



Conservation News

Print post approved PP65002/0001



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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

OCTOBER 2001

New national park for the Preston Valley

A new national park extending over more than 12,700 hectares has been proposed for forested areas in the Preston River valley near Noggerup.

By Nigel Higgs

The park is one of 30 new national parks in the south-west forests that will be created during the next four years.

- The areas proposed to make up the new park are:
- 6320 hectares covering the Noggerup and Roseneath conservation parks proposed under the 1994-2003 Forest Management Plan and all of the Goonac Conservation Park proposed in the plan and endorsed by the Regional Forest Agreement;
 - 4480 hectares of reserves proposed in the Forest Management Plan but traded off for timber harvesting under the RFA (these are parts of the formerly-proposed Goonac Conservation Park and the Preston Conservation Park);

- 810 hectares of new reserves proposed in the RFA and around the settlement of Noggerup;
 - 1100 hectares of Hovea forest block in an area nominated for the Register of the National Estate and outlined in the Government's forest policy.
- The proposed new park is in two parts of approximately 6000 hectares each separated by a 2 km stretch of private land that straddles the upper reaches of the Preston River. It is bordered by private land to the north, north east, west and south east.
- The forested area has been baited for foxes as part of the

Department of Conservation and Land Management's Western Shield program that is bringing many native animal species back from the brink of extinction.

The proposed park is dominated by jarrah but has a mix of forest types including old growth jarrah, tall open jarrah-marri, and swampy banksia woodlands.

The eastern part of the proposed park is open jarrah forest and wandoo woodland but there also are dense shrublands in the valley floors which provide suitable habitat for native species such as tamar wallabies and woylies.

The proposed park is a popular recreation area for locals and tourists alike and will provide new nature-based tourism opportunities for the region.

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Huge numbers visit The Hills Forest

SINCE the inception of the Department's EcoEducation programs in The Hills Forest in 1993 participant numbers have been growing.

By Liz Moore

This spring more than 7000 booked in an eight-week period and this brings the year's total to more than 16,600 to date.

At the centre of this hub of activity is Jill Francis, who coordinates the programs.

She successfully juggles bookings, e-mail and telephone queries, allocation of education officers to lead groups, correspondence, record keeping and reporting on progress.

Feedback from schools has been excellent and indicates that we are succeeding in our mission to provide meaningful experiences about nature con-

servation as well as fulfilling curriculum needs.

Alcoa World Alumina Australia's sponsorship helps us to offer excursions at a reduced cost to some groups who otherwise would not be able to attend.

It has also helped us to develop new programs and reach a wide cross section of the school community.

Interest in our programs has blossomed this term with the success of our new geography/biology excursions offered to Year 11 and 12 students.

Developed and trialed by our geologist leader, Peter Russell, in conjunc-

tion with Perth Modern teachers and students, bookings have been pouring in.

As one teacher said "The hands-on activities run by knowledgeable leaders give students an enjoyable opportunity to apply theory to practice. I've been looking for years for this type of field experience for my students."

With September being Biodiversity Month there has been added interest in the Western Shield Schools program and Back from the Brink excursions.

More than 120 students took part in activities on Threatened Species Day and many have already sent in their entries for the Biodiversity Quiz competition.



Jill Francis, at the hub of The Hills Forest EcoEducation programs.

Celebrating 12 months without accident



Pictured receiving the safety Achievement Awards were (left to right) Carl Cicchini of Manjimup, John McKenzie of Pemberton, Kath White of Walpole and Mark Barley from Manjimup specialists.

FOUR work groups—Manjimup District, Pemberton District, Walpole District and the specialist branches based at the Manjimup Regional Headquarters—have celebrated 12 months work without a lost time accident.

By Peter Keppel

The Acting Executive Director Keiran McNamara, Director Regional Services Alan Walker and the Acting Director Sustainable Forest Management Caris Bailey attended the function.

In presenting the Safety Achievement Awards to work place representatives, Keiran said the achievement was particularly notable because it was a rare occasion that four work groups working together in the same location achieved such a feat.

