

WESROC News

December 2020

Photo by TedDougal'n'Jack - CC



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NORFOLK ISLAND PINE UPDATE

An investigation has been conducted into the declining Norfolk Island Pine Trees in the WESROC area. A sample of pine trees were tested throughout the Towns of Cottesloe and Claremont, the City of Nedlands, and the Shire of Peppermint Grove.

ArborCarbon undertook visual tree and crown health assessments. Soil, root, trunk, stem, and foliage samples were collected for nutrient analysis and to test for soil and plant pathogens.

It has been determined that there is a combination of factors that are impacting on the health of the pine trees. These factors include stress due to low rainfall and heat from the extended summer-autumn drought period experienced in 2019, impacts from canker pathogens, and *Phytophthora* (dieback).

Trials are being undertaken to improve soil condition and tree health to determine the best course of treatment.



Nuytsia floribunda



Whadjuk Walking Trails

FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL 2021

The control of introduced, invasive fauna is essential to environmental management and the survivability of native fauna and flora. WESROC has one of the longest running collaborative control programs in the metro area, operating since 2014. The WESROC Feral Animal Control Program targets foxes, feral cats, and rabbits to reduce their population and the negative impacts they have on regional biodiversity.

WALGA has developed an eLearning module on Biosecurity. The WESROC Feral Animal Control Program is used as a case study on how a collaborative, cross-boundary approach is effective in supporting individual control programs and benefits all the Local Government areas involved.

In 2021 the control program is continuing. Twenty-one locations will be targeted across the WESROC area for monitoring and control.

Moodjar

At this time of year, all through the South West, there is a tree that stands out from the rest with its distinctive orange-yellow flowers creating pockets of bright colour in the drying bushlands. It is the WA Christmas Tree, *Nuytsia floribunda*, or as it is known to the Noongar people – Moodjar.

Moodjar is a special tree in Noongar culture, a tree of significance and one that is greatly respected. The flowers represent the spirits of ancestors, those that have passed on, and carry messages about caring for and connecting to Country. It is forbidden to harm the Moodjar, to take its flowers, or to even stand in its shade at any time.

WESROC'S NEW LOOK

WESROC has been operating since 1995 and undertaken environmental projects and studies to benefit the people, flora, and fauna that call the western suburbs home. In 2020, WESROC has gotten a facelift and has a new logo to help identify the good work it does.



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NATURE PLAY FOR CHILDREN

WESROC is working with NaturePlay WA to promote mental and physical wellbeing for residents, and increase awareness of the Whadjuk Walking Trails. Information and mapping have been provided to NaturePlay WA for inclusion on their website of 'Things to do' and 'Places to go'.

Further to this, WESROC is taking a targeted approach towards promoting nature discovery and play for children through the Nature Passport program. Seven sites have been selected from the WESROC Local Governments along the Whadjuk Walking Trails to engage children in environmental discovery and cultural learning. A WESROC Nature Passport is currently in development.

Previously the animals represented on the avatar stickers in these Passports were globally endangered species such as tigers and orangutans, however, WESROC has partnered with NaturePlay WA to update the stickers and represent endangered animals native to the WESROC region.

