



Conservation News

Print post approved PP665002/0001



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WESTERN AUSTRALIA

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2004

Forest Management Plan for next decade



Pictured from left at the launch of the Forest Management Plan were Jaye Radisich, Swan Hills MLA; Dr Judy Edwards, Environment Minister; Caris Bailey, A/Director Sustainable Forest Management; Dr John Bailey, Conservation Commission Chairman; Keiran McNamara, CALM Executive Director; Kim Chance, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; and Dr Paul Biggs, Forest Products Commission General Manager.

THE Forest Management Plan 2004-2013 that formalises the protection of old-growth forest and reduced timber harvesting levels in line with the commitments made in the Government's Protecting our old-growth forests policy was released late last year.

When releasing the management plan, Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards said that it was a blueprint to protect forests and improve forest management in the State's South-West.

"In delivering the Government's commitments to better forest management, the new plan will also deliver a legacy for future gen-

erations in Western Australians by protecting our spectacular native forests and creating a world-class parks system," Dr Edwards said.

The plan ensures that there is no more logging in old-growth forests and will see the creation of 31 new national parks (including the new national park at Dalgarpur near Bridgetown) and two new conservation parks.

It is also designed to offer improved wildlife protection through the establishment of a network of fauna habitat zones across State forests, ensure that internationally agreed principles for ecologically sustainable forest management are adopted, and a

reduced timber yield is maintained.

The final Forest Management Plan is available on CALM's NatureBase website at www.naturebase.net/forest_facts or can be looked at in CALM's Kensington, Bunbury and Manjimup offices. Printed copies of the plan were distributed widely early in February.

CALM's Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, said the development of the Forest Management Plan was a long, complex and demanding process.

"This was in part because of the number of parallel studies that fed into its development

and the way the results of these had to be incorporated, particularly into the calculation of the sustained yields of jarrah and karri," he said.

"Caris Bailey, Acting Director of Sustainable Forest Management, Paul Jones, Project Manager, and Martin Rayner, Manager Forest Management Branch and their staff, bore the brunt of the numerous difficult deadlines and consequent long hours required to meet them.

"I thank all the staff involved for their efforts and look forward to successful implementation of the plan."

\$3 million boost for fire management

The State Government has boosted CALM's fire management resources with an extra \$3 million.

The extra funding was in response to CALM's analysis of the difficult 2002/03 fire season and will bolster CALM's fire management works and wildfire suppression capability in key areas of the State.

The monetary injection is earmarked for the employment of 38 extra seasonal fire crew - 30 in the three south-west regions, four in the Midwest region and four in the South Coast Region.

Funds have also been

allocated for road and bridge maintenance and upgrades, hire of two extra bulldozers and to meet increasing costs involved in CALM's fire management program.

When announcing the funding, Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards said the additional fire staff would enable CALM to undertake prescribed burning in areas that, in recent years, have been postponed due to dry conditions.

CALM Regional Services Director An Walker said in the current fire season, CALM had conducted prescribed burns

covering 82,000 hectares up to the end of February and would be working assiduously to meet the nominal prescribed burning target of 200,000 hectares by the end of June 2004.

As a timely reminder that prescribed burns could not stop all bushfires getting out of control, two bushfires at Bridgetown and Tenterden involved a mammoth fire-fighting effort from CALM, the Forest Products Commission and volunteer bushfire brigades during the week following Christmas.

Around 400 CALM and FPC staff were involved. The main

fires at Bridgetown and Tenterden and three fires at Collie involved a large contingent of fire crews, heavy machinery and water bombers.

A story about the Bridgetown and Collie fires is on page four.

The Tenterden/Stirling Range National Park fire burnt more than 18,000 hectares in the Tenterden/Cranbrook area and around 6,500 hectares of the Stirling Range National Park. CALM fire crews from the South Coast and Wheatbelt regions were part of an incident response managed by the Shire of Plantagenet.

Public comment on Rowley Shoals

A draft management plan for the Rowley Shoals Marine Park was released for public comment in January.

The plan will protect the biodiversity of an area that is globally significant and a world-renowned dive site.

The plan proposes that the park be extended from 21,912 hectares to a total area of more than 87,500 hectares. Of that, 26 per cent would be sanctuary zone, 17 per cent recreational zone and 57 per cent general use zone.

The draft management plan was prepared by a joint CALM/Department of Fisheries planning team on behalf of the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority, with input from the local community and users of the Rowley Shoals. Public comment closes on 12 April 2004.

Working Together

In the December 2003 *Conservation News* I mentioned a few of the year's highlights. This edition includes a fairly detailed review of the year and reinforces the diversity of our activities and achievements, and the sense of pride that staff can take in their work.

It's a few years since I visited Harvey and inspected the work that was being done to mechanise the production of baits. *Western Shield* has been an outstandingly successful fauna conservation program but is under pressure from rising costs. More efficient bait production has long been one of our objectives so we can expand the program. I was impressed by the technical innovation, ingenuity and commitment of Bruce Withnell and Rob Brazell when they showed me their work, and am pleased to read of their achievements in the article on page 3.

Much of my time recently has been committed to the Government's 2004/05 budget process. As all staff know one of our key roles is fire management, and it was particularly pleasing to have both the Premier Dr Geoff Gallop and the Minister for the Environment Dr Judy Edwards at John Forrest National Park at the end of December to announce \$3 million in extra funding for the Department's fire management this financial year. Importantly these extra funds have been put to work not only in the south-west forest areas, but also in our South Coast and Midwest Regions.

This combined edition for the months of January and February doesn't represent a decision to reduce the frequency of *Conservation News*. Rather it's a consequence of some competition for time and attention in late January, and we will return to monthly publication.

Keiran McNamara, Executive Director



Animal Ethics Committee meeting

by Rhianna Mooney

TEN new applications for fauna research, biological survey, monitoring and animal handling were reviewed at the last CALM Animal Ethics Committee meeting.

The applications were reviewed at the quarterly Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) meeting, which saw matters such as staff training, standard operating procedures, cat trapping and the transmission of infectious organisms discussed.

Keith Morris, the AEC Chair, said the committee congratulated staff for the effort they took in preparing their applications and annual reports on progress.

"The information submitted in the applications about new animal handling techniques and other procedures help to improve the techniques used in CALM by reducing the number of animals used in experiments, refining the experiment techniques and, where possible, replacing the need for animals in experiments," he said.

"At the moment CALM is developing a standard operations procedure, a working document that incorporates the new techniques submitted in many of the applications.

Under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, CALM operates as a scientific institution under the guidelines of a Corporate Licence, which is administered by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. CALM is required to operate following the Australian Code of Practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

Under the Code of Practice, every staff member involved in fauna research, biological survey, fauna monitoring or animal handling

must have Animal Ethics Committee approval. An important part of this approval is to be able to demonstrate they have the competencies to undertake the work required.

"The Animal Welfare Act and Regulations are new to staff and it is a bit of a learning curve but it is important for all staff to comply with the relevant licensing conditions and regulations," Keith said.

For more information about the competency checklists or regulations, please contact the Executive Officer, Joanne Smith, or Keith Morris, on 9405 5143.

Conservation News Jan/Feb 2004

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: Lamb Print

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Tuart Atlas launch

Latest digital mapping techniques to map tuart woodlands on the Swan Coastal Plain in a Tuart Atlas drew the praise of Environment Minister Judy Edwards in December.

Dr Edwards told guests at the launch of the atlas that she was delighted with the work of the Tuart Response Group chaired by CALM's Director of Regional Services, Alan Walker, with Executive Officer support from CALM's Drew Haswell.

The launch took place in a tuart grove in Kings Park and was attended by representatives from the Tuart Response Group, conservation groups, universities, local governments, CALM and tuart conservation supporters.

Dr Edwards said the atlas – a 38-page A3 colour booklet –

by Sue McKenna

provided accurate and current information on the density of tuart woodlands and the condition of its understorey, and was the first stage in developing the Government's tuart conservation and management strategy. She added there would be incentives for tuart conservation on private lands.

"The preparation of the atlas was a very exact process using existing maps and high resolution aerial colour photographs taken in January 2002. The tuart areas were mapped at a very fine scale, plotting tuarts over areas as small as one hectare," she said.

"The atlas will contribute to the development of the

Government's tuart conservation and management strategy."

She also announced that the Australian Research Council had awarded \$285,000 in research grants to investigate the decline of tuart trees near Yalgorup. CALM and contributing partners Murdoch University, Edith Cowan University, Alcoa World Alumina (Australia) and the City of Mandurah are matching the grant with cash and in-kind support.

