Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Forrestdale Lake
Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the Noongar Elders who participated in this project, in particular Vivienne Hansen for providing the translations and knowledge about the plants and animals of Forrestdale Lake.

Funding has been provided through the National Landcare Program and Perth NRM. We would like to thank Bryony Fremlin of Friends of Forrestdale Lake, Stian Mawson of Friends of Queens Park Bushland and Gary Tate for the images they supplied for this project, where an image is not credited it is a Perth NRM photo. The Waargle drawing is by Anne Thomas from Aboriginal Legends from the Bibulmun Tribe 1981 Rigby Publishers Limited ISBN 0 7270 1504 4.

WARNING: This document contains images of people who are deceased.

This document is part of a Traditional Ecological Knowledge project of Forrestdale Lake. This document aims to provide knowledge from Noongar Elders about traditional understanding and use of plants endemic to Forrestdale Lake, and to provide Noongar language translations where possible. This document also highlights the importance of wetlands in Perth and why they are so significant to the Noongar community.

Please Note: Aboriginal people did not have any formalised form of written communication; their knowledge was passed between generations through stories, dance, song, and artwork. The following Noongar translations are provided by Elders Vivienne and Mort Hansen, which is knowledge that was passed down to them from their Elders. These translations may differ to what other Noongars know, Mort and Vivienne hold some traditional knowledge, there are other Noongar elders who hold other information not referenced here.

Forrestdale Lake: a Ramsar wetland.

Forrestdale Lake is a declared Ramsar wetland. This means that it is one of the three wetlands in the Perth region that are considered to be of national environmental significance and have been listed on the Ramsar Convention. This is an international convention that has over 169 contracting bodies signed on. The Convention’s mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.”

The Ramsar Convention protects wetlands of international importance and aims to conserve their ecological value. The Convention protects sites that are representative of rare or unique wetlands, or are important for the conservation of biological diversity.

Contents

What makes Forrestdale Lake special? 2
The Noongar people 3
Forrestdale Lake in the past 3
Waargle 4
Forrestdale Lake today 5
Balga (Yoorluk) 5
Bibool 6
Bondalang (common term for pelican) 6
Boohn (Mardya, Mean) 7
Bulgalla 7
Cara 8
Choponya (Booyi) 8
Gujang 9
Dangalang 9
Djirdji (Jeeriji) 10
Dorritj 10
Dwert 11
Dwutta (Maynee) 11
Gonllark 12
Jannah 12
Karda 13
Kabbur (Koopa) 13
Kara 14
Knulbora (krulbrang) 14
Kodjenningara 15
Komma 15
Koorla 16
Konsybardany 16
Kweli (Kulli,Gulli-Pibbulmun) 17
Kwilija (Qeearl, Kooya) 17
Maali 18
Mangarel 18
Mindalany (generic term for wattles) 19
Moltch (Kulurda) 19
Moodgar 20
Moyop 20
Mungite (Beera) 21
Pienza (Biana, Bealhara) 21
Quendi 22
Quenda 22
Tjunguri 23
Wenu 23
Wollong 24
Woylie 24
Wuragle (Ngarnak, Kuiarch) 25
Yangiet 25
Yerdaper (common term for ducks or gese) 26
Yonga 26
Yorn 27
Noongar Word List 28
Bibliography 28

Image from the State Library of Western Australia showing a post-colonial Mia Mia
To Indigenous people the management and use of natural resources is enmeshed in cultural practice and the exercise of cultural responsibility. This view merges cultural heritage and natural resource management into a single concept, rather than seeing them as discrete elements to be dealt with separately.”


Forrestdale Lake in the past

The lakes, swamps, and wetlands of Perth were more extensive in the past than as we see them today. The wetlands were more connected, some forming chains, and this was an important part of life for the Noongar people.

For Aboriginal people, water bodies such as Forrestdale Lake would have been essential to survival in Western Australia and provided abundant plant and animal resources.

It is known from ethnographic sources and from oral history passed down the generations that Noongar people travelled around the landscape spending time on the coast over summer and in the hills during the winter period. Forrestdale Lake, given its position near the coast and down from the hills, would have been frequented during spring when many of the animals were raising their young and the plants flowering or starting to fruit.

