



# **Wheatbelt Woodlands: Where the Wild Things Are**



The Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt are an iconic part of the wheatbelt landscape that have been listed as a Threatened Ecological Community. We have received funding for our 'Where the Wild Things Are' project to initially identify priority Wheatbelt Woodland remnants and then work with land managers to implement meaningful conservation actions to improve their condition. **If you believe you have Eucalypt Woodland TEC on your property or in your local area, we'd love to hear from you.** Wheatbelt NRM has attracted funding through the Australian Governments National Landcare Program to work with land managers to improve the condition of the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt, an EPBC listed Threatened Ecological Community.

The Regional Strategy, developed by Wheatbelt NRM through consultation with our community, has highlighted Ecosystem Health and Species Viability as one of the primary concerns of the Avon River Basin. Our 3 Year Plan for the region includes protecting and enhancing the physical and cultural environment, focusing on biodiversity conservation, water management in the environment and climate change adaptation. Fragmentation, climate change, over-grazing, invasive species and fire frequency are all listed as big drivers that cause changes in the system. Each of these drivers are also listed as key threats to the Eucalypt Woodlands.

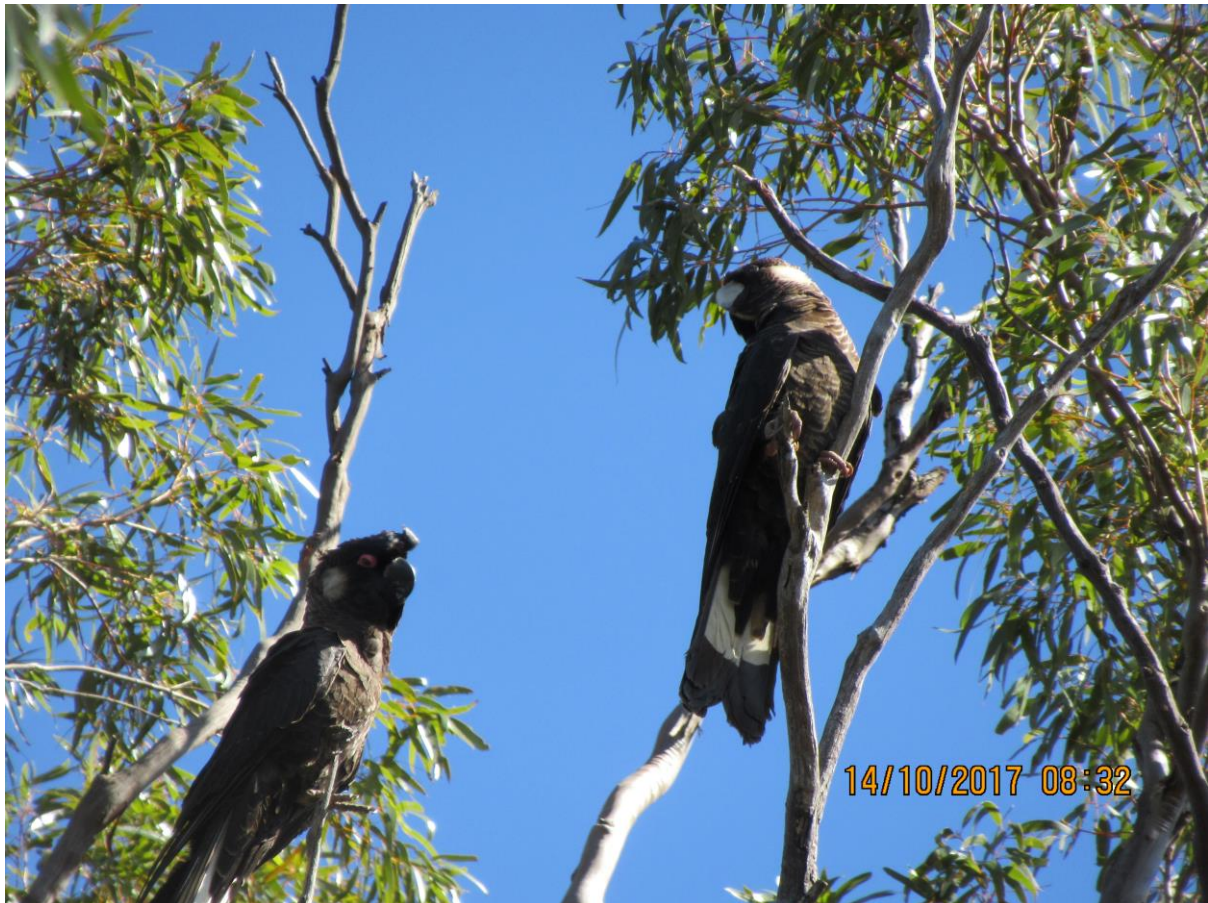
Initially we'll be heading out across the region to identify potential TEC remnants to inform management decisions. Identification of the Woodlands can be a difficult task, so we are developing a field resource that will allow community to help us identify and assess the condition of potential Wheatbelt Woodland TEC.

