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# Report Card

## **SUBJECT: GeoCatch Projects 2002/2003**

The Geographe Bay catchment covers about 2000 km<sup>2</sup>, extending from Gelorup in the north, to Kirup, and across to Cape Naturaliste in the west.

The natural environment faces increasing pressure and there are competing uses for land and water. Agricultural development, coastal issues, sustainable fishing, forest management, environmental values, lifestyle values, socio-economic issues and economic development all vie for a place in the catchment. Population and development rates are amongst the highest in Australia.

The Geographe Catchment Council (GeoCatch) works through partnerships to cooperatively manage land and water issues using through integrated catchment management. GeoCatch is sponsored by the Water and Rivers Commission and supported by other key natural resource management agencies and the Shires of Busselton and Capel.

**This Report Card provides an overview of GeoCatch's key achievements over the past year – 2002/03.**



## **GeoCatch**

*proudly sponsored by the Water and Rivers Commission*

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Projects	RESULTS*
<p><b>Partnership Projects</b></p> <p>The existence and durability of GeoCatch is based on continuing cooperation and mutual respect from a wide range of individuals, groups and agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ GeoCatch is currently involved in a number of partnership projects. Some of these are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing working relationships with Vasse-Wonnerup, Capel, Sussex and Yallingup LCDCs;</li> <li>- Dunsborough Coast &amp; Land Care Group, restoration of Dugalup Creek;</li> <li>- Geographe Community Landcare Nursery start-up and operation (Busselton-Dunsborough Environment Centre, Water Corporation, local businesses). A successful funding application completed. Official opening March 03. Over 25000 seedlings have been grown. Ranging from shrubs and trees such as <i>Acacia</i> sp, <i>Melaleuca</i> sp to rushes such as <i>Juncus</i> sp.</li> <li>- Weed Management, support to Weed Action Groups and liaison with others (Vasse Wonnerup and Sussex Weed Action Groups, Shires of Busselton and Capel);</li> <li>- Broadwater Wetlands Restoration Project (CALM);</li> <li>- Restoration project on the Abba River (CALM);</li> <li>- River Restoration 'demonstration site' on the Sabina River (Vasse-Wonnerup LCDC, Noongah community, Landowner);</li> <li>- Capel LCDC Pilot Fox-baiting project (Capel LCDC, Cable Sands, Capel Shire, Dept. Agriculture);</li> <li>- Restoration of Vasse River foreshore with Isaac St residents October 2002;</li> <li>- Development of Draft Busselton Wetlands Conservation Strategy (Dept Planning &amp; Infrastructure, CALM, Water Corporation, Dept of Environment, Dept. Ag., Shire of Busselton, landholders), released April 03;</li> <li>- Supporting implementation of Environmental Improvement Initiative (Water Corporation, Shire of Busselton, AGWEST, and local stakeholders). Two new projects: River Fencing project and a soils/fertiliser project.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Capel CSO has assisted a number of landcare groups and landholders in the Shire. In partnership with the Capel LCDC these activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing weed control on reserves;</li> <li>- Develop and implementing a management plan for lot 61 Hasties Rd Gelorup, including forming a management committee, securing a sponsor and engaging the Bunbury Cathedral Grammar school to plant over 700 plants this season;</li> <li>- Revegetation of Gwindinup gravel pit;</li> <li>- Community campaign to spread the bridal creeper rust fungus to new infestations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>A number of projects with other community groups have been developed.</p>
<p><b>DairyCatch WA</b></p> <p>The activity will deliver industry-led implementation of dairy industry best practice through an integrated catchment approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This project has been developed with the WA Dairy Industry. Two successful funding applications were prepared and granted for work over 1-3 years.</li> <li>✓ The project will work with WA dairy farmers to develop and implement agreed dairy Best Management Practices (BMPs) with a focus on the priority issues of effluent management, nutrient management and water use efficiency.</li> <li>✓/x A concise package of dairy BMP's to guide natural resource management, will be developed.</li> <li>✓/x Implementation of BMP's will be guided by targeted farm effluent plans developed with expert assistance.</li> <li>✓ Steering Committee meetings, Project Team Coordination and Farmer involvement has been achieved.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Abba Plains Remnant Vegetation Project</b></p> <p>A NHT project to protect, manage and enhance Abba Plains remnant vegetation fragments across the catchment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Consultant continued to work with the community to raise awareness, appreciation &amp; recognition of these vegetation complexes to determine priority areas &amp; linkages for enhancement.</li> <li>Strong networks have been built through the project.