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Conservation News

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AUGUST 2002

Audit contributes to Australian mammal studies

by Sue McKenna

A NATIONAL mammal audit co-ordinated by two of the Department's most senior scientists has found that mammals continue to decline across Australia in spite of extensive research projects and conservation efforts.

The mammal audit was co-ordinated by retired Deputy Director of Nature Conservation, Andrew Burbidge, and Norm McKenzie, a Science Division Survey Ecologist.

The audit concluded that since 1600, one third of the world's mammal extinctions have been Australian with evidence suggesting that the wave of mammal extinctions in Australia was continuing.

This was in the face of long-term conservation plans and large amounts of resources allocated to preventing declines and extinctions. Since European settlement, 22 species had become extinct across Australia—10 of them in WA, with a warning of more to come.

"Australia continues to lead the world in the extinction of its native mammals," said Norm.

"Unless Australia provides more resources to mammal conservation and unless the nation is willing to address the continuing massive changes to mammal habitat, species will continue to be lost."

In the last 15 years this Department has allocated millions of dollars to conservation initiatives. Funds have been directed to animal research, translocations, recovery plans and actions, a threatened species unit and the world's most extensive fox control program, Western Shield, across 3.5 million hectares of conservation estate.

There have been many successes but Australia's terrestrial mammals are still susceptible to declines and extinction, particularly in the Northern Territory and the Kimberleys, where the continuing expansion of feral cattle and donkeys, and the increasing number of fires are expected to cause more extinctions.

"There has been a massive contraction in the geographical ranges and species composition of Australia's indigenous mammal fauna which is unparalleled in any other component of Australia's biodiversity, or anywhere else in the world.

"We now need to ask ourselves the question: 'How much do we need to do to hold on to our native animals?'" Norm asked.

"In spite of everything that has been done, it continues to be a disaster and will require more investment."

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A young Andrew Burbidge (right) looks pensive as he stands with the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Phillip (left) and Tom Riggert from the Department of Fisheries and Fauna. The occasion was the official opening of the Woodvale Research Centre in 1974.

Distinguished career in science

by Tracy Peacock

AFTER a long and distinguished career with the Department, Andrew Burbidge has been farewelled.

The Deputy Director, Biodiversity Conservation, retired last month.

A University of WA graduate, Andrew said he became interested in natural history through his mother, who had an interest in birds, and through the influence of his aunt, Dr Nancy T. Burbidge, who was a

renowned Australian botanist.

He became Chief Research Officer, Wildlife, in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife in 1978 and held that position until the Department of Conservation and Land Management was formed in 1985.

Andrew was the Department's Director of Research from 1987 to 1992.

One of the Department's Senior Technical Officers, Grant Pearson, praised Andrew saying that he should be nominated as Australian of the Year and acknowledged his contribution to conservation as "immense".

"From a Technical Officer's perspective he was always available and prepared to listen to their concerns and to provide good advice," Grant said.

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Walk for the Cure in October

STRATEGIC Development and Corporate Affairs Director, Ron Kawalilik has extended a challenge for every division to be involved in the 13 October Walk to Cure Diabetes.

Each year, more than 60,000 people throughout Australia walk seven kilometres to raise money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's research into the cure for diabetes.

Last year, more than \$1.86 million was raised for the cause. This year the fundraising target is \$2.2 million.

Ron said he encouraged the Department to become involved.