He believed the achievement was a clear statement of the

personal commitment that staff across the region displayed to their work and a good measure of the area's management. They were all congratulated on their achievement.

This was particularly the case considering the changes and challenges staff in the area have successfully worked through in the past year or so.

The Directors, in recognition of their safety performance, presented staff with personal vouchers.

Keiran and the Directors encouraged all staff across the Southern Forests to constantly think about working safely, and issued the challenge of working safely for the same achievement over the next 12 months.

While staff mixed socially at the Manjimup Country Club for afternoon tea the chatter was very much focused on going forward and being successful in achieving the challenges before us.

Department of Conservation and Land Management supports the International Year of the Volunteer



Working Together

One of the articles in this edition of *Conservation News* reports the award won by the Department's *Land for Wildlife* program at the recent State Landcare Conference in Mandurah.

It has been pleasing over recent years to see the maps showing *Land for Wildlife* sites gradually spread across the State's agricultural landscape, from within our urban centres to well beyond. The program's growth and success are a tribute to the field staff and the leadership of Penny Hussey.

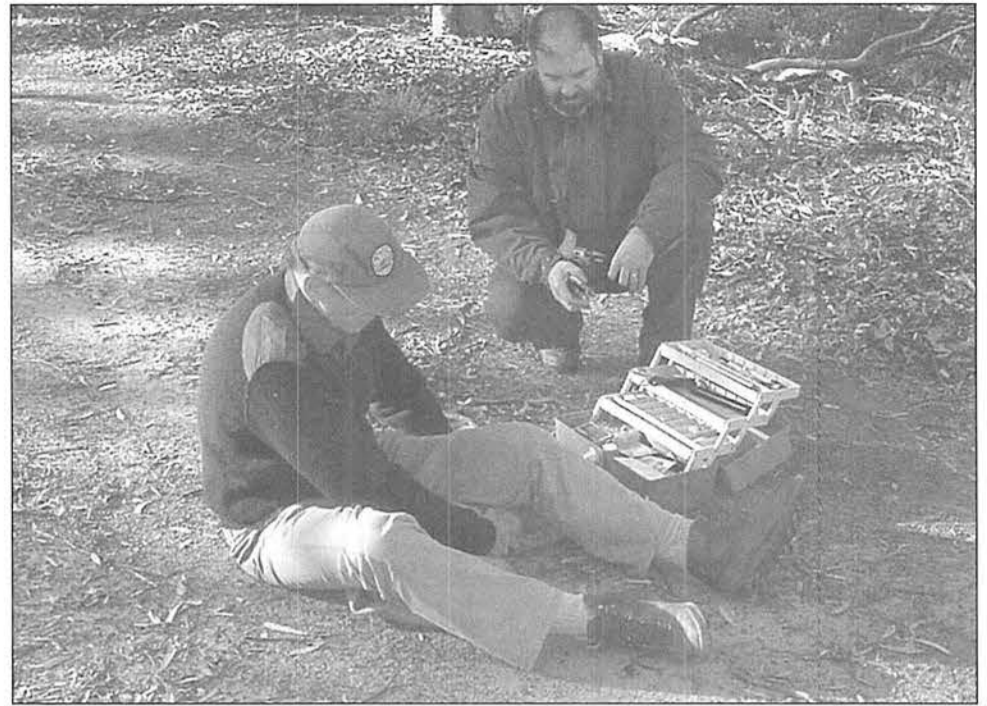
Land for Wildlife is about encouraging and assisting landowners and managers who want to help conserve our biodiversity by looking after the wildlife habitat on their properties. It is a high profile component of the Department's off-reserve conservation efforts.

Even if we had the ideal of a comprehensive, adequate and representative conservation reserve system in place, effective biodiversity conservation would still be reliant on a broader whole-of-landscape approach. Important biodiversity values will always exist on lands owned and managed by others, and our reserves don't exist and function in isolation from what's around them.