</li> <li>✓ A number of on-ground vegetation protection and enhancement initiatives are under-way totalling</li> <li>✓ approximately 150ha, 20 000 seedlings.</li> <li>Development of three community training workshops.</li> <li>✓ Completion of existing NHT project &amp; report submitted.</li> <li>Secured further investment thru Priority Project funding.</li> <li>Support to Dept. CALM in protection of priority flora.</li> <li>✓ Production of the 'Catchment Companion" a practical</li> <li>✓ landcare manual that will be continually updated for</li> <li>✓ landholders to provide information on topics such as               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restabilising perennial vegetation</li> <li>- Bush and biodiversity</li> <li>- Working with Water</li> <li>- Property planning and management</li> <li>- Monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>- Contacts and assistance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Ribbons of Blue</b></p> <p>To increase community awareness and understanding of water quality issues, provide environmental education opportunities, encourage local action projects, support community monitoring projects and maintain networks and partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Ribbons of Blue program focusses on environmental education opportunities linked to community action. The program was extended from Capel, Busselton and Yallingup to include Cowaramup, Margaret River and Augusta. Specific activities conducted in 2002/03 included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided educational opportunities at Geographe Primary School linked to the study and rehabilitation of the wetland adjacent to the school. Students planted 2000 plants with help from parents and Lions Club volunteers. School successfully applied for Coles Grant to fund work at the wetland;</li> <li>- Held an all day Confluence event at Wharmcliffe Mill bringing together students from six schools from the Geographe and Cape to Cape areas;</li> <li>- Seasonal monitoring of the New River wetland by students from St Josephs PS and MacKillop;</li> <li>- Macroinvertebrate Snapshot 2002, 120 students involved from 4 schools;</li> <li>- Monitoring of Abba River for Saltwatch Week in May 2003, report available on RoB website;</li> <li>- Train and support BDEC volunteers to monitor the demonstration site on the Sabina River</li> <li>- 500 students planting on Broadwater wetland and Geographe PS wetland for National Tree Day;</li> <li>- Supported Dunsborough Schools to plant 500 plants on World Environment Day;</li> <li>- Three professional development workshops for teachers and community groups;</li> <li>- Supported Cowaramup Primary School and West Busselton Primary School to successfully apply for Westpac Operation Backyard grants to undertake revegetation projects;</li> <li>- Stormwater monitoring in Busselton LIA with MacKillop Catholic College;</li> <li>- Macroinvertebrate sampling at Dugalup Creek with Dunsborough schools;</li> <li>- Supported Our Lady of the Cape PS to successfully apply for funding for Dugalup Creek;</li> <li>- Supported Dunsborough Coast &amp; Land Care Group to organise plants and erosion control at Dugalup Creek;</li> <li>- Work with Gunyulgup Brook Group for seasonal monitoring;</li> <li>- Working with Margaret River High School to plan and undertake restoration of the creek on the school farm;</li> <li>- Support the Gracetown Progress Association, Cowaramup Primary School and the local community to develop an action plan for Cowaramup Brook;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planting 3000 local native species on the Cowaramup Primary School grounds;</li> <li>All primary schools and two high schools involved in the Ribbons of Blue program in Geographe/Cape to Cape/Lower Blackwood.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local River Action Plans</b></p> <p>Complete and implement the Yallingup Brook Action Plan.</p> <p>Complete and Implement the Vasse River Action Plan.</p> <p>Complete and implement the Carburnup River Action Plan</p> <p>Complete and implement the Capel River Action Plan.</p> <p>Complete and implement the Vasse-Wonnerup waterways (Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers) River Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ GeoCatch in partnership with the LCDCs won the 2001 State Rivercare Prize, for the Geographe RAPS and were finalists at the National Awards held in August 2002.</li> <li>✓ Final NHT Reports were submitted for this project.</li> <li>✓ Action Plan completed and a continuing partnership agreement maintained with Yallingup LCDC. Ongoing works coordinated by the LCDC with GeoCatch sponsorship, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revegetation and ongoing maintenance of rehabilitation on Yallingup Brook;</li> <li>- Restoration of Dune system at Cape Clairault.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Action Plan completed and partnership agreement maintained with Vasse-Wonnerup LCDC. Ongoing works coordinated by the LCDC with GeoCatch sponsorship, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planting of native species on the Vasse River;</li> <li>- Vasse Weed Action Group expanded to become the Geographe Weed Action Group – wider scope to include other LCDCs such as Sussex. The Weed Action Group has coordinated media articles; information leaflets on weeds such as Arum Lily and provided advice to the shire and landholders on weed control in the area.