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Sent: Tuesday, 20 January 2026 4:34 PM
To: Library
Subject: Ngari Capes Newsletter - Summer 2026



Issue 28 - Summer 2026

Welcome to the 28th issue of *Ngari Capes Marine Park News*

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Image right: The Large Whale Disentanglement Team happy after a successful outcome. By Parks and Wildlife Service

Marine Park Update

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood

Summer has arrived in the South West and it is a busy time for locals and tourists alike. The recent months have also been busy for the Ngari Capes Marine Park team. We take a look at a successful humpback whale disentanglement off the coast in Geographe Bay. An outcome made possible by the trained Large Whale Disentanglement (LWD) team and a local fisher that called the entanglement in.

Marine Rangers attended the annual Dunsborough Primary School Bay OK Day. This event is held on the beach overlooking Geographe Bay and includes the entire school, aimed to teach students about our marine environment and celebrate the schools sustainability achievements. Rangers have also been assisting the Marine Science team with intertidal surveys of Campanile snails. The species is endemic to the South West and are our last remaining lighthouse shell. Read below to learn more.

An annual beach clean-up was run by Tangaroa Blue in October, bringing the community together to collect rubbish and marine debris from our coastline. The event held on the 19th of October was run in collaboration with Tangaroa Blue and Margaret River Nature Conservation where the public attended a 'Sip n Sort' to sort through and identify waste collected from the beaches that adjoin the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. Marine Rangers have also been out collecting waste from below the water. The team assisted the Wellington District with their biennial inspections of the fresh waterways surrounding their recreational sites, removing submerged objects, hazards and discarded fishing gear from below the surface.

We also learn about our newest member to the team, Marine Ranger Amber, who has been with us for almost a year. Lastly, we touch on the Kilcarnup Sanctuary and the installation of on-water markers ready for a busy summer on the water. Thank you for your continued support and interest in our work. We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter.

Whale Disentanglement Success - Geographe Marine Park

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood



Early in October the Ngari Capes Large Whale Disentanglement team responded to a report of an entangled 8m humpback whale in Geographe Bay. The call came in from a local fisherman who spotted the whale moving slowly with what appeared to be floats and ropes trailing behind. Whilst enroute to the whale's location, the team made a quick stop at the Port Geographe Marina entrance to put their newly gained seabird rescue skills to work by removing a hook from a pied cormorant that had been caught by two members of the public fishing off the rock wall. Continuing with the response, the team then travelled approx. 10 nautical miles to the whales last known location outside of the state managed marine park and into Commonwealth waters where the whale was soon located within the Geographe Marine Park.

On arrival, the Large Whale Disentanglement team assessed the whale's condition, before carefully planning the necessary steps to ensure a safe response and successful outcome for the whale. In deteriorating sea conditions, the decision was made to attach a tracking buoy to the whale and return the following day knowing the whale could be easily re-located from the real-time GPS information transmitted by the buoy. This multi-day response would not have been possible without the tracking buoy.



The introduction of whale tracking buoys is a joint initiative by the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD), the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and Western Rock Lobster Council. The use of this technology highlights the importance of government and industry working together to achieve outcomes and protect wildlife.

Underwater footage was used to inform the cutting strategy and a successful disentanglement was achieved using a safe well-planned approach. After two days on the water the Ngari Capes whale disentanglement team were very happy to see the humpback whale swim away heading south to continue on the migration route back to Antarctica.



Although this whale was outside of State waters and within an area managed by Australian Marine Parks, both Commonwealth and State government agencies responsible for managing marine parks work together in partnership to support the day-to-day management of the South-west Network. Not only does this help the whales it also ensures a consistent approach to management of marine parks across the entire state and even across the country.



If you see an entangled whale anywhere off the Western Australian coast, please call the Wildcare Helpline on 9474 9055 or your closest Parks and Wildlife Service office. Do not attempt to disentangle the whale or cut any of the trailing rope. If safe to do so, stay with the whale at a safe distance for as long as possible until a response team has been mobilised.

Photos above: Releasing a pied cormorant after fishing line was removed by DBCA staff (top). The LWD team part way through a whale disentanglement (middle). Happy members of the LWD after a successful outcome (bottom).

