



# MELON HILL BUSHLAND GROUP

SWANBOURNE EST. 1996  
Think Global. Act Local.

KAMBARANG 2024



October November



## “Look deep into nature, and you will understand everything better” – Albert Einstein

The Noongar Season of Kambarang (Oct/Nov) is represented by the colour yellow and symbolises the return of the hot weather. There is an abundance of colours and flowers, reptiles start to wake up from hibernation and many of our birds will be feeding young. In our bushland the yellow flowering acacias are at the end of their flowering whilst the bright yellow Native Groundsel is still abundant. Look out for pink fairy orchids and Common mignonette orchids.

The explosion of growth over the last month or so has kept us very busy weeding. This sometimes seems like an endless task. However, it can be quite therapeutic (especially if the weather is nice and the company is good) and it helps to know how important it is. If weeds are not dealt with, even for one season, then the soil ends up with a lot more weed seed and the job is much bigger the next year. Weeds also significantly increase the bushfire risk, and have a serious impact on our all-important biodiversity.

For many years, the Allen Park bushland was neglected and overrun with weeds. The first Management Plan (1996) recorded more weeds than native species (66:40).

Council staff did not have expertise in natural areas, and did not manage them as we see them managed today.

When the first qualified Bushcare Officer was appointed in 2000 it opened our eyes to the wonders hidden beneath the weeds and neglect. Years of work have resulted in the rich, biodiverse natural areas we have today.

We now know that green spaces, and in particular tree canopy and natural areas with high levels of biodiversity, are essential for both the planet and for people. They cool our city, clean our air, lower our energy demands, increase the value of surrounding homes, mitigate climate change, and improve the mental and physical wellbeing of our people.

As one example of what is now a large body of science, a recent study has confirmed that green spaces with high biodiversity have more mental health benefits than those with low biodiversity.

I hope you all have time to enjoy some moments in our wonderful natural areas during these lovely months. Enjoy this newsletter!

**Lesley Shaw** (Acting President Melon Hill Bushland Group)

### At a glance:

Highlights and Spotlights - people, plants & wildlife

Notes to remember

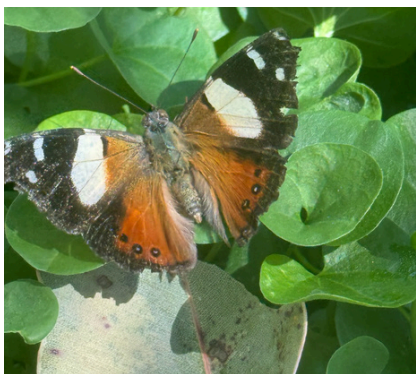
Now and then - Seaward Corridor

Project update - Cockie Trough

Events

Birdwalk

# Highlights and Spotlights



## Yellow Admiral

You may have seen the Yellow Admiral Butterfly sunning itself or resting head down on trunks or branches. This long living butterfly is one of our success stories. It relies on Native Pellitory for its lifecycle. Native Pellitory was reintroduced to the area in 1999. With careful weed management the Pellitory is now well established, and the Yellow Admiral has returned.



## Pink Fairy Orchid

The first tiny patch of Pink fairy orchids (*Caladenia latifolia*) were discovered over 20 years ago. They are now much more widespread, and are a valuable indicator of the health of the local ecosystem. See if you can spot some of these beautiful orchids on the verge in the Heritage Precinct (the lovely cluster of old buildings near the ovals).



## Notes To Remember

- Please take care of our **Bobtails**. They are slow, and not very good with kerbs! They are vulnerable to dogs, cats and cars so please keep dogs on leash in the bush areas and one eye on the road.
- **Our owls** (Southern Boobook, Tawny Frogmouths and Barn) will be feeding babies. Please minimise rodenticides and stick to owl friendly ones if you must. For more information [youthactionforwildlife.com](http://youthactionforwildlife.com)
- **Snakes** are out! Please keep your dog on leash in the bush areas.
- **Please pick up!** Lots of dogs + small patches of bush = 🐾
- **We meet** on Tuesdays and the first Saturday of each month behind Mattie Furphy's House (near the main car park for the ovals). 8am start in summer. 9am winter. Morning tea and gloves provided. **All Welcome!**



## Owl Friendly

This year 3 WA scientists led a delegation of environmental scientists from all over Australia to lobby in Canberra against second – generation rodenticides (SGACR).

