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# Nearer to Nature South West Schools programs



Department of  
Parks and Wildlife



Nearer to Nature  
Schools

## Nearer to Nature South West

offers education programs for schools and other groups at the Wellington Discovery Forest near Bunbury and Wharnccliffe Mill and other locations in the Margaret River region. These venues offer accommodation for school camps and are areas of outstanding natural beauty displaying great biodiversity. Many excursions can also be delivered by arrangement at other suitable locations convenient to schools, subject to adequate health and safety standards being met.

**Standard day excursions run from 10am to 2pm. On-camp activities to suit your timetable.**

**For a full list of current programs and excursion prices please contact us or visit [nearertonature.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://nearertonature.dpaw.wa.gov.au)**



## Conservation and education in the outdoor classroom

Parks and Wildlife excursions work by engaging children's natural curiosity in the environment to develop deeper understandings of biodiversity, ecosystems and conservation. There are many benefits to offering meaningful outdoor experiences to children of all ages. Research has shown that children display better learning habits, improved behaviour and are much more likely to develop a life-long conservation ethic after spending time in nature.

Excursions examine the features and inter-relationships that allow flora and fauna to thrive in the South West region. In addition to this, excursions educate participants about human impacts and important conservation programs such as *Western Shield*, while encouraging children to engage their senses to explore the world around them.



## Indigenous cultural learning

The Noongar people of the South West have lived on and managed the land for at least 60,000 years. Traditional knowledge encapsulates an understanding of the rhythms and relationships of the environment. We have partnered with local Indigenous leaders to offer a range of cultural excursions giving an insight into traditional knowledge and lifestyles. Singing, dancing, didgeridoo and crafts are combined with a bush tucker walk to provide an insight into the unique connections that Indigenous people have to the land.





## Teaching for a sustainable future

Management of the natural environment is a complex and multifaceted task. We teach students how our forests and other natural areas are managed for a range of values and activities to ensure that these can be enjoyed now and into the future.

## Sustainable forest management

Forests provide us with many natural resources such as timber, wildflowers, water and honey in addition to services such as recreation and tourism. Careful management of these resources ensures they are available in a way which is sustainable environmentally, socially and economically now and for future generations. For older students we also examine the impacts of how these resources are managed have on a local, national and global scale.

## Fire

Bushfires are a natural part of our environment and an inevitable part of our life in the South West, impacting on ourselves and our communities in a range of ways. Our fire education programs are suitable for students from Upper Primary to Year 12 and cover a range of age appropriate topics to help be prepared for bushfires and develop an understanding of the importance of fire management for protection of life, property and biodiversity.

## Water

Changing land cover and a drying climate have an effect on water catchments and water quality. We offer a range of educational opportunities to learn about the health of catchments, rivers and wetlands using water quality testing and other field observations such as monitoring of aquatic macroinvertebrates. Throughout many of our excursions, the mutual dependence of healthy forests and water are also highlighted, along with management techniques to maintain a healthy water cycle.

## Conservation

A healthy forest with its natural interdependencies between plants, animals and abiotic components produces ecosystem services essential to human wellbeing. The importance of biodiversity conservation is woven through all of our excursions in addition to hands-on conservation activities, in particular for camps and **Bush Ranger** groups focussing on specific conservation programs such as **Western Shield**.



## Incursions

When a whole day excursion is not possible or you would like our specialised knowledge to enhance your teaching program, we offer a range of incursions based around many of these themes for years PP – 12. These may be delivered as stand-alone sessions or as an extension to a booked excursion. Our knowledgeable leaders can come into the classroom or to a natural area on or near the school grounds to deliver curriculum linked activities. From a story telling session and our ever-popular touch table to fire awareness and biodiversity activities we can guarantee an informative, interesting and engaging session for your students.

## Curriculum links

All programs are linked to the West Australian Curriculum. Within HASS and Geography we address issues of sustainability, natural resource management and land use change for a range of year levels including valuable geographical fieldwork skills. Within the Science learning area we look at features and adaptations of living things, biomes and ecosystems, as well as threats to and conservation of biodiversity.

