bushland news

urban nature

Issue 134 **Winter** 2025 *Time of Makuru and Djilba in the Noongar calendar.*

Local action for conservation

Quinns Rock Environmental Group reflects on 40 years

Photo – Pete Morgan

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of **Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Bushland News *is a quarterly newsletter of the Urban Nature program to support community involvement in bushland conservation.*

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This publication is available in alternative formats on request. Current and archived issues of *Bushland News* are available at https://dbca.wa.gov.au/bushlandnews.

Next issue

Winter *Bushland News*

Spring *Bushland News* contributions should be sent to Urban Nature by **Monday 11 August 2025**. *Bushland News* seeks original contributions. If your submission has been or may be published elsewhere please let us know. Compiled and edited by Jaimee Nobbs, Louise Kaestner, Rebecca Dassens and Diego Lara.

Local action for conservation: Quinns Rock Environmental Group reflects on 40 years

Quinns Rocks Environmental Group

Located on the coast 40km north of the Perth CBD, Quinns Rocks has changed as the city has grown. For the past 40 years the Quinns Rocks Environmental Group (QREG) has worked to influence that change. The group has been a voice for conservation, with retention and management of bushland a priority.

The Quinns Rocks Environmental Group started in 1985 as 'a local community organisation working for conservation and understanding of the environment and towards a sustainable society'. The group formed in response to a proposal for a marina and residential development named Mindarie Keys, to be located south of the small community of Quinns Rocks, a quiet village on the coast surrounded by bush. The people that lived or spent their holidays there valued the environment and lifestyle it offered. Mindarie Keys was a precursor of greater changes to happen along the mostly vegetated coastal areas north of Joondalup.

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Front cover: Beach biodiversity and microplastics awareness activity at Mindarie foreshore. Photo – QREG

Volunteers engaging in revegetation action in the foreshore reserve at Quinns Rocks. Photo – D Wake.

... continued

In the first couple of years, the focus was on advocacy for sustainable development, writing submissions, promoting alternative approaches to development and joining others in protests like the one in 1991 against the establishment of an unlined waste disposal landfill on land important for conservation. Later QREG campaigned for the protection of regionally significant bushland north of Burns Beach, and more recently advocated for improving fauna and ecological connectivity in the design of major roads and the railway extension affecting Bush Forever areas including Neerabup National Park and Ningana bushland.

Volunteers sifting through the sand to look for microplastics at Quinns Beach. Photo – L Groenewegan.

Monitoring post fire recovery in Gumblossom Reserve, Quinns Rocks. Photo – M Cook.

Our group has placed significant effort into promoting the importance of urban bushland. With guidance from botanists and ecologists, we organised guided walks, flora and fauna surveys in local reserves and published awareness raising materials. In 1995, following a series of workshops on local bush, QREG released its first publication, a 41-page book, Discover your local bushland and its first leaflet promoting the use of local plants in residential gardens. The updated 2002 version of the group's 'Grow local plants' brochure inspired similar publications by others like Perth NRM.

We held regular bushcare days in four bushland reserves in Quinns Rocks and Mindarie, including hand weeding, seed collections, clean ups and planting. Since the formation of a dedicated conservation team in the City of Wanneroo, the group's volunteers support planting and weeding activities managed by the city.

After 40 years, the committee coordinates around 10 events or activities annually, including guided bushland walks, bushland and beach clean-ups, workshops and talks on sustainable living, planting, vegetation monitoring, weeding, movie nights, displays at community events or shopping centres to promote the importance of the local environment.

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In 2020, the group started running "Nature lovers" events, targeting families with young children. In the last five years, about 300 people a year participated in QREG activities and many more people engage via our Facebook page.

Things we celebrate

- 380ha of significant coastal dunefield and bushland north of Burns Beach was set aside for conservation via the proposed Tamala Conservation Park.
- All the local bushland reserves where we ran bushcare activities are now managed for conservation by the City of Wanneroo and are recognised in the Local Planning Scheme as 'Conservation'. In three of the reserves, the City of Wanneroo installed trails with interpretive sign information and photos created by the QREG members.
- We have collected baseline information on flora and fauna for selected local reserves and one of our members discovered a new population of threatened flora in one of the local reserves we have worked in since 2002.
- Protest about the Tamala Park landfill led to later stages being lined and capped to limit pollution and helped bring about kerbside recycling and resource recovery locally (standard practice now but not in the early 1990s).
- QREG is recognised as a community stakeholder by local government and State Government agencies. Consultation with QREG was stipulated as a Ministerial condition on Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment for Clarkson-Butler. The group has been a voice for the environment on reference groups for projects including the Mitchell Freeway extension, Yanchep Rail extension and Quinns Rocks coastal erosion management and sits on the City of Wanneroo's Environmental Advisory Committee.

Treasure hunt in Gumblossom Reserve, Quinns Rocks. Photo – A Rossen.

- The growing number of local residents interested in the local environment and sustainable living practices.
- Working partnerships and support from organisations like Perth NRM, BirdLife Australia, Tangaroa Blue, Urban Bushland Council, Conservation Council of WA, City of Wanneroo and local businesses that have supported us with fundraising or in-kind.

The surrounds of Quinns Rocks are very different to what they looked like in 1985, with residential development now extending from Quinns Rocks to Yanchep.

QREG's mission remains as relevant as ever. We aim to continue to play our part in building consciousness and influencing local decisions to protect nature and seek more sustainable approaches to growing the city we live in.

Contact

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Urban Nature update *By Julia Cullity*

Meet more new editors

Let me present to you three more volunteer editors who join *Bushland News* for this winter issue. Please introduce yourselves…

Louise, volunteering at the Perth Observatory, "The telescope is a Howard Grubb astrograph. It's my favourite telescope and still works at 130 years old!" Photo – Norma Betram.

Louise

Greetings! I'm Louise, a writing student at Curtin University. Volunteering is one of my special interests, as is writing and crochet. As a volunteer, it allows me the opportunity to give with selflessness, which spurs my personal and spiritual growth. I've been volunteering with the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) since April 2022 in various capacities across many areas. Caring for land and community is an activity that fills my cup.

It's exciting editing at *Bushland News* as it supplements my education. Here, I hope to hone my editing skills and learn from the production team.

I currently volunteer with Perth Observatory, Nearer 2 Nature, Cahoots, Curtin Volunteers! and New to Curtin Mentoring. I have also helped establish the community garden at Unilodge, where I live on campus, watering and weeding as necessary.

Rebecca enjoying the ocean at Margaret River. Photo – Caio Martelli.

Rebecca

Heya! My name is Rebecca. I grew up with an enthusiasm for Australia's natural landscape and unique flora and fauna. Both my parents are immigrants and their appreciation for a landscape so different to their own childhood gave me a special perspective. This sentiment led me to where I am today.

I graduated from Murdoch University, where I studied wildlife biology, conservation, environmental management, and sustainability. I previously studied creative writing and film at Edith Cowan University. I am passionate about science and arts and want to acquire more knowledge and further develop skills in both.

This journey led me to volunteering with DBCA where I signed up to assist in the seagrass lab. This opportunity opened the pathway to seeking out more volunteer opportunities and I discovered the *Bushland News* editing role. I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to volunteer for a role that allows me to pursue my dream of learning more about how arts and science can connect and share knowledge in ways that can support the environment and encourage conservation of our beautiful and unique biodiversity.

Diego enjoying his favourite food (oysters) after his favourite hobby (snorkelling) at Cottesloe Beach. Photo – Stephanie Cheung

Diego

My name is Diego Lara, and I grew up in Panama, a vibrant Central American country where dense tropical jungles and beautiful oceans can be found. Much of my childhood was spent living aboard a boat, swimming among coral reefs and tending my family's farm. These were experiences that ignited my passion for wildlife and steered me toward a career in zoology and conservation. That journey took me to the Smithsonian's field station on Barro Colorado Island, where I explored how people understand and value conservation and discovered the power of clear, engaging science communication.

Since moving to Australia, I've volunteered with organisations and independent researchers, learning more about this continent's remarkable fauna while searching for ways to make research accessible to everyone. Joining *Bushland News* has finally given me that platform: a place where I can advocate for conservation and bring scientific discoveries a step closer to the public.

I hope every reader of *Bushland News* finds a project to champion, an organisation to support, or a researcher to collaborate with. I'm proud to contribute to a publication that turns the often chaotic world of research into a neatly wrapped, quarterly package that anyone can enjoy.