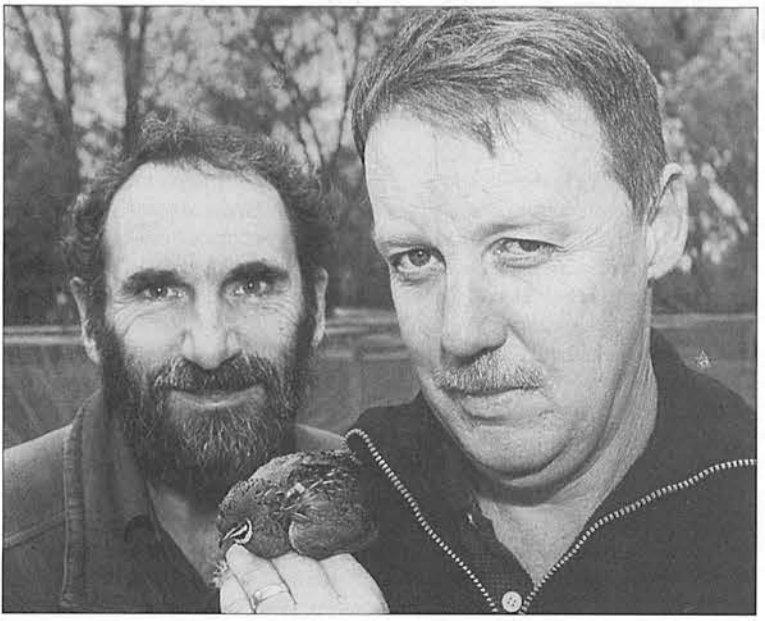
"About one million Australians suffer from diabetes, and many of them are children. Diabetes is clearly a very important issue in the community," he said.

"The Walk to Cure Diabetes offers the Department and each individual an opportunity to support this fantastic cause, get some exercise and have some fun with their co-workers."

Ron said that he extended a challenge to each division to get involved in the activity.

"When people get involved, they are asked to raise money for their division and as an individual," he said.

Interested people should call Rhianna Mooney on 9389 8644.



Allan Burbidge (left) and Neil Hamilton with a King Quail. Photo by Ernie McLintock.

A bird in the hand . . .

by Tracy Peacock

THE Department of Conservation and Land Management's Senior Research Scientist Allan Burbidge is using King Quails to discover the best way to attach a radio tracking harness as an aid for vital research on threatened West Australian bird species.

By finding the right material for the harness from which a one-centimetre radio transmitter can be attached, it will help with further research on the western bristlebird and the noisy scrub-bird.

Since the beginning of the year, Allan and Technical Officer Neil Hamilton have tried hat elastic, surgical suture material and now elastic bands to fit the harness which is like

a back pack and is looped around the bird's wings.

Allan said the project's aim was to determine a suitable material for the harness so that they could be fitted to the western bristlebird and the noisy scrub-bird when they were translocated.

He said this was important because many birds did not call and they had no other way of locating them after release to find out what they did. Both species inhabit very dense vegetation and they are extremely difficult to see.

"The idea is that we want to be able to use radio tracking on threat-

ened birds safely and that the transmitters also come off within an appropriate time frame," Allan said.

With this in mind, he believes the elastic bands may prove to be the most satisfactory because they are made of a soft material that does not chafe the bird and they eventually disintegrate.

Allan said it was very important to find a material and method that posed minimal trauma to the bird.

The King Quails were chosen to test the harness and radio tracking device because they were easily available and were about the right size and live in dense vegetation on the ground.

Currently, three birds at Woodvale are being tested with the harness.

Working Together

In this month's column I want to let staff know about a couple of issues the Department's Corporate Executive has begun focussing on. Both will need to involve staff consultation and input.

The first is to have a good look at our structure and ensure that we are set up in a way that meets the requirements of a modern and dynamic conservation agency. While our present structure has in many respects served us and the WA community well, at the senior executive and divisional level in particular it has changed little over the years. At the same time, however, expectations of us have changed markedly.

Corporate Executive will be having a two-day 'retreat' later in the year to focus on our future and the way we need to shape the Department for that future. We intend to invite a number of people to present their views at the retreat, both from among our staff and outside the Department. There will be further communication to staff about the retreat and opportunities for your views to be put forward.

The second issue is our Perth-based accommodation arrangements. Presently we have central divisional and branch staff spread over six locations. While that does lead to some inefficiencies, the real cost in my view is that it is far from ideal in terms of the sense of unity, drive and direction that the agency needs. In particular, separating the executive leadership from the majority of the staff needs to be rectified.

The need for a new Herbarium building is also a significant factor in driving an examination of our Perth accommodation.