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Action Plan completed and partnership agreement developed with Sussex LCDC. Coordinator appointed and ongoing works continuing, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing management of weeds Carburnup Reserve by the Shire;</li> <li>- Fencing areas of degraded streams and revegetation of a stretch of the River foreshore;</li> <li>- Seed Collection workshop was held in November;</li> <li>- Media articles and newsletter updates;</li> <li>- Wildflower tours of the Carburnup Reserve.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Action Plan completed and partnership agreement maintained with Capel LCDC. Ongoing works coordinated by the Capel LCDC with GeoCatch sponsorship, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In partnership with Main Roads and Western Power and Capel Shire, develop a river restoration project on the river reserve next to the Capel Drive Road Bridge;</li> <li>- Water quality monitoring on 10 sites on the Capel River;</li> <li>- Two workshops on Acid Sulfate Soils were held for the Shire and affected landholders;</li> <li>- Weed workshop held in October 2002 with Dept of Agriculture;</li> <li>- Planting of over 500 seedlings at the Olympic Landcare site;</li> <li>- Nutrient Monitoring of a Dairy farm</li> <li>- Hosted Green Corp Team to work with Capel Primary school to plant over 2000 seedlings at the school</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Action Plan completed and partnership agreement developed with the Vasse-Wonnerup LCDC. Coordinator appointed and ongoing works coordinated by the LCDC with GeoCatch sponsorship, including; Sabina River Demonstration site               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Established at Sabina Vale, to address problems of erosion and loss of fringing vegetation along the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<p>Complete and implement the Gynudup Brook and Tren Creek Action Plan</p>	<p>Sabina. Works have included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fencing, weed control, construction of a stock crossing and stabilisation of a head cut on adjacent drains;</li> <li>- Identifying sections of the river that require further stabilisation and revegetation;</li> <li>- Revegetation on the banks of the Sabina River with native riparian vegetation;</li> <li>- The Sabina is a registered Aboriginal Site, river restoration has involved consultation and on site meetings with Nyoongar representatives;</li> <li>- Aiming to result in improved water quality entering receiving waters and in-stream habitat;</li> <li>- Use of the site as a learning resource by groups.</li> </ul> <p>✓/x Successful Envirofund application by Capel LCDC to do a foreshore vegetation assessment. Partnership project with Capel LCDC, Iluka Resource P/L, Shire of Capel and GeoCatch. Foreshore surveys underway. On completion of mapping a community meeting will be held with all landholders and other stakeholders prior to RAP being finalised.</p>
<p><b>Implementation of Catchment Management Strategy</b></p> <p>Continue to implement the Geographe Catchment Weed Management Plan</p> <p>Develop catchment skills</p> <p>Provide administration support</p> <p>Raise community awareness of local environment management and involvement opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Following on from the Weed Forum held in June 02, a weed survey and mapping was completed for the Busselton Shire in partnership with the Geographe Weed Action Group and Shire of Busselton.</li> <li>✓/x Weed survey and mapping in Capel Shire being progressed with Capel LCDC and Capel Shire.</li> <li>✓ Weed Forum being organised by Geographe Weed Action group for Sept 03 with support from GeoCatch.</li> <li>✓ Staff attended Rivercare forums, an Acid Sulphate Soils Workshop, Limnology conference and Fish Kill response training.</li> <li>✓ Administration and technical infrastructure support provided to GeoCatch by the Dept of Environment.</li> <li>✓ A number of displays were set up at various events. As well as being involved in these activities, Members were involved with World Environment Day in June and National Tree Day in July.</li> <li>✓ Presentations were made to several local community groups on the LVR Cleanup Program and general River Management issues.</li> <li>✓ Annual Business Plan was completed and widely distributed.</li> <li>✓ A report was given to the Board of the Water &amp; Rivers Commission on GeoCatch's progress and activities. This was well received by this group.</li> <li>✓ A Landcare Catchment Planning Workshop was held in Busselton in April 2003. The forum discussed a range of roles, directions and ideas regarding landcare activities in the Catchment. Information from the workshop will feed into future Business Planning and integrated projects for the Geographe Catchment.</li> <li>✓ Representation to Minister for Environment, July.</li> <li>✓ Development and delivery of three community workshops that focused on: Bush &amp; Biodiversity, Revegetation Techniques and Working with Water.</li> </ul>

