



PRACTITIONER

Turtle Trackers citizen science program: Partnerships to protect a local turtle species

Vicky Harthill, Turtle Trackers

Abstract

To reduce mortality rates in Bibra Lake's native turtle population, in 2019 the City of Cockburn in partnership with Murdoch University, Parks & Wildlife Services, WA Wildlife (formerly Native ARC) and The Wetlands Centre launched the Turtle Trackers citizen science program to help protect nesting females, their nests and eggs during the peak of the nesting season.

Volunteers were recruited and tasked with tracking nesting female turtles around Bibra Lake from September to November, logging information about turtle sightings and behaviour, and helping to install nesting cages to protect hatchlings. Following two seasons, the program has shown positive signs in supporting the turtle population, and educating the community, but to see lasting results there's still a long road ahead. Learn about the successes and challenges of the Turtle Trackers over the last two years, and how the City plans on continuing this program.

Speaker Profile

Vicky Hartill is a passionate environmental educator with over a decade of experience in local government. Working with the City of Cockburn's Environmental Services team since 2008 she has helped build the City's environmental education program from the ground up. Vicky has always had a strong passion for wetlands, completing her honours in wetland salinity in 2005 at Murdoch University, and she has been involved with the Turtle Trackers program since its inception. Vicky was the winner of Australian Association of Environmental Educators (AAEE) WA Environmental Educator of the Year award in 2013, where she is a regular volunteer.