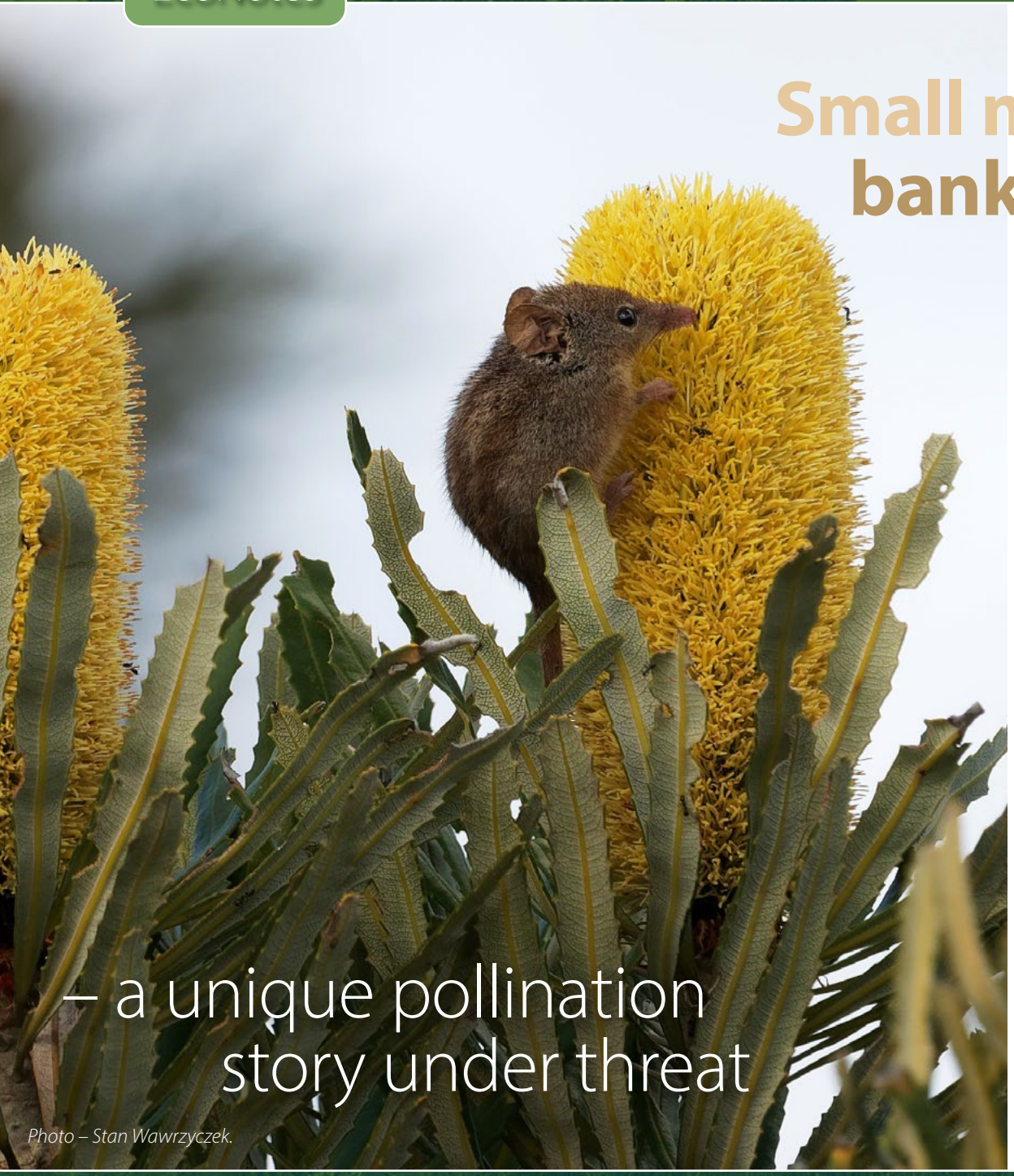
The Friends of Paganoni Swamp and DBCA are setting up a flora survey plot to confirm the presence of a new occurrence of Melaleuca huegelii – M. systena *shrublands of limestone ridges (SCP 26a) threatened ecological community. This threatened ecological community is only found near the tops of limestone ridges on the Swan Coastal Plain. While naturally restricted, its distribution was historically diminished by limestone mining and clearing for housing and road building. Photo – Grazyna Paczkowska.*

Honeymyrtle threatened ecological communities

We are happy to announce that the Urban Nature team has recorded two new occurrences of honeymyrtle shrubland threatened ecological community at Paganoni Swamp that meet criteria for both state and federal listing. We also mapped two new occurrences in Mosman Park that meet the federal criteria for listing as a threatened ecological community. Next time you are on the top of a limestone ridge in the Swan Coastal Plain and think you have found a new occurrence drop us a line by emailing Urban Nature. This is a critically endangered threatened ecological community which is highly restricted, with little more than 200ha of known occurrences. We'd love to find, protect, and manage more of it.

Dalapon back on the market

After six years off the market, dalapon is commercially available again with delivery expected in early June. Dalapon, or 2,2-DPA is the first choice for selective herbicide for watsonia control because it causes very little off-target damage to bushland. Dalapon also controls grasses and can be used as an alternative to fluazifop as part of an integrated weed management system to avoid herbicide resistance in grassy weeds.



Small mammals and banksias in the kwongan – a unique pollination story under threat

Photo – Stan Wawrzyczek.

By Dr Stanislaw Wawrzyczek

The honey possum, endemic to Western Australia, is the only marsupial that feeds exclusively on pollen and nectar. This remarkable species depends entirely on flowers, with banksias as their major food source. Because of their close association with the flowers, honey possums are thought to be important pollinators. However, they're not alone in visiting banksia flowers. Other small mammals as well as birds and insects also visit and so the role of honey possums as pollinators is not so clear.

To determine whether an animal is an effective pollinator, researchers need more than just observations of that species visiting the flowers.

While observing small mammals foraging in the bush is challenging enough, researchers also need evidence that they carry pollen between plants and, ideally, that the plants produce fruit when other potential pollinators are excluded.

I studied the pollination ecology of ten banksias in one of their species-rich hotspots: the kwongan of the Northern Sandplain. This was the focus of my PhD project at La Trobe University in collaboration with Kings Park Science, the University of Western Australia and Edith Cowan University.

Sampling pollen from a pit-trapped honey possum to determine which plant species they visit and potentially pollinate. Photo – Stan Wawrzyczek.

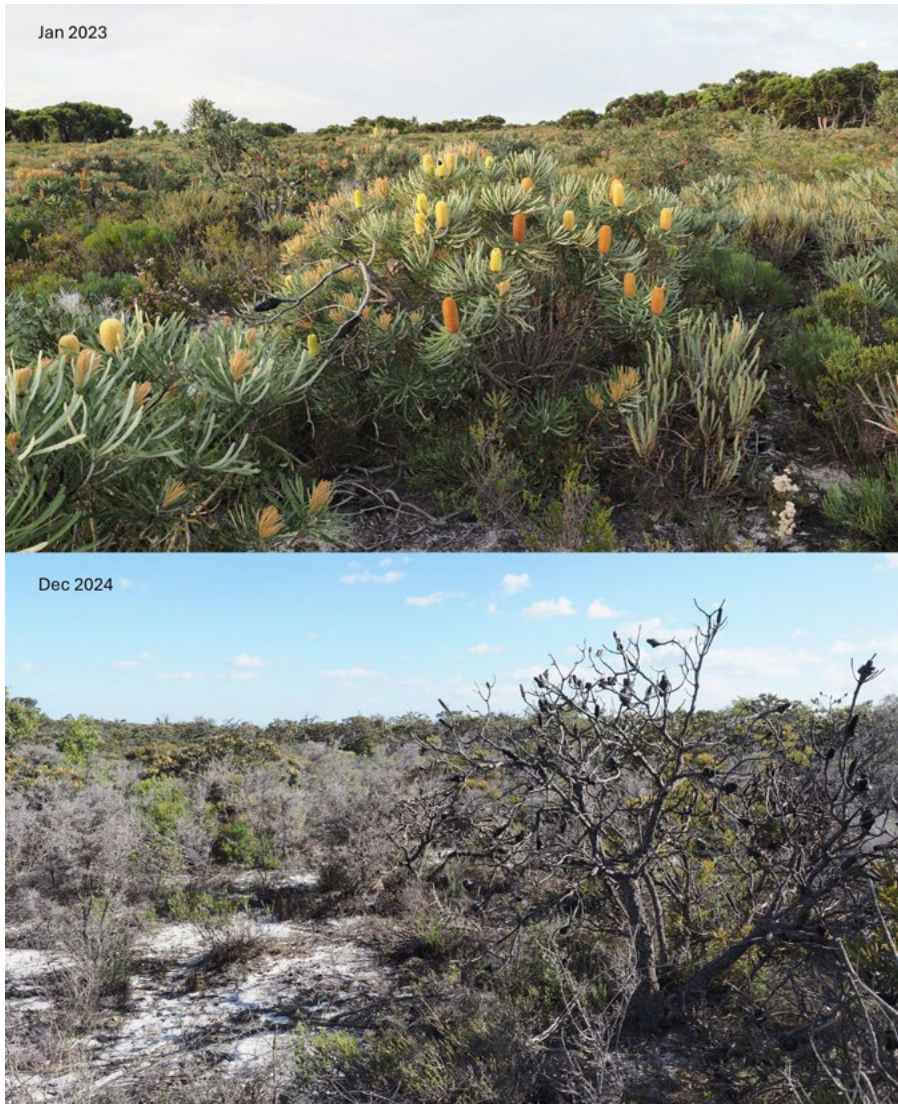
Continued next page ...