Bay OK Day

By Parks and Wildlife Service

During November, marine rangers from Ngari Capes Marine Park team attended Dunsborough Primary Schools Bay Ok Day held on the shores of beautiful Geographe Bay, adjacent to the Old Dunsborough settlement. It is an annual event with the environment at the forefront aimed to teach students key messages regarding environmental protection, conservation and sustainable practices. As students moved through activities, they gained knowledge of the beautiful coastline that they call home and the threatening processes that impact it. Students learnt how we can all play a role in protecting our coastline.



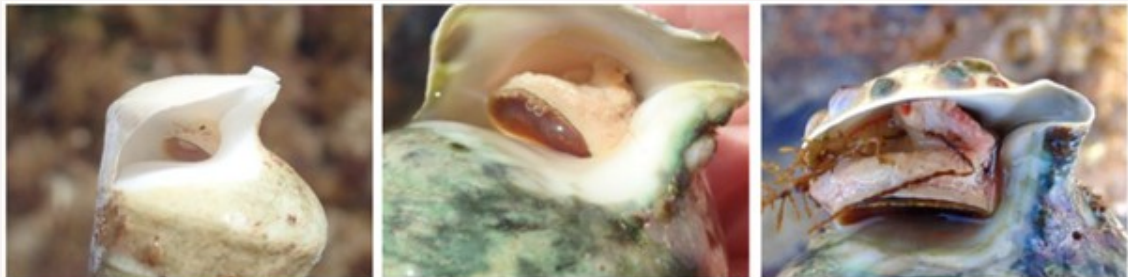


The event has run every year since 2012 and this year the Ngari Capes Marine Park team were lucky enough to receive their 10-year Champions Certificate for contributing to the wonderful event for ten years. Marine Rangers led an interactive activity with several Year 2 and 3 classes to teach them fascinating facts about whales that inhabit our coastal waters. The team also allowed students to learn through sight and touch with the Ngari touch table.

Photos above: 10 year Champions certificate to Ngari Capes staff (top). Bay Ok Day activity with Year 3s by Dunsborough Primary School (bottom).

From egg masses to conservation: protecting WA's last lighthouse shell

By Inês Leal, Parks and Wildlife Service



Photos above: *Campanile symbolicum* photographed by Inês Leal.

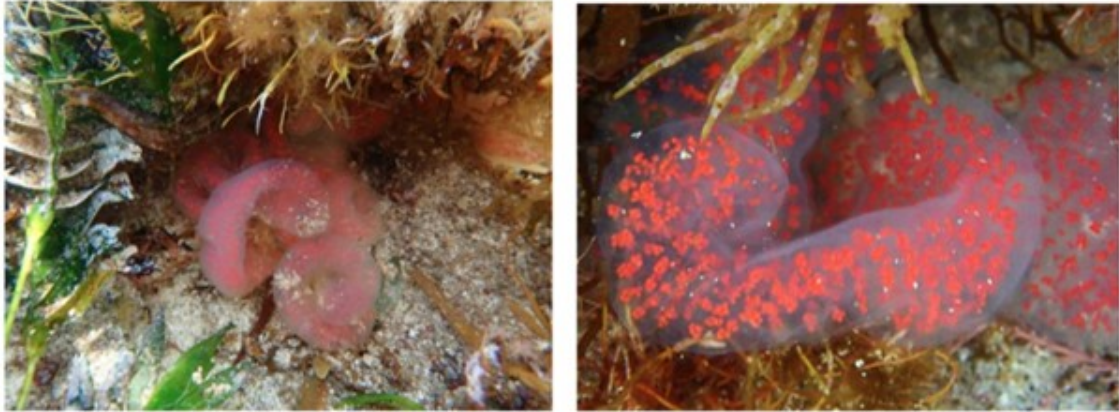
It's *Campanile* breeding season in the South West! If you're exploring the shallow reefs of the South West's **Ngari Capes Marine Park** over the next few weeks, you may spot something unusual - clear, gelatinous masses drifting or resting in shallow water. No, they're not jellyfish, and there's no need to be alarmed! They're egg masses laid by *Campanile symbolicum* - a unique sea snail endemic to South West WA – in other words, you won't find them anywhere else on Earth. Each dot in the egg mass is an egg or developing embryo, a future baby *Campanile* snail in the making!

