

# 40 Years of Wetlands Conservation: What Have We Achieved?

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# Origins of Wetlands Conservation in WA

- Aboriginal attitudes to wetlands
- The early European settlers
- Post-War expansion
- The rise of environmental concern – Carson, Suzuki, Rischbieth, Serventy, Seddon, Butler

# Lake Monger c. 1914



# First Steps

- CCWA formed (1967)
- Conservation rally (1969)
- EPA formed (1971)
- CTRC begins (1972)
- Wetlands Advisory Committee formed (1972)
- Cockburn Wetlands Study (1976)
- System 6 Green Book (1980)
- System 6 Red Book (1983)

# Environmental Activism for Wetlands

- Bessie Rischbieth – Freeway interchange protest (1964)
- PPG formed 1977
- Star Swamp campaign 1982
- WCG formed 1984
- Farrington Road protest 1984
- WCS formed 1985
- Watts Road Lake protest 1989

# Bessie Rischbieth at Mounts Bay

## 21 April 1964



# Farrington Road Blockade

## 10 September 1984



# Campaigns Continued

- Port Kennedy and Secret Harbour 1989-1992
- Duck Shooting campaign 1989 – 1992
- Jandakot wetlands campaign 1992
- FRAGYL formed 2006 – Yalgorup campaign
- Roe Highway campaign 2000 –
- Yarragadee campaign 2001 - 2006



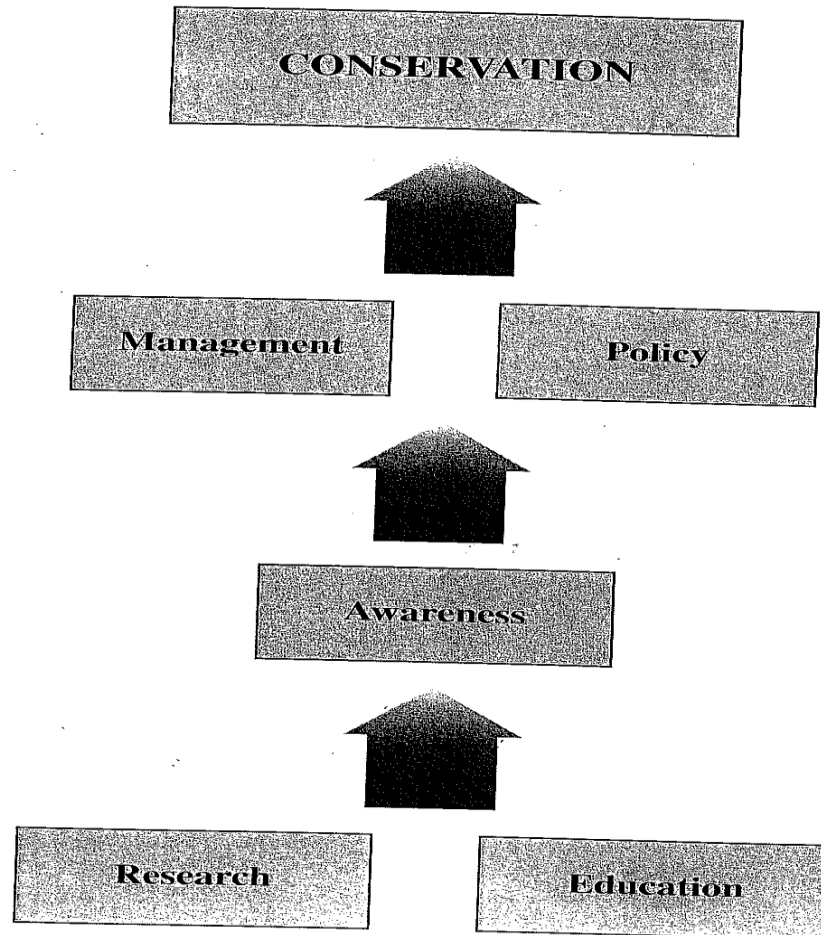
# Outcomes

- EPA System Reports – recommendations for conservation 1978 - 83
- Star Swamp saved 1983
- Herdsman Wildlife Centre 1985
- Ramsar nominations – first batch 1990
- Duck Shooting banned 1992
- Swan Coastal Plain Lakes Policy 1992
- Port Kennedy Scientific Park 1993
- CWEC established 1993
- Regional Parks System 1997

# Outcomes continued

- Big Swamp saved 1995
- State Wetlands Conservation Policy 1997
- Wetlands Coordinating Committee established 1998
- Naragebup established 1998
- Second batch of Ramsar nominations 2000
- Canning River Eco-Centre established 2006
- Denmark Sustainability Centre 2005
- Western Swamp Tortoise EPP 2003/2010

# The Process of Conservation



# Ongoing Activities

- Wetlands Research – DEC, universities
- Wetland mapping and inventory - DEC
- Wetland restoration work – DEC, community, NGOs, industry, LGAs, landcare groups
- Wetland education – universities, NGOs, schools

# Unfinished Business

- Regional Parks expansion – Peel, South Bunbury, Vasse Wonnerup, Lower Serpentine, Gnangara
- Regional Parks legislation and consolidation (1997 - )
- State Wetlands Conservation Policy update ( 2004-)
- Wetlands EPP or Guide (2001, 2005 - )
- Further Ramsar nominations (8) (2000 -)
- Wetland Buffer Guidelines (1998 - )

