

Library

From: WA Parks Foundation <info@ourwaparks.org.au>
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Subject: From world-renowned beaches to groundbreaking marine discoveries

Explore the landscapes, wildlife and conservation stories inspiring communities across WA.



May 2026



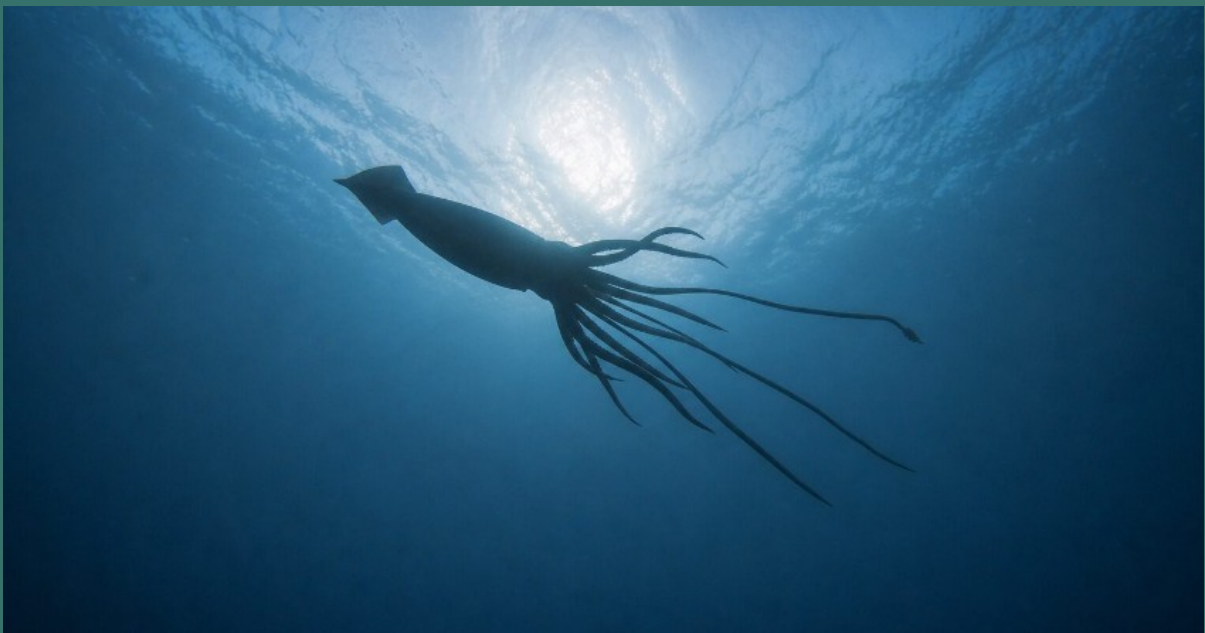
*Western Australia's coastline is among the world's best beaches, showcasing our state's stunning natural beauty globally.
Image by Tourism WA.*

Western Australia's natural wonders take centre stage

From two of the world's best beaches to discoveries deep beneath our coastline, Western Australia's natural places continue to capture global

attention and inspire local communities. In this edition, we celebrate the landscapes, wildlife and conservation stories shaping WA. From young minds connecting with native flora and fauna, to new restoration projects, visitor experiences and groundbreaking marine research helping protect some of the world's most remarkable environments.

Study uncovers giant squid and new species records in WA's deep-sea canyons



An AI-rendering of the *Architeuthis dux*, an elusive giant squid discovered off the Ningaloo coast. Image by Curtin University.

An environmental DNA (eDNA) study led by Curtin University has revealed an exceptional range of marine life in Western Australia's deep-sea canyons off the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) coast, including traces of the elusive giant squid and dozens of species never previously recorded in the region.

The Western Australian Museum-led expedition on board the Schmidt Ocean Institute's *R/V Falkor* surveyed the deep Cape Range and Cloates submarine canyons about 1200km north of Perth, collecting more than 1000 samples from depths of up to 4510m.

By analysing genetic material shed by animals into seawater, researchers detected 226 species across 11 major animal groups. Notable findings

included eDNA from the *giant squid* (*Architeuthis dux*), as well as deep-diving whales such as the Pygmy sperm whale and Cuvier's beaked whale.

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Two WA beaches named in the World's Best Beaches Top 50



Turquoise Bay in Exmouth and Esperance's Wharton Beach have been recognised as some of the World's 50 Best Beaches. Image by Tourism WA.

Two Western Australian beaches have secured places among the world's best, reinforcing the state's international reputation for exceptional, unspoiled coastlines.