Consequently, planning for our accommodation future in Perth is now getting underway, and will be accompanied by a program of staff involvement.

Keiran McNamara, Acting Executive Director



Distinguished career in science

from page 1

"In the early days of Fisheries and Wildlife, before he became Science Director for the Department, he was often sought for advice on personal or work related issues by technical staff. That continued with the formation of the Department and his elevation to Director.

"Andrew recognised the value of quality technical input and fostered a strong technical support group.

"He either initiated or supported many progressive work place conditions for technical staff. I saw him as an egalitarian, often deferring to less educated associates on issues of technical expertise."

Colleague Norm McKenzie, a Science Division Survey Ecologist, reflected on his many years of working with Andrew.

Norm said it had been a pleasure to work with Andrew and had done so since June 1970.

His strength had been in his commitment to being a working scientist, despite taking on managerial roles.

Norm said he would remember Andrew as a manager who could always make the hard decisions and had the loyalty of his staff, and one of Australia's most effective conservationists. He was looking forward to Andrew's return later this year on a Research Fellowship with the Department.

Andrew Burbidge also had two vertebrates named after him—the skink *Ctenopus burbidgei* Storr 1975 and the rock-wallaby

Petrogale burbidgei Kitchener & Sanson 1978.

His studies have included biogeographical research (mainly in the deserts and Kimberley), conservation biology (especially threatened species), island biogeography and conservation, seabird conservation, mammal conservation (especially marsupials), desert fire ecology, and freshwater tortoise/turtle evolution, ecology and conservation.

From 1993 to 1999 he was Chair of the Commonwealth Endangered Species Advisory Committee and Endangered Species Scientific Subcommittee. The latter committee reviewed all nominations to Schedules 1 (endangered and vulnerable species), 2 (endangered ecological communities) and 3 (key threatening processes) of the Endangered Species Protection Act, and made recommendations to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment as to whether the nominations should be accepted. He is a member of the Department's Threatened Species Scientific Committee, which reviews the WA threatened species lists and recommends priorities for threatened species conservation action.

Andrew was a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Australasian Marsupial and Monotreme Specialist Group (chair 1991-2000), Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group and Reintroduction Specialist Group.

Audit contributes to Australian mammal studies

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The mammal audit was part of the National Land and Water Resources Audit (a program of the Natural Heritage Trust) with collaborators from each state and territory.

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It confirmed research undertaken by Andrew and Norm in 1988-89 in WA, which divided the state into six regions, and was later published in the British journal, *Biological Conservation*.

Norm said the result of this audit was no surprise.

"We knew how bad it was when we published the original paper in 1989," he said.

He listed the agricultural and pastoral zones and the desert as the areas where mammal fauna had been most affected.

"The more arid the country the worse the situation," Norm said.

The 2001 audit looked at 305 indigenous species across Australia's 85 regions, a 27,000-cell matrix of information to analyse.

Norm and Andrew expect to start drafting a journal paper on the mammal audit later this year.

The audit will soon be available on the Australian Natural Resources Atlas home page.

School children get the wildlife message

by Rhianna Mooney

WESTERN Australia's school children are getting a wildlife message with an Aboriginal flavour from the Department's Trevor Walley.

Wildlife Officer Trevor Walley is involved in a program between the Department of Conservation and Land Management and Western Australian schools. The program sees Trevor visit many schools throughout WA, teaching children about flora and fauna.

"The program has been going for about two years now and it is still evolving," Trevor said.

"The children get an opportunity to learn about flora and fauna and about the Noongar culture.

"It's a wildlife message with an Aboriginal flavour."

Trevor is very involved in public education about the Noongar culture and conservation matters. He has also been involved in developing the teacher's resource guide 'Nidja Noongar Boodjar Noonook Nyininy.'

"The resource guide is used in schools throughout Western Australia and enables teachers to teach children about the Aboriginal culture," Trevor said.

"It is really important for WA children to learn about Aboriginal culture and my visits to schools complement



Wildlife Officer Trevor Walley at Hope Valley Primary School. Photo by Rhianna Mooney.

lessons based on the teacher's resource guide."