Across the Avon River Basin, between 70-95% of the vegetation has been cleared. A small part of this remnant vegetation is classified as Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC. The Wheatbelt Woodlands are made up of 62 different vegetation communities, each with different species or structures. Many are only found within the Avon River Basin, making them unique to our region. They can be hard to classify but the major similarities are that they are found on the flatter landscapes and lower rises of the wheatbelt, the main overstorey trees are eucalypts that have a single trunk (not mallees) and they have a diverse and variable understorey, ranging from bare and grassy to shrubby. The quality of woodland remnants refers to the size of the patch, the presence of a native understorey as opposed to weeds, and presence of mature Eucalypts.









The Wheatbelt Woodlands are a distinctive aspect of our landscape and offer numerous ecosystem services, including:

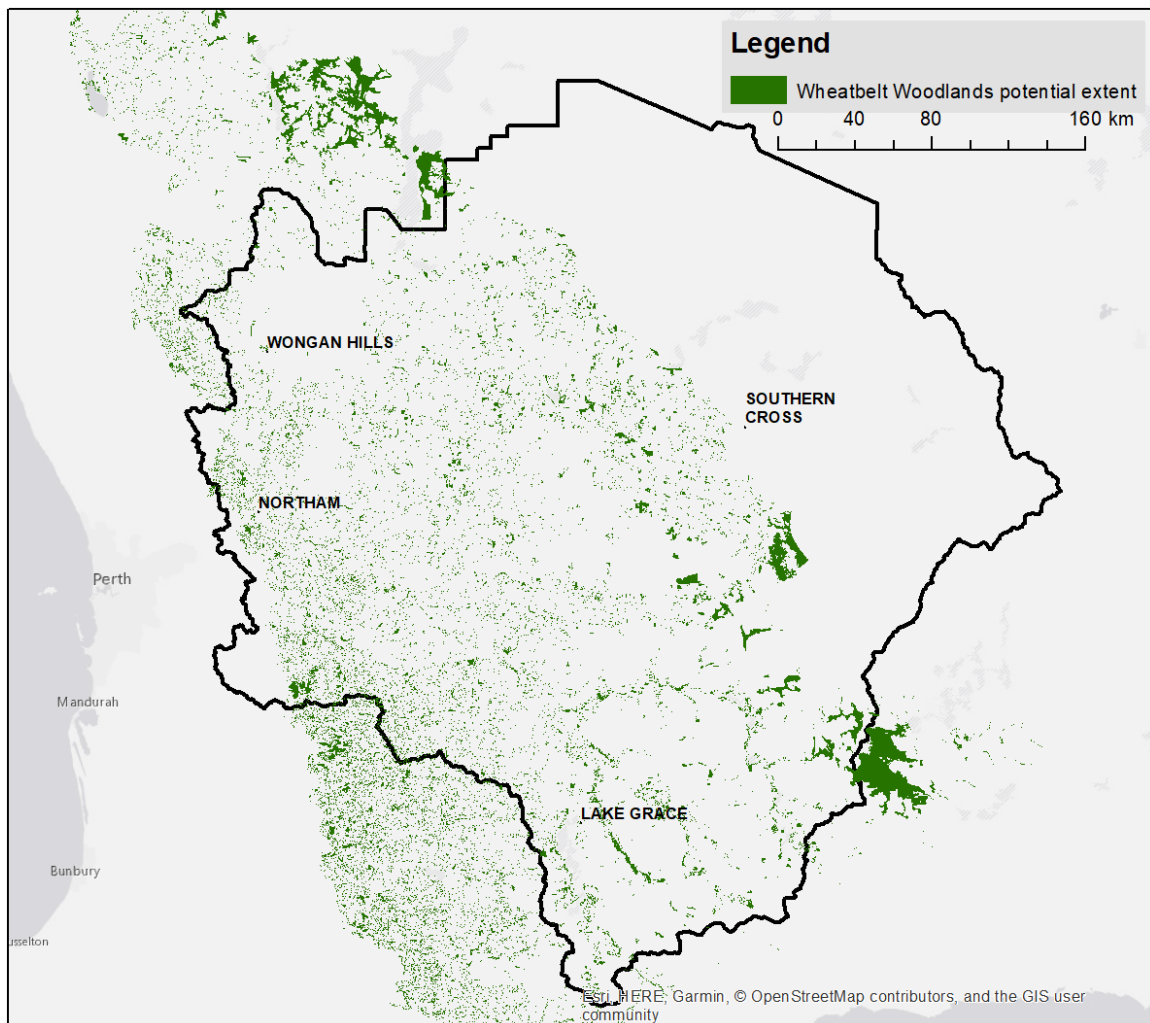
- providing habitat for many animals, including multiple threatened species
- the potential to provide shelter for stock
- maintaining current water table levels and salinity
- maintaining soil health
- maintaining beneficial populations of:
  - predatory birds – which hunt mice and other agricultural pests
  - invertebrates – which may help with pollination and support insectivorous birds and bats
  - bats – which prey on agricultural pests
  - native mammals – such as echidnas, chuditch and phascogales
  - reptiles and amphibians - which have the potential to prey on agricultural pests
  - native bees - which provide significant and diversified pollination services to the agricultural system