"We will only find solutions by working together in partnerships between government, business and the community," Dr Edwards said.

The Tuart Atlas is available from Drew Haswell on 9334 0337.



Pictured with Environment Minister Judy Edwards (centre) at the tuart atlas launch at Kings Park were Tuart Response Group members (left to right) Robert Griffiths (Department for Planning and Infrastructure), Christine Steer (Peel Development Commission), John Sherwood (Tuart Coalition), Drew Haswell (the group's Executive Officer), Tim Sparks (Department of Environment), Alan Walker (Chair) and Gayle Gray (South West Development Commission). Absent members were Fiona O'Connor and Graham Nestor of the Lake Clifton Landcare Group and Eric Wright of the Department of Agriculture. Photo by Sue McKenna.



Chantelle, Danielle, Michelle, and Ethan Barleyman Woolston (front) received certificates of appreciation from (left to right) Ross Beaden, Customs Supervisor Information Management; Lance Black, Hotline Coordinator; Roland Dixon, Director Border Compliance and Enforcement and (right) Adam Meyer, CALM Wildlife Officer. Parents Helen Barleyman (middle, left) and George Woolston (back, second from right) watched on.

Pint-sized detectives in animal haul

by Rhianna Mooney

BADGINGARRA'S newest crime fighting family received certificates of appreciation for their role in the haul of 217 reptiles and amphibians at Perth International Airport last year.

On their way home from school, the children and their mother spotted convicted animal smuggler, Michael Linley, on the side of a road in Cervantes. They stopped to make sure he was okay and as they drove off they saw him putting a bobtail lizard into a cylinder.

Chantelle (10), Danielle (8), Michelle (6) and Ethan Barleyman Woolston (5) asked their mother, Helen Barleyman, to report what they saw to authorities. She contacted the CALM Nature Protection branch in Perth which contacted CALM Wildlife Officer, Adam Meyer, in Jurien.

Mr Linley was then placed under surveillance by CALM Special Investigations Officers and Customs with the assistance of local police.

When he arrived at Perth Airport,

Mr Linley's luggage was inspected and he was arrested and later charged with 31 offences under the *Wildlife Conservation Act* for taking 27 different species of native animal. He was charged under Commonwealth legislation for attempting to smuggle animals out of the country.

He was found guilty and fined \$20,000 plus court costs. He also faced charges of animal cruelty.

District Wildlife Officer, Adam Meyer, said the students played an instrumental role in the haul.

"The family called CALM about a week before he was due to leave Australia so without their tip off, Linley might have managed to smuggle the animals out of Australia," he said.

"It is important that people keep an eye out and report anything they think is suspicious."

Innovative new baits lift CALM's ability to control introduced predators

FIVE years of trial and error turned into an engineering success for two CALM Wellington District employees who invented a device to inject 1080 poison into *Western Shield* fox and cat baits.

In the past eight years, millions of dried meat baits have been injected with the poison by hand before being aerially dropped across 3.5 million hectares. The baiting is part of CALM's *Western Shield*'s program to save native animals from extinction by reducing, and if possible removing, introduced predators.

Western Shield Research and Development Bait Manufacturing Facility Overseer Bruce Withnell and Project Leader Rob Brazell's determination to solve the problem of integrating a simple automated injection system into the manufacture of sausage style baits meant long nights and weekends spent tinkering with valves, pumps and computers at the bait factory.

30,000 sausages a day

The men adapted a pump to work in tandem with a sausage making machine and a computer to inject 1080 poison into more than 15,000 sausages a day. With improved facilities and equipment, production of 30,000 a day is expected.

The purpose of establishing the bait facility was to develop both feral cat and fox sausage baits. Currently the feral cat bait ERADICAT is manufactured under a research permit. This year, for the first time – and after five years of testing – the bait facility is making large quantities of baits for the quarterly *Western Shield* fox baiting program.

Using existing equipment developed for liquid injection, and with the assistance of external service providers, Bruce has also been successful in designing another piece of machinery to inject ball bearings into cat baits. This is part of a national trial which will determine whether small native animals spit out capsules from within the sausage. If successful, it will greatly enhance the use of baiting for feral cat control in Australia while minimising the impacts of the baits on native animals.

by Sue McKenna

Ingenuity

Senior CALM research scientist Dave Algar, who coordinates the cat baiting program, said Bruce and Rob's inventions were a testament to their ingenuity, creativity and problem solving ability.

"It's a credit to their dedication and they deserve a lot of praise for their achievements," Dave said.

Western Shield project manager John Asher said Bruce and Rob had achieved a significant breakthrough in the production of cheap and effective predator baits.

"The benefits will assist the expansion of *Western Shield* and have the potential to benefit nature conservation and agricultural protection across Australia," he said.

"They have developed equipment, product formulation and process design through their knowledge of nature conservation and their other life skills such as welding, machining, engine mechanics, hydraulics and electronics.

"It's amazing what can be done with imagination, dedication and a small budget."

John said Bruce and Rob had taken the project from concept to production with few resources and huge amounts of talent.

Initiative

Wellington District manager Drew Griffiths said Bruce and Rob used their initiative and a keen sense of duty to meet the challenges that arose in developing the production process, bringing financial savings to the ever growing demands of *Western Shield*.

"These guys have come up with everything asked for by our department and others. They've worked long hours and shown lots of ingenuity with limited resources... We really have marvelous people here," he said.



CALM's inventors Bruce Withnell (centre) and Rob Brazell (right) with conservation employee Dave Hawkes show off their new 1080 fox sausage baits. Photo by Sue McKenna.

Good signs for quokkas in southern forests

THE signs are good for quokkas in WA's southern forests, as they exist in more than half the sites surveyed by CALM in the past six months.

In a benchmark survey, a total of 609 sites in the Walpole Wilderness Area, conservation reserves, State forests, nature reserves, unallocated Crown land and national parks (Leeuwin Naturaliste, Warren, D'Entrecasteaux, Walpole-Nornalup, Mt Frankland, Shannon and Beedelup) were surveyed for quokkas.

Of those, 363 show signs of

by Sue McKenna

quokkas, which is an encouraging sign of the success of *Western Shield*, CALM's native wildlife recovery program that brings back native species from the brink of extinction through controlling feral predators, particularly foxes and feral cats.

This is the first time quokkas have been systematically surveyed over such a large area of the southern forest region.

The survey Co-ordinator, Graeme Liddelow, a Senior Technical Officer who has worked on forest mammals, including quokkas, for more than 30 years, is convinced that *Western Shield* is having an impact.

"*Western Shield*'s baiting strategy has been so successful that quokka numbers have increased to such an extent that we are finding several 'road kills'," he said.

"It's a sign that the breeding is successful."

Graeme's survey will map the

presence of quokkas in CALM's three South-West forest regions - Warren, the South-West and Swan.

"There has been concern about the plight of quokkas on the mainland, especially in the northern forests, but they're alive and doing very well in the southern forests in the Warren and South-West regions," Graeme said.

Mainland species

"Many people think quokkas only occur on Rottnest Island, but they are a mainland species and are doing well."

Quokkas have been found in 90 per cent of the 233 sites in the Donnelly District, 35 per cent of the 315 sites in the Blackwood District and 72 per cent of the 61 sites in the Frankland District.

Graeme has been assisted by four staff from the Blackwood District, three from the Collie District, four from the Frankland District and four from the Donnelly-Manjimup-Pemberton Districts.

He said a problem for quokkas was feral pigs, which were an increasing threat because of the demise of the fox. Although the pigs ate fox baits, they were larger and continued to breed.

"In the Walpole area 28 per cent of sites showed evidence of pigs so it may become an increasing problem," Graeme said.

Pigs threaten the understorey of forests, which are the principal food source and cover for quokkas. They

also introduce dieback and prey on quokkas.

The survey will be continued in the northern jarrah forest region this year.

Mosaic burns are Graeme's Camelot

CALM Technical Officer Graeme Liddelow's 'Camelot' is a place where forests have mosaic burns which are managed year in, year out.

Mosaic burns result in the regeneration of understorey vegetation which is a prime source of food and cover for quokkas.

"Unfortunately many sites where quokkas are occurring are old and denuded because of a lack of regeneration," Graeme said.

"These areas are breaking down because many of the understorey plants are short-lived and die out."

Graeme said that before European settlement, mosaic burns would have occurred naturally from wildfires as a result of lightning and Aboriginal fires.

"We don't have that now... there is private property and other values which we have, and the focus, rightly so, since settlement has been to protect these from fire," he said.