As I talk to different groups of people, it is sometimes disappointing that the off-reserve role of the Department is not as clearly understood as it might be. It is our statutory function to conserve flora and fauna throughout the State, not just on the lands and waters we directly manage.

Managing the parks, reserves and forests vested in the Conservation Commission and Marine Parks and Reserves Authority will always be a fundamental part of our efforts, but increasingly we need to also work with and alongside other land managers and the wider community to fulfil our conservation role.

Keiran McNamara, Acting Executive Director



Rob Wheeler (sitting) and Geoff Ross from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service learn woylie handling techniques at Dryandra Woodland.

Woylies head east

WESTERN SHIELD'S message stretched interstate this month when 50 Western Australian woylies moved house to a New South Wales nature reserve.

It was the first time native animals from Western Australia had been released into the wild in New South Wales.

If all goes well the woylies may be followed by WA bilbies, numbats, boodies, red-tailed phascogales and stick nest rats if the 107,000-hectare Yathong Nature Reserve is suitable.

The animals were taken from the Dryandra Woodland - 230 kilometres south-east of Perth - during an overnight trapping operation co-ordinated by the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Senior Zoologist, Dr Peter Mawson, supported by Narrogin District staff and officers from the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW NPWS).

For minimum travelling time, the animals were driven to Perth Airport in time to catch the early flight to Adelaide, and then a NSW NPWS service aircraft to the Yathong Nature Reserve 100 kilometre south of Cobarr.

The woylies even had an in-flight attendant -

NSW NPWS Officer, Geoff Ross, who last month visited Dryandra with Special Projects Officer Rob Wheeler to learn woylie handling techniques from Wildlife Branch staff.

Geoff said Western Shield was well known in NSW as a model to re-introduce species to former habitats following fox-baiting.

Woylies were once abundant in central and south-western NSW but had not been seen in 120 years. Foxes are the main culprit for the local extinction, devouring 'critical weight range' animals (35 grams to five kilos).

In Western Australia the woylie was listed as threatened, following in the footsteps of 10 species that became extinct, with fox predation a major factor. It was removed from the State and Commonwealth endangered fauna lists in 1996 following the success of Western Shield's fox baiting program.

The woylies taken from South Australia a week before and transported to Yathong Nature Reserve had their genesis in WA following re-introductions to that State co-ordinated by the Department in the mid 1990s.

Conservation News October 2001

Published by Department of Conservation and Land Management Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, Cygnet Hall, (cnr) Mounts Bay Road & Hackett Drive, CRAWLEY, Western Australia 6009

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Printing: Optima Press

Printed on 100% recycled paper

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Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Judy Edwards, who announced the new park earlier this month, said that under the Government's forest conservation policy, a total of 200,000 hectares of new reserves would be created. This was in addition to the 150,000 hectares of new reserves proposed under the RFA and the areas set aside following the release of the Ferguson report on karri and tingle forest management.

Community-based advisory groups would be set up to help with management planning and finalising boundaries of the proposed new parks.

Environmental auditing's new face in WA

Peter Baldwin is the new face of environmental auditing in WA.

He started work as the Conservation Commission of Western Australia's manager of environmental audit in July.

The Conservation Commission is the vesting body for all of the land managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management and has statutory responsibilities for the monitoring, assessment and audit of the Department's compliance with management plans.

Essentially, Peter audits the performance of the Department in delivering good environmental outcomes.

"I think it's important that the position is able to provide the public with the confidence that the Department is doing a good job by assessing performance in an independent and objective way," he said.

Since taking up the position two months ago, Peter has worked closely with Conservation and Land Management staff on a range of issues.

"I've been heavily involved in the process to develop the new Forest Management Plan as it is the key Commission responsibility at the

moment and because the plan needs to have performance indicators or measures, and with these my job will be made a lot easier," he said.

He has also undertaken some preliminary work on developing a system to audit Park Management Plans.

Peter has more than 20 years experience in the forestry and land management area.

