



# WOODLAND WATCH

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO  
CONSERVE WHEATBELT WOODLANDS

## Private Bush Management in the Western Australian Wheatbelt Scientific, Conservation and Social Outcomes



Mukinbudin farmer **Jeff Seaby** discusses bush management with the WWF Woodland Watch team.

Photo: WWF / Richard McLellan

*Woodland Watch*, launched by WWF-Australia in June 2000, is a unique working partnership with rural landholders and communities across the Northern Agricultural Region and the Avon Basin of WA's Wheatbelt. The project offers a range of services that support practical bush management. While the program encompasses the conservation of a range of vegetation types in the Wheatbelt, it focuses on woodlands that are under-represented in the State's conservation estate – principally woodlands dominated by Salmon Gum, Gimlet, York Gum and Red Morrel.

*Woodland Watch* aims to enhance the value of these unique woodlands through an on-ground response to landholders' needs that is both practical and valuable. The program aims to create links with landholders who have significant tall eucalypt woodlands on their properties, with an emphasis on personal contact and providing practical information based on the guiding principles of 'best practice management'.

### Scientific Outcomes

- **156** woodland sites, of varying condition, identified and assessed across the WA Wheatbelt
- Over **6000** plant specimens vouchered by the CALM Western Australian Herbarium
- **30** new species discovered; **28** new populations of rare / priority flora species located; Significant range extensions to at least **27** other species
- Woodland Watch flora survey data lodged on CALM's acclaimed FloraBase website for easy and open public access to all data <<http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/wwatch>>

### Conservation Outcomes

- Over **150** landholders with high-quality woodlands engaged in the project
- Over **50** landholders have either implemented or initiated conservation covenants, Land For Wildlife agreements and/or other voluntary conservation agreements
- More than **2,300ha** of bush containing high priority woodlands protected through 10 Conservation Covenants and under negotiations with over 15 other landholders.
- **2,908** hectares of bush containing high priority woodlands protected under Land For Wildlife agreements and subsequently supported by CALM [directly brokered by WWF]
- More than **1,100ha** of bush containing high priority woodlands under better management through 23 Voluntary Management Agreements (a 'stepping stone' toward longer term conservation protection options)
- More than **2,500** hectares of bush containing high priority woodlands under Shire and/or community-group control and being managed for conservation either under new Shire conservation policies (developed with the direct assistance of WWF) or according to WWF best-practice management standards
- **13** Local Government Authorities involved in the project - developing programs aimed at increasing local environmental awareness, and improved local reserve management and conservation (eg. with assistance from WWF, the Shire of Beverley has reclassified 3 local reserves to include for protection of flora and fauna)
- Liaison with **6** Wheatbelt community conservation groups assisting local authorities develop conservation policies and management plans

For further details on the outcomes of WWF's Woodland Watch project  
please contact WWF ☎ 08 9387 6444 📧 [ccurnow@wwf.org.au](mailto:ccurnow@wwf.org.au)

# Social Impacts of Woodland Watch: 2000-2005

## Perspectives from landholders



Muntadgin farmer, Ken Liebeck, managing for conservation.

*The Woodland Watch Coordinator provided a 'safe' entry for us as farmers to get some advice on managing our 'bush'. I had some confidence after listening to him that I would still be in control of decisions about my bush and that I could get some help from him in managing the bush – but managing it myself.*

**Frank & Anne Panizza,**  
Grain producers & bush owners, Toodyay

*[We] valued the bush as kids for playing in and it just sort of dawns on you as you get older that this bush isn't permanent – when you are young you think it will last forever. Knowing that there is technical expertise around provided by a significant*

*organisation is valuable, the survey results will be useful and mostly we need and want some ongoing expertise to help us judge the results of our management through time – the plant survey will do this. We value the bush for balancing water use across the farm, it modifies natural events that occur across the farm and we want to make sure the bush is there for the future. The Woodland Watch Coordinator can help us do this.*

**Landholder,** Dalwallinu

*The new knowledge gained from the Woodland Watch survey of our bush increased the value that we held for our bush. We now have some knowledge about how we are going to manage the bush. We are struggling to bring a new farming enterprise on line and we have little financial leeway to invest unassisted to protect our bush values at the moment; we will invest but we need to learn first. We also are learning how to integrate bush management with our farm management so that what we do in our management activities benefits both bush and farm business. Once again (previous farming and bush management experience) we learnt that gaining knowledge about our bush increases its value in our minds, that the bush has some sort of 'shock absorber' effect on my peace of mind and the natural balance across the farm. The value of bush is as yet largely unrecognised. The bush on our farm may well one day be the most valued part of our farm.*

**Ben & Wendy Davey,** grain producers & bush owners, Cunderdin

*The plant survey result made me feel a need to protect my bush areas; if other people valued the things in my bush then I had better protect it. The Woodland Watch Coordinator was fundamentally important in recognising the animal and plant species on my farm and helping me realise that my bush was special.*

**Gene Stone**

Grain producer & bush owner, Quairading



Cuballing farmer, Verity Harris [right], believes their covenant will help them manage for conservation.

WWF-Australia acknowledges the support of the **Avon Catchment Council**, the **Northern Agricultural Catchment Council**, the **Natural Heritage Trust** and **Alcoa World Alumina Australia** for past and present support.