Technical Officer John Rooney and Senior Technical Officer Graeme Liddelow surveying quokkas in the northern jarrah forest. Photo courtesy Graeme Liddelow.

Fire crews tackle Collie and Bridgetown blazes

CALM fire crews worked around the clock to save houses and buildings in Collie and Bridgetown as fire licked their doorsteps in late December.

Senior staff said they had never seen two towns so perilously close to being overrun by wildfire on the same day.

"We had some great contributors who did some impressive work," CALM's South West Regional Fire Coordinator, John Tillman, said.

John said the temperature on December 27 was 38 degrees, humidity was 14 per cent and there were north-west winds up to 40km/hr with gusts up to 70km/hr.



John Tillman

by Sue McKenna

Bridgetown

John described the Bridgetown fire as being horrendous in its speed, starting 13 km north-west of the town and travelling four kilometres in less than an hour.

"There was potential to burn the whole town out so we made a decision to go into defensive asset protection mode," John said.

"Instead of having people attack the flanks of the fire and pinching the headfire, fire officers were moved to the front of the fire - between the town and the fire - so

that we could protect life and save property.

"It was the reverse of what we usually do and was a little bit out of our comfort zone."

At the height of the fire 180 personnel were on duty using 69 fire appliances and 18 pieces of heavy machinery. All six State waterbombers, two reconnaissance aircraft and an air attack supervisor plane (coordinating the waterbombers' movements) were in the air.



Fire trucks from all agencies line up at Bridgetown. Photo courtesy of John Tillman.

"That fire ran for 10 shifts with the main fire running for one day, burning 4,700ha with a 55km perimeter," he said. "About 3,100ha was private property with the balance being State and private timber plantations, and some conservation reserves," John said.

After discussions with the Bridgetown Shire and the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA), CALM maintained control of the fire for the entire event, including the post-fire recovery phase.

Collie

"At the same time, Collie was under threat so allocating our resources was a commendable effort," he said.

"The two deliberately-lit fires were started a kilometre from town. We didn't have long to gear up and respond... The fire was stopped literally in the streets after the efforts of CALM's fire personnel, volunteers and residents."

The Collie fires "punched right into town, stopping in the alley just over the road from the Club Hotel, going down the alleyway like a wick," he said.

"In this part of the town, the local and imported bushfire brigades, the local Fire and Rescue Service, other volunteers and residents managed to stop the spread before any buildings were damaged."

Interagency alliance

John said the cooperation between CALM, FESA, the Forest Products Commission, the Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades, the Fire and Rescue Service and the State Emergency Service made a true interagency alliance.

Volunteer fire brigades came from 13 shires from as far afield as Mandurah, Waroona, Murray and Augusta-Margaret River.

"The interaction and coordination between the agencies was outstanding," he said.

Debriefings

Because of the enormity of the fires, CALM and FESA had debriefings for agencies, including independent debriefs for incident management team members, operational personnel, volunteer brigades, and shire and FESA staff.

"The issues and actions that we discussed will put us in a

The Bridgetown fire started north-west of the town on CALM-managed land known as the Dalgarpur plantation.

Investigations by the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the Energy Safety Division revealed the fire started as a result of branches from a pear tree causing powerlines to arc under strong, gusting winds.

CALM has engaged an insurance assessor to assess claims for uninsured losses.

The Collie fires were deliberately lit.

better position when faced with a similar situation," John said.

CALM staff including Blackwood District Manager Greg Mair and Senior Fire Research Scientist Dr Lachie McCaw spoke at a public meeting in Bridgetown attended by 400 people in early January.

"A highlight of the meeting was when the Greenbushes Shire President publicly thanked the fire officers for 'saving our town.'

"The hall broke into thunderous applause," John said.



Terry Hunter, the Chief Bushfire Control Officer for the Collie Shire, provides advice to a resident during the December fire. Photo courtesy of John Tillman.

Right on track

On Track is a monthly series of Conservation News articles sponsored by Corporate Executive, designed to illustrate CALM's strategic directions and corporate values. Regional Services Director Alan Walker introduces this month's feature.

Recently I received an informative briefing by Alf Lorkiewicz, a Forest Management Branch officer from Bunbury and experienced air attack supervisor.

Alf was the air attack supervisor for the Bridgetown fire in December 2003 and guided the successful protection of numerous houses, buildings and assets during this very intense fire that threatened to overrun Bridgetown.

This relatively new role in CALM's fire suppression work highlights the backgrounds and experiences of staff who work seasonally on roster.

There are now about 20 air attack supervisors who work for the FPC, CALM (wages staff, rangers and field staff) and FESA (Fire and Emergency Services Authority), as well as volunteers.

Foot prints, tag ons, rollups, bullseyes and anchor points are part of the working lingo for our air attack supervisors whose job is to direct aircraft suppression operations, including fixed-wing and rotary water bomber activity, over fires and to assist the ICS Operations Officer with intelligence from their aerial vantage point.

'Operation Firebird', a joint initiative between CALM and FESA, has expanded since its initial summer 97 trial, with fixed-wing water bombers now based in three locations - Perth, Bunbury and Manjimup. There are also two Helitaks based in Perth.

This new fixed-wing aerial firefighting function calls for new roles and people to be

trained as air base and aircraft managers and air attack supervisors.

Air attack supervisors conduct the tactical operations over the fire area, selecting fire bombing targets in consultation with ground-personnel. They direct aircraft over the fire, suspend operations if conditions are unsuitable or ineffective, ensure safety standards are maintained and are in charge of the air to fire line communications and liaison.

They are conversant and adhere to standard operating procedures covering fixed-wing and rotary craft, and can be responsible for directing up to eight bombers in one operation. They operate from an aircraft and allocate airspace to other aircraft in the vicinity of the fire operations.

During the recent Bridgetown fires, steep valley conditions combined with thick smoke and high winds to limit the tactics available to the water bombers, which carried water loads of two tonnes. At one time, six bombers and two air attack platforms and one observer platform were in action simultaneously.

In metropolitan fires, accommodating the needs of media helicopters over the fire ground without compromising suppression activities can be a challenge.

In coastal heath country the air attack supervisor, with a bird's eye view, directs fire crews to safe access roads to protect assets and property under threat.

So who in our organisation is interested in being trained for such a position? You certainly

need good air legs, as extended circling and holding aerial positions is part of the job. Experience and understanding of on-ground fire suppression operations is essential, as are excellent communication skills, a good situational awareness, a thorough understanding of fire behaviour and a willingness to be part of a greater team.

People in this position come from a range of backgrounds. A number of air attack supervisors have fire incendiary and navigator experience while others have experience in aerial fox baiting or have been involved with aerial photography for harvesting and dieback purposes. They have survived the 'trial by fire' about whether they can handle aerial work and keep their stomachs! Others are experienced in on-ground fire operations and procedures.

And it goes without saying that all have been busy this fire season.



Joy Bornatici (FPC), Steve Collings (CALM) and Natasha Oke (CALM) in front of a scout aircraft during a water bombing operation in Manjimup.

Perup Forest Ecology Centre redevelopments

by Rhianna Mooney

VISITORS to the Proposed Tone-Perup National Park might notice some changes to the ecology centre that in 30 years has transformed from a farmhouse to what is now a state-of-the-art research and accommodation facility.

In the last year, a new classroom/science laboratory, visiting scientist accommodation, visitors' cottage and accommodation for the centre's host have been built at what has long been a popular destination for school groups, CALM staff, scientists, university students, special interest groups and families. The rammed-earth centre runs entirely on an alternative hybrid solar/wind power system.

Donnelly District's National Park Ranger, Julia Northin, said the facility reopened in October.

"The Perup Ecology Centre now has a range of accommodation options," Julia said.

"It can facilitate a range of science-based activities for its visitors and has one of the longest forest-based research and data collection programs in Australia."

Julia said CALM staff and other visitors were welcome to stay at the centre. Bookings can be made through the Manjimup office by calling 9771 7988.

Volunteers of the Year

CALM's volunteers recognised for dedication



Executive Director Keiran McNamara (left) is pictured with (front row, left to right) Carleen Edwards, Marilee D'Souza, Melissa Charles and Margaret Porter and (back row, left to right) Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, Fran Logan MLA, James Wishart, CALM Community Involvement Coordinator, Marg Buckland; Jim Freeman, Veronica Garratt and CALM's Director of Parks and Visitor Services, Jim Sharp.
Photos on this page by Ernie McLintock.

CALM's volunteers were described as the backbone of many of CALM's programs at last year's Volunteers of the Year and Outstanding Service Awards ceremony.