He came to the Commission from the Queensland Department of Natural Resources where he was the environmental auditor and has also worked overseas in Nepal, India, Vanuatu and Sri Lanka on community forestry and other development projects.



Peter Baldwin



Our Cape Range campground hosts pose for the camera.

Volunteers get together to enjoy the good life

THE Department of Conservation and Land Management's Exmouth District held its annual campground host and volunteer get together last month.

The barbeque was held in the Cape Range National Park workshop where the volunteers are stationed.

As in previous years, the occasion was a huge success. The event was organised as a thank you and parting gift for the campground hosts.

The volunteers do a tremendous

By Jo Milner

job in assisting the management of Cape Range National Park and Ningaloo Marine Park and devote many hours of their time to caring for their assigned campground.

This year the district received many letters from happy campers praising the campground hosts system and the volunteers.

Steve Strachan, the ranger-in-charge at the time, initiated the volunteer host program in Cape Range

National Park 12 years ago.

It has carried on despite many changes in the district, with most of the host following the sun and returning year after year to make the park their home for several months.

At present the district has eight campgrounds being managed by hosts and the remainder by park staff.

The staff of the Exmouth District would like to express their appreciation for the effort put in by all the volunteers and we hope to see you back next year.

Alan returns to the fire front

THE Department's State Duty Officers' team will have a 'new'-face this season.

Director of Regional Services Alan Walker makes a return to the fire management team after a six-year 'spell' from fire duties.

Recently Alan attended a five-day Incident Planning course at Busselton along with staff from Mornington, East Kimberley, Ravensthorpe, Walpole, Merredin and Geraldton, the Forest Products Commission and the Fire and Emergency Services Authority.

"It was great to be on the course to refresh skills and knowledge about incident management," Alan said.

"The course was exceptionally well planned and presented by David Rawet and Bob Hagan and

involved several syndicate exercises that were very realistic and challenging. Ross Mead, Stephen White and Roger Armstrong were the assessors during the exercises.

"It also was rewarding to be training with several staff from the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the Forest Products Commission. It is particularly pleasing to see the on-going commitment to fire training from the Commission.

"There is a strong emphasis on interagency training in fire management. For example, in the past 12 months, 70 people from FPC and FESA have participated in fire training courses run by the Department. It is intended to continue this important and valuable interaction."

Alan said there were many Departmental staff such as himself who had had many years of fire experience but who no longer were involved in fire management.

"We need to rejuvenate the interest and involvement of these staff through refresher training and deployment at large fires throughout the year," he said.

There also are many staff in specialist branches at centres such as Kensington, Fremantle and Woodvale who would be terrific in non-combat roles during large-scale emergency incidents such as wildfires and marine mammal rescues

"We need a 'whole of Department' response during such incidents and there is a wealth of untapped talent in many of our branch and division staff."



Alan Walker with (left to right) Paul Roberts from the Merredin District, Anthony Desmond from the Midwest Region and Max Barker from FESA at Geraldton

Jennie lured by an Exmouth 'dream'



Jennie Cary at work

ONE of the Department's leading marine experts is to take up the reins at Exmouth as the new District Manager.

Jennie Cary, Senior Marine Ecologist with the Marine Conservation Branch will be leaving the big city life in Perth to live and work in what can only be described as a marine lover's paradise - Exmouth, home of Cape Range National Park and the world renowned Ningaloo Reef.

Commencing in her new role in early November, Jennie said she was looking forward to a change in her job responsibilities as well as scenery.

"Ningaloo is a dream location for me - I love the area and have had numerous holidays there during the last 20 years and have worked there on and off during research projects for the last 15 years," she said.

"I have always wanted to work and live in the area and actually applied for a position as Manager of the Ningaloo Marine Park about ten years ago - needless to say I didn't get it, so when this position came up I jumped at the chance to apply."

Jennie said she had always thought about expanding her skills and knowledge in the management field but it wasn't until this position came up that she actually decided to venture from scientific based work to more of a leadership role.