Scientists are only beginning to uncover the secrets of its ecology and biology, including:

- ✓ Tracking the breeding season timeline
- ✓ Understanding early life development (egg à juvenile)
- ✓ Monitoring habitat preferences and environmental drivers
- ✓ Building baseline data to guide long-term conservation

This work contributes to expanding scientific knowledge of the South West's marine biodiversity and forms part of broader collaborative research between DBCA's Marine Science Program and The University of Western Australia

Photos below: *Campanile symbolicum* egg masses photographed by Inês Leal.



This very special sea snail is the last surviving species of a once very diverse family known as the lighthouse shells (*Campanilidae*), making it a living fossil.

What's even more special is they call the shallow waters of the South West their home, and we're only just starting to understand many basic aspects of their ecology and biology.

These special marine creatures are part of what makes the South West's marine environment so unique – let's care for them and their future!

Help us to protect them by:

- ✔ **Look, don't touch.** Please avoid disturbing egg masses if you find them while swimming or wading.
- ✔ **Give space.** Keep fins, hands and pets away from shallow areas where they're present.

WA Beach Clean-Up October 2025

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood



The annual WA Beach Clean-Up event run by Tangaroa Blue Foundation was held 17th to the 20th of October this year. South-West events and cleanups were supported by Parks and Wildlife Service, Margaret River Brewhouse and Nature Conservation Margaret River Region and of course our wonderful community who together donated 3,028 volunteer hours to remove a whopping 5.3 tonnes of debris.

Marine and National Park Rangers from the Blackwood district spent the day cleaning up a beach along the coast of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park and were able to collect 27.5kg of waste and 29kg of rope. This was then taken to the Margaret River Brewhouse, where the team sorted through rubbish collected placing them into different categories which was then input into Tangaroa's Australia Marine Debris Initiative (AMDII) database. The vital data gained from sorting and identifying waste from our beaches can help prevent plastic pollution at its source.



Keeping recreation sites safe for you to visit

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood



Marine Rangers also spent some time below the water this season removing hazards from inland freshwater sites regularly frequented by visitors. This important work contributes to the department's commitment to keeping our visitors safe and effectively managing visitor risk. This year, Marine Rangers visited nearby Wellington district where they removed rubbish and fishing gear from a number of sites with increasing visitation in the Wellington National Park. Many hazards may not be visible from the surface and submerged objects can pose risk to recreational users and sometimes wildlife. Marine Rangers play a vital role in keeping these sites safe for visitors to enjoy through visitor risk inspections and targeted dive operations to remove hazards such as rubbish and fishing gear.

Meet the team - Marine Ranger Amber

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood



I grew up in the beautiful South West where my love for the ocean was formed. At 18 I relocated to spend the next decade between the east coast and overseas. I completed a Bachelor of Environmental Science majoring in Coastal Management at Southern Cross University in NSW, with elective units located at the National Marine Science Centre in Coffs Harbour. Throughout this degree I was selected for a scholarship in Indonesia focusing on Poverty Alleviation with Honey-hunters. I also was fortunate enough to complete an internship in Timor-Leste working with a local NGO RAEBIA (Resilient Agriculture through Biodiversity in Action).

I then relocated to Tasmania to work as a Biosecurity and Hatchery Manager at an abalone farm. Following this I completed a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) focusing on teaching Science in secondary schools. Preceding my career with DBCA I worked as a relief teacher and taught in the Pilbara at a remote community school focusing on educating students in the context of two languages and two cultures: Manyjilyjarra and English/Western.

I then started with DBCA in a seasonal position as a Conservation Employee, which transitioned into a full time Ranger position in the beautiful Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. I have now joined the Ngari Capes Marine Park team and feel very fortunate to have stepped into such a rewarding role with the department. I love the variety of our work which ranges from education, time on the water, wildlife response, bird surveys, beach clean-ups and the list goes on. Outside of work my biggest passions are travel, surfing, camping and spending time with loved ones.

