

THE GECKO



Edition 40
July 2023

Welcome to the July 2023 edition of The Gecko.

We welcomed the early and decisive start to winter this quarter with a lot of rain falling in early June.

This got our planting season off to a good start. We now need the rains to continue falling through spring (and summer) to give the plants their best chance of establishing.

April to June 2023

30 April 2023

The weather was perfect, the company even better. Six volunteers enjoyed an hour or so of each other's company even if the task was not that welcome. However, the weeds came out easily and everyone was satisfied with the end result.



28 May 2023

Despite being a bit chilly at the start, the weather was perfect – sunny and calm – for six volunteers to plant 91 plants. All of the plants were in the ground, staked and watered within an hour thanks to the help of Cat, SERCUL's Canning Community Landcare Officer, who augured all of the planting holes and helped with planting.



25 June 2023

After a week of wet weather, the clouds disappeared just in time for our last planting activity of this winter. In a little over an hour, seven volunteers and Cat from SERCUL had 94 plants in the ground, staked and watered.

Our thanks go to the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for removing many of the weeds from the area before we planted.



A big THANK YOU goes to Barbara, Catherine, Ian, Jackie, Kade, Ronnie, Rosemary, Sian and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

Also this quarter

The City of Canning engaged a contractor to remove asbestos from a heavily contaminated site.

The work was done in June, when the ground was wet, to avoid any airborne fibres escaping the site. Other hazard reduction measures in place were air quality monitors around the

perimeter of the site and the area, including the adjacent bushland, being off-limits to the public. Now that the area has been cleaned, the City will begin revegetating of the site.



We had a surprise visitor to the lake near Station Street in April. A White-bellied Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) was spotted on the island with a Southwestern Snake-necked Turtle (*Chelodina colliei*) in its talons.

White-bellied Sea-Eagles are found around Australia but usually near the coast. They do follow rivers inland and settle at inland lakes, however, our modified stormwater drain and lake are a bit small to support a predatory bird of this size.

The Sea-Eagle already had the turtle in its talons when it was spotted, so it's not known if the turtle was caught or scavenged.



While the bird wasn't seen to eat the turtle, turtles are definitely on the menu. They also eat fish, other reptiles (snakes and lizards) and waterbirds. The many other birds on the lake appeared to know that they could be invited for lunch and were keeping well away from the Sea-Eagle.

The plumage colour suggests that this bird is at least 3 years old. It has the pure white feathers of an adult on its head but brown feathers of an immature bird on its chest (adults have a pure white chest). Some birds have been known to stay in immature plumage for 10 years, so our bird could be any age in between.

Hopefully the Sea-Eagle enjoyed its turtle meal and was rested before continuing on its journey.