The Noongar people

The Noongar people have occupied the Perth region for at least 40,000 years. Dated archaeological sites provide evidence of occupation extending back at least 38,000 years in the South West of Western Australia.¹

For Noongar people, the stories about their culture and moort (family) is completely intertwined with the stories of their boodja (country). The boodja is where their spirit resides and it is through kinship laws that the rules and responsibilities of caring for the land and the natural environment come. This makes the attachment to boodja a spiritual connection for the Noongar people.

¹ The site of Devils Lair has been dated to 38,000 BP from archaeological excavation undertaken there in 1986. [6]

² It is known from archaeological remains and from oral traditional that Noongar people travelled through the landscape

Forrestdale Lake

Forrestdale Lake Nature Reserve covers an area of 246 hectares, with the lake body taking up 221 hectares of that area. The lake is shallow (<2m when full) and is circular/oval in shape. What earned Forrestdale Lake its Ramsar classification is that it plays an important role for waterbirds, providing breeding grounds, refuge during drought, and acting as an essential stop-over point for migratory species.

The facts about Forrestdale Lake:

• 76 species of water bird have been recorded at the lake;
• 13 species of lizard and snakes;
• 7 species of frogs;
• 4 species of mammals;
• 252 native plant species;
• 99 introduced species of plants;
• 7 native species are priority species of flora;
• 2 native species of plants are declared rare flora (Diuris prudiei and Drakaea elastic)

What makes Forrestdale Lake special?

Forrestdale Lake is one of the best remnant examples of seasonal, brackish lakes with fringing sedgeland that were once common in the Swan Coastal Plain bioregion.

Bryony Fremlin (Friends of Forrestdale Lake)

Image from the State Library of Western Australia showing a pre-colonial Mia Mia in Perth
Waargle

Forestdale Lake is associated with the dreaming Waargle (the rainbow serpent). The Waargle created all the rivers, lakes, and watering holes found in Perth and the South West, and the Waargle spirit protects these places even today.

The following quote is about Forrestdale Lake and its association with the Waargle:

“... one of the most important place for the Waargle, the roundness and size indicates it curled itself up and rested there for a while, after the hard work of creating the streams, brooks and rivulets...” Richard Wilkes 1999.

Forrestdale Lake today

Forrestdale Lake remains important to Noongar people today not only for its association with the Waargle and as a connection to their country, but also as an example of how Noongar people lived, what they relied on to eat, and how they maintained their culture. Today Forrestdale lake is a site recorded on the Department of Aboriginal Affairs register as ID Number 3713 a mythological site with artefact scatter, hunting ground, and camp site.

Balga (Yoorluk)

Scientific Name: Xanthorrhoea preissii
Common Name: Grass Tree
Flowering Period: August – December
Noongar Uses: The kadjo (gum/resin from Xanthorrhoea sp.) was chewed to relieve diarrhoea and constipation. The boyi (smoke) from the burning kadjo was inhaled to relieve sinusitis. Kadjo from the balga was used as a binding agent. The flower spike was used as a fishing kitj (spear), and the flowers from the spike were infused with water to make a sweet drink. The white material inside the top of the trunk can be squeezed and the milky liquid is drinkable. [2]
Boodalang (common term for pelican)
Scientific Name: Pelecanus conspicillatus
Common Name: Australian Pelican

Borhn (Mardy, Meam)
Scientific Name: Haemodorum spicatum
Common Name: Bloodroot or Mardy
Flowing Period: October - January
Noongar Uses: The bulbs can be eaten raw or roasted. The roots and leaf bases were roasted and mixed with clay from termite nests and ingested to stop diarrhoea. The bulb was brewed into a drink to relieve lung congestion. [3]

Bulgalla
Scientific Name: Banksia menziesii
Common Name: Firewood Banksia
Flowing Period: February - October
Noongar Uses: The banksia flower spikes were soaked in water to make a sweet refreshing drink. This drink was drunk for coughs and sore throat. [2]