Parliamentary Secretary to Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards, Fran Logan MLA, presented the awards and thanked the volunteers, who collectively dedicated 264,000 hours of their time last year to assist CALM's many conservation projects throughout the State.

Since CALM's volunteer program was formalised 14 years ago, the registered network of volunteers has grown to more than 3,200 volunteers.

"CALM and its predecessors have always relied on volunteer forces to help in its operations," Mr Logan said.

He also said there could not be too many partnerships in the name of conservation and he congratulated CALM on its ability to get people involved in conservation.

"So much more can be achieved when the Government works with the community," he said.

Community Involvement Coordinator, Marg

Buckland, said 2003 was a busy year for CALM and its volunteers.

"It is very important to acknowledge the wonderful contribution and generosity of the volunteers who support CALM's mission, of conserving our natural environment and the role they play in helping us achieve our outcomes," she said.

"Congratulations to all the award recipients."

Recipients of the Volunteer of the Year Award were:

- Shark Bay volunteer, Melissa Charles;
- CALM Bush Ranger volunteer, Carleen Edwards; and
- Bibbulmun Track Foundation volunteer, Jim Freeman.

Outstanding Service Awards were awarded to:

- Marilee D'Souza from the Wildcare Helpline Referral Service;
- Veronica Garratt from the Wildcare Helpline Referral Service;
- Margaret Porter from the Wildcare Helpline Referral Service; and
- James Wishart for his dedication to shopping centre and land experience displays.

Melissa recognised for volunteer work

FOR two years, Volunteer of the Year Award recipient, Melissa Charles' pleasant nature and happy smile has brightened up the Shark Bay District Office.

Melissa has been volunteering at the office for one or two days a week, undertaking a range of valuable office tasks.

Melissa's muscle control is affected by a rare medical condition and she is classified as having a mild to moderate intellectual disability. But, funding from CALM's Disability Services Planning Committee has provided her with a workstation, desk, and special chair.

Shark Bay District's Parks and Visitor Service Leader, Carl Beck, said Melissa undertook tasks such as photocopying, brochure folding, putting together information packages, binding reports, laminating posters, inputting computer data and setting up for meetings.

"Since commencing as a volunteer in our Denham Office, Melissa has developed into an important member of the District team," he said.

"She enables us to complete a range of tasks that couldn't be achieved without her assistance."

Melissa has also been involved in field projects such as the re-introduction of bilbies, conducting visitor statistic surveys and maintenance of park facilities.

Melissa travelled from Shark Bay with her mother, Carolynne, and grandparents to accept the Volunteer of the Year Award. They drove to Geraldton and then they flew down to

Perth the day before the ceremony and were catching a plane later that afternoon and repeating the previous day's travelling.

"Melissa was very excited and happy about the award and has proudly shown it off around the office," Carl said.



Melissa Charles and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, Fran Logan MLA.



Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, Fran Logan MLA (left) and Jim Freeman.

Jim is on track

WHEN presenting the Volunteer of the Year Award to Jim Freeman, CALM's Director of Parks and Visitor Services, Jim Sharp, described him as a "legend of his time".

Jim received the award for his dedication and commitment to the Bibbulmun Track, which he first walked in 1976, well before it was officially opened.

Since then, he has seen the Track undergo a number of realignments and has walked each one, a total of more than 7,000 kilometres. So far, he has walked the Track end to end seven times and plans to do it again in 2004.

Jim said that when the then Friends of the Bibbulmun Track was formed in 1997 he joined as a volunteer.

"By that time I had done the walk quite a few times and I wanted to give something back for the years of use I got out of the facilities," Jim said.

Since 1998, Jim has been a volunteer guide for the Foundation, a maintenance volunteer and an instructor on the Mountain Designs Bibbulmun Team Challenge. He also works in the office one day a week and volunteers at several events throughout the year.

"Since 1998 the Track has definitely become more popular and I'm glad to be able to give something back and share my knowledge of the Track with others," Jim said.

"The Track has such a good band of volunteers and I am pleased to be part of the team."

The Bibbulmun Track's Volunteer Coordinator, Gwen Plunkett, said Jim was a Founding and Life Member of the Friends of the Bibbulmun Track.

"He is well-liked and respected by all who know him and his contribution to the Foundation and the Track is invaluable," she said.

"Jim is a worthy recipient of this award."

Carleen is a Bush Ranger at heart

IN five years, Volunteer of the Year Award recipient, Carleen Edwards, is conservatively estimated to have volunteered a remarkable 1,000 hours.

Carleen is a home economics teacher at John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School in Mirrabooka and volunteers her time to the CALM Bush Ranger program.

Her Unit has 60 CALM Bush Rangers, aged between 13 and 17, and a waiting list to join. She has five adult instructors, which include former CALM Bush Rangers, and her Unit assists at the Fauna Rehabilitation Centre at Malaga.

CALM Bush Rangers Coordinator, Bronwyn Humphreys, said Carleen's dedication saw her, and 40 cadets, volunteer at CALM's 'Conservation and Landcare Exhibition' at last year's Royal Perth Show for eight-hour days, over three days, during her annual leave.

For the fifth year, she also assisted (and provided the catering for) the CALM Bush Ranger Fire Reward Experience, a nationally-accredited

fire course at Dwellingup.

"Carleen's Unit has hosted three Swan Regional Camps for about 200 CALM Bush Rangers from eight Units. She planned the activities and catered for the Bush Rangers for more than 50 hours," Bronwyn said.

"She is highly committed to CALM's mission and through her extensive volunteer work she has brought great credit to CALM and has instilled a conservation ethic in the youth of Western Australia."

Carleen said her job was made easy because she had 60 fantastic cadets.

"The CALM Bush Ranger program is the best cadet program I have worked with," she said.

"It helps the kids to look outside themselves and gives us all a great awareness of the State's conservation."

Carleen said next year she planned to take her Unit to the Kimberleys for the Variety Bash.

"In 2003 we went to Laverton and this year I will pack up my 60 cadets, four children and go on a big family holiday!"



Carleen Edwards and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, Fran Logan MLA.

2003 – the year in review

January

- More than 250 personnel from CALM, the Forest Products Commission and local volunteer bush fire brigades worked for three days to contain a fire that burnt 15,000 hectares in the Mount Cooke area. It was the biggest fire in the northern jarrah forest since the Dwellingup fires in 1961.
- An estimated 3,000 volunteers rallied to save five adult and one juvenile Gray's beaked whales stranded in Busselton's Geographe Bay.
- A third calf in two months was born to the group of beach-feeding dolphins in the World Heritage-listed Shark Bay area.
- CALM and the Department of Agriculture investigated a reported cane toad sighting on a station about 120 kilometres south-east of Derby. The reported sighting highlighted the imminence of the toxic pest's arrival to WA.
- Forestry icon Dick Perry passed away aged 100.

February

- CALM's Bush Book *Fungi of the South-West Forests*, which put some of WA's hundreds of fungi species under the microscope, was released.
- Draft boundaries for the Boyndaminup National Park near Lake Muir, one of the 30 proposed new national parks, were released for public comment under the Government's *Protecting our old-growth forests policy*.
- The State Government announced a major conservation works program on more than four million hectares of former pastoral leasehold land purchased under the Gascoyne-Murchison Strategy for conservation on the edge of the northern Wheatbelt, in the Gascoyne, Murchison, and the northern Goldfields. The program aimed to restore biodiversity values, control

feral animals, repair infrastructure

(including station homesteads and power plants) and conduct biological surveys.

- Fires in the south-west burnt 2,000 hectares in three days and kept fire crews busy while strong winds fuelled a fire in Fitzgerald River National Park that burnt 3,000 hectares.
- The Fire and Emergency Services Authority and CALM, backed by the State Government, committed \$5 million during the next seven years to a national fire research program. CALM's Director of Science Neil Burrows and CALM Senior Research Scientist Lachlan McCaw were named to contribute to the program.
- Environment Minister Judy Edwards announced the Community Forest Inspection Program, a pilot program designed to broaden community participation in the sustainable management of South-West forests.
- The State Government's Wandoo Response Group was formed to develop educational material for landholders, help combat the decline of wandoo and other woodland trees, as well as coordinate the activities of various interest groups and research projects.
- An independent team of international experts began a review of CALM's wildlife recovery program *Western Shield*.
- A \$12.5 million biological survey covering 180,000 square kilometres of the Pilbara began. The survey is to look at the region's biodiversity and research and analyse the area's plants, animals, soils and water systems.

