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From: WA Parks Foundation <info@ourwaparks.org.au>
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Subject: March Newsletter - Magpie social bonds, WA's natural wonders and more

WA Parks Foundation | Connecting people to parks



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March 2026



Aerial image of Nganjarli Gorge, Murujuga National Park. Image Credit: D. Fowler/Fuzz Digital

Murujuga takes its place on Time Magazine's 2026 world destination list

The Murujuga Cultural Landscape in WA's Pilbara region is one of four Australian inclusions in TIME magazine's *World's Greatest Places 2026*.

Selected from editor and expert nominations worldwide, the list celebrates 100 destinations offering visitors something truly distinctive and internationally important.

Murujuga, encompassing the Burrup Peninsula, the Dampier Archipelago, surrounding marine areas and the submerged landscape, has the largest and densest collection of ancient petroglyphs on earth, with some of the rock engravings dating back more than 45,000 years.

[Read more](#)

Strong social bonds help magpies learn faster and thrive



UWA Magpie vocalisation research. Images credit: Andrew Leslie

New research shows young magpies learn how to turn basic sounds into complex calls and sequences in much the same way human children learn to turn sounds into words and words into sentences.

The study, published in the journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, provides the first evidence of learned syntax in any non-human animal.

In a project led by Dr Stephanie Mason from the Centre for Evolutionary Biology at The University of Western Australia, researchers followed 11 fledgling WA magpies for 200 days from the time they left the nest at the age of three-to-four weeks.

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Vale June Butcher AM



June Butcher AM. Image credit: Kanyana Wildlife Centre

Wildlife conservation champion and Parks Ambassador June Butcher, widely known across the Perth hills for her work caring for injured and orphaned native animals, died recently aged 90.

June's lifelong passion for wildlife led ultimately to the formal creation of Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre with her husband Lloyd in 1986.

Today, this centre in Lesmurdie is one of Western Australia's leading wildlife rehabilitation organisations, catering for thousands of injured, sick and orphaned native animals each year and supported by hundreds of volunteers.

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Now open: support opportunities for community stewardship initiatives



Friends of Upper Lesmurdie Falls - previous grant recipients - are targeting removal of weeds and other unwanted growth to make way for replanting of native species. Image credit: Friends of Upper Lesmurdie Falls

In 2026, \$7 million in funding is available via the Community Stewardships program to support community-driven natural resource management projects across WA.

Submissions close at 12:00pm 29 April 2026 (AWST).

The Community Stewardship Grants are designed to facilitate the conservation and sustainable management of the state's natural resources by supporting local groups to undertake stewardship of natural resources in their local area.

This initiative is managed through the State Natural Resource Management Program at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

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Up with the best - WA's Pinky's Beach and Hellfire Bay



Pinky Beach, Rottnest Island/Wadjemup. Image credit: Rottnest Island Authority

Western Australia shines once again in Australia's Best Beaches 2026, with Pinky Beach on Rottnest Island/Wadjemup ranked #2 and Hellfire Bay in Esperance/Kepa Kurl placed #5.

Curated by Tourism Australia's beach ambassador Brad Farmer AM, the annual list celebrates the nation's most remarkable coastal spots, among

which Western Australia stands out for its pristine sand and crystal-clear waters.

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EPA appointment announced



Dr Regina Flugge. Image credit: Environmental Protection Authority

The WA Parks Foundation congratulates Dr Regina Flugge on her recent appointment to the independent Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

Dr Flugge, who makes a valuable contribution to the Foundation as a Parks Ambassador, is an environmental scientist with more than 30 years' experience in resources, agriculture, governance, and conservation.

She has been Chair of the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee since 2019.

[Read more](#)

Citizen scientists helping to track WA's Black Cockatoos



Red-Tailed Black Cockatoos. Image credit: Western Australian Museum

The next Great Cocky Count, BirdLife Australia's annual snapshot survey of black-cockatoos in south-western WA, will take place on 12 April.

In the lead-up to this citizen science event, Birdlife Australia asks people to keep an eye out for roost sites, which helps with planning, then, on one evening each autumn, volunteers monitor known roost sites and count black cockatoos as they arrive.

South-western Australia is home to three species of black cockatoos – Baudin's Black-Cockatoo, Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo and the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo – all listed as threatened under state and federal legislation.

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WA's natural wonders top the list for tourists



Swimming with Manta Rays at Ningaloo. Image credit: Australia's Coral Coast

Western Australia's natural assets as well as good food and wine are largely why visitors choose to holiday in WA and why they would recommend this state as a holiday destination.

New visitor data shows that our tourism sector continues to break records with 11 million overnight and 29.1 million daytrip visitors spending \$19.2 billion across WA in 2025.

In Tourism WA's 2024-2025 Visitor Experience and Expectations research, 81 per cent of visitors surveyed said they had a particularly memorable experience in WA with natural attractions the most common reason.

Other than Perth, the South West was the most visited region in 2024-25.

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