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<b>Support for the Geographe Catchment Council and Administration</b>	<p>✓ In addition to the monthly meetings of GeoCatch, the following activities were undertaken by the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination of the 2002 "Report to the Community" forum, with an attendance of over 80 community members. The aims of the evening were to report to the community on the achievements of GeoCatch in its fifth year of operation, and to seek community feedback on GeoCatch's role and operation;</li> <li>- Use of the GeoCatch Network Centre as a resource centre by the local community;</li> <li>- 5 new members appointed to GeoCatch to guide operations. Appointment by a Selection Panel with an independent Chair;</li> <li>- Distribution of a quarterly 'Geographe Network News' publication that promotes activities local groups are involved in across the catchment;</li> <li>- Involvement of GeoCatch members in local displays for a number of events;</li> <li>- Community Support Officers appointed in Capel and Busselton;</li> <li>- Accountability for finance procedures, the expenditure of significant public funds, budgetary and contract management; GST Compliance;</li> <li>- Project administration, reporting and acquittal, Regional support and training;</li> <li>- 10 Council Meetings, report to the community and four workshops held;</li> <li>- Support to LCDC's and Community Groups for due process regarding financial and contract management and the appointment / management of 4 staff positions. Coordination of volunteers; insurance compliance.</li> </ul>
<b>Advice, Representation, Liaison, Submissions</b>	<p>✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Represented on the Marine Conservation Park Reference Group. Contributing to the planning process for the Capes Marine Park (CALM);</li> <li>- Stormwater management in the urban and industrial areas of Busselton Town;</li> <li>- Contributing with the Shire of Busselton to the WA Floodplain Management Strategy being coordinated by the Floodplain Management Strategy Council.</li> <li>- Contributing to Busselton Flood Management Committee with the Dept of Environment, Shire of Busselton, Water Corporation, Office of Water Regulation, CALM, local landholders);</li> <li>- Active member of South West Catchments Council (sub-regional groups, CALM, DoE, AGWEST, DEP, DPI, South West Development Commission, LGA);</li> <li>- Cape to Cape Catchments (Dept of Environment, Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, wine industry, dairy industry, community and environment groups);</li> <li>- Capel LCDC Business Plan;</li> <li>- Capel Shire Strategic Plan;</li> <li>- Stirling Wetlands and Capel Weir</li> <li>- National Facilitator and Coordinator Review;</li> <li>- Ludlow Tuart Forest and proposed mine;</li> <li>- Toby Inlet Ocean Entrance and Wetlands;</li> <li>- Shire of Busselton, Wetlands Ecotourism Project</li> <li>- Draft Busselton Wetlands Conservation Strategy</li> <li>- WA State Sustainability Strategy</li> </ul>