Wharton Beach ranked third globally in the 2026 edition of the World's 50 Best Beaches list. Located near Esperance, the beach was recognised for its remote setting, vivid turquoise waters and pristine white sand. Judges highlighted its relative isolation as a key factor in maintaining an uncrowded environment, even during peak travel periods.

Also featured was Turquoise Bay, which placed 15th. Situated within Cape Range National Park, the beach is known for its clear waters and direct access

to Ningaloo Reef. It was recognised for offering a distinctive coastal experience where visitors can engage with rich marine life through the reef's well-known drift snorkelling conditions.

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Young minds inspired by WA's wildlife and flora



Creativity blossomed at our Native Creative Station during the FRONT Family Festival, where children explored Western Australia's unique flora and fauna through hands-on art, weaving, collage and interactive learning activities. Image supplied by FORM, Front Festival, 2026.

The WA Parks Foundation recently supported the Native Creative Station as part of the FRONT Family Festival in the Perth CBD. It was wonderful to see children of all ages let their imaginations run wild across a range of hands-on workshops, from bird mask-making and origami to weaving. They enthusiastically took on the challenge of creating native animals through collage, using leaves and other natural materials, bringing Western Australia's unique wildlife to life in their own creative ways.

With the help of beautifully designed educational booklets and guided drawing activities, children also deepened their understanding of WA's rich flora and fauna.

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New visitor hub coming to Wellington National Park



A visitor kiosk at Wellington National Park will create a welcoming hub beside Wellington Dam, enhancing visitor experiences and supporting tourism growth in the South West. Image by DBCA.

A new \$3 million kiosk is being built in Wellington National Park, with funding from the WA Government. Set beside Wellington Dam, the facility will create a vibrant visitor hub alongside the existing heritage-listed kiosk. A courtyard between the two buildings will offer a welcoming space for people to relax, enjoy refreshments and explore the park's trails and attractions, including the *Reflections* mega-mural on the dam wall.

Construction is expected to begin in mid-2026, supporting regional jobs and continued tourism growth in Collie and the South West.

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Urban forest projects to enhance Swan Canning Riverpark restoration



Urban forest restoration projects across the Swan Canning Riverpark will enhance biodiversity, expand urban canopy cover and improve habitat through collaborative revegetation and conservation efforts. Image by DBCA.

New urban forest restoration projects will be rolled out across the Swan Canning Riverpark over the next three years, supported by \$925,000 in funding through the Urban Forest program.

Six local governments — the Cities of Gosnells, Armadale, Perth, Belmont and Bayswater, along with the Town of Bassendean — will partner with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions to deliver targeted revegetation, weed control and habitat enhancement works. The program contributes up to two-thirds of each project's total cost, helping land managers meet urban canopy and biodiversity goals outlined in their strategic plans.

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CoastSnap citizen science project expands to Mettams Pool



CoastSnap is turning beachgoers into citizen scientists, helping track coastal change over time through simple smartphone photos captured from dedicated shoreline monitoring stations. Image by Tourism WA.

CoastSnap is a global citizen science project helping communities around the world capture how coastlines change over time. All you need is a smartphone and a moment at the beach.

At each CoastSnap station, you'll find a simple stainless-steel phone cradle overlooking the shoreline. Place your phone in the cradle, follow the instructions on the sign, take a photo, and upload it using the free CoastSnap app or via the QR code and hashtag unique to that site.

Now, there's a brand-new CoastSnap station north of Perth at Mettams Pool. This location will help raise awareness about coastal erosion and give visitors a simple way to contribute to ongoing monitoring.

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Support WA's parks today



Your generosity helps protect and enhance Western Australia's extraordinary parks, marine reserves and natural heritage for future generations. *Image by Tourism WA.*

Thank you to all who have supported us in 2025-2026.

As we approach the end of the financial year, we extend our appreciation to all who have contributed to our EOFY appeal. As a not-for-profit organisation, the Foundation relies on the generosity of individuals, community groups and corporate partners to deliver programs that protect and enhance Western Australia's remarkable natural places.

Your support helps our programs to conserve, promote and add value to Western Australia's 34 million hectares of spectacular terrestrial and marine parks — including three natural World Heritage areas — forming one of the most biodiverse protected networks on Earth.

Every donation strengthens our ability to connect people with nature and ensure these extraordinary environments can be enjoyed, understood and cared for by generations to come.

Help keep WA wild and extraordinary. Click below if you would like to donate.

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Uniting the community through a shared love for our WA Parks to protect and conserve them for our physical and mental health, and so they can be enjoyed into the future.

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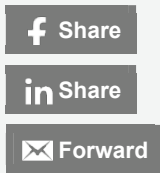
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