

## **BEELIAR REGIONAL PARK**

### **Background**

Beeliar Regional Park is located in the south west of the Perth metropolitan area and has a range of land ownership (see Figure 1). The northernmost area of the Park (Blue Gum Lake) is located approximately 10 kilometres from Perth's Central Business District (CBD) while The Spectacles, being the southernmost area, is approximately 33 kilometres from the CBD.

The Park comprises 19 lakes and many other associated wetlands in two main chains located parallel to the coast. The western chain is approximately two kilometres from the coast and the eastern chain is between five and six kilometres from the coast. Coastal limestone cliffs along the Henderson foreshore are also contained within the Park.

The western chain of wetlands consists of a number of depressions behind the coastal dune system. This chain comprises Manning Lake, Market Garden Swamps 1 and 2, Lake Coogee, Brownman Swamps, and Lake Mount Brown.

Mount Brown and the Henderson foreshore (System Six, M91 reserve) adjoin the wetland chain to the southwest. The entire western chain of wetlands and coastal areas are within the municipal boundaries of the City of Cockburn.

The eastern chain of wetlands is more extensive than the western chain and encompasses Blue Gum Lake, Booragoon Lake and Piney Lakes Reserve (within the City of Melville), North Lake, Bibra Lake, South Lake, Little Rush Lake, Yangebup Lake, Kogolup Lake, Thomsons Lake and Banganup Lake (within the City of Cockburn) and The Spectacles (within the Town of Kwinana).

### **Natural Environment Value**

Much of Beeliar Regional Park has high nature conservation value due to its rich diversity and complexity of ecosystems which are limited in distribution across the Swan Coastal Plain. Even though the wetlands within the Park are by no means pristine, they form one of the most important systems of wetlands remaining within the Perth metropolitan region (DPUD, 1992).

The vegetation communities found within Beeliar Regional Park are significant as they represent communities once widespread on the Swan Coastal Plain but now significantly cleared. The vegetation within the Park comprises both structural and floral diversity expressed as a diverse series of landscapes (Keighery 1996).

A number of Park areas contain priority flora species, as well as a large number and wide range of plant communities some of which are in very good condition. The diversity of habitat is important to wildlife utilising the Park. The wetlands and surrounding areas provide important nesting and feeding habitats and because of their high biological productivity, they directly or indirectly support most of the wildlife of the region.

Additionally, some of the wetlands in the Park act as summer refuges for a diverse bird population, many of which are transequatorial migratory waders.

The Beeliam Wetlands can be considered of international and national significance. The entire Park has been placed on the Interim List of the Register of the National Estate, while Booragoon Lake, Thomsons Lake and The Spectacles have been listed on the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia (Environment Australia 2001).

Thomsons Lake (in conjunction with Forrestdale Lake) has been listed as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar convention. Many wetland areas in the Park have also been identified as locations for JAMBA / CAMBA migratory bird species.

### **Cultural Value**

Beeliam Regional Park has cultural significance to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

There are numerous Aboriginal sites within or immediately adjacent to the Park which have been identified by the Department of Indigenous Affairs. The wetlands of Beeliam Regional Park holds significance for the local Aboriginal people (Nyungars) as they were important camping, ceremonial areas and sources of food. The eastern chain of wetlands was a part of a major trade route between Aboriginal people in the Swan and Murray River areas (Polglaze, 1986). North Lake and Bibra Lake in particular are areas of spirituality for the Nyungar people.

Non-Aboriginal people also have historical connections to the area. Thomas Peel first occupied the area in 1830 as the Clarence settlement. However, it was not until the late nineteenth century that intensive agriculture commenced in the area, coinciding with the gold rush in the 1890s.

### **Landscape Value**

Beeliam Regional Park provides significant landscape and amenity value to the region. Many landscapes contribute to the overall high visual quality of the Park. These include vegetated uplands consisting of mature woodland and forest areas, vegetated wetland areas, extensive areas of open water and areas of well maintained grassed parkland. The coastal environments of the Henderson foreshore area, which comprises limestone cliff formations and coastal vegetation, also add another positive dimension to the Park's landscape amenity.

Significant views of the major wetland areas can be appreciated from many vantage points around the Park. These views are an important part of the Park's identity. The relationship of adjoining land uses to the Park's landscape often has a significant impact on the overall amenity of the Park.

### **Recreation Value**

Beeliar Regional Park provides for a range of passive and active recreation opportunities. Of particular significance is the opportunity to recreate in natural environments that are relatively undisturbed yet close to urban areas. A wide variety of natural features such as the lakes, wetlands and bushland areas as well as coastal environments, provide visitors with a variety of recreation opportunities and experiences.

The Park also contains a number of smaller recreation nodes offering a diversity of settings, uses and facilities.