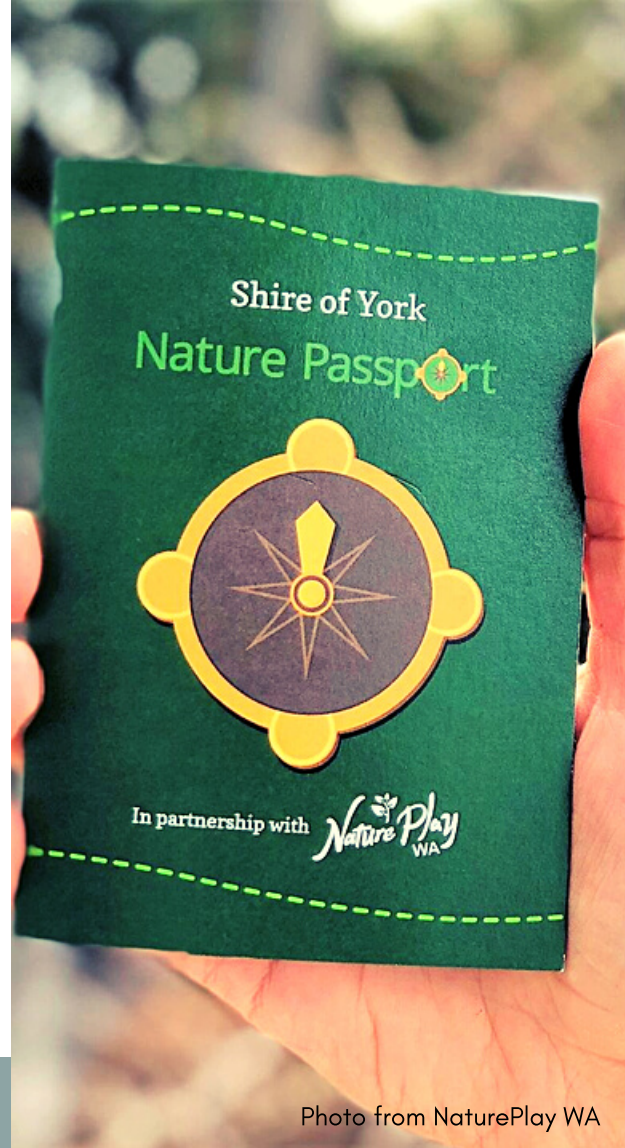


Photo from NaturePlay WA

Turtles on the Move

This is a truly special time of the year as emerging from wetlands across the WESROC area are Oblong Turtles (*Chelodina oblonga*) looking for a place to nest. An Oblong Turtle can travel up to a kilometre from their watery home to find the perfect sandy site to lay their eggs, and they don't always nest in natural areas. Verges, median strips, parks, and residential gardens can be chosen as nesting sites.

It can be worrying to see these sweet animals crossing roads and often they are thought of as disoriented or lost because they are moving away from the wetland. However, they are just on a mission to find the perfect place to lay their eggs. To help the turtles during this time, there are some key things to remember.

1. If you do find a turtle on the road and need to move it because of traffic, it is important to move the turtle in the same direction it is already travelling.

If you return the turtle to the wetland when it is travelling away from it, the turtle will need to make the whole trip again and this increases the chance that it can be injured or killed. Be sure to hold the turtle around the middle of the shell and hold it away from your body to avoid scratches or their other (smellier) defense mechanism of urination.

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Photo by Simon J. Tonge - CC



Chelodina oblonga

2. Keep dogs on a leash and cats indoors.
Oblong Turtles are vulnerable to many predators and unfortunately this includes domestic dogs and cats, so please keep them contained and leashed for the turtles' protection.

3. Report your sighting! Let your Local Government know, contact a [Turtle Watch](#) hotline number, or record your sighting at climatewatch.org.au.

For more information on the Oblong Turtle visit [Turtle Watch](#) or [The Wetlands Centre](#).

If you would like to see some Oblong Turtles try visiting the Mason Gardens Turtle Pond (City of Nedlands) or take a walk around the other wonderful wetlands in the WESROC area for chance sightings.

GREENER SPACES, BETTER PLACES

The WESROC suburbs have been included in a recent study by [Greener Spaces, Better Places](#). Benchmarking research of green cover in suburbs and cities has been carried out since 2013. A 2020 update has been released, looking at how local governments compare depending on rainfall, density, and urbanization.

The following rankings are based on green cover compared to similar local governments across Australia.

Cambridge: 8th out of 21 with 25.3% green cover.

Claremont: 11th out of 23 with 24% green cover.

Cottesloe: 6th out of 23 with 25.8% green cover.

Mosman Park: 5th out of 23 with 27.8% green cover.

