchids. The Carousel Spider Orchid and other Caladenias, emit an odour which mimics the female thynnid wasp and this attracts the male thynnid wasps.

These wasp pollinators need to be present at the right time and with changing climate and destruction of habitat, the wasp/orchid relationship could be threatened.

* From "Recovery plan for *Caladenia huegelii*" Department of Environment and Conservation,

Group News Group News Group News

Bush to Beach Walk 2010

Every year the **Friends of Shenton Bushland and allied groups** organise a community walk to support the linkages which still remain between coastal areas, bushlands and wetlands. Despite knowledge of the importance of these linkages, many are threatened.

This year's walk, held on 5th September, was restricted to 50 people and started with a circuit of Shenton Bushland. Highlights of Shenton Bushland were the magnificent trees, the spring flowers, the grass trees with their flowering spikes up and the blue leschenaultia. Blue leschenaultia is not native to the coastal plain but was introduced when gravel was brought down from the hills in the 1940s for a prison of war camp in the bushland.



2010 Bush to Beach walk participants

Photo courtesy of Friends of Shenton Bushland

The walk continued into Karrakatta Cemetery, past various denominational areas and to the surprise of the walkers, past one area of graves sign-posted 'Remnants.'

In Hollywood Reserve we were warmly greeted by the Friends of Hollywood Reserve who explained things as we went around. One of the resident Tawny Frogmouths was pointed out to us enjoying the sun in a casuarina tree.



Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*) in Hollywood Bushland

Photo by Marg Owen

The morning tea provided by the Friends was wonderful.

The Friends of Lake Claremont lead the walkers around the lake area and the uplands where we were able to see the peppermint grove and the tuart tree grove, both now very precious as so much has been cleared.



Wildlife observed at Lake Claremont: Long-necked turtle (*Chelodina oblonga*) and Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*)

Photos by Marg Owen



Small bats have taken up residence in some of the bat boxes which are made at Scotch College and which have recently been erected high up on the tuart trees.

Both at Hollywood Reserve and at Lake Claremont, many school students have been involved in planting native plants and together with volunteers tens of thousands of plants have been planted and tended.

Marg Owen

New Guided Walks in Bold Park

Free guided walks are set to begin for the first time in Bold Park to coincide with this year's wildflower season.

The walks are an initiative of the **Friends of Bold Park Bushland** and will be led by a newly trained group of volunteer guides. The itinerary includes wildflowers, native plants and animals, plus the fascinating history and geography of this iconic park.

The Friends of Bold Park Bushland conducted the guides' recent training course with funding from Lotterywest and support from the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, Kings Park Volunteer Guides, Birds Australia WA, WA Wildflower Society and the Naturalists' Club.

The Guides have been trained in the geology, vegetation types, ecology, wildflowers, birds, bushland restoration and history of the area. Associate Professor Nancy Longnecker, Coordinator of UWA's Science Communication Program, coordinated the training program.

Following the inaugural walk on September 18, Professor Longnecker reported:

"It was fantastic! Judging from the many positive comments I heard from the group of 21 guests, they thought so

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too. The team of four guides worked together well, supporting each other and providing complementary information.”

For information about dates and times of walks, contact Sue Briggs on 9480 3990, or leave a message at friendsbp@bgpa.wa.gov.au.

Bold Park is managed by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority.

Mike Whittington

Wildflower Society of WA Wants You!

The Wildflower Society of WA is on the look-out for people who are interested in West Australian native flora - and who isn't! If you would like to know more about WA native plants and about how to grow them in your garden, you can join the Society. There are 6 branches in the Perth metro region and 3 country branches. Each has a monthly meeting with a guest speaker, as well as excursions to look at and learn about native plants. Members also receive an informative quarterly newsletter. If this sounds interesting, contact the Office on ph: 9383 7979 or wildflowers@ozemail.com.au for further information. Visit the website at <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~wildflowers/> or just google 'wildflower society of wa'.