The Park provides excellent opportunities to promote CALM's Healthy Parks Healthy People programme which encourages people to visit and enjoy themselves in parks by raising the awareness of the physical, mental and social health benefits of spending time in nature.

### **Education and Research Value**

The Park has significant research and scientific value. On one hand it contains rich, dynamic ecosystems with seasonal and periodic variations, subject to considerable external pressures and inputs. Conversely, it has areas with high recreational demand requiring an understanding of human use, landscape design, and changing social use of natural areas for recreation.

In particular, the collection of technical data on wetland habitats, water quality and water quantity make it an extremely valuable resource in gaining technical and managerial expertise that can be applied to other wetlands across the Swan Coastal Plain.

### **South West Group Role**

The South West Group has supported trials of weed control, supported environmental management and has established the Beeliar - Rockingham Lakes Regional Parks Fund. Through the South West Corridor Environment and Services Committee the South West Group will seek to develop the Beeliar Regional Park and adjoining conservation areas.



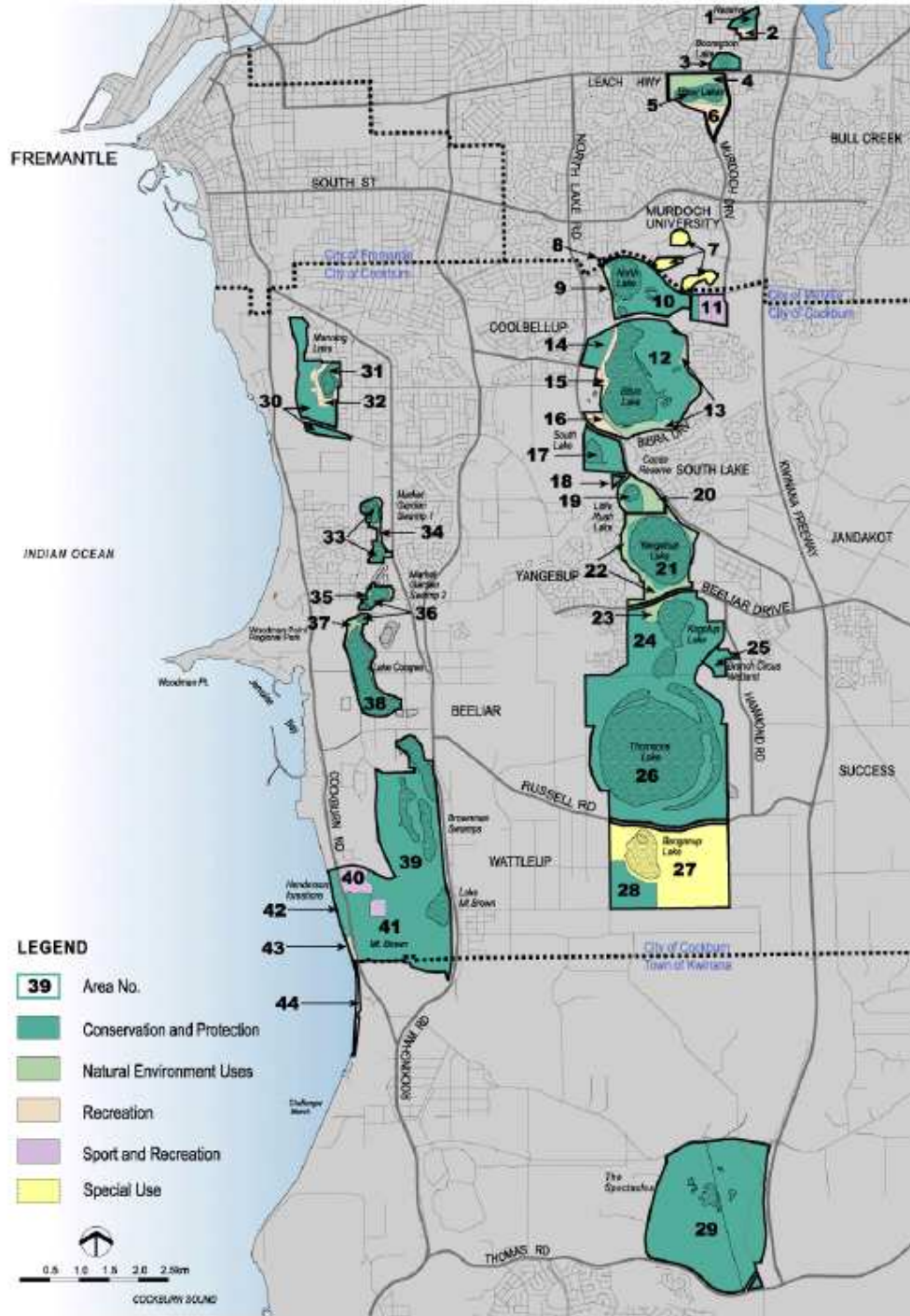


Figure 2. Beeliam Regional Park Management