Bibool
Scientific Name: Melaleuca rhaphiophylla
Common Name: Swamp paperbark
Flowing Period: July - December
Noongar Uses: Leaves contained oil used for treating colds and the flexible bark was used as bandages. The oil in the Melaleucas is the same as is found in tea tree and has antibacterial and antiseptic qualities. The bark was used to wrap around fish for cooking or wrapping up other food to help preserve it while travelling. [1]

Noongar Uses: Leaves contained oil used for treating colds and the flexible bark was used as bandages. The oil in the Melaleucas is the same as is found in tea tree and has antibacterial and antiseptic qualities. The bark was used to wrap around fish for cooking or wrapping up other food to help preserve it while travelling. [1]
Cara
Scientific Name: Burchardia multiflora
Common Name: Multi-headed Milkmaid
Flowering Period: August - October
Noongar Uses: The roots and tubers of this plant were a plentiful food source for the Noongar people.

Cujong
Scientific Name: Acacia saligna
Common Name: Orange Wattle
Flowering Period: July - November
Noongar Uses: The wattle seeds were eaten raw or ground into flour and baked into damper, the seeds are a good source of fat, protein, and carbohydrate. [2]

Choonya (Booyi)
Scientific Name: Chelodina oblonga
Common Name: Long-necked turtle, Oblong Turtle

Dangalang
Scientific Name: Waitzia suaveolens
Common Name: Everlasting
Flowering Period: September - January
Noongar Uses: Uses of this plant were not identified.
**Djiridji (Jeeriji)**

**Scientific Name:** Macrozamia fraseri  
**Common Name:** Zamia  
**Flowering Period:** September to October  
**Noongar Uses:** The bayu (pods) contain toxins, they were treated by soaking in running water or burying underground for six months. After treatment the bayu was peeled and eaten. The cotton from the female plant was used as feminine hygiene purposes or as lining for carrying a baby in a yandi (curved dish). [2]

---

**Dwert**

**Scientific Name:** Canis lupus dingo  
**Common Name:** Dingo

---

**Dwutta (Maynee)**

**Scientific Name:** Eucalyptus todtiana  
**Common Name:** Blackbutt or Prickly bark  
**Noongar Uses:** The leaves of the eucalyptus were used as an antibacterial and were held under the nose to relieve congestion. The leaves can be brewed to produce a steam that eases colds, flu and rheumatic symptoms. The gum of the eucalypt can be eaten to relieve dysentery. [1]

---

**Dobitj**

**Scientific Name:** Pseudonaja affinis  
**Common Name:** Dugite
Gnollark
Scientific Name: Calyptorhynchus latirostris
Common Name: Carnaby’s Black-cockatoo

Kaarda
Scientific Name: Varanus gouldii
Common Name: Gould’s Monitor, Racehorse Goanna

Kabbur (Koorpa)
Scientific Name: Jacksonia sternbergiana
Common Name: Stinkwood
Flowering Period: All year
Noongar Uses: The stems of this plant provided strong flexible branches used to build Mia Mia (shelters) and could be made into rope or twine. [2]

Jarrah
Scientific Name: Eucalyptus marginata
Common Name: Jarrah
Flowering Period: June - January
Noongar Uses: The bark of the jarrah was used as roofing for shelters. The crushed leaves were used as an antibacterial poultice for wounds. The smell from the crushed leaves was inhaled to relieve congestion due to colds and flu.
The kino (gum) has anaesthetic qualities and was mixed with water and drunk to relieve diarrhoea and upset stomach. The gum was also ground and mixed as an ointment for sores. [2]
**Kara**

*Scientific Name:* Burchardia congesta  
*Common Name:* Milkmaid  
*Flowering Period:* August - October  
*Noongar Uses:* The roots of this lilly, like other lillies, have thick fleshy roots that store starch and were eaten. They could be eaten raw, steamed, or roasted over coals.

**Kodjenningara**

*Scientific Name:* Verticordia densiflora  
*Common Name:* Compacted Feather flower  
*Flowering Period:* September – December  
*Noongar Uses:* The uses of this plant were not identified.