Ash-grey mouse pit-trapped in the field foraging at freshly collected inflorescence of Banksia subulata *in an experimental enclosure. This observation helped allow to ascertain these native rodents forage for nectar without damaging the flowers. Photo – Stan Wawrzyczek.*

Using camera traps, I found that honeyeaters, particularly the highly territorial white-cheeked honeyeater, frequently visited the flowers and likely were effective pollinators. However, a range of mammals also accessed flowers and carried pollen including the honey possum, ash-grey mouse, the introduced house mouse and two dunnart species.

Selective pollinator exclusion experiments, using cages and mesh nets to exclude one or another pollinator group, indicated that the mammals contributed significantly to the fruit set of five species. When I excluded mammals from the flowers, in most cases, fruit set was reduced. Feral honeybees also proved effective pollinators, while few native insects visited the flowers, likely because most of the study species flower in the cool, wet months of the year.

I also investigated whether the species most frequently visited by rodents had evolved specifically to attract them as pollinators by producing unusual floral scents. The mammals mostly visited species with low shrubby form and flowers hidden among foliage or close to the ground (geoflorous). Some of these species produced strong musky and pungent scents, in others the scent was more subtle. The scent of the species visited most frequently by mice, particularly the geoflorous *Banksia subulata*, included two unusual nitrogen-containing volatile compounds (nitroalkanes). Because these molecules are closely related to another compound that has been reported as a pheromone in rats, they may function specifically to attract rodents to the flowers.



The effects of severe drought on stands of Banksia attenuata *in Badgingarra National Park. Poor flowering and large number of banksias dying from heat stress could lead to sharp decline of local honey possum population in the coming years. The banksias will also be vulnerable to fire. Photo – Stan Wawrzyczek.*

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My studies revealed in unprecedented detail the remarkable interaction between Western Australian banksias and their mammalian pollinators. However, my results have implications for understanding the evolution of vertebrate pollination systems more broadly, with pollination systems involving both birds and mammals documented also in eastern Australia, South Africa and South America.

While biodiversity conservation themes were not at the forefront of my work, during field work I had the opportunity to closely observe the effects of climate change and fire on these study species and their plant communities. Based on the browning leaves, low flowering and high death rates, it's clear that the banksias in the Northern Sandplain are under stress from increasingly severe droughts and heatwaves. This is likely to translate to food shortages for honey possums, particularly during summer when floral resources are limited.

An important question will be how climate change interacts with fire to affect population persistence. *Banksia subulata*, for example, does not resprout after fire. Instead, it relies entirely on seeds stored in its canopy seed bank to recover. However, its seedbank is not long-lived, and the occurrence of fire following a period of poor flowering could lead to a rapid decline of this species. Because of this, it's important to survey the populations of *Banksia subulata*, assess the impacts of recent fires at Alexander Morrison National Park, and ensure a genetically-diverse seed collection is held ex-situ to safeguard this remarkable species

Contact

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Observations suggesting vulnerability of Banksia subulata *to fires following years of poor fruit set. A. Due to its geoflorous habit the canopy seedbank in* Banksia subulata *is located at the ground level making the fruit susceptible to rotting; B. Young infructescence on a branch; C. A degraded 3 or 4-year-old infructescence that is unlikely to contain viable seeds. D. Charred remains of* Banksia subulata *at a recently burnt site in Alexander Morrison National Park with a single seedling (arrowed) growing among the dead branches in August 2022. Photo – Stan Wawrzyczek.*

Bridal creeper management and control in Tenterden

By Dr Eddy and Donna Wajon

Background

We purchased a 46ha uncleared bush block in Tenterden and a 572ha previously cleared farm in Boxwood Hill in 2002. Our goal was conservation, environmental education, enjoyment and contributing to the Gondwana Link vision. We were the first to purchase land along the corridor specifically to advance the Gondwana Link concept.

The Tenterden property consists wholly of remnant vegetation, comprising jarrah, marri, wandoo and sheoak woodlands, and mallee heath with a proteaceous understory. A creek winds through the southern part of the property with fringing yate (*Eucalyptus cornuta*) and knotted club-rush (*Ficinia nodosa*), as well as glaucous goosefoot (*Chenopodium glaucum*) in the dry season.

Our property is home to 400 native plants, 300 native fauna and 150 native fungi species, but also contains 24 alien plant species, including bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*), a weed of national significance. This invasive species is a scrambling or climbing herb or vine that arises from a shallow tuberous root mass approximately 300-1500mm across. Each root mass has 1-10 thin stems with a short white, fleshy rhizome that seeks support by climbing up and over plants and tree trunks. It has creamy white flowers which mature into bright red berries. It grows throughout the property, however, the biggest infestation is in the 14.5ha, 1.3km long, 150m wide floodplain along the creek.

A bridal creeper infestation along the creek flood plain. Bridal creeper is the lime green twiner that is beginning to climb up the trunks of the trees. If left undisturbed it can smother the canopy and create a monoculture in the understory. Photo – Eddy Wajon.

Donna Wajonholding a bunch of bridal creeper . Bridal creeper has a woody rhizome which needs to be removed and disposed of. Photo – Eddy Wajon.

Initial removal strategy

Since day one, we have tried to manage and control bridal creeper. Initially, this consisted of opportunistic attempts to manually remove the entire tuber mat. In April 2003, this was augmented by deploying leaf hopper obtained from CSIRO Floreat, bred specifically as a biological control agent.

Following a fire that burnt the property in 2003, we presumed the leaf hoppers released earlier that year had not survived. We returned to digging up bridal creeper tuber mats because they were easier to spot on the burnt ground. In 2009 and 2010, we undertook a particularly intense period of digging, sometimes with the help of friends, removing 20–50kg of root mats during each visit.

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However, the physical effort and time required to remove all tuber mats was more than the two to six volunteers could manage. Even after we cleared a patch, seedlings often re-emerged from the soil.

Rust removal strategy trial

Rust has proven to be an effective bridal creeper management and control strategy in other parts of Western Australia. We trialled this method in 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2012 by spreading infected leaves in a number of locations along the creek. Although we initially saw some signs of rust infection on the bridal creeper leaves, it failed to spread or establish and was ultimately not successful in our removal strategy.

Hard at work spraying the invasive bridal creeper with metsulfuron among the yate trees on the floodplain. Photo – Eddy Wajon.

Eddy Wajon hand-pulling bridal creeper along the creek. Photo – provided by Eddy Wajon.

Preliminary herbicide removal trial

In 2003 and 2005, we trialled spot spraying and wiping glyphosate on leafy bridal creeper stems in small areas. In 2010, a small team spent a day spraying a mixture of glyphosate, metsulfuron and Pulse (a wetting agent) along the creek line. Low rates of metsulfuron spray application (0.02g/15L) during winter can provide good suppression of bridal creeper without harming native vegetation. However, our efforts produced poor results.

By the following year, plant numbers were unchanged. Spraying was time-consuming and physically demanding, with limited success. We resorted to digging up isolated mats in the upland native vegetation.

Stem pulling strategy

In 2020, we undertook a different strategy without the use of herbicides. This involved pulling every stem of bridal creeper from the creek floodplain. The aim was to weaken plants and dry out their tubers. We estimated it could take five to seven years to see results.

That year, a three-person team from the Denmark Weed Action Group, funded by a DBCA grant, joined us for the work. Over three sessions, five people pulled every visible stem along the creek line, working two to three seven-hour days.

In 2021, we self-funded and repeated the same effort with the same three-person team. Opportunistic monitoring in 2022 suggested that this strategy had resulted in little reduction in bridal creeper abundance and density. Considering the effort involved, this strategy was not likely to be successful or sustainable.