March

- Keeping certain reptiles and amphibians as pets became legal with a CALM-issued licence under the *Wildlife Conservation Act*.
- A fire burnt 35,000 hectares in the proposed Walpole Wilderness Area and



Pictured at CALM's 2003 Graduation and Award Ceremony with the Environment Minister, Dr Judy Edwards, and CALM's Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, were the 17 new conservation and land management graduates and the Organizational Learning and Development Coordinator, Alan Byrne.
Photo by Ernie McLintock.

2002–2003 became the busiest fire season in more than 40 years. CALM fire crews, with the assistance of Forest Products Commission and local volunteer bush fire brigades, faced a 70 per cent increase in bushfires and suppressed 600 wildfires. Dry conditions and lightning strikes were blamed for the fires that burnt through about 110,000 hectares of land in the South-West in four months.

- The State Government announced plans to build a new turtle interpretation facility in the Jurabi Coastal Park near the tip of the North West Cape to conserve and research the area's green, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles as well as showcase them to visitors.
- The Epic Energy Wildlife Conservation Challenge, a competition for WA schools to help encourage community involvement in conserving the State's threatened native fauna, was launched.

April

- The State Government awarded almost \$200,000 to 63 individual and community conservation groups throughout the State for a broad range of conservation projects as part of its community grants scheme.
- A new conservation reserve was announced on 726 hectares of private land in the Lake Bryde catchment, south-east of Lake Grace, acquired as part of the State Salinity Strategy.
- A revised threatened flora and fauna list was released, which named 39 new species and saw two species removed.
- The State Government announced an additional \$8 million for the management of new national parks in the South-West and the creation of better facilities for visitors. The funds were part of the Government's \$25 million commitment to create 30 new national parks.
- Marine life was the focus of the new book *Beneath the Busselton Jetty* – expected to have a broad appeal among diving enthusiasts, visitors and local residents of the area who were preparing for the completion of the Busselton Jetty underwater observatory.
- The Environment Minister Judy Edwards officially opened the Karri Forest Explorer, an 86-kilometre self-guided drive around Pemberton. The \$1.6 million project was funded through the Regional Forest Agreement and the *Protecting our old-growth forests policy*.
- A Guide to the Southern Forests, a 12-page, tabloid-sized guide, was released as a strategy to bolster tourism in the region and give an overview of the forests and conservation icons from Nannup and Bridgetown, south to the coast and east to Denmark.

May

- CALM scientists and members of the Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group found a fifth colony of Australia's rarest marsupial, Gilbert's potoroos, in the Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve.
- The Wait-jeu Trail, a 10-kilometre walk near Wagin, opened providing visitors with an opportunity to take a stroll through Aboriginal culture with interpretive signage prepared by Indigenous artists.
- CALM's graduation ceremony recognised 17 land management graduates who completed a 12-week training program.

June

- Arbor Day celebrations were held at Yellagonga Regional Park where Environment Minister Judy Edwards presented \$50,000 in grants to metropolitan regional parks community conservation groups.
- The State Government released the draft wilderness policy for a two-month comment period that aims to guide future management of wilderness and surrounding areas in national parks and protected areas.
- The conservation of urban bushland and wetland areas received a boost with the formation of the Urban Nature program – an extension of the EcoPlan program to nurture and encourage partnerships with the community.
- The management plan for Yellagonga Regional Park, one of Perth's premier urban bushland areas, was released providing a long-term framework to ensure local residents and visitors have recreational opportunities compatible with conservation values.

July

- CALM accepted selected management responsibilities across 89 million hectares of unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves, including fire prevention and the control of weeds and feral animals.
- The State Government and six Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Groups signed a memorandum of understanding that formalised working relationships and provided a framework for greater cooperation, mutual support and accountability for conservation and sustainable land use.
- WA's world-renowned Purnululu National Park, home to the Bungle Bungles, was granted World Heritage Listing.
- The State Government committed \$320,000 to upgrade visitor facilities in national and conservation parks between Shark Bay and Cervantes to ensure increased visitation did not impact on the area's conservation values.
- The State Government rejected plans for a resort-style marina development on the Ningaloo Reef coast at Maud's Landing.



An estimated 3,000 volunteers helped keep stranded Gray's beaked whales afloat in Busselton's Geographe Bay.



Environment Minister, Dr Judy Edwards, visited the forward control point during the fire along the Brookton Highway in what was the worst season for fires in 40 years. Incident Controller Kevin Pollock (left), Operations Officer Greg Napier (centre) and Regional Services Director Alan Walker (right) briefed Dr Edwards.

2003 – the year in review

- A consultation paper on the joint management of the State's conservation estate was launched which proposed amendments to the *CALM Act* to reflect the aspirations of Aboriginal people.
- The boundaries of three proposed new parks – Yelverton, Bramley and Forest Grove – were released.

August

- More than 100 delegates from government and industry sectors of the nature-based tourism industry attended the 2003 WA Nature-Based Tourism Exchange and Supplier Workshop.
- The planning process began for a new marine conservation reserve in the Walpole and Nornalup inlets on the south coast.
- Twenty captive-bred boobies were released in the Wheatbelt. Before the release, boobies had not been recorded in the region for 60 years.
- Floreat Park Primary School won the \$5,000 Epic Energy Wildlife Conservation Challenge.
- Keiran McNamara was formally appointed as CALM's Executive Director.
- Three CALM officers and one from the Forest Products Commission flew to the United States to assist with an outbreak of wildfires.

were released into Cape Range National Park as part of a recovery plan for the species under the wildlife recovery program *Western Shield*.

- Environment Minister Judy Edwards announced an independent review of CALM's management guidelines for commercial tour operators interacting with and feeding wildlife.
- CALM's *Western Shield* program was hailed by experts as a world-class strategy in conserving native animals.
- Scientists from CALM and the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute began a survey of the biodiversity of the Jurien Bay Marine Park.
- CALM's LANDSCOPE Expeditions program received the prestigious International Environment Award from the Association of German Travel Agents and Tour Operators (DRV) – the first time an Australian organisation received the award.
- A joint investigation by CALM and the Australian Customs Service led to the arrest and conviction of Michael Linley, a British documentary maker, who attempted to smuggle 217 reptiles and frogs out of WA.
- A Western ringtail possum, affectionately known as 'Lulu', was returned to Perth after it hitched a ride on a shipping container to the Gold Coast.



CALM Executive Director Keiran McNamara (front right), WA Premier Geoff Gallop (front second from right) and Environment Minister Judy Edwards (front third from left) with CALM staff (front row left to right) Tania Donovan, Koodah Cornwall, and Alex Rogers, (middle row left to right) Maria Duthie, Sue McKenna, Cliff Gillam, Mitzi Vance, Alan Byrne, Chontarle Pitulej and Robert Narrier, and (back row left to right) Marissa Maher, Wayne Dekker, Ron Kawalilak, Peter Sharp and Laura Sinclair at the Premier's Award ceremony. Photo by Keating Photography.



Premier Geoff Gallop and Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards on the water at Jurien Bay. Photo by David Gough.

- The creation of the first marine park in 13 years, Jurien Bay Marine Park, was officially celebrated. The park encompasses the waters of the Turquoise Coast for 100 kilometres between Wedge Island and Green Head.

September

- Public comment was sought on the draft boundaries for five proposed new national parks in the Perth Hills – Mundaring, Pickering Brook, Canning, Helena Valley and Wandoo – which would see the Perth Hills conservation network expand to more than 76,000 hectares.
- 2003's Conservation and Landcare Exhibition at the Perth Royal Show gave people an opportunity to see rare native animals, learn about nature conservation, taste bush tucker and hear traditional Aboriginal Dreaming stories.

October

- Premier Geoff Gallop launched the management plan for Carnac Island Nature Reserve, a popular spot for Australian sea lions located 10 kilometres south-west of Fremantle.
- The State Government announced a \$155,000 program for a feral dog and weed control program and \$32,000 for fire management on unallocated crown land in the southern rangelands.
- Twenty-five black-flanked rock wallabies

- Jurien Bay's 'Blessing of the Fleet' festivities provided an opportunity for CALM to inform the community about the newly-created Jurien Bay Marine Park and work with local residents to raise awareness about its conservation values.
- The State Government released the draft management plans for Rockingham Lakes Regional Park and Forrestdale Lake and Thomsons Lake nature reserves, popular areas in Perth's southern region.