Friends of Star Swamp Bushland

Celebrations for the 25th Anniversary of Star Swamp Bushland Reserve are drawing to a close, but the legacy will live on. Anyone who would like to remember this special year can purchase a specially designed 25th Anniversary cap, pencil/stubbie holder or carry bag from the Friends group by contacting Christine on ph: 9447 2983 or Joan on ph: 9447 2358. The final special event for 2010 will be a Nocturnal Walk on Friday 22 October. This will leave from the Henderson Environment Centre, in Groat St North Beach, at 7.30pm and will be looking for nocturnal birds, spiders and insects, as well as taking in the uniqueness of the bush at night. Those attending should wear sturdy shoes and bring a torch.

Christine Curry

Friends of Hepburn & Pinnaroo Bushland

During a weed survey by the Friends of Hepburn & Pinnaroo Bushland at the end of August, it was discovered that Optus had caused a great deal of damage to the natural bushland within Hepburn Heights Conservation Area from vehicles and from excavations at five points spaced out down the Water Corporation easement. Optus had been laying their fibre optic cables from their communications tower at Whitfords Reservoir along the easement, which dissects the conservation area. The excavation points were left as large patches of bare sand with vehicle tracks leading to each one (see photos).

Each cleared patch would probably require about 100 plants for rehabilitation.



Photo by R Henderson

The City of Joondalup had discussed the proposed works with Optus last year and had recommended a route for the cable around the perimeter of the bushland and had told the Optus representative that the City would need to be informed of a commencement date so that monitoring could take place. All areas that were to be disturbed were to be reinstated by Optus and written permission was to be obtained from the Bush Forever office of the Department of Planning before the City would even consider the application for approval.

The City of Joondalup staff were completely unaware that this work had been done and were extremely surprised when informed of this. Enquiries are being made with the relevant parties to determine how the rehabilitation can be facilitated.

Marg Owen & Ralph Henderson

Stirling Natural Environment Coastcare

SNEC Coastcarers Georgina and Shel reported that the two sites sown with Pellitory seed has grown strongly and has since attracted the migratory Yellow Admiral butterfly to lay eggs which are now at larvae phase.

Robert Powell (Ecologist) provides valuable knowledge and encouragement to this new project. Anyone interested in helping out is welcome to participate, as the success of this trial indicates that this project will be ongoing and rewarding.

SNEC were successful recipients of a Coastwest Grant got weed mapping along six and half kilometres of City of Stirling's coast. The weed mapping will be coordinated by Dr Judy Fisher.

Next community activity will be held on Saturday 9 October. SNEC invite anyone interested in assisting in 'Tangaroa Blue Beach Litter Survey'. For more information contact Rae on 0419 191 710.

Reprinted with permission from the SNEC Spring-Summer 2010 Newsletter

Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands

Are presenting special talks on **Trees of the Perth Metro area** by Robert Powell, an author and on **Using Local na-**

Group News Group News Group News

tive Plants to Protect Out by Amy Krupa, the winner of the 2009 Western Australian Landcare Professional Award and Phosphorus Awareness Project Coordinator.

The talks will be presented on Monday 18th October at 6.30 pm at the Mud Hut Community Hall, Cnr Brixton Street and Kenwick Road. Gold coin donation.

On Saturday 6th November, between 9 and 11 am, anyone interested will be able to enjoy a guided walk through the wetlands looking at plants and insects. There will be an Insect Society display and music.

Meet at Alton Street. Morning tea provided. For more details on these events please contact Regina on 9459 2964.

Friends of Hollywood Bushland

Spring is here and we have planted all that we intend to plant this year and in spite of it being the driest winter for ... whatever record they want to make it - the plants seem to be doing well.

Our working bee in August was spent dealing with weeds, which, in spite of the dry weather are doing well. We targeted the Carnation Weed, Turnip weed, Cape Tulip, flat weeds, but many others as well. We had a good turn out of 20 people and were pleased to welcome a new family, the Hersh/Israel family. Six years old twins Asher and Zach, with their 10 years old brother Alex spent much of the morning tracking down the rabbit burrows and marking them so they can be targeted at a later date.