"It was time for a change, and this new position allows me to combine my scientific background with a more managerial role. "The majority of my career has been spent on studying the

conservation of our marine environment and I now have the opportunity to use this knowledge on a wider level.

"A key aim for me as District Manager is to ensure the conservation values of the area are protected and to strengthen community relations and foster greater awareness in the community of these values."

Jennie is one of only a few women within the Department who has taken on a District Manager role - one that she is clearly looking forward to both on a personal and professional level.

"It surprises me that there are not more women in Department positions such as this, particularly as there are so many capable women within the organisation," she said

"To me this position is the next step in a career that has been extremely satisfying and rewarding."

Director of Regional Services Alan Walker said that Jennie would be a valuable addition to the regional management team and provide a significant contribution to marine and terrestrial management in the region.

"The role of District Manager is extremely challenging but can also be very rewarding," he said. "Jennie has great credentials for this very responsible job.

"The District faces a suite of difficult and complex issues in the immediate future and District staff will require effective leadership and clear direction.

Critically endangered plants given a new home

MORE than 20 pairs of helping hands joined together recently in an important translocation operation aimed at saving five critically endangered plant species.

Local residents from Busselton and Bunbury joined Department of Conservation and Land Management staff in a day-long exercise which saw 1350 plants grown from seeds and cuttings

planted at two new sites 20 kilometres east of Busselton.

The critically endangered species translocated were the Western prickly honeysuckle, McCutcheon's grevillea, the ironstone petrophile, the butterfly brachysema and the Abba bell.

All five are known from only one location near Busselton within the southern ironstone association - a vegetation structure listed as a critically endangered ecological community because more than 90 per cent has been cleared.

The translocation of the five species is part of an overall nature conservation initiative to conserve the 353 declared rare plants in WA.

The Department's research scientist, Leonie Monks, said the translocation was vital for the long-term survival of the five species.

"The translocation seems to be going well and we will continue to monitor it over the coming years," Leonie said.

She said support from the local volunteers to conserve these species was very important.



Shirley Fisher and Helen Luccini weed around naturally germinated seedlings from last year's translocations.



Year eight Bushranger Caitlyn Walker, of John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School with an orphaned tamar wallaby. Photograph courtesy of the West Australian Newspapers Limited.

Bush Rangers top Parade

THE Fauna Rehabilitation Centre at Malaga has had a windfall, thanks to the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Bush Rangers.

In this year's Perth Royal Show parade, the John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School CALM Bush Ranger Unit won \$2000 with their "helping hands for wildlife" parade theme.

The Department's State Coordinator of CALM Bush Rangers Bronwyn Humphreys said the money had gone directly to the Fauna Rehabilitation Centre.

She said the children had lots of fun during the parade and thanked unit leader Carlene Edwards for helping to coordinate the event.

Conservation briefs

Phascogales trapped

A GROUP of Year 6 students from Applecross Primary School had a lucky night camping at The Hills Forest Discovery Centre last month.

As part of their participation in the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Western Shield monitoring program, they were able to see monitoring and trapping at first hand.

And to add to the night's adventure, a male phascogale was found in one of the traps.

The Department's Senior EcoEducation Officer, Liz Moore, confirmed it was rare to see a phascogale in the area.

"They are delightful animals and the children were very excited and pleased to witness such a rare find," Liz said.

On the same night they also trapped two possums, three chuditch and a quenda.

LANDSCOPE Expedition cancelled

LANDSCOPE Expeditions' Montebello Islands trip was cancelled this month because of Ansett Australia's collapse.

Expeditioners were to have met at Dampier after flying to Karratha from around Australia. The trip was to have been an eight-day yachting adventure through the 100 islands, located 120 kilometres north-west of Dampier to check on the Department's Montebello Renewal Program, part of Western Shield, to control feral predators and re-establish native species.

Expeditioners are, however, lining up for the next LANDSCOPE Expedition which will study the seabirds of the Abrolhos Archipelago in December.