November

- CALM's Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme (MATES) won the overall Premier's Award for Excellence in Public Sector Management for 2003. The program was introduced to improve employment opportunities for Indigenous people in CALM. It was considered a great model for equity and diversity that recognised the unique role and expertise of Aboriginal people.
- The Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk soared above the world's best to win the prestigious Environmental Experience category of the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards for its innovative approach to nature-based tourism. The attraction was chosen from more than 75 entries from 38 countries. It was the only Australian attraction to receive an award.
- The proposed *Biodiversity Conservation Act* received widespread support and a total

of 157 formal submissions following the release of the discussion paper in 2002.

- WA's premier botanical website became bigger, better and more user-friendly, with the launch of FloraBase 2, which boasts information about 12,500 species.
- The Golden View lookout was opened providing panoramic views of Mundaring Weir.
- Environment Minister Judy Edwards announced a review of the CALM's prosecution policy guidelines following increased public interest in the way CALM administered its statutory obligations.
- Piccolo, one of Monkey Mia's beach-feeding dolphins, gave birth to a calf making four generations of dolphins that visit the beach.
- Environment Minister Judy Edwards, released the boundaries for the proposed Walpole Wilderness Area encompassing a total of 363,000 hectares.

December

- More than 3,200 CALM registered volunteers were recognised for their commitment and contribution to conserving the State's environment at the 2003 Volunteer of the Year Awards.
- The first of three sections of one of the world's greatest long-distance off-road cycle trails the

Munda Biddi trail was officially opened.

- Monitoring results found baiting programs carried out in October 2001 had successfully eradicated rats from Montebello Islands.
- The Western Australian Greenhouse Strategy was released for public comment.
- A Tuart Atlas that mapped the extent and density of remnant tuart woodlands and the condition of the understorey was launched. The atlas was one of two initiatives, which also included a major research program to investigate the decline in tuart health.
- In a gesture of goodwill to farmers and the farming community, CALM withdrew charges against two farmers who were charged under the Wildlife Conservation Act and the Conservation and Land Management Act.
- The State Government's commitment to protect old-growth forests and reduce timber harvesting to sustainable levels was formalised by the launch of the Forest Management Plan 2004-2013.
- The State Government committed \$3 million to boost CALM's fire fighting and fire protection capacity in the south-west, mid-west and south coast regions. The additional funds provide for extra 38 seasonal firefighters and other additional resources.



Rangers Kevin Hill and Sam Hurd and forest workers Gavin Amos, Wayne Needham and Ian Nice enjoyed the view at the new Golden View lookout at Mundaring. Photo by Sue Flett, Hills Gazette.

Turtle monitoring: a team effort

By Kate Macgregor

AN important collaboration between CALM, non-government organisations and the local community is working to promote the conservation of Exmouth's marine turtle population.

A growing network of volunteers supports the confluence of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Exmouth's Cape Conservation Group, Murdoch University and CALM's Exmouth District to identify key breeding and nesting beaches, the effects of fox predation and generate community support.

Three species of marine turtles, for which the beaches of the north-west cape provide important nesting habitats, are the subject of this work: green, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles.

The Ningaloo Community Turtle Monitoring Program season, which officially opened on 1 December, was preceded by a weekend training workshop for volunteers.

Forty-four people, including CALM staff from Exmouth, Coral Bay and Karratha, and community members from Exmouth, Red Bluff, Carnarvon, Wickham, overseas travellers and university students, took part in the workshop.

It covered a range of topics and included a night-time field trip where participants quietly observed massive green turtles digging body pits.

All volunteers attend a series of training sessions and complete a competency-based assessment to become qualified members of the 'Turtle Team' and officially record turtle activity.

The volunteer monitoring program was initiated in 2001 and, since then, there has been a steady increase in the number of people who take part. There has also been considerable interest from people in other regions eager to adopt the non-invasive principles and practices of the program to monitor sea turtles in their own area.

For more information about the turtle monitoring program, contact WWF's Kim McGrath on (08) 9949 4613 or kmcgrath@wwf.org.au or Roland Mau at CALM's Exmouth District Office on (08) 9949 1676.

Farther south, on Dirk Hartog Island in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, 11 'paying' volunteers from around Australia monitored loggerhead turtles as part of a CALM LANDSCOPE Expedition in January.

LANDSCOPE Expeditions Scientific Co-ordinator, Kevin Kenneally, said the volunteers searched the beautiful and remote beaches at Turtle Bay to record, measure and tag all the nesting turtles.

"This year's expedition was part of an ongoing research program that began in 1994 to monitor the size and health of the internationally endangered loggerhead turtle population in the area," he said.

"This expedition is a regular feature on the LANDSCOPE Expedition's calendar and all the data collected will be published and used in the ongoing management of the species.

"Almost 600 turtles were recorded during the expedition, of which, nearly half had not been recorded before."

Kevin said the expedition's volunteers

provided financial and physical support, without which, expeditions like the one to Dirk Hartog Island could not take place.

"The expeditions enable people to have a rewarding experience while contributing to the conservation of an internationally endangered species."

Kevin said the programs were also reliant on the help and hard work of CALM's district and regional staff.

"Kevin Crane and Carl Beck were the expedition leaders for the turtle monitoring trip," he said.

"They did a fantastic job and we appreciate their professionalism and also the support of other people in the Department who contribute to make the expeditions a success."

The program for expeditions in 2004 is available from LANDSCOPE Expeditions Scientific Co-ordinator Kevin Kenneally by phoning 9334 0561, emailing kevink@calm.wa.gov.au or can be obtained from CALM's NatureBase website at www.naturebase.net/tourism/lsexpeditions/index.html.



Members of the January 2004 LANDSCOPE turtle tagging expedition are pictured at Turtle Bay, Dirk Hartog Island. Volunteers Kevin and Gwennyth Bray (back) watch as Expedition Leader Carl Beck, from CALM's Shark Bay office, and volunteer Associate Professor Tony Krins measure a turtle.

Quenda rescued from development sites

MORE than 180 quendas, translocated from development sites on the Swan Coastal Plain, have found new homes in Avon Valley National Park.

The quendas (southern brown bandicoots) were translocated over the past 18 months from 11 sites, involving 46 trips to Avon Valley National Park. These efforts were made to rescue individuals of this conservation dependent species from habitat subject to clearing.

The quendas were released into two sites, one on each side of the Avon River. Subsequent monitoring on the south side of the river has found that quendas appear to have taken to their new environment.

As many as half of the females translocated had joeys in their pouches and first generation quendas have already been identified in Avon Valley National Park, which indicates they are breeding successfully.

CALM Senior Zoologist, Peter Mawson, said when it was not possible to conserve quenda in their original habitat, CALM tried to relocate them from development sites in urban areas before their habitat was destroyed.

"All costs associated with the trapping and relocation are borne by the developers of the land," he said.

"Once the quenda were trapped by a licensed contractor they were transported to CALM's Wildlife Branch for weighing and tagging before being released into Avon Valley National Park by CALM staff.

"Quenda is a Priority 4 species, meaning it still is dependent on active management to ensure its status remains healthy.

"The species was removed from the State's threatened fauna list in 1998, as a result of conservation strategies carried out by the Department, particularly fox control."

Peter said further trapping programs would arise at other development sites on the Swan Coastal Plain and plans were being made to direct additional animals to suitable release sites close to Perth.

"By moving remnant populations of species such as the quenda, we are taking further steps to ensure the conservation of the State's native animals."

Montebellos indicative management plan

WESTERN Australia's world-class marine conservation reserve system came a step closer with the release of an indicative management plan for the proposed Montebello and Barrow Islands marine reserves in February.

Environment Minister Judy Edwards released the plan for two proposed new marine parks and an inaugural marine management area over 212,000 hectares of WA's northern waters.

The proposed parks and management area are:

- the Montebello Islands Marine Park (59,000 hectares),
- the Barrow Island Marine Park (4,500 hectares), and
- the Barrow Island Marine Management Area (148,500 hectares).

"The waters surrounding the Montebello/Barrow islands support important coral reefs and unique mangrove communities and a diverse tropical fauna including significant nesting areas for marine turtles," Dr Edwards said.

"The region is also important for petroleum production and other marine-based activities including tourism, pearling, recreational

fishing and commercial fishing.

"This balance of very high conservation significance and economic importance presented a special challenge in developing an indicative management plan for the area."

Dr Edwards said management would include education, surveillance, enforcement, research, monitoring, public participation and zoning for conservation, recreation and commercial uses.

The plan recommends sanctuary zones for 52 per cent of the proposed Montebello Islands Marine Park and for 94 per cent of the proposed Barrow Island Marine Park.