Trevor will also be presenting at a Catholic Education Office seminar for teachers about Aboriginal studies in August.

Senior fire officers fight wildfires in US

by Nigel Higgs

THREE Department of Conservation and Land Management senior fire officers are part of a 45-strong Australia-New Zealand contingent that left for the United States this month to combat wildfires.

They are Mike Cantelo from the Swan Coastal District (WA team leader), Greg Standing from the Perth Hills District and Brian Moss from the Donnelly District. Other members of the WA team are Glen Tunstead and Gary Kennedy from the Fire and Emergency Services Authority.

The team was briefed by the Department's Fire Services Manager Rick Sneeuwjagt, Senior Environmental Protection Officer Roger Armstrong and Science Division Senior Scientist Lachie

McCaw, who went to the US two years ago to help control fires.

Rick said the United States had formally requested assistance after President George Bush signed legislation to enable fire specialists from overseas to assist in the country's fire emergency. The legislation covered indemnity and insurance for foreign fire crews.

"We expect the team to be based in south-west Oregon and northern California where wildfires have been burning through vast tracts of Douglas fir and redwood forests," Rick said.

"The terrain is steep while the conditions have been extremely dry, hot and windy. With the heavy build-up

of fuels there will be some challenging situations in containing these fires."

Rick said the Department would benefit by having its personnel experience fire operations in other countries.

"We learned a lot from our previous American encounter, especially in terms of fire crew physical fitness, community information and consultation during incidents," he said.

The team spent three days at the National Interagency Fire Centre in Boise, Idaho, being briefed on the US procedures before being despatched to fire operations. They are scheduled to return to Australia on 12 September.

Brian and Greg have been posted as divisional supervisors and Mike in aerial operations at the Biscuit fire complex in Oregon.



Emergency Services Minister Michelle Roberts presented the WA fire officers with a State flag to be flown at their base camp while in the US. The team is (from second from right) Mike Cantelo, Greg Standing, Glen Tunstead, Gary Kennedy and Brian Moss.

Working together to protect nature

by Sue McKenna

A LIFELONG love of nature had evolved to a desire to protect WA's biodiversity and natural areas for future generations, said the Department's Acting Executive Director, Keiran McNamara.

Keiran has been at the helm for 13 months and is confident that staff and the general community will join him in his vision to "get it right."

He said biodiversity and nature conservation across vast deserts, rangelands, forests and the coast didn't stop at the borders of the 24 million hectares of conservation estate managed by the Department.

"Everyone—staff, volunteers, the community and indigenous people—has a part to play," he said.

"WA really offers the most diverse opportunities in conservation in Australia, from the Kimberleys to the southern coast.

"This is the only place in the country where you deal with everything from crocodiles to seals."

He praised the Department's staff, saying the level of dedication and enthusiasm was unmatched.

"People here are passionate about their work... There's an outstanding commitment and belief in what they do for a living. We all feel we're



Acting Executive Director Keiran McNamara and Environment and Heritage Minister Judy Edwards at the training awards recently.
Photo by Ernie McLintock.

doing something good for society at large and for the future," he said.

He added delivering conservation as a government agency would not be confined to reserve boundaries.

"We manage on behalf of the community at large; we don't own the plants and the animals and we know that ecological and hydrological processes don't stop at the boundaries between State-vested conserva-

tion lands and other areas," he said.

For that reason, the Department has moved to embrace wide groups of volunteers and local communities by forming partnerships through programs such as Land for Wildlife.

"In the next 12 months there'll be an increasing focus on a range of natural resource management and biodiversity policies as part of the bigger picture," he said.

"As a consequence, we'll see an increasing engagement with other land owners, indigenous people and the community."