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Final herbicide strategy

In 2022, the Gillamii Centre through a South Coast NRM grant, funded full-scale spraying of bridal creeper along both sides of the creek flood plain using metsulfuron and Pulse. A three-person team used 15L back-pack sprayers, with water to transported in 50L drums on a motorised wheelbarrow, to minimise damage to the native vegetation.

Before spraying, we surveyed for native orchids which would be adversely affected by metsulfuron, and marked these off to ensure that spraying occurred at least five metres away.

Spraying took place in August–September 2022 as the bridal creeper started to flower. It took three people working five seven-hour days to complete the spraying. We monitored the area using 20 transects across the floodplain to determine the effectiveness of the spraying program, with pre-treatment monitoring in October 2022 and post-treatment monitoring in August 2023. Each individual location was marked with tape to be able to retrace the exact route for each transect and observers recorded all live bridal creeper plants within 500mm of the line.

A second round of spraying with metsulfuron occurred in October 2023, using a three-person team, working three seven-hour days.

A final post-treatment monitoring session was completed in October 2024. And during monitoring, any bridal creeper that was seen on or near the transect lines was sprayed with metsulfuron using a small spray bottle.

Results overview

Location	average reduction after year 1	average reduction after year 2	Total average reduction
North side	70%	72%	92%
South side	81%	93%	99%
Overall	78%	86%	97%

*Knotted club rush (*Ficinia nodosa*) sedgeland with yate trees in excellent condition along the creek line in an area protected from weed invasion. Photo – Eddy Wajon.*

The results indicated:

- The second year of spraying greatly improved results.
- The overall removal of bridal creeper after the two years of spraying was 97 per cent, with a greater overall removal on the south side of the creek than on the north side.
- Control was most successful in areas with the worst infestations.
- Only a few bridal creeper plants remained on or near transects in 2024, after two years of spraying.

Total bridal creeper plants recorded:

- Before spraying (October 2022): 1904
- After year 1 (August 2023): 413
- After year 2 (October 2024): 59

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What we've learned

The spraying program was a great success with a likely removal of up to 97 per cent of the bridal creeper. However, two years of spraying was required. The removal after the first year was insufficient, though the bridal creeper stems present were small with no evidence of flowering or fruiting. While spraying with herbicide was definitely the major reason for the successful control of bridal creeper, earlier stem-pulling efforts and two decades of vigilance likely helped reduce root mass and spread.

Although some bridal creeper persists, it's now at a level of infestation that can be controlled through regular patrols, spot-spraying with a small bottle carried on walks through the property and opportunistic hand-pulling in the floodplain and the upland dryland vegetation on the rest of the property.

Continual vigilance is required to achieve and maintain a bridal creeper-free property. Tubers may resprout and birds may introduce new seeds from eating berries from bridal creeper on adjacent properties. To partly address this, we are working with neighbours to undertake bridal creeper control on their properties.

Initial observations indicated that there was no obvious impact on orchids. However, the bridal creeper removal appears to have exposed or been replaced by soursob (*Oxalis pes-caprae*) and wavy glady (*Gladiolus undulatus*) infestations.

Other weeds such as South African orchid (*Disa bracteata*) and ursinia (*Ursinia anthemoides*) continue to be actively removed.

Weed control is never done.

*Understory plants like these giant donkey orchids (*Diuris amplissima*) are greatly at risk from bridal creeper. Photo – Eddy Wajon.*

Contact

Eddy Wajon
email wajonpub@bigpond.com

Enjoy a stroll along Olive Seymour trail at Herdsman Lake. Photo – Amber Kennedy.

Help shape Perth's regional parks

By Tanya Davis

We're looking for enthusiastic locals to join DBCA's Regional Parks community advisory committees.

The committees provide a regular forum to hear public opinion and exchange advice on management issues affecting the regional parks. There are eight regional parks in Perth, each with an active community advisory committee. These include Beeliar, Canning River, Herdsman Lake, Jandakot, Rockingham Lakes, Woodman Point, Darling Range and Yellagonga. Each regional park consists of various land tenures which are managed by DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service, other state government agencies and local governments. We are looking for individuals who can provide valuable insights on park management, including conservation, recreation, tourism, and cultural heritage. Your expertise will help guide DBCA and local governments in better managing our regional parks.

Meetings for each committee are held approximately four times per year on weekday afternoons or evenings and run for approximately 90 minutes. Meetings are held across the Perth metropolitan area within the locality of each regional park.

Community members are selected primarily based on expertise, experience, personal interest, and community networks. Memberships are for a period of two years. For more information or to request an EOI application form, please contact the community liaison officers. EOIs close midday on Wednesday 2 July 2025.

Contact

Tanya Davis or Marissa Minutillo
DBCA
email cacswanregionalparks@dbca.wa.gov.au
phone 9442 0300

AviFluMap: Collaborative tool launched to support Australia's response to H5 bird flu in wild birds

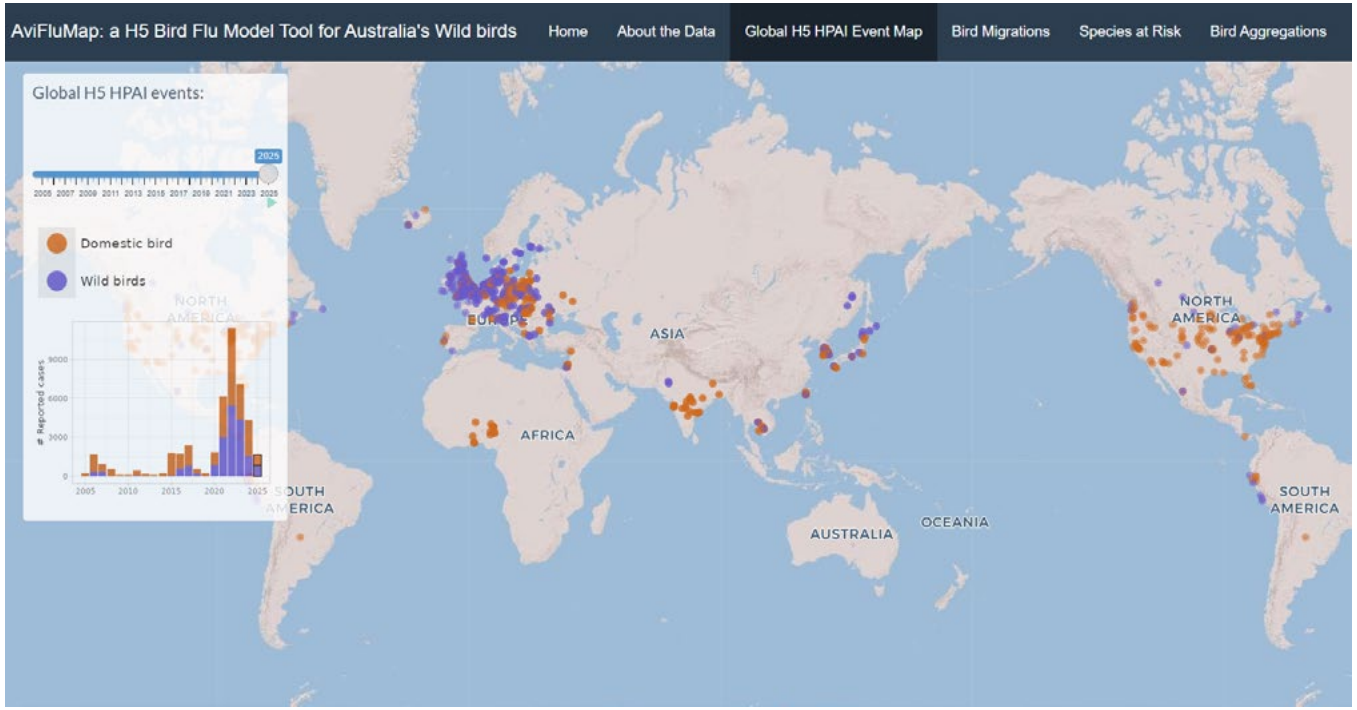
AviFluMap is a new online tool designed to support wildlife managers and biosecurity stakeholders in assessing and responding to the risk of H5 avian influenza (H5 bird flu) in Australia's wild bird populations.

Initiated by Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) and developed by Deakin University in collaboration with BirdLife Australia, AviFluMap is the result of extensive cross-sector collaboration with funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The project is also the result of international collaboration, with key input from the Alfred Wegener Institute in Germany.

The tool is built on a strong foundation of existing data and expert knowledge of wild bird ecology. AviFluMap integrates these multiple layers of information to provide a clear, evidence-based picture of known and emerging H5 bird flu risks.