High protection areas are proposed for approximately 14 per cent of the Barrow Island Marine Management Area to provide increased protection to marine flora and fauna, and migratory birds.

Dr Edwards said that the plan's development relied on extensive involvement from the community and the petroleum industry.

"I commend the positive way that all stakeholders engaged in developing constructive solutions to difficult issues that were raised

during the planning process," she said.

A crucial factor was the participation of a community-based advisory committee which held a number of meetings to discuss boundaries, purpose and zoning.

Interest groups from the petroleum, commercial fishing, tourism, pearling, recreational fishing and conservation sectors met the committee to provide their views.

CALM staff also conducted a broad based public participation program to facilitate wide community input into the proposed marine reserves.

"This is a significant step forward in establishing a world-class system of marine conservation reserves along Western Australia's coastline," Dr Edwards said.

"I strongly encourage the community to comment on the proposal."

The plan will be open for public comment until 24 May. Copies are available from the Kensington, Fremantle and Karratha offices and on www.naturebase.net

Gold star to Financial Services

by Rhianna Mooney

CALM was recently named as one of four exemplar better practice government agencies for its 2002-03 financial statements and performance indicators.

The accolade was in the Auditor-General's December 2003 report to Parliament on the quality and timeliness of reporting across Government.

Financial Services Branch Manager, Mark Neilson, said this reflected well on CALM staff involved in providing financial information and the calculation of performance indicators.

"The end of financial year is always a busy time for many people in Financial Services Branch and across the Department," he said.

"Meeting deadlines and making sure the Auditor-General's requirements are met is a real team effort."



Members of the 'Dream Team' (back row, left to right) Ken Atkins, Mark Neilson, Peter Ryan, Marg Buckland, Melissa D'Silva, Kellie Agar, Luisa Liddicoat and (front row, left to right) John Byrne, Glenn Urquhart, Jeanne Thomas, Ric Althuisen. Photo Rhianna Mooney.

Egyptian delegates' visit to WA

ELEVEN delegates from three Egyptian government organisations travelled to Australia late last year to learn about Australia's sustainable tourism practices.

In the two weeks they were in Australia, the delegates visited WA's Ningaloo coast as well as Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns and Sydney.

The tour was part of the Red Sea Sustainable Tourism Initiative (RSSTI), which promotes the conservation of the Red Sea through the Egyptian Environmental Policy Program, developed by the Egyptian Tourism Development Authority.

The program is funded by USAID (the United States equivalent of AusAID) and focuses on core areas, including integrated environmental management, environmental impact assessment and monitoring, eco-zone development and design, capacity building and sustainable awareness.

CALM's Marine Planning Officer, Stuart Field, said the Egyptians did a whirlwind tour of the North West Cape/Ningaloo region, visiting Exmouth and travelling the Ningaloo Coast from Exmouth to Coral Bay.

"The delegates were looking at how we deal with sustainable tourism management in WA," he said.

"They were very surprised at the lack of development on WA's coast compared with the intense pressure from tourism development along the coastline of the Red Sea interspersed with small areas of highly protected national parks.

"We were trying to give them an example of low impact development adjacent to an environment as fragile as a coral reef that will provide sustainable tourism benefits."

Stuart said that by the end of the visit, the delegates recognised the importance of protecting such an important natural asset.

"The Ningaloo Reef is more akin to the Red Sea than reefs in Australia's east coast due to the arid coastline and fringing reef structure."



Warren Region's Parks and Visitor Services Leader, Cliff Winfield (right), travelled to London late last year to accept the inaugural British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Environment Award for WA's Tree Top Walk. Cliff was pictured at the ceremony with chairman of the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow global judging panel and world-renowned conservationist, Professor David Bellamy.

Successful open days Peron restoration on show

CALM staff organised a successful open day at Peron Homestead in Francois Peron National Park at Shark Bay at the end of January.

About 50 people attended sheep shearing demonstrations, listened to talks on native fauna and took part in a range of old station games including the rolling pin toss!

CALM recently coordinated the restoration of the old Peron Station shearing shed to improve visitor safety and give visitors an insight into how the station used to operate.

Peron Station was a working sheep station until it became a national park in January 1993. Between the time the State Government purchased the land and its proclamation as a national park, sheep and cattle were removed.

Francois Peron National Park is now a significant refuge for threatened native animals released into the area.

"Removing predators such as foxes and cats has had a positive effect on other native animals," CALM's Shark Bay Parks and Visitor Services Leader, Carl Beck, said.

Between shearing sessions, CALM staff held talks and displays to inform visitors about what changes had occurred since Peron Station became a national park.

"A talk on the native animals being released onto the Peron Peninsula as part of CALM's Project Eden was extremely popular, with around 40 people squeezing into the homestead visitor centre to see a bilby and banded hare-wallaby," Carl said.

The animals were brought from the Project Eden captive breeding centre by the centre's manager, Nicole Noakes.

CALM Senior Ranger Mark True held the

interest of a large crowd for more than an hour during his talk about reptiles, complete with a display of a wide range of the park's reptile fauna.

"We are seeing significant increases in the number of lizards and other animals that visitors to the park can now readily observe," Mark said.

Static displays highlighted some of the new recreational facilities constructed in the national park in the last two years.

Carl said keeping the community informed of what was going on was important, and events such as the Back to Peron Day were a great opportunity to do this.

"Hopefully we can continue to have these types of events on a regular basis," he said.



CALM maintenance worker Gary Desmond shows a shearing comb to the crowd at Peron Homestead. Photo courtesy of Carl Beck.

700 attend Nearer to Nature day

NEARER to Nature's Summer 2004 activity program's free event at Shoalwater Islands Marine Park was a great success - attracting more than 700 people!

The half day event promoted the importance of marine parks in conserving biodiversity and showed locals how to enjoy and protect their marine park. It also formed working relationships with volunteer groups and agencies, and promoted Nearer to Nature's activities.

Activities included a marine touch pool, guided beach walks and marine craft activities for children.

Nearer to Nature developed the day as an inter-agency event with displays from marine park rangers, Department of Fisheries volunteers, Naragebup Environmental Centre staff and researchers from the seagrass monitoring program.

Tortoise swamped with help



Swan District's Nature Conservation Overseer, Glynn Hughes (left) with Greencorp members Catherine Page (Team Leader), Justine Thackary, Brendan Marsland, Lauren Conder, Sarah McGuinness, Leanne Kelman, Callum Bell and Julian Pirga. Absent were Solomon Taylor and Annette Thomson. Photo courtesy Stefan de Haan.

SWAN Coastal District staff will be working with a Green Corp team and the local community in the Ellen Brook Catchment to help save the critically endangered western swamp tortoise.

A team of 11 dedicated young environmentalists will be working over the next six months to raise awareness in the community and restore habitat for one of the world's most endangered tortoises.

The western swamp tortoise is found in only two wetland locations in Upper Swan and does not occur naturally anywhere else in the world. The two wild populations of the tortoise are at Ellen Brook Nature Reserve and Twin Swamps Nature Reserve. The species is threatened by habitat loss, exotic predators, and changes in hydrology and water quality.

CALM, the Perth Zoo, the University of WA's Zoology Department, World Wide Fund for Nature Australia and Curtin University's School of Biomedical Sciences prepared a new recovery plan for the western swamp tortoise that has recently been approved by Environment Minister Judy Edwards.

The recovery plan is being funded through Commonwealth Natural Heritage Trust funding provided by the Swan Catchment Council and through funding provided by CALM, Perth Zoo, WWF and UWA.

The plan will guide recovery efforts for the next five years.

The new recovery plan follows on from a number of recovery actions undertaken in the past decade. One of the most important initia-

tives carried out over this period has been the construction of fox proof fencing around the Ellen Brook and Twin Swamps Nature Reserves, and 1080 fox baiting being undertaken inside the reserves.

"To address these threats we will be restoring habitat through weed removal, constructing tunnels for refuge and launching a community education campaign," said Green Corp member Solomon Taylor.

"We are thrilled with the opportunity to work with CALM, the community and one of the world's most endangered tortoises."

The team believes that education is the key to conserving our unique flora and fauna. Without the support of the local community the western swamp tortoise will continue to be threatened by extinction.

"We encourage the support and involvement of the community in this project and hope to form a 'Friends of Western Swamp Tortoise' group over the next six months, said Lauren Conder, another enthusiastic team member.

"It is a great opportunity for a group of young people to assist in the recovery of threatened species whilst also developing practical skills in nature conservation. In order to protect species such as the western swamp tortoise, ongoing partnerships between the public, community groups and State and Federal governments are essential," said Rod Martyn, CALM's Swan Coastal District's Senior Nature Conservation Officer.