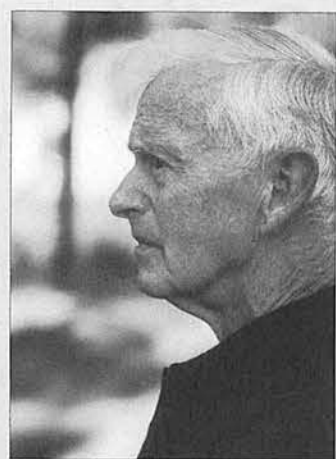
Keiran said WA offered the opportunity to establish a truly world-class system of parks and reserves, building on spectacular areas such as Ningaloo, Shark Bay, Purnululu, Karijini, the south-west forests, deserts and rangelands "which are outstanding by any international measures."

Keiran moved to WA and the Department from Canberra in 1985 after seven years at the National Parks and Wildlife Service in Canberra.

He was a scientific advisor until 1989 before managing the Wildlife Branch until 1992, when he became Director of Nature Conservation. He took on the role of Acting Director of Sustainable Forest Management in 2000 and assumed his current position when Dr Wally Cox retired from the Public Service in July last year.

He said he had always loved nature and that the new job was satisfying and enormously varied, demanding and challenging.

"It's rewarding to see what can be achieved, particularly with the support we receive from the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards," he said.



Dick Perry

Dick Perry turns 100

by Rhianna Mooney

ONE of WA's greatest living foresters and departmental veteran, Dick Perry turned 100 in July.

Douglas Humphrey Perry, later known as Dick, was born in England in 1902 and emigrated to Australia in 1912.

Dick left school at 14 and applied for an apprenticeship with the Woods and Forests Department.

He and Jack Thompson became the Department's first apprentices in 1917 and started work at the tree nursery in Hamel, south of Pinjarra. Dick's career spanned more than 50 years and was spent entirely at the Forests Department.

Dick is celebrated for his contribution to forestry, in particular, his work on maritime pine, fertilisation trials and his expertise in termites and photography.

In 1925, Dick went to work as an assistant to the Conservator of Forests and in the 1950s worked on trials to find trees suitable to plant in the Wheatbelt.

In 1963, Dick was sent to Portugal in search of the perfect pine for a tree-breeding program. He and his wife Katherine spent two years looking for 85 of the tallest, straightest trees. By 1990, the descendants of these clones were 70 per cent more productive than the original trees grown at Gnaragara.

In 1991, Dick received Membership of the Order of Australia for his contribution to forestry and entomology and in 1995 was made an Honorary Member of the Institute of Foresters of Australia.

The plant *Goodenia perryi* Gardner ex Carolin, the termite *Amitermes perryi* Gay and Dick Perry Avenue in Kensington have also been named in Dick's honour.

Kanyana to the rescue over 40 years

by Mitzi Vance

JUNE and Lloyd Butcher have spent the past 40 years developing Kanyana Native Fauna Rehabilitation Centre into a 200-plus animal care facility, run entirely by volunteers.

Last month their tireless and dedicated work was acknowledged when they were both awarded Members of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

The Butchers' commitment for caring for native animals began in 1962 with an injured galah.

Over time, June and Lloyd began taking in more and more injured native animals, nursing them back to health and then releasing them back into the wild.

Their first home, a caravan, was used for this animal rescue work.

In 1986 the Butchers heeded the call for a rehabilitation centre in Perth's hills. Funding the entire project themselves, they constructed a purpose-built animal hospital on their property and called it Kanyana.

Their dedication and commitment, teamed with the long hours needed to care for the animals, soon



June and Lloyd Butcher with Bill the boodie. Photograph by Ron D'Raine, West Australian Newspapers.

saw June, a child health nurse, and Lloyd, then State Manager of Ansett, retire to dedicate themselves full-time to running Kanyana.

As well as caring for and rehabilitating native animals, the Butchers set up a captive-breeding facility at Kanyana to help conserve populations of the marl (western barred bandicoot) and later the dalgate (bilby) with Department

research scientist, Tony Friend.

Both breeding programs exceeded departmental expectations and after six years have provided enough offspring to enable the two species to be used in translocation programs.

In 1996, the Butchers expanded Kanyana to cater for more animals and turned it into an incorporated body, allowing them to apply for much-needed funding.