**Knulbora (krulbrang)**

*Scientific Name:* Anigozanthos manglesii  
*Common Name:* Mangels Kangaroo Paw  
*Flowering Period:* August - November  
*Noongar Uses:* The roots of the kangaroo paw store starch and were eaten. [2]

**Komma**

*Scientific Name:* Patersonia occidentalis  
*Common Name:* Purple Flag  
*Flowering Period:* August – December  
*Noongar Uses:* The uses of this plant were not identified.
Koorla

**Scientific Name:** Hardenbergia comptoniana  
**Common Name:** Native Wisteria  
**Flowering Period:** July - October  
**Noongar Uses:** The stems of this plant provided strong flexible branches used to help build Mia Mia (shelters) and could be made into rope or twine. [2]

Kwell (Kulli, Gulli-Pibbulmun)

**Scientific Name:** Allocasuarina fraseriana  
**Common Name:** Sheoak  
**Flowering Period:** May - October  
**Noongar Uses:** The needles of the sheoaks were used as bedding in Mia Mia (shelter) and covered with a buka (kangaroo skin). Women often gave birth under sheoaks because of the soft needles. Other species of sheoak were used to make implements such as spears, boomerangs, and shields because of the hard bark. The young cones were eaten. Young shoots of the tree were eaten to reduce thirst. [1]

Koroylbardany

**Scientific Name:** Anigozanthos viridi  
**Common Name:** Green Kangaroo Paw  
**Flowering Period:** August - October  
**Noongar Uses:** The roots of the kangaroo paw stored starch and were eaten.

Kwidja (Qeeearl, Kooya)

**Common Name:** Frogs
Maali
Scientific Name: Cygnus atratus
Common Name: Black Swan

Mindaleny (generic term for wattles)
Scientific Name: Acacia pulchella
Common Name: Prickly Moses
Flowering Period: May - December
Noongar Uses: The wattle seeds were eaten raw or ground into flour and baked into damper, the seeds are a good source of fat, protein, and carbohydrate. The wood was used to make kitj (spears) and wannas (digging sticks) and woonda (shields). The bark was stripped and rubbed with yonga (kangaroo) or kaarda (goanna) djirang (fat) and made pliable for tying items together. [2]

Mangarel
Scientific Name: Dinaella revoluta
Common Name: Blueberry Lilly
Flowering Period: August - December
Noongar Uses: The fruit was eaten both raw and cooked. The roots are processed through pounding and then masted and eaten. The leaves were used to make string and cord. The leaves steeped in water were drunk to relieve headaches and the roots steeped and drunk as a remedy for colds. [1]

Moitch (Kulurda)
Scientific Name: Eucalyptus rudis
Common Name: Flooded Gum
Flowering Period: July - September
Noongar Uses: Manna (a product of a small mite that lives on the leaves) was licked from the leaves, the taste is sweet and could be collected and rolled into a large sweet to suck on. The leaves were crushed and used as a poultice to stop bleeding, mud was sometimes used to hold the poultice on and assist with healing. [2] [4]
Moodgar
Scientific Name: Nuytsia floribunda
Common Name: WA Christmas Tree
Flowering Period: October - January
Noongar Uses: The bark was used for making kits. The gum that exudes from the tree from its wounds was collected. It is sweet and eaten raw. [5]

Mungite (Beera)
Scientific Name: Banksia grandis
Common Name: Bull Banksia
Flowering Period: September - December
Noongar Uses: The flower spikes were soaked in water to make a sweet drink, which soothed coughs and sore throats. The cones of the Mungite were used as fuel for fires and wrapped in paper bark to carry the fire when travelling across country. [1]

Piara (Biara, Bealwra)
Scientific Name: Banksia attenuata
Common Name: Slender Banksia
Flowering Period: October to December or January to February
Noongar Uses: The flower spikes were soaked in water to make a sweet drink, which soothed coughs and sore throats. [1]
**Quell**

*Scientific Name:* *Macropus irma*

*Common Name:* Western Brush Wallaby

**Tjunguri**

*Scientific Name:* *Thysanotus manglesianus*

*Common Name:* Fringed Lilly

*Flowering Period:* August – November

*Noongar Uses:* The roots of this lillie, like other lillies, have thick fleshy roots that store starch and were eaten. They could be eaten raw, steamed, or roasted over coals. The roots were ground into paste and made into cakes or patties. [2]

