

Weed and Feral Management in the South West Hotspot Zone

Aim/Purpose:

Strategic and practical weed and feral animal management to help protect biodiversity in the Geographe catchment. The project brings together all relevant stakeholders to improve on-ground outcomes for weed and feral animal control.

Start Date: July 1st 2006

Finish Date: June 30th 2009

Project Partners: Cape to Cape Catchments Group

Project Stakeholders: All groups/agencies undertaking weed control within the catchment, including community groups, local government, Department of Environment and Conservation, Department of Agriculture and Food and private landholders.

Background:

Weeds and feral animals have been identified as two of the major threats impacting on the biodiversity in the south west. Weeds can out-compete native species, create monocultures of single species and can alter ecosystems by pushing out native animals that depend on native flora for food and habitat. Feral animals, including foxes, have adapted well to the environment of the south west have had a severe impact on our native animal populations through predation.

From 2005-2006, GeoCatch coordinated a similar weed and feral animal management project, which encompassed both weed and feral animal control within the catchment, as well as coordination of related workshops for the community. The current project largely follows on from this. There are numerous other projects that incorporate weed control into their objectives, including the Biodiversity Hotspot, River Action Plans, Lower Vasse River, Rural Drainage and Wetlands projects.

Main Achievements:

The Weed & Feral Management Project undertook significant on-ground works and helped build the awareness and capacity of local community, local government and land managers to reduce the threat of weeds and feral animals in the South west hotspot zone.

The project has focused on key environmental weeds such as include Arum Lily, Blackberry, Dolichos pea, Watsonia, Geraldton Carnation weed, Asparagus scandens, Juncus acutus, Typha and various woody weeds including Acacia longifolia and Victorian teatree. 366 ha of weed control has been undertaken.

Feral animals controlled include rabbits, foxes and the smooth marron. 21388 ha of land protected from feral animals. This figure includes repeat twice yearly baiting for foxes at a number of public and private sites. Five nights intensive smooth marron control was delivered in September and December 2008.

The project developed a woody weed identification and control manual, delivered training workshops on identifying and controlling various weeds and a significant number of media articles on seasonal weed control and assistance available. Research was undertaken to determine presence/absence and potential threat of invasive aquatic animals in the Margaret, Carburnup and Buayanyup Rivers.

Partnerships were developed with two local governments, the Departments of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Agriculture and Food WA, and numerous community groups and land managers.

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Photos: (see photo gallery – Weed & Feral Management)