An average of 12 volunteer carers work at Kanyana each day, nursing and feeding the animals and conducting diagnostic and administrative duties.

The Butchers agree, they've come a long way from their caravan in the 1960s to the Kanyana of today—a centre staffed by 106 volunteers and looking after approximately 1500 native animals a year.

Accommodation review in metropolitan area

A STRATEGIC review of Departmental accommodation needs in the metropolitan area has been commenced in advance of the formal creation of a new Department of Conservation.

The review which is to be overseen by Corporate Executive has the purpose of maximising potential synergies through the co-location, probably at the existing Kensington site, of all of the central service units of the Department.

The appropriate location of metropolitan based regional and district management staff would also be examined during the review.

Acting Executive Director Keiran McNamara said that the proposed replacement of the current Herbarium had raised issues of need for the integration of the new Herbarium facility with other science functions, and the desirability of reconnecting the Science Division with the core functions that it underpins.

"The need for a new Herbarium is clear and the overall review will not delay detailed planning for that facility," Keiran said.

"However, there is a once-only opportunity to get the planning at Kensington right by bringing together all of our Directors, and metropolitan science, policy, planning and other key support

staff at the one location," he said.

Keiran said it was expected that redevelopment would be staged over several years as resources were made available.

He said that maximizing co-location would be of benefit to the Department's primary biodiversity conservation function, improve accessibility to the public and key stakeholders, and very importantly would present the opportunity to develop the standards of staff amenities that are expected of a modern and dynamic organisation.

The initial phase of the redevelopment process will involve information gathering from directorates and branches regarding functional

synergies and a preliminary examination of current accommodation.

Keiran said that one of Corporate Executive's key aims was to ensure that staff have the opportunity to be involved at all stages of the planning process so that the end result has wide acceptance.

"We are already aware of many of the problems faced by Departmental staff in coping with inadequate, dated, and in some areas dysfunctional accommodation. We will be seeking positive input from staff on their requirements and expectations of their physical working environment," he said.

Conservation briefs

Dryandra Woodland ecology

The Narrogin District will run its award-winning Dryandra Woodland Ecology Course from Friday 18 October until Sunday 20 October.

The Dryandra Woodland Ecology Course was first run in 1992 and was conceived and designed by staff from the Department's Interpretation Section, Science Division, the Wheatbelt Region and Narrogin District.

Narrogin District staff and Research Scientist, Tony Friend facilitate the course, which aims to generate a basic understanding of ecological processes as well as an appreciation of the role that research and management play in maintaining biodiversity in the Wheatbelt.

Additions to reserves

The Conservation Commission of Western Australia has recommended to the State Government that a number of additions be made to proposed and existing formal reserves.

The recommendations, which include the reservation of Dalgarpur block and the southern part of Witchcliffe block (habitat of the declared rare fauna species the White-Bellied Frog) are the result of the report 'A Review of High Conservation Values in WA's South West Forests' released by the Commission.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

The Department held a Climate Change Adaption Workshop in July, aimed at encouraging proactive conservation management to reduce greenhouse emissions.

The Minister for Environment and Heritage Judy Edwards congratulated the Department for organising the workshop and for its continued and active role in addressing the issues of what we now call the Greenhouse effect.

The workshop examined the Government's four-part strategic framework, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by creating carbon sinks, reducing emissions, adapting to climate change and analysing new industries.

Working together to protect birds

The Department and the community will work together to help protect the habitat of migratory waders.

With the Friends of Attadale Foreshore, the project will involve the construction of protective fencing around Alfred Cove Nature Reserve.

The area is one of the most significant feeding and resting areas for migratory and local shore birds.

South west lighthouses

Negotiations are underway for the management and lease arrangements of the Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin lighthouse precincts.

The talks with the Cape Naturalist Tourism Association and the Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association were the result of a comprehensive expression of interest process which started last year.

Life's in love with Terry at Geikie

by Rhianna Mooney

TERRY Bloomer loves his nomadic life.

He has been a mobile ranger in the Department for the past 11 years and has worked in most areas of the state.