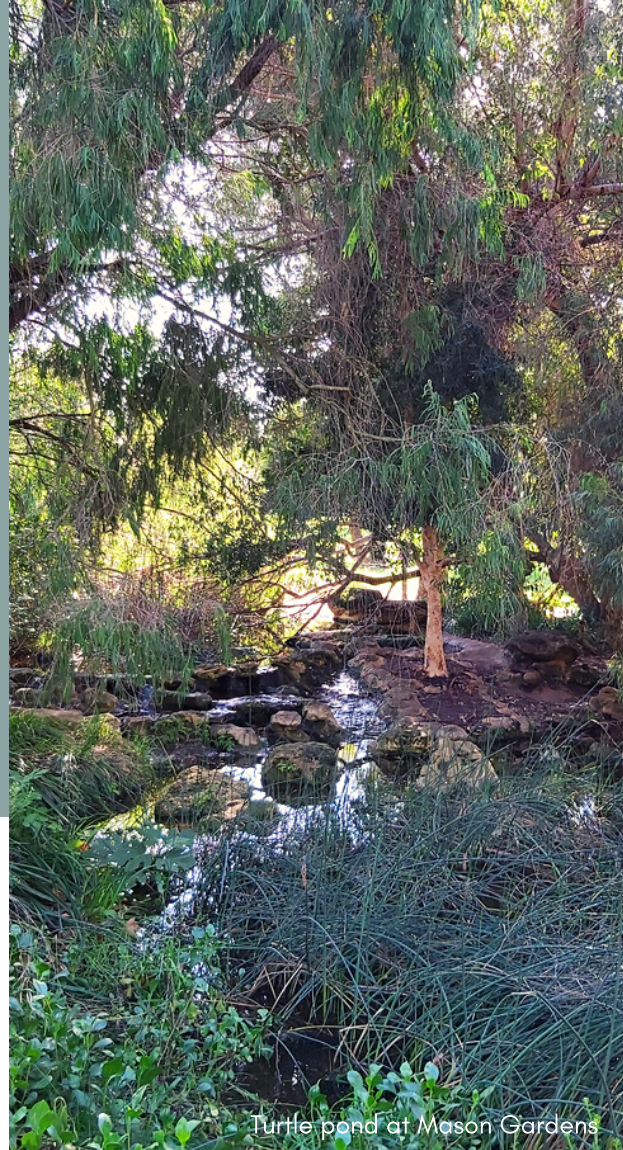
Nedlands: 5th out of 21 with 30.3% green cover.

Peppermint Grove: 3rd out of 21 with 34.7% green cover.

Subiaco: 11th out of 29 with 26.8% green cover.

The full report is available on the Greener Spaces, Better Places website, titled [Where Will All The Trees Be?](#)

WESROC has recently completed its own comprehensive study into canopy cover, green spaces, and heat zones in the western suburbs. This research will be used to identify future greening and urban cooling programs.



Turtle pond at Mason Gardens



Filling the bird bath to help wildlife

Help Wildlife Weather the Heat

Summer has arrived with its sudden hot days that suck the moisture out of the air and soil. While we are fortunate enough to escape the heat and hide in the embrace of air conditioned homes, offices, and retreats – our lovely native animals are not so fortunate. Birds and reptiles in particular can find it hard to cope with the intensifying heat of summer and the reduction of readily available water sources.

Here are some easy ways that you can help protect wildlife this summer and enjoy their visits to your garden or workplace.

1. Provide Water! This is the most important action you can take to help local wildlife during the hot days. The water container doesn't have to be attractive or elaborate, the animals don't care, they simply need fresh water provided in a shady location. Old pots, deep sided dishes, bowls, trays – a bird bath can be made out of almost anything!
2. Provide multiple baths at various heights and locations. Have some at ground level for reptiles, mammals, and insects to use. Place a bath in the protective cover of a tree or shrub for small birds to drink and bathe, then dry themselves in the safety of the branches. Place a larger container of water in a more open area for the larger birds to use, but try to make sure it's still shaded.
3. Keep the baths clean with a regular scrub. This will help prevent the spread of disease and illness in wildlife. If you need to use detergent, use only a small amount and rinse thoroughly.
4. If you have regular bird visitors to your garden, offer them a bit of fun and a cool down by misting them gently with the hose or garden bottle. Some will be scared off but you might be surprised by how many will enjoy the experience. Start by spraying around them first to get them used to the idea.
5. Put some ice (just a little bit) in the baths to keep the water cool and give the wildlife something different to play with.
6. Keep your dogs and cats in doors so that wildlife can visit the water supply in peace and safety.

For more interesting information on providing baths for wildlife, visit [The secret world of bird baths](#) and to learn other ways to help Aussie wildlife read [6 things Aussies can do to help wildlife right now](#).

Western Suburbs Regional Organisation of Councils



In partnership with  Town of Cambridge