AviFluMap:

- identifies and maps global sites where H5 bird flu outbreaks have recently occurred
- maps the migratory routes of wild bird species that may carry H5 bird flu to Australia
- pinpoints Australian locations where these birds are likely to arrive and where local wild bird populations reside to inform potential consequences of virus arrival and spread
- models the susceptibility of Australian bird species to H5 bird flu infection and associated sickness and death.



AviFluMap identifies global sites where H5 bird flu have occurred in the past 20 years with an animated model.

AviFluMap represents a national first: a tool specifically tailored to Australia's wild bird ecology and the associated threat of H5 avian influenza. The map supports H5 bird flu risk-based planning for jurisdictions involved in wildlife health, poultry industries and conservation.

Find out how to detect signs of avian flu and what to do.

Contact

Wildlife Health Australia
email admin@wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au

Please send us your regional report (400 words) and one or two photos by Monday 11 August 2025. Text may be edited in response to volume of submitted reports.

Protect Wooditjup Bilya project launches

By Trevor Paddenburg edited reprint with thanks from Nature Conservation

There is good news for the Margaret River, or Wooditjup Bilya, after Nature Conservation Margaret River Region succeeded in securing a new grant that boosts understanding and health of the waterway.

\We won a large grant, spanning four years, from The Ian Potter Foundation, a national foundation supporting charitable and not-for-profit groups working to benefit the community across a wide range of sectors and endeavours.

The new Protect Wooditjup Bilya project includes funding for:

- research
- on-the-ground efforts like fencing and weed control
- community engagement through events and accessible information.

It will also help coordinate the efforts of many agencies and organisations working in the Margaret River catchment. Furthermore, the funding facilitates a review of existing research to identify gaps in knowledge needed for effective conservation. This includes a better understanding of the water flow, quality and future of refuge pools. These pools remain over summer and are vital for wildlife.

Our project aims to use up-to-date research and proven methods to protect Wooditjup Bilya catchment's biodiversity. Community-focused initiatives taking root in coming months include a community planting day at a Rosa Brook rehabilitation site, featuring engaging speakers to promote sustainable practices benefiting the ecosystem and surrounding community.

Wooditjup Bilya is so important from a cultural, social and environmental perspective, but it's also one of the most important conservation priority areas for freshwater fish and crayfish in Western Australia's south-west region. Margaret River is experiencing a drying climate with rainfall down 20 per cent since 1970. The impact on stream flows and groundwater recharge is drastic. Last summer was a wake up to us all about how serious this is for our area. This is the time of year when our river pools—the last refuge for many animals—become low. The plants need rain. We must do what we can to keep water in our system, the water quality healthy, and minimise impacts on the fragile plants that grow near our river.

The importance of the river is echoed by Associate Professor Stephen Beatty, deputy director for the Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Ecosystems at Murdoch University, who gave several talks on the river at Nature Conservation events and describes the Margaret River as the 'jewel in the crown' of the region.

"Freshwater ecosystems occupy a tiny fraction of the Earth's surface but hold exceptional levels of biodiversity," A/Professor Beatty says. "And south-western Australia houses the highest proportion of endemic fish in Australia, known to be great consumers of nuisance midge and mosquitos. Unfortunately, we have the highest proportion of threatened endemic fish in the country due to habitat decline, invasive species and a drying climate. We need to better appreciate these wonderful animals and do more to address the multiple threats they face."

Nature Conservation's Programs Manager and Biodiversity Officer, Cass Jury. The Wooditjup Bilya project launches on a powerful mission of protecting our valuable and picturesque Maragaret River. Photo –Trevor Paddenburg.

Nature Conservation succeeded with its grant from The Ian Potter Foundation thanks to leverage from important seed funding from the Pater Foundation's Norman Pater and collaborations with partners including the Shire of Augusta Margaret River, the State NRM Community Stewardship Program and the Water Corporation.

The Ian Potter Foundation CEO Paul Conroy said the foundation is impressed by Nature Conservation's proactive and inclusive strategy. "Protect Wooditjup Bilya has a forward-looking approach, blending scientific research and stakeholder engagement, including grassroots community involvement," he said. "The concept of protecting intact, but threatened, ecosystems shows great foresight. This, combined with strong collaborative support from a range of delivery partners, including local and state government agencies, means this project has the potential to serve as an excellent model."

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Cockitrough®: Solution for a drying climate

By Stephen Szydlowski

An innovative bird watering station developed by the Town of Victoria Park is gaining traction with local governments and conservation groups across Western Australia. Cockitrough® is a four-metre-high elevated water trough. It offers safe, clean drinking water for birdlife, particularly threatened black-cockatoos. Its design includes multiple self-flushing troughs and jarrah perches. This reduces the risk of predation while supporting biodiversity in fragmented habitats.

Originally designed in 2018 and refined in 2020, Cockitrough® is now part of a growing initiative in local government urban forest strategies. As traditional water sources dry due to climate change and water abstraction, councils and conservation organisations are turning to low-maintenance, cost-effective solutions like the Cockitrough® to bolster ecological resilience. To date, we've sold more than 138 units and installed 120 across Perth. This equates to about 61 per cent of councils now adopting Cockitrough®.

Why Cockitrough® is spreading

1. They support urban forest strategies.

Cockitrough® complements local planting programs by providing a consistent water source that attracts local wildlife— especially during hot, dry periods. This helps reconnect fragmented habitats, rebuild wildlife corridors and promote a healthier urban ecosystem.

2. They restore biodiversity corridors.

When installed strategically, Cockitrough® help connect habitat patches, enabling birds and possums to move, pollinate and disperse seeds with more freedom across council boundaries.

3. They catalyse innovation and collaboration.

The initiative has sparked cross-sector collaboration. By providing a reliable source of drinking water, where birds can be easily seen, Cockitrough® supports monitoring of roosting sites for BirdLife WA's Great Cocky Count. At Amaris Wildlife Sanctuary a rope system enables both black-cockatoos (diurnal) and western ringtail possums (nocturnal) to safely share the same water source. Cockitrough® have also developed an off-grid solution that is solar-powered with water tanks.

4. They maximise urban greening outcomes.

Cockitrough® offer social and educational benefits, enhancing bird photography, eco-tourism and public engagement. In banksia woodlands like Jirdarup Bushland, visitors from across WA arrive to observe over 50 bird species in both a rehabilitated and remnant urban bushland setting.

Cockatoos waiting in a natural 'waiting room' for their turn for a drink. Photo – Georgina Wilson.

The Town of Victoria Park integrates Cockitrough® into its broader Urban Forest Strategy which involves planting 25,000–30,000 tube stock every year from locally collected seed. By combining food (local flora), water (Cockitrough®) and shelter (artificial hollows), the Town of Victoria Park is building layered urban ecosystems that serve both people and wildlife. As installations of this habitat enhancement spread across the southwest of WA, the Cockitrough® provides an urban forest-led solution to the complex challenge of wildlife conservation.

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In nature reserves

Regional Ecologist Dr Geoff Barrett says "DBCA supports the installation of elevated artificial water points for black-cockatoo conservation in the suburban landscape, close to feeding, roosting and breeding sites. Within the conservation estate DBCA works to protect natural waterways and wetlands that provide water for wildlife during the hot summer months."

Both red and white tail cockatoos enjoying a sip at a Cockitrough®. Photo – Georgina Wilson.

Five-star rating for Helena River's newest B&B – built for quenda!

By Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group with contributions from Amanda Bland and Bronwyn Scallan.

Creating safe havens for wildlife in urban areas is now more vital than ever—especially for the quenda, listed as a Priority 4 species by DBCA. With sparse groundcover in many developed areas, quenda are vulnerable to many predators. In response, the Helena River Iconic Community Rivercare Project began work in January 2024 to transform a section of riverbank into premium quenda habitat. The team removed woody weeds, extracted old fencing wire, selected key refuge sites, installed signage, cut refuge logs to size and ordered native plants.

Breaking news: New B & B opens for quendas on the Helena River. Ratings fly to five stars. Photo – Bronwyn Scallan.

Initial monitoring using DBCA's Western Shield fauna cameras—with the expert assistance of DBCA zoologist Dr. Michelle Drew—revealed the all-too-common presence of well-fed foxes prowling the riverbanks. This only reinforced the need for safe quenda refuges. Enter master architect David O'Brien, from the Shire of Mundaring , who shared his 'quenda B&B' blueprint.

The first five refuges were installed in October by officers from Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group, Chittering Landcare, Helena River Catchment Group, SERCUL and DBCA's Healthy Catchment Group, nestled among the 350 newly planted native species for added shelter and shade. Success didn't take long. A mere month after installation, the first quenda appeared on camera. Sightings increased from January to March, suggesting that the refuges are fulfilling their purpose. Other species spotted include goshawks, burrowing frogs, goannas, blue tongue lizards, magpies, kookaburras, ducks, parrots—and unfortunately, a few cats, dogs, rabbits and rodents too.