Aspects of many other learning areas are also covered including English, Mathematics, Outdoor Education, and the cross-curriculum priorities of Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. We are happy to adapt any of our standard excursions to your particular needs.

To assist in planning, curriculum linking documents are available for all of our excursions on the website or by request.





## Summary of programs

For a full list of excursions and further details please visit [nearertonature.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://nearertonature.dpaw.wa.gov.au)

### Busy in the forest (Years PP-1)

A treasure hunt in the forest and a blindfold rope trail offers a fun and interactive sensory encounter with nature.

**Curriculum links:** Science, (F-2), English (F-2), HASS (F-2)

### Investigating the forest (Years 2-4)

Collect clues to your mystery plant including surprising information about how they are used by humans present and past, and other inhabitants of the forest.

**Curriculum links:** Science (2-4), English (2-4), HASS (2-4)

### Incredible invertebrates (Years 3-5)

(Also available as a two-hour program for secondary groups.)

This day of exploring will look at different habitats, relationships with other animals and plants, and why invertebrates are important for a healthy environment.

**Curriculum links:** Science (3-5), English (3-5)

### Living with fire (Years 5-6)

Students learn why fire is a natural part of our environment, how we can manage it, how bushfires impact on communities and the importance of being prepared. The excursion includes hands-on experience with a range of firefighting tools and equipment.

**Curriculum links:** HASS (4-7), Science (3-6), English (4-6)

### The Noongar way (Years 1-10)

Build knowledge, skills and understanding of Aboriginal culture in relation to food collection, tool making and roles played by different family members. Learn how Aboriginal people use land and resources in a seasonal and sustainable manner.

**Curriculum links:** Science (1-10), English (5-9), HASS (5-9)

### Back from the brink (Years 5-12)

Find out how *Western Shield* is saving our native wildlife and practice scientific methods used to monitor wildlife including trapping and data collection.

**Curriculum links:** Science (5-10), English (5-10), HASS (9-10), Biology (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 4), Geography (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 3), IS (ATAR Unit 2, General Unit 3)



## Environmental change and management (Year 10)

Students are introduced to the concept of sustainable forest management and its social, economic and environmental considerations. They take part in some hands-on management exercises and carry out environmental monitoring fieldwork.

**Curriculum links:** Science (8-10), Geography (9-10), English (8-10)

## Geography (Years 11-12)

WA is a place of ancient landscapes hosting some of the highest biodiversity in the world. Land use change and other human impacts create threats to this biodiversity. Students take part in a guided walk and hands-on fieldwork activities. They use geographical thinking and skills, to investigate the unique adaptations of the flora and fauna and explore issues surrounding forest uses and values past, present and into the future.

**Curriculum links:** Geography (ATAR Unit 3, General Unit 1), EES (General Unit 2)

## Fire – a force of life and a natural hazard (Years 10-12)

Students consider the impacts of fire on the ecosystem and human communities. They learn about fire behaviour and how fire management is not only used to protect life and property but also to protect and enhance biodiversity.

**Curriculum links:** Biology (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 4), Geography (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 3)

## Sustainable forests (Years 10-12)

Timber is a versatile and widely used fibre-based commodity. Find out how modern forestry practices can allow us to sustainably meet our timber needs while ensuring that forests can still be enjoyed for many other values. Students will learn about how decisions we make in our society may have global consequences.

**Curriculum links:** HASS (9-10), Science (8-10), English, Geography (ATAR Unit 2, General Unit 4), EES (ATAR Unit 3), IS (ATAR Unit 2)

## Biology (Years 11-12)

### Understand conservation in our forests through biodiversity and population studies

Students will explore the adaptations of plants and animals in dry sclerophyllous forests and the scientific methods used to measure and monitor forest health. Conservation biology will be highlighted with management processes and strategies practised.

**Curriculum links:** Biology (ATAR Unit 1), Biology (General Unit 4)

## Aquatic Ecosystems (Years 4-12) (2 or 4 hours)

### Can also be done as an incursion at a wetland close to your school.

Students investigate the health of aquatic systems by surveying the plant, animal and invertebrate communities then conduct tests of water quality to relate that to the non-living environment. They also consider how those creatures are adapted to this unique environment and human impacts on wetland ecosystems.