Our September working bee coincided with the annual *Bush to Beach Walk*. This year Friends of Hollywood got involved by welcoming the walkers at the Hollywood lawn area at about 10.00 - 10.30 am for morning tea provided by the Friends group. A Gold Coin donation is made for the morning tea and of course any extra funds are very welcome to the group. The walkers spent about half an hour in the Reserve before continuing on to Lake Claremont via the cemetery for lunch. Before and after the walkers, the members continued to target the weeds and start looking at where we might be working next year.

There are many plants in flower in the Reserve. The first Donkey Orchids are out near Monash Avenue entrance, and Snail Orchids and Greenhoods are in many places, and the rest are showing their leaves.

Another red finger fungus was found by Leonie, thanks for advising us as we keep a record of fungii finds.

Our next working bee is on Sunday 10th October at the usual time of 9.30 am until Noon with the morning tea at 10.30 am. It will be weeding as usual and no doubt in your walks around you will have noticed the wonderful flowering of all the weeds - Cape Tulip and Freesias just to mention a couple.

David & Trish Hewson

SAVE BEELIAR WETLANDS

The Save Beelihar Wetlands Campaign is forging on in its campaign to protect North Lake and Bibra Lake from Roe Highway Stage 8, having endured a totally shameful excuse of a community consultation process. The Minister for Transport, Simon O'Brien has repeatedly stated that the road will result in an enhanced environment for the area but we still fail to see how hundreds of tonnes of bitumen can enhance wetlands or bushland. Alarming they are taking a similar stance with the aboriginal heritage sites, one of which is the most significant site south of the Swan River and will be completely obliterated.

We were relieved at the eventual outcome of the Federal election as the Labour Party has agreed not to fund the project. Of course there is always the possibility of Mr Barnett and his colleagues conjuring up the money. I mean who needs hospitals and schools when you can destroy some wetlands and bushland and build a useless road to nowhere.

In January next year we will be launching into submissions for the Public Environmental Review. We are planning to hold some workshops for everyone to come along and write their own submissions. Check the Save Beelihar Website for details closer to the time.

Festival of the Lakes

Saturday 9th October 6am to 4pm

Celebrating the Environmental, Cultural and Recreational Values of the wetlands and bushland of Bibra Lake and North Lake. Activities and displays to explore nature including guided bush walks, wetland activities, a beautiful waterwise garden, and lots of food and other stalls. Try the climbing wall, karate and take a train ride around the lake. Follow the signs to Bibra Lake Recreation area.

For more information call Felicity 0419 044 986

UNDERWOOD AVENUE BUSHLAND

Two demonstrations were held within three days in support of the retention of Underwood Avenue Bushland in its entirety. The first was held on 13th August outside Julie Bishop's office in Rokeby Road, Subiaco. Ms Bishop is the Federal representative for Curtin and Underwood Avenue Bushland is in this electorate. The second demonstration was at the University of WA at their open day on Sunday 15th August.

When demonstrators started arriving at Ms Bishop's office there were so many police around that some thought there must have been some major event like a broken gas line. However the police were in attendance for the demonstration. There was a fair bit of good natured chanting for the survival of cockatoos and for the survival of the bushland and all its wondrous, magical and complex inhabitants.

Group News Group News Group News



Photo by M Owen

At the UWA Open Day, some stayed on the highway with banners, and others hung banners, stenciled cockatoos and white crosses from trees and buildings within the grounds. The UWA proposal for 300 houses in the bushland has been approved by state and local governments but the proposal still needs referral to the Federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. We think it would be wonderful if you, the reader,



Photo by M Owen

could respond when the proposal is referred to the federal department under the EPBC Act, and the insert to the Urban Bush Telegraph gives you some assistance for points to make. There will only be ten days to get a response in.