Then in April this year, 40 officers attending DBCA's Catchment Officers Support Network meeting constructed an additional five refuges and planted 300 more native plants. The cameras have been relocated to monitor these new habitat restoration sites.

Experts in the field—Triumphant specialist quenda hotel builders relax for a group photo. Photo – Roweena Hart.

While foraging, quenda help us by turning over large amounts of soil, providing a free composting and fire-mitigation service, protecting the river foreshore and bushland. We can help quenda by letting everyone know not to touch, feed, scare or handle wildlife. Furthermore, we educate owners on the importance of ensuring dogs are on leads when walking in bushland or near waterways.

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Abundant, diverse and rarely seen fauna recorded in annual Cockburn survey

By Michele Nugent edited reprint with thanks from the City of Cockburn

The near-threatened western false pipistrelle (*Falsistrellus mackenziei*), last recorded in Cockburn more than 30 years ago, is among the abundant and diverse native fauna recorded during surveys in bushland reserves in the City of Cockburn's eastern and central suburbs. The near threatened western false pipistrelle bat was recorded at Banksia Eucalypt Woodland reserve in Aubin Grove. The mammal is not commonly sighted in Perth and was last recorded in Cockburn in 1993, at the Harry Waring Marsupial Reserve in Wattleup.

Completed by independent consultants on a rotational basis at city-managed reserves, the surveys help manage local and conservation-level species and identify threats, including feral animals. The surveys conducted across the city's eastern and central suburbs are a part of the annual surveys commissioned by the city since 2019. The 2024 surveys recorded a diverse variety of native fauna, such as birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals of local and conservation significance.

Several other conservation-level species were observed in the surveys. These included Carnaby's black-cockatoo (*Zanda latirostris*), forest red-tailed black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii naso*) peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), rainbow bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*), Perth lined-slider skink (*Lerista lineata*) and quenda (*Isoodon fusciventer*). These species were observed at reserves in Aubin Grove, Banjup, Beeliar, Hammond Park, Success and Treeby. Several locally significant fauna observations included a diverse range of bird species and several first-time recordings of species not commonly detected on the Swan Coastal Plain. These included King's skink (*Egernia kingii*), southwestern cool skink (*Acritoscincus trilineatus*), and quacking frog (*Crinia georgiana*). Western grey kangaroo (*Macropus fuliginosus*) was observed at Clementine Park, Banksia Eucalypt Woodland Reserve and Frankland Reserve, demonstrating good ecosystem health and habitat connection.

City of Cockburn Acting Service Manager – Sustainability, Rafeena Boyle, said the surveys identified threats including cats, foxes, rabbits, rats and mice, plus opportunities for related community and landholder education. "Official records of our local wildlife demonstrate the importance of managing fauna, particularly those of conservation significance" Ms Boyle said. Ms Boyle further highlighted the significance of the surveys for guiding management of feral animals, such as fox and rabbit control, and encouraging responsible pet ownership, including keeping cats safely contained to preserve native wildlife.

Goulds snake enjoying its day in Frankland Park. Photo – City of Cockburn.

"Measuring fauna presence at particular reserves is a good indicator of how well a reserve is functioning as an ecosystem. It also demonstrates how well the city's bushland crew maintains these reserves which are highly valued by the local community and important for safeguarding all species.

It helps us plan weed management and revegetation to provide good quality habitat for fauna we want to attract and which already occur, including ways to create better habitat connections to nearby bushland reserves."

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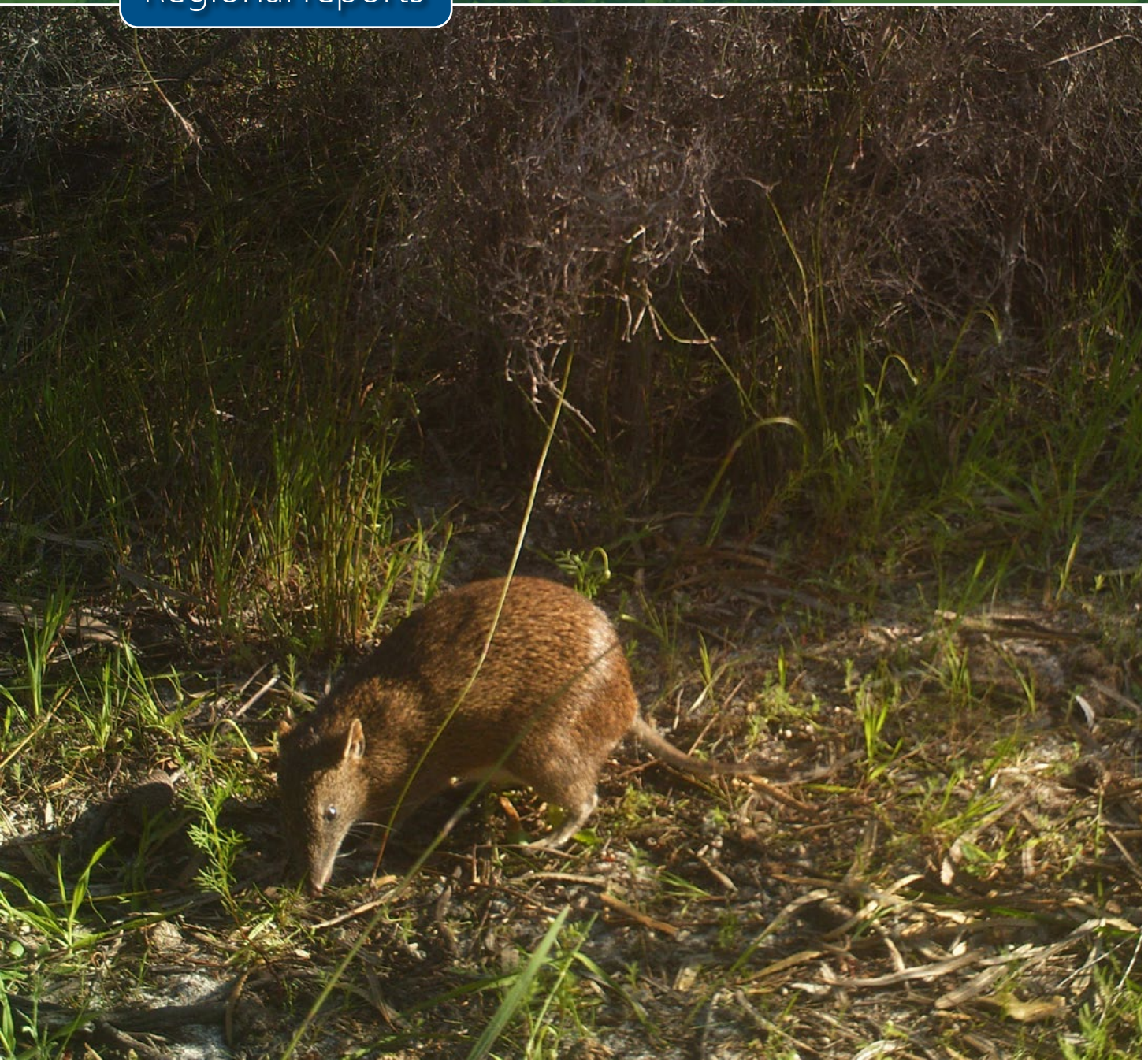

Quenda foraging for tasty treats in Clementine Park. Photo – City of Cockburn.

The city aims to re-survey its reserves every five years to monitor any changes in the fauna population. These findings underline the importance of ongoing conservation efforts to preserve the city's biodiversity.

Other reserve highlights include:

Banksia Eucalypt Woodland Reserve, Aubin Grove

- three amphibians, 17 reptiles, 13 mammals, 48 bird species
- 87 potential habitat trees, five potentially with hollows and 13 with hollows up to and over 10cm
- 26ha of potential feeding habitat for Carnaby and forest red-tailed black-cockatoo
- a high density of bat species, seven in total
- very high quenda population.

Frankland Reserve, Hammond Park

- two amphibians, 16 reptiles, 10 mammals, 26 bird species
- ten potential habitat trees, two may contain hollows, one with a hollow up to 10cm
- 19ha of potential feeding habitat for Carnaby and forest red-tailed black-cockatoo
- high microbat diversity, six species detected
- large flock of 16 Carnaby's black-cockatoos observed feeding
- peregrine falcon pair observed roosting in communications tower.