**Quenda**

*Scientific Name:* *Isoodon obesulus fusciventer*

*Common Name:* Quenda

**Weeu**

*Scientific Name:* *Myrmecobius fasciatus*

*Common Name:* Numbat
Wollong
Scientific Name: Kennedia prostrata
Common Name: Scarlet Runner (Running Postman)
Flowering Period: April - November
Noongar Uses: The leaves are used to make a tea-like refreshing drink and the nectar of the flowers soothed a sore throat. The stems were used to make twine. [1]

Wuargle (Ngarnak, Kuiarch)
Scientific Name: Baumea articulata
Common Name: Joint rush
Flowering Period: September - December
Noongar Uses: The roots of many sedges were eaten, the inside of the jointed rush was hollowed out to create a pipe, and used to hunt yerderap (ducks) from under the water. [2]

Woylie
Scientific Name: Bettongia gilbyi
Common Name: Woylie

Yangjet
Scientific Name: Ficinia nodosa
Common Name: Knobby Club-rush
Flowering Period: September - February
Noongar Uses: The roots of many sedges were eaten and the presence of these sedges indicated to Noongar people the presence of fresh water. They were sometimes used to weave nets for catching djidjít (fish) and yakan (turtles). [2]
Yerderap
(common term for ducks or geese)

Yoorn
Scientific Name: Tiliqua rugosa
Common Name: Bobtail, Shingle-back

Yonga
Scientific Name: Macropus fuliginosus
Common Name: Western Grey Kangaroo

For Noongar people, the stories about their culture and moort (family) is completely intertwined with the stories of their boodja (country). The boodja is where their spirit resides and it is through kinship laws that the rules and responsibilities of caring for the land and the natural environment come.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noongar</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>balga</td>
<td>grass tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayu</td>
<td>zamia pods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bibool</td>
<td>paperbark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biodalang</td>
<td>pelican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boodja</td>
<td>country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>borhi</td>
<td>bloodroot or mandja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boyi</td>
<td>smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buka</td>
<td>kangaroo skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bulgalla</td>
<td>firewood banksia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cara</td>
<td>orchids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choonya</td>
<td>long necked turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cujong</td>
<td>orange wattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangalang</td>
<td>everlasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>djising</td>
<td>fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>djirdji</td>
<td>zamia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dobitj</td>
<td>dugite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dwert</td>
<td>dingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gnollark</td>
<td>camabys black cockatoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jarrah</td>
<td>jarrah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaarda</td>
<td>goud's goanna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabbur</td>
<td>stinkwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kadjo</td>
<td>gum or resin from xanthorrhoea species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kara</td>
<td>milkmaid, spider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kino</td>
<td>gum from the jarrah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kitj</td>
<td>spear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knulbora</td>
<td>mangels kangaroo paw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kodjennonga</td>
<td>compacted feather flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>komma</td>
<td>purple flag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koorla</td>
<td>native wisteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koonybardinj</td>
<td>green kangaroo paw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noongar</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kooya</td>
<td>frog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwelli</td>
<td>sheoak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwidja</td>
<td>frog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mangarel</td>
<td>blueberry lilly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mia mia</td>
<td>paperbark hut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mindaleny</td>
<td>wattles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moitch</td>
<td>floored gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moodar</td>
<td>WA Christmas Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moont</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moyop</td>
<td>tiger snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mungite</td>
<td>bull banksia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piara</td>
<td>slender banksia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quell</td>
<td>western brush wallaby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quedna</td>
<td>quenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tjunguri</td>
<td>fringed lilly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wannas</td>
<td>digging stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warugle</td>
<td>jointed rush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warangle</td>
<td>spirit snake that formed the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weeu</td>
<td>numbat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wollong</td>
<td>scarlett runner (or running postman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woonda</td>
<td>shield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woylie</td>
<td>woylie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yandi</td>
<td>curved dish made of wood used by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yangjet</td>
<td>knobby club rushes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yerderap</td>
<td>duck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yonga</td>
<td>kangaroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yoom</td>
<td>bobtail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography**