Marg Owen

Quinns Rocks Environmental Group Inc Twenty Five Years of Local Action

In June 1985 local residents concerned about our local and global environment formed the Quinns Rocks Environmental Group. They were prompted by plans for a marina and residential development at Mindarie, a landfill rubbish tip and quarrying adjacent Neerabup National Park.

Quinns Rocks was a small community nestled between the

beach and bushland. Twenty five years later it is part of Perth's sprawling suburbs; the number of people and houses has grown at the expense of natural ecology.

QREG continues as an active group of citizens promoting conservation. We advocate on local issues, promote community awareness and take action on the ground.

Over the last 25 years we have:

- Lobbied for protection of coastal bushland north of Burns Beach; 380ha is to become a conservation park
- Contributed to the introduction of kerbside recycling and waste recovery in Wanneroo to reduce landfill
- Supported the inclusion of more bushland in Neerabup National Park and opposed encroaching infrastructure
- Worked to look after bushland reserves in Quinns Rocks and Mindarie including weeding, planting and surveys
- Promoted community awareness through events and publications on local plants, bushland ecology and living sustainably.

Thanks to everyone who has supported these efforts, whether by taking part in protests or bushcare, being a member or serving on the committee. The need for local action for conservation continues, and so will we.

To promote community awareness and mark our 25 years we are holding **Quinns Eco-fest on Sunday October 24, 1.30-4.00pm** at Gumblossom Community Centre, Tapping Way, Quinns Rocks.

The event will include nature-based activities for children, bushwalks and displays about our local environment and reducing our environmental footprint. We will also screen environmental films and enjoy afternoon tea.

If you are interested, please contact Renata, phone 9305 9382 or David, phone 9305 9575.

Reprinted with permission from the Quinns Environs September 2010

Friends of Trigg Bushland

Are working with the City of Stirling on a plan to rehabilitate and manage the area periodically inundated by the Duart Street drain. The area is severely degraded with many invasive weeds. The plan includes spraying the weeds now and again after the first winter rains to be followed by planting selected species from the local area. The area will require continuous management to control fresh invasion of weed species.

The tuart mapping project is well advanced with weekly sessions held on Monday afternoons. The project is supported by the Hale School which included the mapping as part of its Duke of Edinburgh award program.

Next guided walk will be held on Saturday 30th October at 8 am. Meet on the southern side of Saint Mary's School, off Elliott Road, Trigg. For more information visit www.triggbushland.org.au

New alerts put the spotlight on pest birds

The Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food has coordinated the production of three National Animal Pest Alerts to assist in raising public awareness about the potential risk of new invasive species establishing populations in Australia and becoming pests.

The pest alerts, covering the Canada goose, red-whiskered bulbul and Barbary dove, have been produced with support from the Australian Government's Australian Pest Animal Management Program administered by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics – Bureau of Rural Sciences.

The brochures have been designed to educate the public about the risks these emerging pests pose to agriculture, the environment and society to increase community awareness and encourage vigilance. The brochures have been produced using results from risk assessments conducted by the department, and include background information, description, behaviour and the potential impact of the pests. Information and pictures showing these birds in the wild in Australia have also been included in the brochures. These include four Canada Geese discovered at large in New South Wales in 2007, and Barbary doves at large in Melbourne.

Importantly, the pest alerts also distinguish these non-native species from similar-looking native birds. As many reports of introduced birds turn out to be native species, it is hoped that this will focus reporting to the problem species.

The pest alerts also raise the issue of the widespread keeping of pets that could become pests – the responsible keeping of animals and birds with significant pest potential is absolutely crucial to prevent another starling or rabbit-like bird establishing wild populations in Australia.

Further titles in the series will include squirrels, the Pacific rat and deer.

Any sightings of unusual birds or animals should be reported to the Department of Agriculture and Food's Pest and Disease Information Service on Freecall 1800 084 881. The Animal Pest Alerts are being distributed nationally to all relevant government departments and wildlife authorities, and can be obtained by downloading them from the department's website: www.agric.wa.gov.au by searching for 'pest alert'.