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Projects	RESULTS*
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<p><b>Lower Vasse River Cleanup Program</b> The Shire of Busselton, GeoCatch and the WRC resolved to pursue the following strategies in 2002/03 to improve the health of the Vasse River</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Restoring River Ecology</u></li>   <li>▪ <u>Sediment treatment and Removal Phoslock application</u> WRC/CSIRO partnership to address Phosphorus stored in the river sediment</li>   <li>▪ <u>Rural Catchment Management</u> In partnership with the Vasse-Wonnerup LCDC</li>   <li>▪ <u>Stormwater Urban/Industrial Catchment Management</u> Support secured from Coasts &amp; Clean Seas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completion of NHT Report</li> <li>✓ Reshaping the foreshores and construction of islands, weed removal and revegetation were undertaken on a section of the Lower Vasse River between the Causeway and the Butter Factory (Stage 2) was completed. 14 000 seedlings planted. Extensive community and Aboriginal consultation at all stages.</li> <li>✓ Launch of Interpretive signage and Walk Trail and viewing platform. Aiming to raise awareness of the importance and history of the river and to describe the management initiatives undertaken through the cleanup program.</li> <li>✓ Engagement of local Noongah people to provide information on their stories of the River, its history and how the River used to be before it became degraded. Aboriginal artwork and names incorporated into signs recognising the history of the River and the importance of the River environment.</li> <li>✓ Launch in June 2003 of the Lower Vasse River Cleanup Program</li> <li>✓ Murdoch University honours project commenced in July 2003 to investigate the establishment of submerged macrophytes in the LVR.</li> <li>✓ Regular photo points used to monitor the success of vegetation establishment.</li>   <li>✓ Joint sponsorship and production of a Phoslock Brochure, reporting on the research findings of the Phoslock trials. Algae results for summer 02/03 show improvement compared to previous summers.</li>   <li>✓ The Vasse River Action Plan is being implemented to actively assist landowners to improve the condition of the Vasse River in the rural catchment. Fencing, weed management, revegetation and stock control is major components of the Action Plan.</li>   <li>✓ On-ground works continued to treat a total of 24 stormwater outlets. Constructed detention basins and drainage lines planted with native wetland vegetation to 'polish' stormwater through trapping sediments and absorbing nutrients.</li> <li>✓ "Clean Drains" program promoted with Ribbons of Blue to raise awareness in the community of the role that we can play in stormwater management, the risk that stormwater can pose to our waterways and to promote cleaner production technology for industry.</li> <li>✓ GeoCatch, the Shire of Busselton and the Water and Rivers Commission were announced as joint winners of the Western Australian Coastal Award for 2002, for the "Geographe Bay Clean Seas Project", in the category of Outstanding Coastal Project.</li> <li>✓ Stormwater monitoring program implemented to assess the effectiveness of treatments and nature of pollutants in the detention basins. McKillop Catholic College assisting in monitoring of drainage points.</li> <li>✓ Stormwater Management Workshop organised for August 2003 for regional Government Agencies involved in planning to get an overview of the forthcoming updated Stormwater Management Manual and the need for a review.</li> <li>✓ Broadwater Wetlands (northeast sector), partnership with CALM for the Stormwater Management and rehabilitation program on the Broadwater Wetlands. On National Tree Day GeoCatch led a team of 500 West Busselton Primary School students, to plant 2000 trees at the Broadwater Wetlands.</li> </ul>
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