Five other expeditions have already been successfully completed this year:

- 'Rock Pools and Rugged Ranges - Wildlife of the Nulagine River', with Dr Peter Kendrick, Michael Hughes, Dr Stephen van Leeuwen and Bob Bromilow;
 - 'Landscape of the Heart - A Journey to the Carnarvon Range', with Kevin Kenneally, Daphne Ediger, Kevin Coate and Dr Ric How;
 - 'Night and Day under an Outback Sky - An Astronomical Adventure', with Dr Jame Biggs and Sue Patrick;
 - 'Buckshot and Breakaways - Plants and Animals of the Gibson Desert', with Bruce Ward and Graeme Liddelow; and
 - 'Beyond the Dreaming - Project Eden', with Keith Morris, David Pearson, Graeme Liddelow and Bruce Ward.
- Eight expeditions are planned for 2002

Second land forms book published

A second Bush Book on landforms - Geology and Landforms of the South-West - is now available in bookstores (and at some Department front counters) for \$6.50 to the public and \$5.20 to staff. It follows the twice-reprinted Bush Book Geology and Landforms of the Kimberley and is expected to be another best seller. The books are two of 70 produced and marketed by the Department on subjects ranging from bush walks and diving to mammals, birds, plants and national parks. Our spectacular LANDSCOPE calendar is also available for \$16.95 (\$13.55 for staff). If you want more information go to naturebase.net and click on bookshop.

New districts, new names

The Department of Conservation and Land Management's restructured districts in the south-west have new names to identify their locations more easily. The new names are:

- Swan Region: Swan Coastal (formerly Perth and Marine and Coastal) and Perth Hills (formerly Mundaring and Dwellingup)
- South West Region (formerly Central Forest): Wellington (formerly Mornington) and Blackwood (formerly Blackwood and South West Capes)
- Warren Region (formerly Southern Forest): Donnelly (formerly Manjimup and Pemberton) and Franklands (formerly Walpole).

Endangered dibbler comes back to Peniup

MORE than 40 endangered native dibblers were released into the proposed Peniup nature reserve east of Albany in early October as part of the wildlife recovery program Western Shield.

Principal Research Scientist Dr Tony Friend said the aim of the reintroduction was to establish a second mainland population of the species. Prior to the reintroduction, the species was only found in the wild in Fitzgerald River National Park on the State's south coast and on three small islands off the west coast.

The Peniup translocation is the first reintroduction of the species on mainland

Australia, and is the result of fruitful collaboration between government agencies, universities and the community through the Dibbler Recovery Team.

Forty-two dibblers were released, of which 37 were captive bred at Perth Zoo. Thirty of the animals were fitted with radio-collars for intensive monitoring after the release.

The release site was specifically chosen as it contained suitable habitat for the species and was part of the Western Shield aerial baiting and fauna reintroduction program.

The area is currently baited for foxes by

the Department's Albany District staff and mammal population monitoring is carried out in spring and autumn each year. The continuing program will assist in monitoring the new dibbler population.

The trapping program is carried out with the assistance of volunteers from the Malleefowl Preservation Group based at Ongerup.

Dr Friend said the reintroduction would continue with the release of a second group of dibblers at Peniup in October 2002.

The Peniup reintroduction follows the successful translocation of dibblers to Escape Island off Jurien Bay in 1999.

National Park Ranger retires after 28 years

STAFF from the Pilbara region met at Karijini National Park to farewell Bob Taylor after 28 years of service as a National Park Ranger.

Faxes and emails poured in from friends and colleagues across the state as he said goodbye to a career which spanned the length and breadth of the State.