At the moment, Terry is based at Geikie Gorge National Park where he conducts boat tours and other park duties. He is very popular with park visitors who enjoy his stories and sense of humour.

Terry said it takes a special kind of person to be a mobile ranger and he enjoys the variety and independence that being a mobile ranger gives him.

"We're different to normal people, for example other people pack up their bags when they're going on holidays and stay in a caravan, mobile rangers pack up their caravans and spend their holidays in houses," Terry said.

"We really are nomadic and a bit like snails . . . we make everywhere a home."

Terry said that mobile rangers usually spent the dry season in the Kimberley or the north of the state and the summer anywhere south to Esperance.

Former District Manager at Shark Bay and the Gascoyne, Ron Shepherd said the whole time he knew Terry he always grew veggies.

"He would pack up the pots, put them in the caravan and take them wherever he went," he said.



Terry, captaining his boat on a Geikie Gorge tour. Photo by Maria Duthie.

"When I worked with him, Terry's diet usually consisted of wild goat, homebrew and the veggies from his veggie patch.

"He probably grew them because it was the only way to guarantee you would get fresh produce when you're in the sticks."

Ron said that Terry was one of the hardest physical workers he'd ever worked with.

"Many of the walk trails and facilities at Mount Augustus are a tribute to his dedication," Ron said.

"The truth is, I really enjoy my job," Terry said.

Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . .

Promotion

Kim Cream, Visitor Services Officer (Marketing), Swan Coastal District, Yanchep National Park; Lisa Craig, Administration Officer, Perth Hills, Dwellingup; Natalie Burton, Administration Officer, Perth Hills, Dwellingup; John Tillman, Regional Fire Coordinator, Fire Services Regional Services Division, Bunbury Regional Headquarters; Alan Burnett, Finance and Administration Officer, Finance Branch, Kensington.

Contracts

Karen Wheeler, Marine Conservation Officer, Marine Conservation Branch; Gwen Bush, Project Officer, Corporate Information Services; Catherine Tauss, Technical Officer, Science Division WA Herbarium; Christina Garnett, Records Officer, Information Management Branch; Wendy Finch, Officer, People Services Branch; Deon Utber, Regional Bushcare Facilitator, Regional Conservation Division Wildlife Branch; Humera Rind, Indigenous Cadet, Science Division Woodvale Research Centre; Barbara Powell, Retention and Disposal Officer, Corporate Information Services, Kensington; Nicole Weber, Reserves Officer,

Katanning District Officer Regional Services.

Permanent appointments

Jeff Daubney, National Park Ranger, Donnelly District; Jolene Wallington, Officer, Hills Forest Activity Centre, Mundaring;

Temporary deployment

Sid Sepkus, Trainee Ranger, Donnelly District, Regional Services Division, Pemberton.

Voluntary severance

Tim Birmingham, Operations Officer, Regional Services, Dwellingup; Bevan Forster, Senior Operations Officer, Regional Services, Kirup; Phillip Fuller, Senior Technical Officer, Science Division, Woodvale; Christine Farrell, Administrative Assistant, Science Division, Kensington; Julie Male, Marketing and Customer Services Officer, Regional Services Division, Yanchep National Park; Marianne Lewis, Science Editor, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, Crawley; John Eygenraam, Officer, Science Division, WA Herbarium; Thelma Byrne, Officer, Science Division, Woodvale; Patrick Pigott, Research Scientist, Science Division WA Herbarium; Linda Rodin-Zimdall, Project Officer, People Services, Kensington; Judith Harvey, Senior

Technical Officer, Science Division, Woodvale.

Contract ceased

Jonathon (Jack) Mercer, Research Scientist, Science Services Group, Albany; Kylie Payne, Land Care Officer, Kalgoorlie Regional Headquarters; Susan Tesselaar, Project Officer, Planning and Visitor Services Branch, Kensington; Kelly Shepherd, Research Scientist, Science Division, WA Herbarium.

