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Perup Forest Ecology Centre

The Perup Forest Ecology Centre and Wilderness Lodge, 50 kilometres east of Manjimup, offers a spectacular wilderness experience.

It is home to sizeable populations of most of the 27 species of native mammals found in the southern forests.

The Ecology Centre is designed to give visitors a deeper knowledge and understanding of nature conservation and forest management.

It is located within 52,000 hectares of jarrah forest and wandoo woodland, and offers visitors a great chance to see five rare Australian mammals in the wild.

The numbat, chuditch, tammar wallaby, ringtail possum and southern brown bandicoot make the centre the best single location in Australia for observing rare marsupial wildlife.



chuditch

(*Dasyurus geoffroii*)

Friends of Perup activities

A community-based volunteer conservation group, The Friends of Perup, has a membership of around 150, and uses the facility to run science-based activity weekends led by experts in their field on six weekends a year. If you would like to find out more about the weekends, contact:

Friends of Perup

PO Box 150

Boyup Brook, WA 6244



FRIENDS OF PERUP

PERUP FOREST ECOLOGY CENTRE



Perup Forest Ecology Centre

The Perup Forest Ecology Centre is regarded as unique in Australia as a place where an abundance of rare wildlife can be easily observed. You may see at least four, and possibly five, rare or threatened animals, and several other more common species, during a one-night stay at the Wilderness Lodge at Perup Forest Ecology Centre.

The Perup Forest Ecology Centre is located on a 100-ha remnant of State forest surrounded by the 52,000-ha Perup Nature Reserve, which is part of the National Estate. The Centre is around 45 minutes drive from either Boyup Brook, Manjimup or Bridgetown, around 100 minutes from the City of Bunbury, and four hours from the Perth metropolitan area. There is no public transport to Perup.

The Centre is located on an old farm where the land has become State forest. During the 1970s, the fibro and iron farmhouse became the base station for Dr Per Christensen's research in the surrounding jarrah forest into the effects of prescribed fire on a known population of rare tamar wallabies.

Fox baiting was also undertaken in the area. Before long, researchers began to observe that the tamar population had increased dramatically, sightings of numbats and woylies, (presumed extinct in this region) became more frequent, and other rare species such as western ring-tail possums, chuditch and southern brown bandicoots began to appear. Further research confirmed that the re-emergence of these animals could be attributed to the reduction of fox numbers in their habitats.



The beginning of ecotourism at Perup

During the 1980s, Dr Christensen and his technical officer Graeme Liddelow formed an alliance with the University of Western Australia Extension Service and began what must be one of the original nature-based tourism operations in Australia.

Second-hand mining-camp sleeping units were added to the house, and a 240-volt diesel generator installed. Around 16 participants paid to join the researchers on 'Wild Weekends'. During their stay, the visitors participated in wildlife population-monitoring activities, including spotlighting, radio tracking, trapping and releasing.

Several schools and universities began hiring Perup Forest Ecology Centre for field-based activities, and two commercial tour operators began visiting Perup, and hiring a Department of Conservation and Land Management officer to lead their groups.

Redevelopment of the facilities

By 1990, the old farmhouse and mining-camp facilities were approaching the end of their serviceable life. In 1993, funding was secured from the Commonwealth Department of Tourism, the South West Development Commission (SWDC), and the Department of Conservation and Land Management. With this funding, and the support of the Friends of Perup and the Boyup Brook Shire Council, a redevelopment program began.

This provided the perfect opportunity to develop an experience based on environmentally and ecologically sustainable nature-based tourism. Walk trails and observation hides were built, and an interpretive guidebook produced.



Experience a philosophy

Apart from providing the opportunity to view threatened species of wildlife in the surrounding nature reserve, the complex itself is a model for minimal-impact living, maximising the use of renewable resources and energy.

This is achieved by:

- the station homestead-style buildings being constructed of mostly natural and renewable resources, with plantation pine ceiling over jarrah in the lodge, cork tile flooring, and incorporating solar passive design principles;
- the use of solar/wind energy and solar hot water systems throughout the complex;
- providing a zero nutrient pollution and effluent disposal system;
- collecting rain and storing it in tanks for use as drinking and shower water; and
- exporting all rubbish from the site.

For this to work, visitors need to learn to live lightly. They have to switch off lights at every opportunity, and use less water. Through passive solar design and materials, the ambient temperature inside the buildings varies year round in the range 15–25° C, so visitors are encouraged to wear warmer or cooler clothes rather than trying to alter the temperature artificially.

