

THE GECKO



Edition 30
January 2021

Welcome to the January 2021 edition of The Gecko.

We hope you had a Merry Christmas and wish you all the best for the New Year.

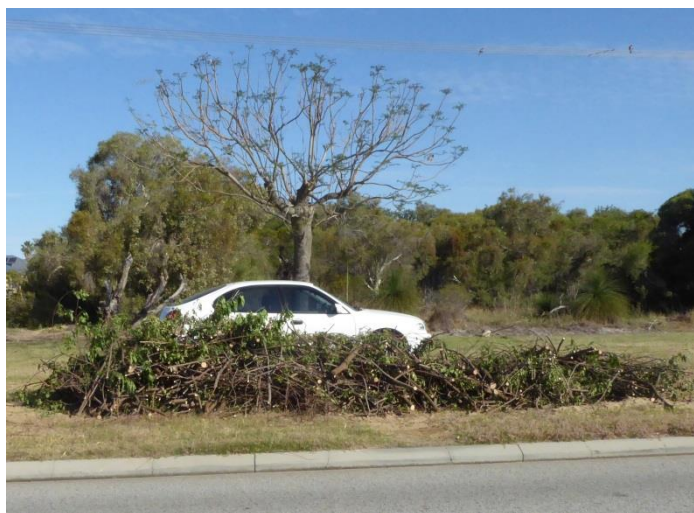
The State Football Centre is the dominant topic during gatherings this quarter. We now have access to more detailed plans and so have a better idea of what to expect. Public comment is currently being sought regarding the development application so see page 4 for details.

October to December 2020

25 October 2020

As is so often the case, our activity day fell on the hottest day of the month. Even though it was forecast to hit 34C, eight people came to remove some Japanese Peppers, *Schinus terebinthifolia*, from one of our reserves. These are an introduced species of tree with small, red berries that are readily spread by birds.

There was a green waste pick-up beginning the following day so we were able to negotiate with the City of Canning to leave the cut branches on the verge. What's more, we were permitted to leave twice the normal amount of vegetation to be collected.



The Japanese Pepper branches ready for collection.

In 1½ hours we were able to cut and move our allotted 12m³ to the verge and put more aside to be collected by the City of Canning's Natural Area Team (NAT). The NAT later cut the trees to ground level and poisoned the stumps to ensure the trees don't regrow.

Due to the number and size of the trees present, removing all of the Japanese Peppers from this reserve will be an ongoing task. But with the effort from everyone today, we are that little bit closer to getting rid of them.

Special thanks must go to Tracey, from Martin's Environmental Services, who volunteered her skills with the chainsaw. And thanks to Rosemary and Kade for supplying morning tea.



Tracey, Martin's Environmental Services, cuts into a wall of Japanese Peppers.

27 November 2020

Our night stalk was attended by 11 enthusiastic supporters eager to find out what critters come out after dark.

Some of our first sightings, however, were of dragonflies that are active during the day. We were lucky enough to see them sleeping – which was pleasing as during the day they would normally fly away before we got near enough to have a good look.

We were delighted to find two different species of huntsman spider on the same tree and low enough for everyone to see them easily. Orb weaving spiders were regularly spotted, with some requiring tricky manoeuvres to get around their web, which had been strung across the path.

We also found a scorpion and a centipede. But possibly the most exciting find was that of a Spiny-tailed Gecko. It was a little nervous with all the attention but posed nicely so that everyone got to see it.



Southwest Spiny-tailed Gecko, *Strophurus spinigerus*.

Pie-dish Beetles were found in great numbers with this night appearing to be the one to go out and find a mate.



Mating pie-dish beetles, *Pterohelaeus* sp.

A nice surprise awaited us at the light trap. These insects were once believed to have luminous snouts and so were called Lanternflies. The truth is that they are not luminous and are not even flies. They are plant-hoppers and probably suck the juices from plants to feed.



A Lanternfly, family Fulgoridae.

You can see more photos from the night stalk on page 5 at the end of the newsletter.

29 December 2020

Eight members met on what was forecast to be a 39C day to water our seedlings. It was pleasing to see so many plants not only surviving, but thriving.

Of interest were the seedlings planted in the area that had our experimental lupin planting. Did they look bigger and healthier than the seedlings outside of the lupin area? Or is it our imagination? Only time will tell.



Watering the seedlings.

A big THANK YOU goes to Addy, Barbara, Clare, Clive, Frank, Ian, Jackie, Jake, Kade, Katrina, Koda, Ronnie, Rosemary, Shirley, Sian, Siew, Song, Tracey and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

Upcoming events

January – To be confirmed
February – AGM
March – To be confirmed

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

Also this quarter

The City of Canning's Natural Areas Team (NAT) conducted cat trapping in our reserves. Over seven nights of trapping they caught three cats. They were taken to the City of Canning's cat management facility where their owners were attempted to be identified and contacted. Their photographs were also displayed on the City of Canning's [website](#) but, if nobody claimed them, they will have been rehomed or destroyed.



Cat number 1 in a cat trap.

The NAT is able to trap cats in all of the bushland areas in order to help protect the wildlife. This means cat owners should ensure that their cat doesn't go into the reserves. Any cat in the reserves is at risk of being trapped and impounded.

Also, 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 being trapped, make sure it doesn't stray from your home.



Cat number 2 in a cat trap. Photo: Janelle.

The Southwest Group, made up of six local government areas in the south-west of Perth, has developed a webpage about domestic cats called Happy at Home - <http://www.southwestgroup.com.au/natural-resource-management/happyathome/>

This page aims to educate people of their responsibilities as being a cat owner and demonstrate how keeping their cat at home benefits both the cat and native wildlife.



Cat number 3 in a cat trap. Photo: Janelle.

There was a fire in one of our reserves on 26 November. Fortunately, the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team (NAT) was nearby and immediately called the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) for assistance.



The fire when the NAT first arrived.

Before the fire engines arrived, the NAT was able to use the water they had on board their spray unit to calm the flames. The professional fire fighters arrived just as the NAT ran out of water and finished the job of extinguishing the flames.

It is not known how the fire started. We're just glad the NAT was there to call DFES and start work on it.



DFES work on the fire.

If fire wasn't bad enough, our trees were also the victims of vandalism. More than a dozen trees, some with trunks around 15cm in diameter, were felled over a couple of weeks.

It appears that an axe, or similarly bladed tool, was used to cut the trees down. There doesn't appear to have been any purpose to the act as the trees were just left where they fell.

If you see anyone walking around in the bush (or anywhere for that matter) carrying an axe, please report them to the City of Canning's rangers on 1300 422 664.



One of the vandalised trees.

The State Football Centre development application is out for public comment until 27 January 2021. The documents attached to the application reveal more detail of what is planned for the area.

Details of the development application can be found here - <https://consultation.dplh.wa.gov.au/reform-design-state-assessment/state-football-centre-queens-park/>



A huge thank you goes to those of you who have used our Containers for Change scheme ID – C10242280 – when returning your containers. Whether it was 10c or \$10.00 it all helped us earn \$123.40 since the scheme started on 1 October - <https://www.containersforchange.com.au/wa/> .

More photos from the night stalk on 27 November 2020



A native cockroach, *Calolampra marginalis*.



Old Lady Moth, *Dasypodia selenophora*.



Sand Scorpion, *Urodacus novaehollandiae*.



A sleeping Australian Emperor dragonfly, *Hemianax papuensis*.



A huntsman spider, *Holconia westralia*.



Another huntsman spider, *Isopedella* sp.