**Curriculum links:** Science (4-10) Geography (ATAR Unit 3, General Unit 1), Biology (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 4), Integrated Science (ATAR Unit 2, General Unit 1)



## Camp activities

### Sense-ational night life (Years 3-12) (2 hours)

While exploring with torches, students will see how the forest comes alive after dark and will learn about the adaptations required for nocturnal life. Students will also explore the forest blindfolded along our rope trail using the senses of smell, touch and hearing. This experience can be a highlight of your school camp.

### Monitoring marsupials (Western Shield trapping) (Years 5-12 – Wellington Discovery Forest only)

A unique opportunity to be part of **Western Shield** research, students will mix bait, set traps on a transect, and return in the early morning to measure and release animals. The session is split into two 90-minute sessions (afternoon and the next morning). *It may in certain cases also be possible to conduct marsupial surveys on private lands.*

The program is available for two one-week periods each year in Autumn and Spring. **Please visit our website for available dates**

## Other venues

Nearer to Nature South West now offers tailored environmental education programs to school groups at a range of other venues including camp sites within the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

## Combine natural and cultural history at Ellensbrook House

Nearer to Nature South West has teamed up with the National Trust to offer a new experience at the historic Ellensbrook House. Join us for an excursion which offers insights into changing lives and technologies and takes you through the Indigenous and European significance of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste region while exploring the natural features and outstanding biodiversity which has made this area so unique and valuable.

## Coastal ecology

Western Australia has many beautiful sandy beaches which are used for many forms of recreation and a wide range of coastal ecosystems including dunes, rocky shores, forests and mangroves. At locations from Leschenault to Augusta we examine why these are important, how human activities may affect them and what we can do to protect them. The rivermouth at Margaret River is one suitable location where activities can fit around other activities such as canoeing on the river.

## Caves

We offer a number of short activities revolving around the ecology and geography of the karst systems. These have been designed to add to your visit or to fill a half-day timetable when multiple groups with staggered entry times are accessing the caves. Times and content can be adjusted to your timing needs and the age level of your groups.

## Wellington Forest Cottages

The cottages are set in the Jarrah forest of Wellington National Park and make a great venue for metropolitan and country school camps. It is a two-hour drive from Perth and a short distance from Wellington Dam and Bunbury. The adjacent Wellington Discovery Forest Centre offers a wealth of curriculum-linked programs for kindergarten to Year 12 students.

**Facilities:** cottages, hall for hire, public telephone, barbecues, laundry, playgrounds and cafe. Catering available on request.

**Capacity:** eight cottages (each accommodates eight people)  
Some camping is also available by arrangement.

### Bookings/enquiries:

Wendy and Ben Perdon Phone: (08) 9728 3043  
Email: perdon@westnet.com.au  
fcc.com.au

## Wharnclyffe Mill Bush Retreat

Set within the beautiful Bramley National Park, Wharnclyffe Mill Bush Retreat is off Carters Road in Margaret River. It is a fantastic venue for metropolitan and country school camps, especially for geography and biology students and primary school groups.

**Facilities:** dormitories, four self-contained cottages and camping site accommodation available, huge undercover area, kitchen, barbecues, rope play, universal access ablution block (showers and toilets) and a large grassed and nature-play area adjacent to the karri forest. Rock climbing, caving, surfing, canoeing and other activities offered by external suppliers nearby.

**Capacity:** Dorms (50 people), cabins and safari tents (80 people) camping (100+ people).

### Bookings/enquiries:

Claire and Adrian Prendergast Phone: (08) 9758 8227  
Email: stay@wharnclyffemill.com.au  
wharnclyffemill.com.au

## Visit Nearer to Nature at [nearertonature.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://nearertonature.dpaw.wa.gov.au)

### Bookings/enquiries:

Phone: 9725 4300 or 9725 5944  
Fax: 9725 4351  
Email: [swecoed@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:swecoed@dpaw.wa.gov.au)  
Office hours: 8.30am to 4.30pm



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