

*How did you come to be involved in NRM?*

As a consulting biologist I have a range of clients from the resource development, usually mining, government and private sectors. The sale of Telstra and the establishment of environmental funding with devolvement through locally established groups such as South Coast NRM led to a major change whereby funding became available for consulting in the NRM field. This is what led me into NRM or at least provided the opportunity to provide services in that field (no pun intended!).

*What are your biggest achievements in NRM?*

On reflection I have been nibbling away trying to identify the biological attributes, and the processes that sustain them, on the South Coast for nearly 30 years now. In 1981 I discovered (although I was unaware of it at the time) that the Heath Rat was not extinct in WA but living comfortably in the Ravensthorpe Range. Over 1985/87 I was fortunate enough to be funded to do two years biological survey work in the Fitzgerald River National Park and it was like lifting the lid of a biological treasure chest. Most field sessions concluded with biological 'gold' from Dibblers to more Heath Rats and a lot in between.

*Who or what inspires you?*

The Fitzgerald River National Park has been pivotal in my life as a biologist and my sense of place on the South Coast. I first came here in 1970 as an undergraduate to assist in a survey to determine whether or not it should be mined for lignite (noting that it was not a national park at the time). Even at a time when I knew stuff all about anything, I thought it was a truly amazing place. I started work as a biologist in 1972 and divided my time between the

Kimberley and the Wheatbelt, thus very early in my career I got to know quite well the most and the least disturbed environments in WA. I often returned to Fitzgerald River National Park (both in body and spirit) and I thought at the time, and still do, that it is a truly remarkable circumstance that such an amazing place exists only a stone's throw from three towns and only kilometres from farm gates.

*What do you hope to achieve in the next five years?*

To retire gracefully and become more involved in volunteer activities in NRM. I have already started this process with Numbat radio tracking in Cocanarup Timber Reserve, trips to Bald Island and the Recherche Archipelago to assist the Department of Conservation with Gilbert's Potoroo and biological inventory work, respectively. The other thing I must do is pull together the many threads which link together field work already completed. Although I completed a Masters degree on fish biology in 2003 I still haven't published all my results and there are all those rivers I walked and it would be nice to put together a summary of data. I take some, but not much, comfort from the observation that all field biologists I speak to are in the same boat i.e. having huge amounts of unprocessed data in either notebooks or unpublished reports.

*What are the biggest challenges facing the South Coast environment and how can these be met?*

Without hesitation it is Phytophthora dieback. I don't think we will ever eliminate it but the crucial thing is to slow down its rate of spread and leave some quarantined areas. All my experience as a biologist tells me that change per se is not the evil, it is the rate at which it happens, or the capacity of change in one component to get out of kilter with changes in other components. This strangely enough brings me back to Fitzgerald River National Park and the debate about the walk trail - funny about that.