Kilcarnup Sanctuary Zone Markers

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood

As summer begins and the seas become calmer, the time has come to install our sanctuary zone markers in the Kilcarnup Sanctuary Zone. The on-water markers provide park users with an easily identifiable point to demarcate the sanctuary zone boundary helping them to fish responsibly. These markers are only seasonal and will be removed before the heavy winter swells arrive, you can still use your Recfishwest app and phone's GPS technology to assist with identifying the zone boundaries on calm winter days and throughout the marine park.



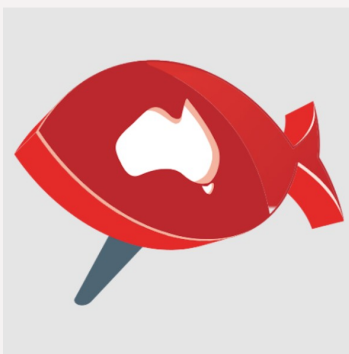
Have you seen anything unusual above or below the water?



Discover a new world of birding! eBird Australia is a collaborative project managed by the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science. eBird Mobile makes it easy to record the birds you see in the field and seamlessly link these observations with eBird-- a global online database of bird records used by hundreds of thousands of birders around the world. This free resource makes it easy to keep track of what you see, while making your data openly available for scientific research, education, and conservation.

App for Apple: [eBird on the App Store](#)

App for Android: [eBird by Cornell Lab – Apps on Google Play](#)



If you are out on the water or diving below and spot a marine species you think is uncommon, you can record it on Redmap (Range Extension Database & Mapping project). Redmap is a citizen science research project that invites the community to spot, log and map marine species that are uncommon in Australia, or along particular parts of our coast. The species identification of these sightings is verified by a panel of Australian expert marine scientists. Over time, Redmap will use this 'citizen science' data to map which Australian marine species may be shifting where they live in response to changes in the marine environment, such as ocean warming/climate change.

App for Apple: [Redmap on the App Store](#)

Thank you for your continued support and interest in our work. We appreciate you taking the time to read about what makes our marine parks so special throughout this time of the year.

Keeping connected and up to date

Understanding the designated zones and their respective activities is crucial for a safe and enjoyable visit to Ngari Capes Marine Park. Since 2018, these zones have been in place to facilitate various recreational and commercial activities while prioritising conservation efforts. Catering to fishers, scuba divers, snorkelers, surfers, and kayakers, the zones promote sustainability and establish sanctuary areas for undisturbed appreciation of the marine environment.

To stay informed and connected, utilise resources such as the Deckee app, and the FishCatch WA app, alongside engaging with Recfishwest for insights tailored to recreational fishing. These apps provide comprehensive information on marine park regulations, enhancing visitor experiences while promoting responsible enjoyment of Western Australia's coastal treasures.



Recfishwest app:

Access all WA fishing rules, fish ID, GPS marine park info, and safety locations offline! High-quality illustrations and details on hundreds of species available on this free app. Stay updated on fishing seasons, bag limits, and easily identify catches with Recfishwest's three-step fish ID.

App for Apple: [recfishwest on the App Store](#)

App for Android: [Recfishwest – Apps on Google Play](#)



Deckee boating app

Deckee is a comprehensive boating assistant with features including on-water location sharing, automated logbooks, marine weather, safety alerts, and more, ensuring confident navigation for users. It offers automatic on-water detection, global member visibility, risk forecasting, activity logging, local knowledge heatmaps, interactive chart info, and worldwide vessel tracking, catering to both novice and experienced boaters.