Many of his positions were in remote locations such as Cape Range (before it became popular) Purnululu and Karijini. Staff who are located away from towns and facilities make significant sacrifices; Bob will tell you that a

By Judymae Napier

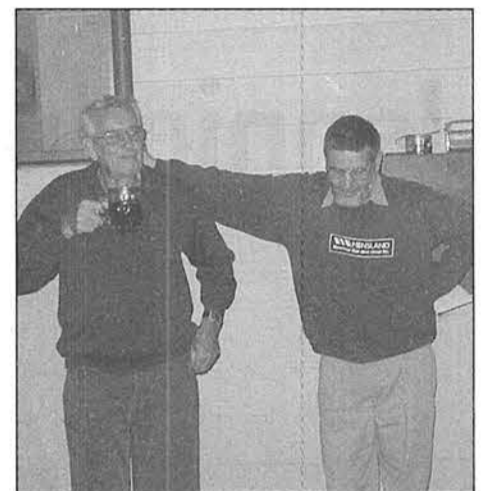
ranger is always on duty. At his retirement ceremony he gratefully handed over his keys, credit card and broom that enabled him to do more than one job at a time!

The differing landscapes and people he met stimulated an appetite for verse. Of an evening, with the broom parked by the front door, Bob would unwind and write poetry. Some of his poems he's recited on the radio, others have featured in newspapers, and some even put to music.

Bob is a keen traveller, and

liked to take his holidays abroad. While overseas, he would do a round of the Karaoke bars, coming back with his very own tapes. These he would leave in the vehicles, to entertain fellow workers as they travelled the long distances from one side of Karijini and the Pilbara to the other.

Bob will be spending his retirement with a good friend, and they plan to travel the country. Keep an eye out for him, because he could crop up in one of your parks any day. Bye for now Bob, and best of luck for the rest of your life.



Bob Taylor (left) and Chris Muller at the farewell ceremony.

State Landcare Awards honour



Elmo de Alwiss, Managing Director, of Sigma Pharmaceuticals, presents the Sigma Landcare Media Award to Penny Hussey, Editor, of 'Western Wildlife'.

THE State Landcare Awards were presented at the State Landcare Conference gala dinner at Mandurah on September 20.

'Western Wildlife', the quarterly magazine of the Land for Wildlife program, won the WA section of the Sigma Landcare Media Award.

This is given to an individual or organisation within electronic or print media that

By Penny Hussey

has covered landcare projects, events, groups or issues.

'Western Wildlife' received a certificate, a cheque for \$500 and a trophy.

Congratulations also go to Jenny Dewing, Land for Wildlife Officer at Bridgetown, who was runner-up in the inaugural Soil

and Land Conservation Council Landcare Professional Award.

This recognition in the State awards demonstrates that Land for Wildlife is achieving its aim of raising awareness of biodiversity conservation and of integrating concern for it within mainstream landcare actions.

Thanks to everyone who has given their time and expertise to help the program in so many ways.

Yellow ribbon for Hiroshima acacias

THE yellow ribbon pinned on Bruce Maslin's chest is a moving tribute to his life's work with Australia's national floral emblem, the acacia or wattle.

His love of the Wheatbelt and the world's biggest array of acacias has not dimmed in more than 20 years of writing and research.

As one of the WA Herbarium's Principal Research Scientists, Bruce co-ordinated and wrote *Flora of Australia - Acacia*, two volumes featuring 1200 varieties of the plant, and a CD ROM called *WATTLE - Acacias of Australia*.

Bruce agreed it was the ribbon more than the ceremony that most signified the meaning of his research.

The ribbons were sent by a Japanese group to Canberra school children because the acacia was the first plant to grow after the nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

Bruce said National Wattle Day was a big celebration in Canberra, and he would like to contact the Japanese group to encourage a similar relationship in Western Australia - Dalwallinu being the ideal spot.

The only other Australian flowering plants to come close to the size and distribution of acacia are the eucalypts, with about 500 species. The volumes were co-authored by 19 scientists and it



Pictured at the launch of *Flora of Australia - Acacia* in Canberra were (left to right) Dr Ian Cresswell, Director of the Australian Biological Resources Study which published the book and CD jointly with the Department, WA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Kim Chance, and Principal Research Scientist with the Herbarium Bruce Maslin

is the first time in 150 years that there had been definitive documentation and illustrations of the plant.

They were launched by Federal Environment

Minister Robert Hill and WA Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Kim Chance who praised Bruce's work before a national audience at a Canberra ceremony.