

# THE GECKO



Edition 19  
April 2018

Welcome to the April 2018 edition of The Gecko.

Late summer and early autumn are generally quiet times in the bushland. The bulk of the wildflowers have finished and the birds are quiet after saying goodbye to this season's brood. But there is always

something happening, no matter how quiet it first appears.

Two new species were added to our fauna list for the bushland and some fascinating trapdoor behaviour was photographed.

## January to March 2018

### **27 January 2018**

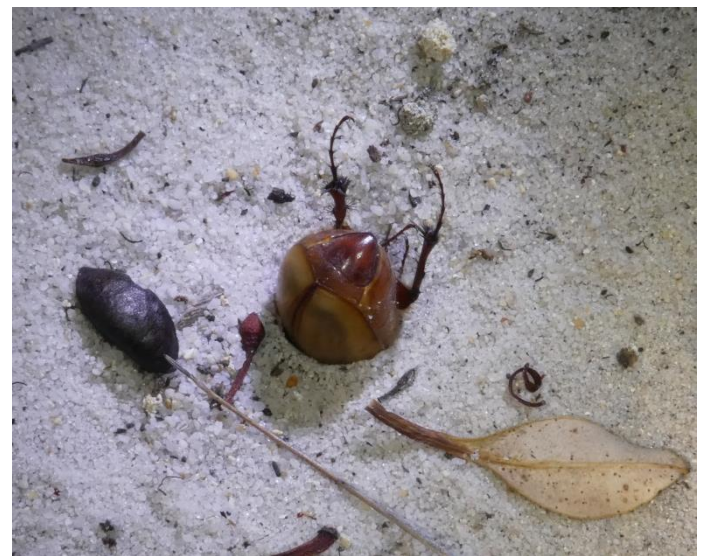
Fifteen members came along to a night stalk this fine and still evening.

We found a species of native cockroach we had not previously recorded in the bush, three frogs and many wolf spiders. We also got to see two different species of huntsman spider and a trapdoor spider.

We were able to entice the trapdoor to the edge of its burrow by pretending to be dinner. The spider would come up to grab its prey, realise it had been duped and disappear back down.



Another trapdoor spider we came across had already got itself dinner. But it looked like it had bitten off more than it could chew. The beetle it had captured and started to pull into its burrow was too big to fit.



A beetle being pulled into a trapdoor's burrow.

Not many insects were attracted to the light trap. Just as well, as we had a delicious supper to end the evening, thanks to Rosemary, Katrina and Kade.

### **25 February 2018**

Our AGM was a pleasant affair where we adopted new rules, thanked our outgoing committee and elected a new one. The committee is now:

Chairperson: Sian

Vice Chairperson: Kade

Secretary: Jelena

Treasurer: Sian

Ordinary committee members: Katrina and Collette.

### 10 March 2018

SERCUL held a 'thank you' breakfast for volunteers and seven of our members attended. We all had a great time eating delicious food and chatting to like-minded people.

Also present was Stephen Dawson, Minister for Environment, who gave his time freely to speak with anyone who wanted a chance to influence the future.



Enjoying breakfast at SERCUL.

### 17 March 2018

Six members of CRREPA (Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association) were welcomed to our patch for our third information exchange visit.

We started by looking at photographs of the straight drain surrounded by *Watsonia*, discussed the transformation and marvelled at what it is today – a large lake system supporting a variety of plants and animals.

Discussion then moved to the problems of *Persicaria*, a weed that almost smothered the lake, and what the City did to remove it.



Discussing how the lakes came into being and the problems with *Persicaria*.  
Photograph courtesy of S Stanley.

A wander through the *Banksia* woodland, albeit with very few wildflowers on show, was enjoyed by all. This was made more enjoyable when a Little Eagle started circling overhead and later when we came across a Bobtail crossing the path.

Photographs of what the site was like 20 years ago were essential to properly tell the story of all that has been achieved. Without them it would be difficult to convince visitors that the bushland hasn't always looked as good as it does now. You can see some of these photos on the last page of this newsletter.

A big THANK YOU goes to Addy, Barbara M, Cat, Collette, Florian, Janelle, Jason, Jelena, Joe, Kade, Katrina, Koda, Michael, Ronnie, Rosemary, Sara, Shirley, Sian, Silus, Stephanie and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

## Upcoming events

April – Weeding  
May – To be advised  
June – To be advised

Details of some activities are yet to be finalised but will be distributed by email and advertised on our website.

## Also this quarter

**Following on from** the December 2017 photograph of a cat in our bushland, trapping was conducted in January and February. Two cats were caught and impounded by the City of Canning. If they can be identified, by collar and/or microchip, the owner/s will be contacted. If they can't be identified they will be assessed for rehoming or destroyed.



One of the cats caught by the City of Canning.

If you have cats visiting your property you can borrow a cat trap from the City of Canning. Once caught, the City's rangers will visit you and impound the cat. To save your cat from the trauma of being trapped make sure it doesn't stray from your home.

**Treatment for dieback** happened in several of our reserves during January and February. The trees in the dieback infected areas were injected with phosphite and the understorey vegetation was sprayed. With any luck this will keep the trees healthy until the next treatment.



Trees being injected with phosphite.

You can help stop the spread of dieback by keeping to the paths and making sure your shoes are clean of dirt as you move in and out of the diseased areas. The disease can be spread via the soil picked up in the tread of your shoes – so keep them as clean as possible.

Dieback is not only damaging to the natural bushland. It can also infect your garden and kill your treasured plants, including many fruit trees, camellias and roses.

**University of Melbourne was collecting flies** from our bushland in February. A man, let's call him "John" (his real name is not known), was seen using a sweep net in the small patch of bushland near the intersection of Gibbs Street and Elizabeth Street.

Upon questioning, "John" revealed that he was collecting flies of the genus *Drosophila*, the same genus that contains fruit flies. Some native *Drosophila* sp. carry particular anti-parasitic bacteria.

This bacterium, if it infects mosquitoes, will stop the mosquito being able to transmit Dengue Fever.

"John" was collecting flies from different locations around Perth, and other places in Australia, to see where to get the most effective bacteria. The best bacteria will then be bred up and used to infect mosquitoes.

It is good to know that our bushland can be used in the fight against disease.

**Two new vertebrate species** have been added to our list this quarter.

A Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen gliding over the bushland in January and a Marbled Gecko was spotted (and photographed) in March.

Even after two decades of recording the species using our bushland, new species are still being discovered.



Marbled Gecko.

### **Tuesday group**

You are welcome to join the Tuesday group on a casual basis or as a regular commitment. We are currently meeting at 9am with the location being determined each week depending on what needs to be done. This quarter the Tuesday group has been busy weeding, seed collecting and watering.

Contact Sian at [fqpbushland@gmail.com](mailto:fqpbushland@gmail.com) to find out where and when to meet for this group.

# Then and Now

There is nothing like looking through old photographs to get a sense of how much the bushland has changed and how much we have achieved. The following images take us through the transformation of the wetland near Station Street. Beginning as a straight drain and developing to what it is now – a thriving environment home to many dozens of species of plants and animals.



Left - Standing on Station Street, looking along the straight drain towards Welshpool Road.

May 2000

Right - Standing in the same spot 18 months after the lakes have been dug and one year after the first planting.

August 2002



Left – Another ten years later and the vegetation has completely filled the field of view.

August 2012