App for Apple: [DECKEE Boating on the App Store](#)

App for Android: [DECKEE Boating – Apps on Google Play](#)

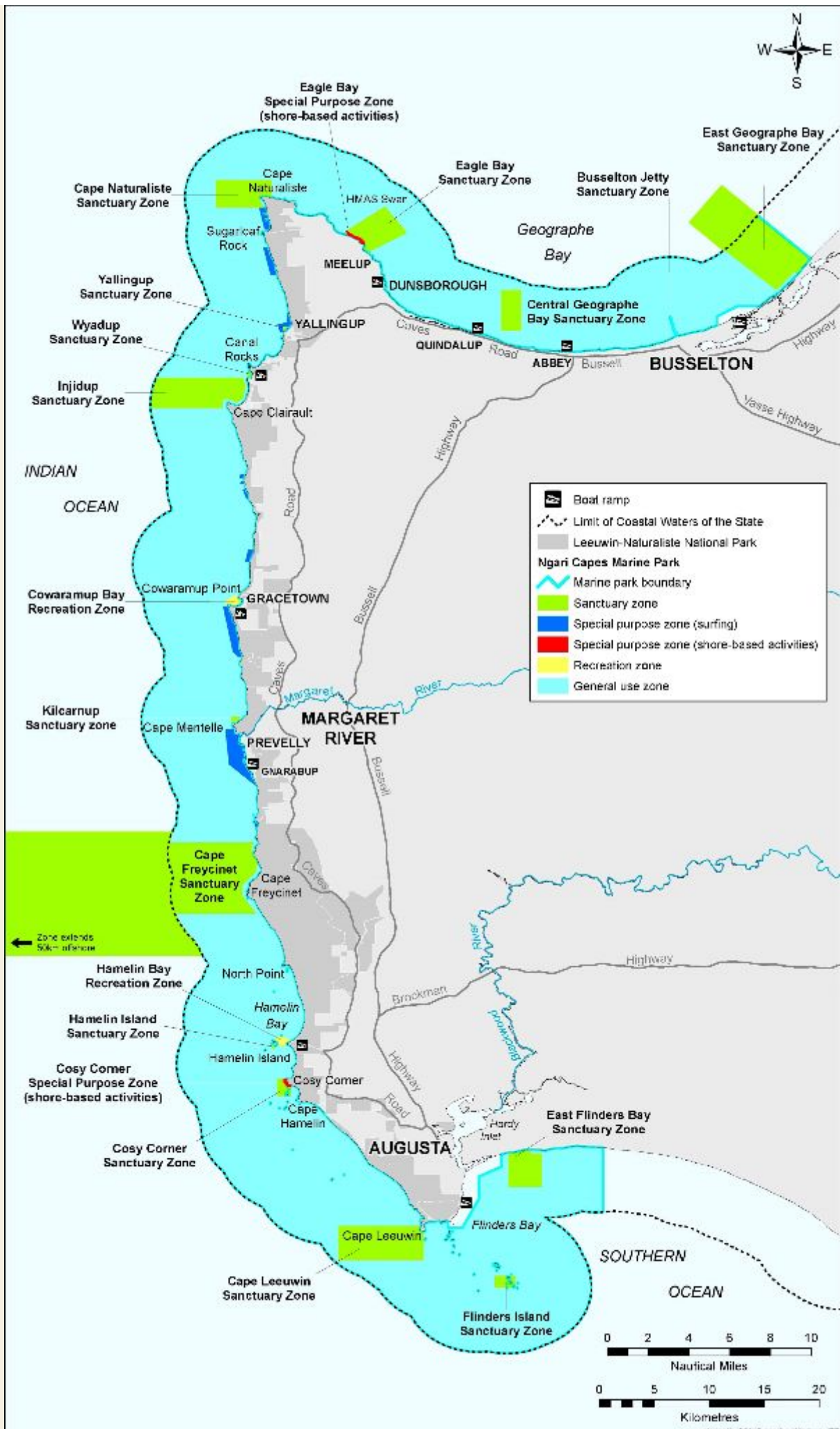


FishCatch WA app

Recreational fishers in Western Australia, exploring the waters from Kalbarri to Augusta, are invited to utilise the innovative FishCatchWA™ tool to document their demersal scalefish catches. Efficiently log your demersal catches and access valuable insights while actively contributing to scientific research. Seamlessly access the FishCatchWA™ tool through the ServiceWA app or download it now for immediate use.

App for Apple: [ServiceWA on the App Store](#)

App for Android: [ServiceWA - Apps on Google Play](#)



Above: Map of Ngari Capes Marine Park showing zones plus national park zones in adjacent Australian marine parks.



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