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Beeliar Reserve, Beeliar

- four reptiles, one mammal, 17 bird species in this small reserve with good range of fauna due to closeness to large remnant bushland
- seven habitat trees, one hollow suitable for forest red-tailed black-cockatoo breeding
- 1.3ha of potential feeding habitat for Carnaby and forest red-tailed black-cockatoo.

Bosworth Reserve, Banjup

- five reptiles, one mammal, 26 bird species in this small reserve with reasonable fauna, quality remnant vegetation and connectivity to other reserves
- one potential habitat tree
- 1ha feeding habitat for Carnaby and forest red-tailed black-cockatoo
- six new bird species recorded.

Clementine Park, Treeby

- five reptiles, four mammals, 30 bird species in this small reserve with potential to support diverse fauna
- ten potential habitat trees, four with hollows
- 9.5ha of potential feeding habitat for Carnaby and forest red-tailed black-cockatoo
- over 80 per cent of the reserve contains high quality banksia woodlands containing a rich and diverse shrub and low ground cover understory.

Emma Treeby Reserve, Banjup

- seven reptiles, one mammal, 32 bird species in this small reserve with reasonable fauna assemblage
- two potential roosting trees for forest red-tailed black-cockatoo
- 1.3ha of potential feeding habitat for Carnaby and forest red-tailed black-cockatoo
- presence of King's skink significant possibly due to urban development, that has likely reduced or obscured local populations
- rainbow bee-eater observed nesting in adjacent reserve.

Jubilee Park, Success

- six amphibians, one reptile, two mammals, 39 bird species at this small reserve with high amphibian and bird diversity
- 60 potential habitat trees, two with hollows, five with potential hollows
- 2.76ha of potential feeding habitat for Carnaby and forest red-tailed black-cockatoo
- quacking frog and southwestern cool skink detected.

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Wood swallow nest with three little eggs in Clementine Park. Photo – City of Cockburn.

As above, so below: looking out for the little (fun)guys *By Aaron Brace*

A lot of discourse regarding climate change, invasive species, and conservation rightly focuses on the visible and beautiful above-ground biodiversity—but what if there was a hidden element working behind the scenes, below ground?

Who are fungi?

Whilst most people will be aware of mushrooms sold in supermarkets, this is only the tip of the fungal diversity/species iceberg as those are only the reproductive structures. It is estimated that there could be more than nine million different kinds of fungi around the world. In fact, fungi outnumber plant species in the same environments. They have a wide variety of shapes and ways of life. Most fungi exist in their substrate as mycelium—small threads that can form huge underground networks as they hunt for food and water. These can stretch over tens of hectares and live for more than a thousand years.

Soil fungi play an important role in keeping our ecosystems healthy. They help break down dead plants and organic matter, assist plants in the uptake of nutrients and water, and can even affect the survival of different species making them vital for the balance and health of ecosystems.

A glimpse into the striking diversity of visible fungi found in southwestern Australia. Top left: Lentinellus pulvinulus, *Middle:* Phaeotrametes decipiens, *Top right:* Ramaria australiana. *The two fungi at bottom left and right remain unidentified but resemble various Australian* Boletus *species. Highlighting how tricky fungal ID can be!*
Photos - Aaron Brace/DBCA.

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Seeing the invisible

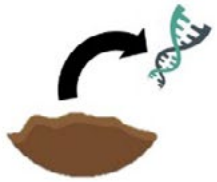
So, if fungi are often unseen, how can we catalogue them to inform conservation and management decisions? This is where the wonderful world of eDNA comes in. This molecular method can help us identify fungi after we have collected the soil and extracted DNA from it. It's a complex and lengthy process—people generally don't think of spreadsheets with millions of entries when you tell them that you study fungi! This simplified diagram outlines the whole process.

Ecosystem management is often 'visible problem' focused, but given how important our less-visible fungal species are, these need to be considered to aid in wholescale decisions. My recently completed PhD investigated the effects of fire and herbicide application on the soil fungi of banksia woodlands on Perth's Swan Coastal Plain. Aside from discovering a treasure trove of diversity with 3.5 million sequences across more than 20,000 unique fungi(!) I had also observed some effects that could aid in the conservation of our native ecosystems.

1. Sample collection

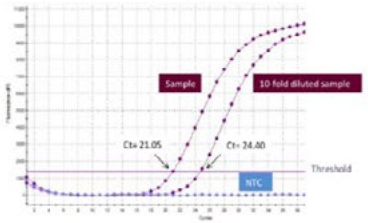
Collecting the soil – digging holes mostly

2. DNA extraction



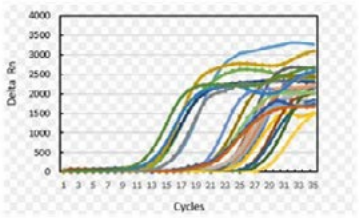
Extracting the DNA from soil – done in the laboratory

3. Untagged PCR



This will tell us how best to amplify the DNA and how much of it there is

4. Tagged PCR



This uses specific primers to target gene regions to give us fungi

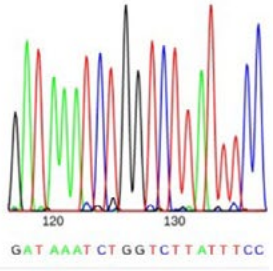
5. Pooling of samples

Pooling of similar length fragments

6. Creation of Library

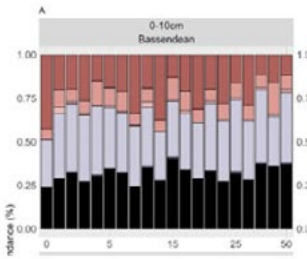
Mixing the pools together, so that all sequence lengths are represented equally

7. Sequencing



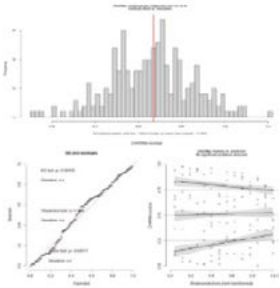
Samples are then sent to be sequenced which will give us all the DNA in the samples

8. Bioinformatics



Then the sequence data is processed, and the fungi are identified

9. Statistical analysis



This information can then be combined with other data and analysed

Some like it hot?

Fire is a well-known phenomenon in our part of the world, and, with researchers continuously investigating best management practices and fire regimes, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to dig a little deeper during my studies.

In 2019, the Yanchep wildfire burned more than 12,000ha. After the fire, the landscape was bleak, with only blackened trees and bare open ground and ash for several months. However, even in that stark environment, the tiny fungi in the soil showed a lot of activity, which we talk about in our 2024 paper. In the first year post fire, we can see that the soil fungal community is at its most active immediately after the fire and then that begins to decline throughout the year. Some fungi even seem to do better after a fire, showing pyrophilous (pyro=fire, philous=loving) tendencies.

We also studied prescribed burns, and found they triggered similar responses from these fire-loving fungi. However, when combined with other efforts to control invasive plants, these burns produced some interesting and promising results.

Delay the spray!

Using herbicides has become a common way to control invasive plants nowadays because they are easy to use, affordable, and often very effective. However, the global community is becoming increasingly cautious about their use. Many herbicides are now heavily monitored or even banned altogether. Our studies here continue the critical thinking about their use.

Some herbicides labelled as 'grass-specific' not only killed native plants we were testing alongside them but also reduced the abundance of soil fungi, based on tests in a glasshouse environment.
We also observed similar negative effects in real-world management efforts in Kings Park and Bold Park. Interestingly, these negative effects seem to be lower in areas that had been subject to a prescribed burn, suggesting that fire buffers fungal communities from herbicide.

One great outcome of our research was the finding that methods which are best for controlling invasive plants can also be good for the fungi living in the soil. This shows that in this case what happens above ground closely affects what is happening below, highlighting the close connection between plant life and soil fungi.

So, spare a thought for the little fun-guys underfoot, you might not be able to see them, but there are a lot of them, and they are putting in the hard work!

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Yanchep National Park in January 2020, one month post fire (above). Whilst pretty bleak-looking, there is much going on in the soil, and, in a couple of months, the greenery returned (below). Photos – Aaron Brace/DBCA.

Perth skyline peeps through the clouds to the south of Herdsman Lake. Photo – Friends of Herdsman Lake.

Friends of Herdsman Lake

Friends of Herdsman Lake working together for conservation and community

By Grace Patorniti

Herdsman Lake, otherwise known as Noogenboro or Ngurgenboro, is situated in Whadjuk Noongar boodja. It is a cultural and natural gem in the urban landscape. This lake was, and continues to be, a place of cultural importance to Whadjuk Noongar people. Historically, it was a source of food and water, as well as a gathering place. Today, it stands as the largest wetland within Perth's inner metropolitan region, supporting a diversity of native wildlife including over 150 species of birds. These birds include black swans, purple swamphens, little grassbirds and clamorous reedwarblers. Furthermore, Herdsman Lake is home to several reptile species such as snake-necked turtles and tiger snakes.