Department of Environment and Conservation launched a new on-line tool designed to assist with selection of plants used by Carnaby's black cockatoos for revegetation projects.

Visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/plantsforcarnabys

New Book

RESTORING NATURAL AREAS IN AUSTRALIA

By *Robin A. Buchanan*

Twenty years after publishing *Bush Regeneration-Recovering Australian Landscapes*, a milestone for bush regeneration, Robin Buchanan's new book will fill a gap for anyone with a practical interest in restoring natural areas.

The book covers many of topics, ranging from basic ecology, different ecosystems, through to project planning, management, costing, funding, legal issues to site assessment, prioritising actions to weeds management techniques, erosion control, seed collecting, planting to stormwater management.

This 264 page publication in colour was published by Tocal College, Patterson, NWS and is available online at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/resources/bookshop/ or by phone on 1800 025 520.
Cost \$44.00 (GTS included)

Interim Graceful sun-moth Report Available

Results of the graceful sun-moth surveys conducted in April-May have been published online at
www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/view/5695/1813

For further information phone Carly Bishop on 9334 0310.

Western Australian Museum International Year of Biodiversity



In response to the proclamation of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, the Western Australian Museum has created a series of programs to celebrate the unique biodiversity of Western Australia.

The Harry Butler Lecture Series IN THE WILD WEST

A program of lectures by WA Museum scientists and associates. Lectures are held at various venues in Perth, Geraldton and Albany.

For dates and locations or to listen to recorded lectures go to:
<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/whatson/year-of-biodiversity.asp>

Support the Urban Bushland Council

Join or renew your membership

Groups:

Membership with voting rights is available to groups committed to the protection of urban bushland for \$35 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

Individuals:

Supporter membership is only \$25 per year (GST included). Supporters can attend meetings and receive copies of the "Urban Bush Telegraph"

Groups and supporters are reminded that annual membership fees include one printed copy of the *Urban Bush Telegraph* (currently published quarterly). Additional printed copies can be ordered at a cost of \$5.00 per copy per annum.

Send your name, address and cheque or postal order to:

Treasurer, Urban Bushland Council WA Inc, PO Box 326, West Perth WA 6872

Urban Bushland Council Activities

City Bush Guides at Port Kennedy

Sunday 10 October at 10 am

Meeting at beach parking area at the end of Port Kennedy Drive.

(UBD Map 485 Ref. H5)

Bring some water, morning tea and picnic lunch.



Friday 18 October at 5 pm

at Old Observatory National Trust, 4 Havelock Street, West Perth

Presentation of Lotterywest cheque to UBC for a promotion and education project in IYB, to be followed by a talk by Tim Hillyard, Manager WAPC Property Services, on implementation of Bush Forever. Come along and ask all those unanswered questions.

Drinks and nibbles provided.

All welcome

UBC PUBLICATIONS

Wetlands to Wastelands? - proceedings of a seminar about the future of bushland at Perth Airport (2004)

Available at UBC's website

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~ubc/html/infosheets.htm>

Burning Issues—proceedings of a workshop about fire management in urban bushland. (2002)

Available from the UBC for \$11, postage included.

Building Partnerships between Community Groups and Local Government for Our Bushland—proceedings of a seminar (2000). Available from the UBC for \$5.50, postage included

Managing our Bushland - proceedings of a conference about the protection and management of urban bushland (1998). Available from the UBC for \$11, postage included.

Burning our Bushland - proceedings of a conference about fire and urban bushland (1995). Out of print; available in libraries.

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Compiled by: Renata Zelinova

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:email

ubc@iinet.net.au

Copy deadline - 15 November 2010

PERTH'S BUSHLAND BIRTHDAY & PERPETUAL CALENDAR

\$15 plus \$2 postage

Available by mail order from the UBC office.

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