Additionally, they have the potential to provide economic benefits such as:

- increasing farm sale prices significantly as the vegetation cover across the farm reaches 20% – even properties with up to 40% vegetation cover sell for more than completely cleared properties
- increasing wildflower tourism
- providing diversified income for land managers in the form of farm stays and carbon farming into the future

At present, the full extent and condition of the Eucalypt Woodlands of the WA Wheatbelt is unknown. As there are many varying types of Wheatbelt Woodlands, some of which have more information available, while others are underrepresented.

Our first priority is to use existing knowledge to survey potential TEC remnants to better understand the distribution and establish the current status. The collected information will provide data to inform management priorities and if necessary, enable useful conservation actions to maintain and/or improve the future condition. Our Healthy Environments staff will be travelling around the region in the upcoming months, identifying potential sites where we can begin implementing conservation actions.



**If you think you have Eucalypt Woodland TEC on your property or in your local area, we'd love to hear from you.**

The on-ground activities undertaken will vary from site to site, depending on what is required to maintain or improve the vegetation condition. Activities may include:

- Monitoring the site condition
- Fencing to exclude stock
- Infill revegetation to improve the understorey
- Feral animal control

- Weed control
- Installing nesting structures for native animals

Looking after your bushland increases chances of iconic species surviving into the future and adds benefits to your farm's productivity. By sharing the responsibility of bushland care and working in partnership we can ensure long term management of these Threatened Ecological Communities. As part of our 'Where the Wild Things Are' project we will be running events to increase community awareness and understanding of the Wheatbelt Woodlands and provide information on the management actions you can employ to maintain or improve your Wheatbelt Woodland remnant.

If you would like to know more about the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt, follow the links below or contact Anika Dent on 9670 3104 or at [adent@wheatbeltnrm.org.au](mailto:adent@wheatbeltnrm.org.au).