In recent times, people used the land for agriculture, market gardening, drainage systems, landfill and dredging for surrounding urban development. In 1997, the Western Australian Government declared Herdsman Lake and surrounding areas as Herdsman Lake Regional Park. This regional park spans approximately 400ha and includes Herdsman Lake, Glendalough Open Space (13ha) and Glendalough Reserve (0.8ha).

Friends of Herdsman Lake (FoHL) is a community-based volunteer group. The group takes an active role in conserving the biodiversity of the regional park. Originally formed in early 2015, the group undertook significant conservation work within Glendalough Reserve. However, after a couple of successful years the group went into hibernation. In late 2022 the idea of reviving the group gained momentum. Thanks to the support from DBCA, WA Gould League and enthusiastic backing from our local community, we relaunched FoHL in April 2023. Since then, a dedicated group of volunteers come together on the first Saturday of every month, from April to November, to undertake a variety of management activities across Herdsman Lake Regional Park. The group's aim focuses on improving the biodiversity of the park's bushland areas, while increasing our understanding and enjoyment of the park. By strengthening our connection with nature, we hope to inspire more people to appreciate and protect our natural environment.

Several members of Friends of Herdsman Lake appreciating a well-deserved cuppa after a working bee at Glendalough Reserve. Photo – Friends of Herdsman Lake.

We continue conservation efforts at Glendalough Reserve with the support of DBCA and WA Gould League, along with funding through the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program. With secured funding, we've been able to plant more than 3000 seedlings and engage a contractor to carry out woody weed control. These efforts improve the bushland's health. Funding from previous Commonwealth Department of Social Services' volunteer grants enabled us to organise an educational Wildlife Awareness Workshop for our group, with a spotlight on tiger snakes. This workshop provided helpful information on how to coexist with these creatures, highlighting the importance of respecting wildlife in their natural habitats. Herdsman Lake is home to Perth's largest population of venomous western tiger snakes, making the workshop invaluable. If you come across them on a walk around the lake, back away slowly from the snake to give it space and leave it alone.

Friends of Herdsman Lake are a social group that has slowly grown over the last two years. Our monthly activity day typically consists of a working bee, which could be weeding, planting, litter clean-ups or even a talk that is followed by a social cuppa and any news or updates. These activity days help us achieve our environmental goals and bring the local community together. The group is registered with DBCA, through which we receive uniforms, training opportunities and funding for tools. This support enables us to carry out our activities, ensuring that our volunteers are well-equipped and knowledgeable.

We welcome new members and seek enthusiastic people who share our interest in conservation and community.

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Nature and nurture – Friends of Herdsman Lake weeding around the seedlings at Glendalough Reserve. Photo – Friends of Herdsman Lake.

Capture the moment with bird photography courses at Eyre Bird Observatory

By Jaimee Nobbs

Bird enthusiasts and keen photographers alike are invited to immerse themselves in the wild beauty of Eyre Bird Observatory (EBO) during one of two upcoming bird photography workshops, held across 9–15 and 16–22 November 2025.

EBO is run by BirdLife Australia and is dedicated to the study and conservation of birdlife in the region. Courses like this support their long-running bird monitoring programs and help foster community appreciation for bird conservation.

Facilitated by renowned bird photographer, Keith Lightbody, each course offers participants close opportunities to photograph birds at the bird baths. There are also walks through mallee woodlands, dune shrublands and the beach, with plenty of chances to photograph birds and contribute to the observatory's valuable beach counts. Beginner bird watchers will be supported in learning key identification skills, while photographers of all levels will benefit from Keith's expert guidance on technique, camera settings, and choosing the best vantage points.

A pink cockatoo in flight carrying eucalypt flowers. The pink cockatoo can travel long distances in search of seasonal food sources, making it a special sighting at Eyre Bird Observatory. Photo – Keith Lightbody.

A parent feeding a chick pink cockatoo at the Eyre Bird Observatory. Chicks are fed a diet of seeds, fruits and other plant matter that has been regurgitated by its parents until it has fledged around six to eight weeks of age. Photo – Keith Lightbody.

Situated in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve, EBO offers a unique coastal setting where mallee woodlands, dune shrublands and sweeping beaches converge—providing the perfect opportunity to photograph both common and rare bird species.

Evenings will feature relaxed presentations using the EBO laptop and projector, where bird calls and identifying marks for each bird will accompany the day's photos. Instruction will also be available for those wanting help processing their images.

You'll need to bring your camera equipment, with spare batteries, memory cards and a backup device recommended. A laptop is handy if you plan to work on your photos during the course.

Whether you're looking to sharpen your photography skills or simply enjoy the quiet thrill of observing birds in their natural habitat, this is an ideal way to learn, connect and explore on the edge of the Nullarbor.

Each six-night course is designed for a maximum of eight participants and includes accommodation, all meals and daily tuition ($940 per person). Please note: the last 10km to EBO is 4WD only but people attending a course can arrange a lift from the scarp carpark with the EBO caretakers.

Bookings are essential. To learn more or reserve your place, visit the Eyre Bird Observatory website

Australian Wildlife Society Conservation Group grants fund up to three groups yearly, specialising in wildlife conservation and the preservation of wildlife habitats. Applications **accepted year-round**.

Australian Wildlife Society
Conserving Australia's Wildlife since 1909

Emergency Actions for Threatened Species offers funding towards preventing new extinctions of native plants and animals. Grant proposals **are open now**.

PHCC fencing and revegetation of rural drains and waterways is available for property owners in the Peel-Harvey Catchment to aid with fencing (up to $4,500/km) and revegetation (up to $15,000/ha) to improve the water quality of the Peel-Harvey Estuary. Expressions of interest **open now**.

Australian Government
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation
The ILSC GROUP

PEOPLE. COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITY.

The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation funds land acquisition or management projects that deliver benefits to Indigenous Australians through the **Our Country Our Future Program**. This includes on-ground activities to maintain or improve the condition of Country (land, water, biodiversity, and cultural heritage). Applications **year-round**

Lotterywest Grassroots Community-Led Grants fund community efforts to care for, sustain and enhance local biodiversity. Applications **open year-round**.

Harvey Water provides funds to support sustainable solutions, and management practices in the communities of Harvey, Waroona, Dardanup, and Collie. Applications **open now**.

HARVEY WATER

PHCC Working Together

Cannon Oceania supports organisations whose work focuses on enhancing sustainability and environment through science and art. Applications grants **open 11 June**.

The Swan Canning Riverpark Urban Forest program provides funding to public land managers for the lessening the impact drainage lines on the fauna, and water quality of an ecosystem, as well as revegetation projects. Approach your public land manager to partner in projects. Applications **accepted year-round**.

Purves Environmental Fund gives funding to projects focusing on the mitigation for the exploitation of natural resources and the protection of freshwater habitats. Applications **open year-round**.

PURVES ENVIRONMENTAL FUND

Feliman Foundation offers support to organizations doing on ground conservation projects, as well as organisations raising environmental awareness. Applications **open year-round**.

Santos aims to provide funding to reduce carbon emissions and to enhance the efficiency of renewable energy. Applications **open year-round**.

Local government and place-based community grants. These local governments and groups provide small grants to their communities which may fund environmental management and restoration projects. Eligibility varies. Broome Quick Response **open year-round**, Busselton **close 13 June**, Cockburn **close 31 July**, Derby/West Kimberley **open year-round**, Gosnells **close 24 each month**, Swan **close 31 July**, South Perth **open year-round**, Wanneroo **open year-round**.

an echidna train this winter

By Rebecca Dassens

The short-beaked echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) is an enigmatic monotreme known for its solitary lifestyle, spiky defences, and a rather unusual courtship behaviour—the echidna train, which occurs during the breeding season (May to September).

An echidna train is prolonged courtship behaviour in which a single female is trailed closely by multiple males, forming a head-to-tail procession.

Triggered by the female's release of pheromones, trains may consist of two to 11 males (typically 3–4), for sometimes up to six weeks. Males may nudge her gently on the side or tail as part of the courtship ritual which is believed to stimulate the female's fertility hormones. As time goes on, males drop out of the train due to fatigue, being outcompeted, or catching the scent of another female, until only the most persistent contenders remain. Once the female is ready, she mates with only one male.

Interested to know more and contribute to echidna research as a citizen scientist? Check out Echidna CSI, take a photo of any sightings, and even post in some poo.

Photo – Ian Fraser.