



## Celebrating 30 Years of Effort in Wetlands Conservation

The Wetlands Conservation Society was founded in February 1985, following the Farrington Road Dispute in September 1984 in which a part of the pristine North Lake Wetlands was destroyed by road construction.

The main aim of the WCS is to raise public awareness of the need to conserve our remaining wetlands. We do this via excursions, meetings, landcare activities, wetland monitoring, public education, lobbying and submissions to Government agencies.

After 30 years of effort it is worthwhile to take a look backwards at what we have achieved through this work and then to look forwards at what remains to be done.

**Achievements** – the WCS has contributed substantially to the following outcomes.

- **Establishment of the Regional Parks System in 1998** - these Parks were first proposed by the EPA in its System Six Green Book (1980) and the WCS campaigned for their establishment following its foundation in 1985. We served on planning committees and lobbied Ministers and LGAs to build support for this initiative. Since the Parks were formally established in 1998 our members have been active on several Regional Park Community Advisory Committees.
- **Management Plans for Regional Parks** - our members have cooperated with State and Local Government agencies in the development of Management Plans for Beeliar, Jandakot and Rockingham Lakes Regional Parks.
- **Management Plans for Important Wetlands** – The WCS has contributed substantially to the development of Management Plans for Ramsar Wetlands, especially Forrestdale and Thomsons Lakes and the Becher Wetlands. We have collaborated with the City of Cockburn to produce a Management Plan for Bibra Lake.
- **Wetland Restoration** – We commenced revegetation of degraded parts of North Lake in 1986 and since 1993 we have collaborated with the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre in revegetation work at North, Bibra and South Lakes.
- **Ramsar Nominations** – the WCS campaigned for the first and second rounds of Ramsar nominations, which occurred in 1990 and 2000. Since then we have campaigned for a third round of nominations.
- **Establishment of the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre** – the Centre was an early objective of the WCS and we approached Federal, State and Local Governments to support its establishment. We helped the City of Cockburn to secure funding to build the Centre and we

managed it for 7 years until the Centre was incorporated in 2000. The WCS has been a key member of the Board of Management since the Centre was established in June 1993. The Centre addresses the WCS aims of raising awareness of wetland values through education and Landcare.

- **The Annual Wetlands Management Conference** is held at the Wetlands Centre on World Wetlands Day. It was first proposed by the WCS and our members play an important role in its planning and management. This Conference is now the premier wetlands event in WA and it has been held every year since 2004
- **The Swan Coastal Plain Wetlands Environmental Protection Policy** – the WCS campaigned for this policy to protect wetlands on the Swan Coastal Plain and we interacted closely with the EPA during its development. This policy was gazetted in 1992 and renewed at 7 yearly intervals since then.
- There are many other areas where the WCS has contributed effectively, including areas such as groundwater management, EPA assessments, wetland management plans, guidelines for wetland management, etc.

**Current Goals** – the WCS has a list of priorities for wetland conservation, including the following.

- **More Ramsar nominations** – there are at least 40 more WA wetlands that are worthy of Ramsar listing. We have been campaigning for further listings since 2000.
- **Expansion of the Regional Parks System** – The WCS strongly supports the Regional Parks System and we have been arguing for its extension to further valuable conservation areas including Peel/Harvey, Lower Serpentine, Gngangara and South Bunbury.
- **Regional Parks Legislation** – we have repeatedly reminded the State Government of its 1998 promise to provide a legislative framework for Regional Parks within the CALM Act. Early in 2015 it appears that the Government may be about to honour this commitment.
- **Wetland Buffer Guidelines** – The WCS participated in the development of ecologically-based guidelines for wetland buffers. These were drawn up in 2006 but have not yet been implemented.
- **Opposition to the extension of the Roe Highway through the Beelihar Wetlands** – this has been a long term objective of the WCS and despite the EPA dropping its objection to this proposal we will continue to oppose it.