Our own local heroes, **Poppy** (pictured) and friends, are **collecting signatures** asking councils (including ours) to become “Owl Friendly” by banning the use of SGACR. @youthactionforwildlife <https://www.youthactionforwildlife.com/>.



## What's that weed?

After a quick straw poll **fumitory** has been declared “Worst Weed” because it climbs all over plants and steals their sunlight. Geraldton Carnation Weed is a close second along with the other perennials pelargonium and brassica. Flick week, Pretty Betsy, oxalis and black flag round out the list. If you want to know what's what in your garden, keep an eye out for **Judy the Weed Wikipedia** (pictured). She is often weeding Tuesday mornings



## Then and Now - Seaward Corridor Linkage

Believe it or not, these two photos are of the same place in 1999 and August 2024. What a difference ! This area is known as the **Seaward Corridor**. It provides the critical linkage between Melon Hill and the Swanbourne Beach Reserve Bush Forever site (315).

Linkages allow wildlife to move, and are essential for biodiversity and healthy, resilient ecosystems. Without them small natural areas risk becoming sterile 'islands'. This linkage is used by all our wildlife and has visibly improved the health of both areas. It has been particularly rewarding to see the fairy wrens establishing family groups in different parts of the bushland.

Linkages can also make for much nicer ways for humans to move around. In this case, revegetation has created a very popular shady, vibrant, bird rich path from the top of Melon Hill to the oval above the Surf Club.

This dramatic transformation represents consistent work over **25 years** by both volunteers, and the Natural Area team at the City of Nedlands, currently led by our wonderful Bushcare Officer Vicki Shannon.

It requires maintenance, and work is done in this area each year by both volunteers and the City of Nedlands.



## Cockie Trough

We are very happy to report that the new bird watering station is now complete. A water pump provides a reliable and safe water supply for local and migratory birds, including endangered species such as Carnaby's and Red-tailed **Black Cockatoos**.

The 'Cocky Trough' funded by Lottery West and the City of Nedlands, can be found on the oval side of Melon Hill – nearest to the **Allen Park heritage cottage** (this is the one with the temporary fence around it. It looks a bit unloved! However, the cottage has significant heritage value as the only original cottage, and will be a fantastic community space once its restored).



November 2024

## Event News

### Nightwalk 2nd November

A torchlight walk with the WA Insect Study Society. 8-9.30pm. **Limit of 20** - please email if you would like to attend. Meet at Mattie Furphy's House at 8pm.

### Curtin Sustainability Fair 2 November 2024

This is a fabulous event hosted by our local federal member, Kate Chaney. We will be there so come along and say hello. The Fair will be at the Centenary Pavilion, Claremont Showground.

**AGM and Black Cockatoo talk 6pm Friday 22nd November** - Save the date - details to follow



## Bird Walk and introducing our special bird reporter.

Our **Bird Walk on 7 September**, led by Lesley Shaw, was such an enjoyable way to spend a morning with lots of birdlife and other interesting things to see. We spent time looking at ‘honkey’ (marri) nuts to see which of our cockatoos had been feeding on them – the Red-tailed ( ‘the butcher’ - destroys the upper part of the nut), the Carnaby ( ‘the general’ - chews around the rim and neck) or the Baudins (the ‘surgeon’ - makes a “v” shaped scar with little damage). We also called in to admire the new “Cockie Trough.”

We were delighted to have some new faces, and especially young faces join us. One young local turned out to be so passionate, and so knowledgeable, we have asked him to give us his thoughts.

*Hello, my name is Austin. I am 8 years old and I live in Swanbourne.*

*I am very passionate about birds and my hobby is going birdwatching with lots of different groups. Sometimes I meet up with the Melon Hill group. On the 7th of September I went with the Melon Hill group across the area to record the local bird species.*

*The highlight of the walk was at the end when a colourful male Mistletoe bird was sighted in the trees right above our heads. The **Mistletoe bird** is not very commonly seen, and certainly not in the Allen Park area. It is very pretty with multiple colours such as red, navy blue, and white. It is also very small.*

*The Noongar name for this bird is “Moonidjedang”.*

*It was quite an interesting encounter at the very end of the walk, and it was definitely quite exciting. The walk was very nice, and we pointed out a lot of flora and fauna with some insects and birds on the way.*

*I really enjoy my time birding and learning about other animals and our environment. I look forward to the next walk.*

**Austin**

*Thank you for reading!*



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Melonhillbg@gmail.com

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