Safety awards for Manjimup

FORTY-FIVE Manjimup Specialist Branch staff were presented with a safety award last month for clocking up three years, or 238,549 hours, Lost Time Incident Free.

CALM's Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, presented the award to staff from the Forest Management Branch, the Manjimup Region and Manjimup's Science and Information Division.

The continuous improvement to the safety and health of personnel, in the workplace and out of work, has been a core business objective in the last three years. The award has been attributed to the introduction of workplace inspections, hazard reports, regular meetings of the Occupational Safety and Health Team, staff training and educational programs.

Technical Officer and Safety Coordinator, John Rooney, said the Occupational Safety and Health Team meetings, organised by the Risk Management team, were a valuable forum for sharing and distributing health information.

"I believe the ability of Safety Coordinators in the field to be enthusiastic and pro-active has been greatly enhanced by the sup-

port from our Risk Management people," he said.

"The regular meetings and their continued support have been great."

As well as the three years Lost

Time Incident Free clocked up by CALM's staff, Manjimup's extensive volunteer program has also clocked up about 8,000 hours by 240 individual volunteers

without an incident.

Manjimup staff in the Warren Region manage 1.44 million hectares including various types of topography.



Pictured at the presentation were (left to right) Rod Simmonds, Regional Safety and Health Team Leader; Mark Barley, Regional Safety Coordinator; John Webb, Forest Management Branch Safety Coordinator; Keiran McNamara, CALM Executive Director; and John Rooney, Science and Information Division Safety Coordinator. Photo courtesy Manjimup-Bridgetown Times.

Nannup's history

"NANNUP" is the Nyoongar word for "place to stop" and Len Talbot, formerly of the Forests Department, has documented the area's history.

Witty anecdotes are scattered throughout Len's *Nannup: A place to stop and rest*, which looks at the lower Blackwood district before the 1980s.

It tells the stories of the early explorers, pastoralists and squatters, local Aboriginal people, dingoes and police hunts. It describes the churches, Roads Board, Farmers and Graziers Association, the hospital, local entertainment, annual race meeting, log-chopping carnivals, football and cricket matches.

It leads the reader through the rough and dangerous lives of mill workers, sleeper cutters and teamsters and paints a picture of the consequences of the wars and the depression for Nannup's close knit community.

Nannup: A place to stop and rest retails for \$40 from Hesperian Press at www.hesperianpress.com, (08) 9362 5955 or books@hesperianpress.com

Conservation briefs

Project Eden award

CALM's Nicole Noakes has scooped an academic prize as part of her studies at Charles Sturt University, NSW.

The 26-year-old Project Eden Captive Breeding Program Manager will receive the Dillys Howell Memorial Prize.

Nicole is based at Denham and studying for her post graduate certificate in captive vertebrate management.

Endangered plant gets new life

Five enthusiastic Ballidu volunteers lent a hand for conservation recently when they helped plant 80 critically endangered Phalanx *Grevillea* plants on a site near the town.

There are less than 100 Phalanx *Grevillea* (*Grevillea*

dryandroides dryandroides) left in the wild, in five populations.

CALM Translocation Project Officer Leonie Monks said translocation aimed to establish a new population of plants with local genetic variety.

TEC symposium

Threatened ecological communities, groups of plants and other organisms that occur together as communities were the subject of a symposium in December.

More than 100 delegates from CALM and other conservation groups, industry bodies, developers, natural resource management groups, State Government departments, local government authorities and the Conservation Commission attended.

The symposium was hosted by CALM and chaired by the Director of Nature Conservation, Gordon Wyre.

Pilbara Bushrangers

By Paul Udinga

CALM's Bush Ranger troop at Newman Senior High School is the most isolated in Western Australia, but the tyranny of distance has only served as an extra challenge to dedicated students and staff.

Even though the nearest CALM-managed land is 160km away, the group was determined to make a difference in conserving the natural environment.

Late last year it became involved in a project to maintain the walk trail to Mt Bruce - Western Australia's second highest mountain - in Karijini National Park.



The proud graduates: CALM's Michelle Griffin and Piper who donned a mortarboard for his graduation ceremony. Photo by Norm Bailey.

"A Bit of Doggerel for a Girl and a Dog"

by Jean Paton

The time has come
The bilby said
To speak of special things
For graduation day is here
And girl and dog begin
A life together-
Girl's best friend
Will never leave her side
Now right, now left, now straight ahead,
Her Piper is her pride.
We wish them well
Girl and her guide
With halter, bed and bowl,
And though she may douse passers-by,
She has a heart of gold.
We see them come
We see them go
A very special pair
Their teamwork is remarkable
Their joy we all can share
The dog is bright
The girl is smart
She's teaching Piper tricks
In fact they're so darn clever
Piper's learned to use the switch.
When you ring CALM
Michelle will charm
But if she's sounding gruff
It may be you've got Piper
And she's answered with a wuff!
The time has come
So Cheryl says,
To speak of things that run!
When Piper's leads are loosened off
She knows its time for fun.
But at day's end
-You know it's true-
That when all's said and done
Our golden girls have made the grade
And we all say "Well done".

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

Contract

Cherie Whyte, Officer, Exmouth; Tamra Chapman, Zoologist, Wildlife Branch, Kensington; Tom Hughson, Forest Auditor, Conservation Commission; Lynley Seaman, Research Scientist, Herbarium; Rumen Grigoroff, Employee Relations Co-ordinator, People Services; Krisian Rodriguez, Reserves Officer, Karratha; Matt Wardell, Project Officer, Swan Region; Anthea Jones, Convenanting Co-ordinator, Wildlife Branch; Rauleigh Webb, Project Co-ordinator, Information Branch.

Permanent

Jacinta Overman, Planning Officer, Regional Parks; Anne Watts, Administration Officer, Collie; Samantha Clarke, Conservation Officer (Flora), Donnelly District; Kaygin Poon, Financial Systems Analyst, Finance Branch; Doug Simpson, Landscape Architect, Parks and Planning; Pauline Pollock, Officer, Perth Hills District; Debra Rule, Manager, Corporate Information Section; Lisa Bland, Field Officer, Swan Region, Kensington; Tanya Llorens, Conservation Officer, Walpole.

Promotion

Robert Stainton, Regional Business Manager, Manjimup;

Robert Hopkins, Regional Business Manager, Manjimup; Malcolm Grant, Nature Conservation Officer, Albany; David Atkins, Regional Fire Coordinator, Jurien; Julianne Proctor, Administration Assistant, Blackwood District; Adam Meyer, District Wildlife Officer, Exmouth; Kylie Ryan, Marine Conservation Officer, Marine Conservation Branch; Caroline Fremlin, Administration Officer, Blackwood District, Busselton; Alex Bowlay, Ranger Grade 3, Regional Services, Lane Poole Reserve, Dwellingup; David Charles, District Operations Officer, Shark Bay District, Monkey Mia; Portia Brown, Administration Officer, Pilbara Region, Karratha.

Reclassification

David Meehan, District Parks and Visitor Services Coordinator, Pemberton.

Secondment

Doug Giles, Ranger Grade 2, Perth Hills District, Mundaring.

Transfer

Kyla Ford, Officer, from Fisheries Department to Midwest Region, Geraldton; Dennis Hancock, Ranger's Assistant, Dwellingup to Swan Coastal District; Richard Mazanec, Research Scientist, Science Services Group to Nature

Conservation Division; Ian Dumbrell, Senior Research Scientist, Forest and Tree Crops; Rod Annear, Parks and Visitor Services Co-ordinator, Swan Region, Mundaring to Donnelly District, Pemberton; Peter Ritson, Special Projects Officer, Science Division to Plantations Management, Forest Products Commission.

Temporary transfer

Johanna Milner, Officer, People Services to Exmouth.

Contract ceased

Marie Ware, Officer, Herbarium; Josie Dean, Project Officer, Exmouth; Susan Walker, Seasonal Ranger, Exmouth; Jamie Birnie, Ranger Grade 2, Karratha.

Retirement

Gavin Wibrow, Employee Relations Co-ordinator, People Services Branch.

Resignation

Suzanne Gattrell, Marine Conservation Officer, Marine Conservation Branch, Fremantle; Claire Barrow, Clerical Officer, Swan Coastal District, Yanchep National Park; Barbara Powell, Retention and Disposal Officer, Kensington; Andrew Stilwell, Technical Officer, Forest and Tree Crops; Dieter Pistol, Technical Officer, Herbarium.