

THE GECKO



Edition 18
January 2018

Welcome to the January 2018 edition of The Gecko.

As mentioned last quarter, the Black-winged Stilts have returned and are now raising three babies. They are very protective of their young and will dive-bomb you if you go anywhere near the lakes.

And they may actually drop a 'poop bomb' in your direction if they get really agitated. It is best to keep your mouth closed, just in case.



A young Black-winged Stilt is guarded by a parent.

October to December 2017

29 October 2017

Nine members met to help water one of our revegetation areas. After the watering, we were meant to be doing a bit of weeding, but the wildlife was too prolific for us to concentrate on weeds so the rest of the session became a bug hunt.



Watering the seedlings.

Many insects were spotted on our larger seedlings. These are seedlings that were planted three years ago and are now taller than any of us. It is good to know that our plants are supporting the local wildlife.



This praying mantis is waiting for a meal.

There were also several skinks darting in and out of cracks and crevices in the logs surrounding our seedlings. The logs make ideal homes for the skinks. The cracks provide protection from predators while the log surface is an ideal place to catch the sun's rays.



Skinks kept an eye on the proceedings.

24 November 2017

A perfect evening saw thirteen members gather to water our seedlings and go on a night stalk.

We saw our first beasties while watering the seedlings and discussed at length the Crusader Bugs that had hatched on, and were now eating, our *Jacksonia sternbergiana* seedlings. To be fair, the jacksonias are now 1-2m tall and can handle a bit of munching, so we looked, admired and left them to it.



Looking at Crusader Bugs on *Jacksonia sternbergiana*.

Thanks to Stephanie's keen eye, the nightstalk revealed several species that we had not recorded before. Possibly the most impressive was a stick insect found in the foliage of a Marri, *Corymbia calophylla*. As it was so hard to see in the leaves, it was coaxed down for a closer view.



Podacanthus keyi, Key's Stick Insect.

There was a katydid at our light trap that appeared to be trying to make a meal of other insects drawn to the light. Interestingly, we have only ever seen this insect in November and we have only ever seen males. Females don't have wings so are harder to spot.

This species of katydid is only found in the Perth region, so when we see this insect we are looking at

something that nobody else in the world can see in the wild. What better reason can we have to look after our natural areas?



Andrea's Balloon-winged Katydid, *Tympanophora andreae*

The largest beetle we've ever seen was also at the light trap. Not only was this beetle big, it was adorned with an impressive set of spines on its legs. Needless to say, nobody felt the need to pick up this specimen.



This unidentified beetle was about 6cm long.

After marvelling at the variety of insects drawn to the light we were then treated to a delicious supper courtesy of Katrina and Kade.

Thankyou everyone who attended for your company, critter-spotting abilities and for asking questions. Without you it would just have been a walk in the dark.

27 December 2017

Six people, including two visitors from India, helped water the seedlings in our revegetation area on this fine day.

A surprise find while watering was a Burton's Legless Lizard. These lizards have a pointed snout allowing them to move with ease through leaf litter in search of their favourite prey – other lizards.



Burton's Legless Lizard, *Lialis burtonis*.
Photograph courtesy of Kade.

Easily mistaken for a snake, this lizard was found hiding in the leaf litter that had accumulated around one of our seedlings. We all gathered around the spot, but only Cat and Kade had the good fortune of seeing the lizard. Luckily for us, Kade took a photo.



Rushing to see the legless lizard.
Photograph courtesy of Yogesh.

Watering was followed by some seed collecting but we were distracted by all of the insects on the *Astartea scoparia*. Two species of jewel beetle were spotted as well as a multitude of native bees.

A big THANK YOU goes to Addy, Anita, Barbara M, Cat, Florian, Jelena, Kade, Katrina, Koda, Margaret, Ronnie, Rosemary, Royce, Sara, Sian, Siew, Stephanie, Yogesh and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

Upcoming events

January – Watering and seed collecting
February – Annual general meeting
March – To be decided

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

Also this quarter

Three new designs have been added to our suite of greeting cards, thanks to a Small Community Grant from the City of Canning.

The new designs have been met with 'oohs' and 'ahhs' from everyone who sees them so hopes are high that they sell well.

The staff at the Canning River Eco Education Centre (CREEC), where the cards are sold, like them so much they arranged for them to appear on the City's facebook page.

Thank you City of Canning and CREEC.



The three new greeting cards stand in front of the existing ten.

Some of the feral honeybee colonies in our bushland were dealt with by the City of Canning's Pest Controllers.

Feral honeybees take over hollows and eat the nectar that could be used by native animals. Left unmanaged, they have the potential to cause the local extinction of many species.



Feral honeybee hive being destroyed by a City of Canning officer.

Bollards will soon be installed along Gibbs Street. This area, which is earmarked to become a sports ground in the future, is a favourite area for rubbish dumpers and joy riders. The bollards should help reduce access and the anti-social behaviour associated with the area.

Thanks to Councillor Sara Saberi for putting forward the suggestion and to the City of Canning for following through.

We set up a camera trap in one of our reserves between Christmas and New Year and saw a cat. Our reserves have been designated as cat prohibited areas by the City of Canning in order to help protect the wildlife.

Our photograph will be sent to the City with a request to do some cat trapping. Cats trapped will be reunited with their owners (after the payment of any applicable fines), put up for adoption if their owner can't be found or destroyed if deemed feral.



Tuesday group

You are welcome to join the Tuesday group on a casual basis or as a regular commitment. We have now split into two units with each team meeting at a different time. The weeding group is currently meeting at 8am while the watering team meets fortnightly at 9am. This quarter the Tuesday groups have been busy weeding, seed collecting and watering.

Contact Sian at fqpbushland@gmail.com to find out where and when to meet for these groups.

Summer insects

There are a lot of insects out and about over summer. The hardest part about watching them is saying goodbye.



Scarab beetle grub



Scarlet Percher, *Diplacodes haematodes*



Castiarina pallidiventris



Podalonia tydei suspiciosa



Garden Praying Mantis, *Orthodera ministralis*



Megachile aurifrons