

# THE GECKO



Edition 21  
October 2018

Welcome to the October 2018 edition of The Gecko.

The wildflowers are blooming, birds are nesting and insects are buzzing. It must be spring! Now is definitely the time to get into the bushland and enjoy nature at its very best.

We've hosted a bird watching walk and night stalk in the last few weeks and both left us wanting more.

Plus, we received a wonderful gift in September – 6 tonnes of mulch. Keep reading to find out how and why.

## July to September 2018

### **29 July 2018**

Seven volunteers helped collect rubbish in the area where bollards have recently been installed. Three enormous piles were amassed; two piles were built around items that were too big and heavy to move.



Rubbish piled up around a fridge.

A few days later, the City of Canning brought in trucks and lifting gear to remove the piles.



Rubbish piled up around a bed.

The activity was paused a number of times as wildlife was removed from harm's way. The most common user of the rubbish was the Banjo Frog.



A Banjo Frog shelters in a cardboard box.

Now that the bollards are hindering further dumping of rubbish, it is hoped that the place stays a bit cleaner for longer.

## 19 August 2018

Our birdwatching walk with BirdLife WA didn't disappoint the 31 attendees. Collectively we sighted 48 bird species (and a number of orchids).

There was one tree in particular that the birds, and therefore the birdwatchers, were attracted to. An individual *Banksia ilicifolia* was covered in flowers, drawing in all of the honeyeaters. At one stage there were six species of honeyeater in the tree at the same time.

Many thanks go to Rosemary, Katrina and Kade for supplying morning tea.



Bird watchers watching birds.

## 28 September 2018

Five members came out on a fine but windy evening for a night stalk. After setting up the light trap we walked around the paths with torches to see what we could find.

Our first find was a trapdoor spider walking across the path. We regularly find these in their burrows, but sightings away from home are few and far between.



The trapdoor spider, *Anamie mainae*.

There were sightings of four individual Moaning Frogs, *Heleioporus eyrei*, and four different species of native cockroach. Also, an assassin bug was seen feeding on a fly it had captured.

Back at the light trap it looked like every midge for 100 metres had been attracted by the light. There were so many midges in the air that observing the other insects was definitely a job to be done with your mouth closed.

The other insects at the light trap included a pair of craneflies that were busy making babies, a couple of beetles, caddisflies, a leaf hopper, a butterfly and several species of moth. See the next page for more photos from the night.

Thanks must go to Kade for bringing cakes for us to share at the end of a pleasant evening.

A big THANK YOU goes to Addy, Alison, Barbara M, Jelena, Kade, Katrina, Koda, Lachlan, Ronnie, Rosemary, and Sian and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

## Upcoming events

28 October – Spreading mulch

November – To be advised

December – To be advised

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

## Also this quarter

**After finding pawprints** in our bushland, the City of Canning's Natural Area Team conducted cat trapping in our area - and caught one. The cat was impounded

and efforts made to contact the owner. If the owner couldn't be contacted the cat will be assessed for rehoming or destroyed.

Our reserves have been designated as cat prohibited areas by the City of Canning 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 the trauma of being trapped make sure it doesn't stray from your home.



A cat trapped in our bushland. Photo courtesy of Max.

**The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC)** had a stall at the Waste and Recycling conference held in early September. They gave a prize of 6 tonnes of mulch to an attendee at the conference. The winner of this prize very generously donated it to us.

We will use the mulch to protect the soil at one of our revegetation sites. The site selected for the mulch

has seedlings that struggle at the best of times, so the mulch should give them a much-needed helping hand. It will help to keep the soil cool, preserve moisture, boost the growth of helpful microbes and put organic material back into the soil.

EMRC will deliver the mulch and we will spread it around the seedlings at our next busy bee.

**A Barn Owl made an appearance** and earned itself a spot on our website as the 104<sup>th</sup> bird species recorded from our bushland.

These large birds are primarily nocturnal hunters of small animals, mainly rodents. They can breed at any time of the year, usually in response to plentiful food. Three to six eggs are laid in a hollow in a living or dead tree.



The Barn Owl.

## Photos from the night stalk