Resignations

Darren Graham, District Wildlife Officer, Kalgoorlie Regional Headquarters; Susan Osborne, Project Officer, Marine Conservation, Fremantle; Kieron Wogan, Project Officer, Parks Policy Tourism, Kensington; David Greenhalgh, Officer, Swan Coastal District, Yanchep National Park; Daniel Flynn, Corporate Information, Kensington.

Retirements

Andrew Burbidge, Deputy Director, Biodiversity Conservation, Woodvale.

Transfer

Vincent Fordham Lamont, Project Officer, Parks Policy Tourism Branch, Kensington to Information Management Branch, Kensington.

A forest inventory by farm forestry expert

by Tammie Reid

LIVING on a hop farm in southern Tasmania, Andrew Rumley was exposed to a lot of anti forestry sentiment.

At the time he thought the solution couldn't be that difficult and so embarked on a career in forestry at the Australian National University, completing an honours project on leaf area index.

No longer that naïve (his own admission!) he is working on a number of inventory projects in native forest, and softwood and hardwood plantations, based in Bunbury's Forest Management Branch. He hopes to graduate from the Department's graduate recruit program this year.

He explains his work since

he joined the Department two years ago.

"Our inventory role is to collect and analyse data, mostly measuring trees in the permanent and semi-permanent growth plots established throughout the plantations and forests.

"Aggregated over time, the results enable growth models and yield predictions."

The Bluegum Stem Analysis featured in the photo aims to establish a more reliable estimate of year 10 volumes based on early age measurements.

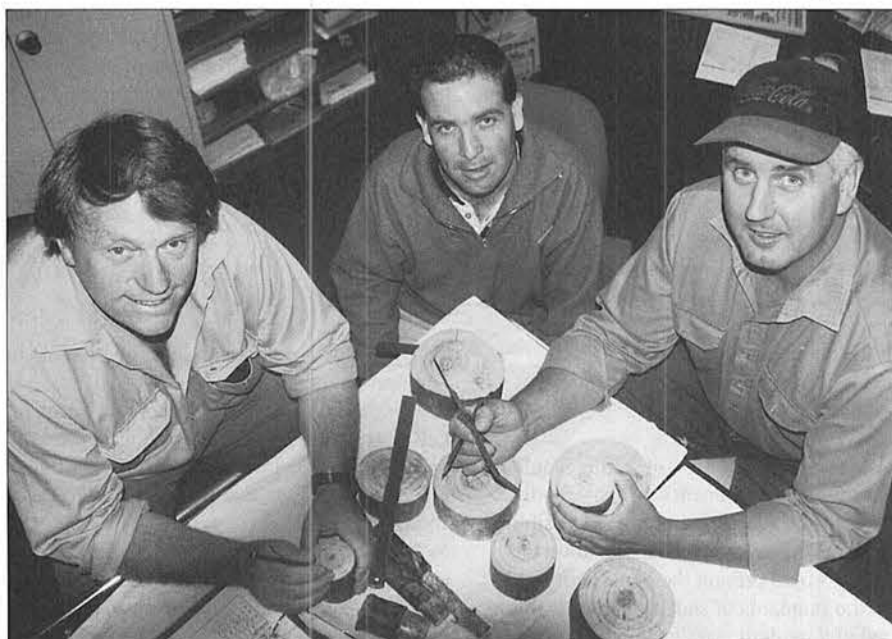
"It's business information people want yesterday and early growth modelling cannot be done overnight. These models are for the lower rainfall areas east of Collie where measurement history in the past has been limited," Andrew said.

The data collection involves measuring 30 trees per plot and ring counts from five trees per plot. Increment cores are not reliable as bluegum can lay down false growth rings and bias the counting.

The work complements the Department's Science Division research on a site prediction model based on environmental and soil factors. Andrew is using a combination of stand and site characteristics to develop a volume prediction model.

Customers include the Forest Products Commission, private forestry companies and our own forest planners.

"We're moving towards tools and databases that develop customised growth models for specific areas," Andrew said.



Terry Carpena, Andrew Rumley and John Terry use calipers and magnifying glasses to count the growth rings from plot bluegums. Photo by Jo Wallace.