# More Unfinished Business

- Completion of the mapping and inventory
- Halt further wetland loss (1500 ha/y)
- Wetland banking and offsets (2001 -)
- Threats to wetlands – salinity, climate change, fragmentation (eg. Roe 8, Keane Road extension), insensitive development (eg. Lake Richmond, Yalgorup, etc), drainage, groundwater extraction, pollution, etc

# The Outlook for Wetland Conservation

- Lack of significant progress on policy since 2000
- Continuing wetland loss (EPA 2007)
- Significant impacts from climate change
- Pressures from rapid population growth and declining water resources
- The system is under great stress

# Climate Change at North Lake

**July 1995**



**July 2012**





# What Can We Do?

- Try to understand why we have lost momentum (eg SCPW EPP, Mangles Bay, State Wetlands Policy, etc)
- Prioritise and campaign for key objectives.
- Build awareness and support
- Engage with the political process

# Questions?

# Ramsar Nominations 1990

- Ord River Flood Plain
- Lakes Argyle and Kununurra
- Roebuck Bay
- Eighty Mile beach
- Forrestdale and Thomsons Lakes
- Peel-Yalgorup System
- Toolibin Lake
- Vasse-Wonnerup System
- Lake Warden system

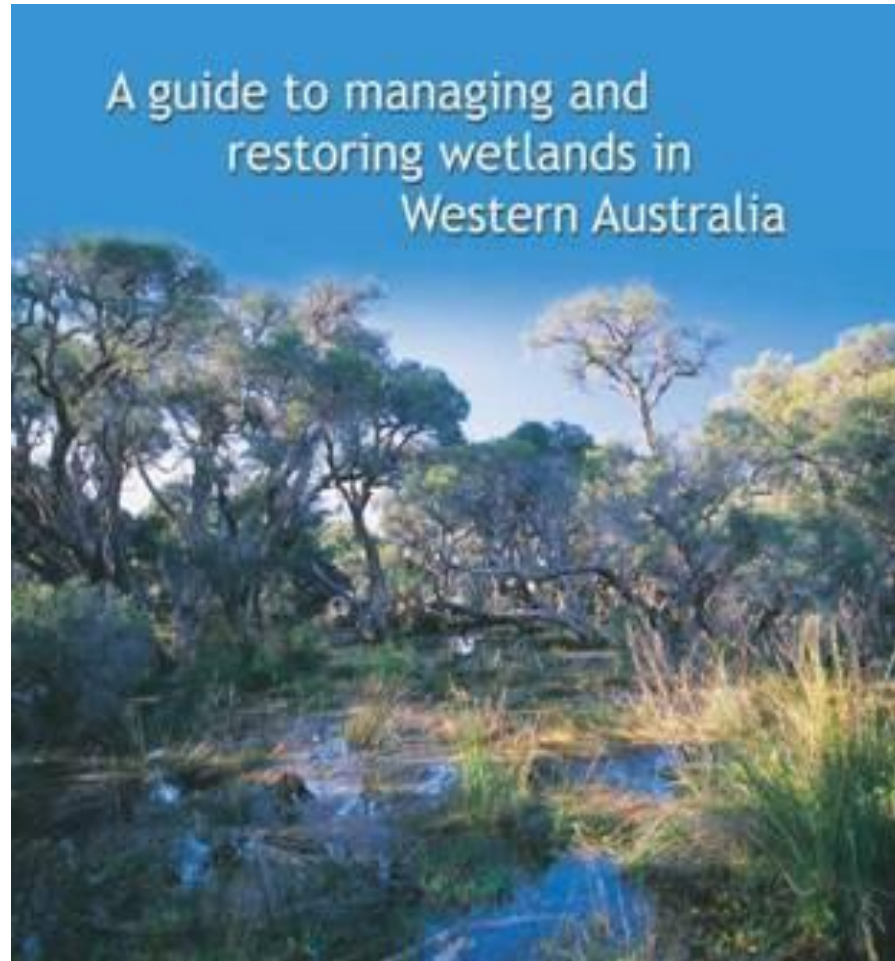
# Ramsar Nominations 2000

- Lake Gore
- Muir-Byenup System
- Becher Wetlands
- Plus extensions to previous nominations

# Candidate Ramsar Sites 2000 -

- Cape Range Subterranean Waterways
- Ellen Brook Swamps
- Lake McLeod
- Spearwood Creek Wetlands
- Lake Ballard
- Millstream Pools
- Hamelin Pool
- Lake Gregory

# Wetlands Guide Released



# What is the Wetlands Guide?

- DEC has prepared a free, online publication to assist people in WA to manage and restore wetlands.
- The guide is intended to be of assistance to anyone who is, or who is intending to, manage or restore a wetland in WA. This includes landowners, land managers, and natural resource managers; individuals, community members and employees of the public and private sector.
- The development of the guide has been funded by the Western Australian Government and Australian Government (via the Natural Heritage Trust). The development of the guide has received the support of the Western Australian Wetlands Coordinating Committee.

# How to Access the Guide

[www.dec.wa.gov.au/wetlandsguide](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/wetlandsguide)