

Conservation News



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WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Good neighbours

CALM's new draft Good Neighbour Policy – aimed at building and maintaining good relationships between the Department and its neighbours – was launched at the Perth Royal Show last month.

The ceremony attracted people from the Pastoralists' and Graziers' Association, the WA Farmers' Federation, the Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Protection Board, the Royal Agricultural Society, local government, the Natural Resource Management Council and CALM.

Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards launched the draft policy, which covers issues such as bushfires and fencing, and was developed after almost two years of extensive consultation between CALM and key rural stakeholders.

She said the draft document was well thought out, responsible and should be well received by farmers and pastoralists.

The draft policy is open to public consultation. CALM will hold a series of forums in regional centres to discuss the content of the document, including:

- the construction and maintenance of fences;
- fire management, including the capacity to deal with fires, pre-

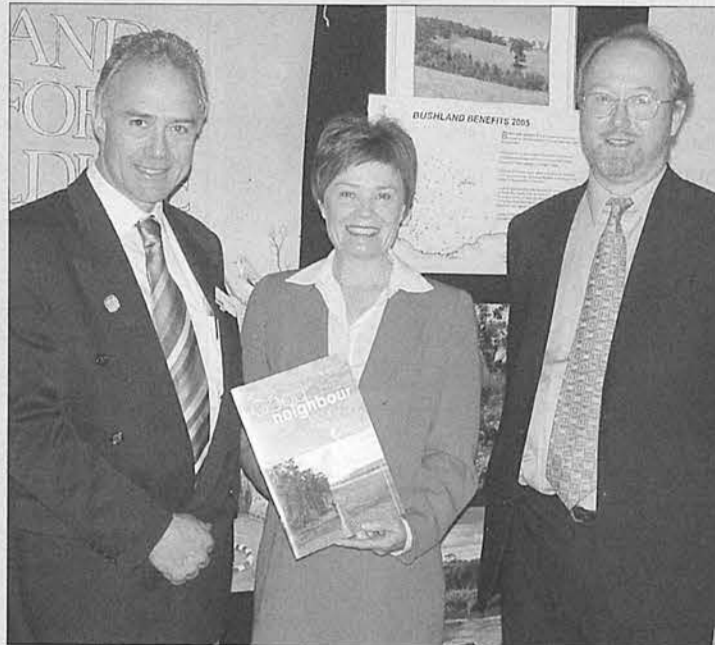
scribed burning to reduce fuel levels, firebreaks, access tracks and response to wildfires;

- weed management;
- introduced pest animals;
- straying stock on CALM-managed lands;
- native animals that affect primary production;
- access to and activities on CALM-managed lands and waters;
- conservation activities on private land;
- natural resource management;
- neighbour and community input into CALM's planning; and
- communication.

Dr Edwards said CALM had several projects that would deliver benefits to its neighbours, including deploying employees to carry out feral animal and weed control, erosion control and land rehabilitation, as well as working on signs, fencing and rubbish clean-ups.

WA Farmers' Federation President Trevor De Landgraft said the relationship between CALM and the farming community had varied over the years.

"In my experience, the draft policy is about partnerships and responsibility for sustainable management, which rests with CALM, pastoralists and graziers.



WA Farmers' Federation President Trevor De Landgraft (left), Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards and CALM Executive Director Keiran McNamara at the draft Good Neighbour Policy launch. Photo – Sue McKenna

"It's about mutual respect of the roles of all parties – about farmers supporting CALM and CALM supporting farmers," he said.

He added farmers would be encouraged to comment about straying stock, access to CALM-managed land on a day to day basis, and other issues.

Appreciation

"We are now at a far greater appreciation of the respective roles of both farmers and CALM,"

he said.

CALM Executive Director Keiran McNamara said CALM appreciated the cooperation and constructive input of farmers and other colleagues, including CALM's Director of Regional Services, Alan Walker, and Wheatbelt Regional Manager, Bruce Bone.

"We are committed to living the draft policy," he said, thanking those who attended.

CALM officer joins Pastoral Lands Board

CALM's Senior Environmental Officer, Tony Brandis, has been appointed as conservation deputy member on the Western Australian Pastoral Lands Board.

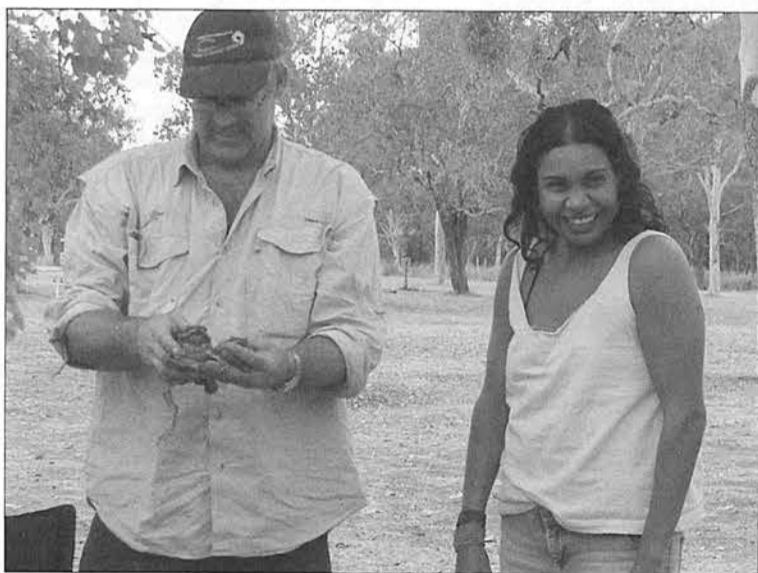
He joins respected conservationist, Graeme Rundle, and Kimberley pastoralist, Peter Leutenegger, who have also been appointed as new board members.

Graeme will serve as the member with expertise in flora, fauna and land conservation management, while Peter, the current lessee of Napier Downs, 140 km east of Derby, was appointed as a member with an interest in a pastoral lease.

Graeme has served on a number of peak State and national conservation organisations during the past 30 years and is an executive member of the WA Conservation Council and a member of the Conservation Commission.

He has a special interest in biodiversity conservation, with a focus on the rangelands, which has involved work with Government agencies and the pastoral and mining industries.

Peter worked on sheep and cattle stations in Queensland and the Gascoyne before taking up the lease of Napier Downs in 1992.



Actress Deborah Mailman and Graeme Sawyer from FrogWatch NT inspect a trap on the first training day. Photo – CALM

Toad battle begins

OLYMPIAN Cathy Freeman and actress Deborah Mailman have joined the battle against the cane toad.

They were among 40 community volunteers, Kununurra Aboriginal community elders, toad expert Graeme Sawyer, and others taking part in the first Toad Busting Training Exercise at Victoria River Roadhouse in September.

The exercise – organised by Lee Scott-Virtue and Dean Goodgame, of Kimberley Specialists, and Kununurra vet, Sarah Brett – was deemed a huge success.

CALM's cane toad project officer, Karin Carnes, and cane toad field officer, Martin Hadley, provided information and advice.

The volunteers caught 47 toads, mostly by hand, at the roadhouse and nearby Victoria River Crossing.

There were 17 large females, four small non-reproductive females, and 26 males.

Each mature female could have laid about 72,000 eggs within the next year!

A further training exercise was held at the beginning of October.

Regional conservation projects given high priority

CALM staff normally based in the south-west are being deployed to other regions of the State to undertake a number of conservation projects.

The \$780,000 program is in line with the Department's recently released draft Good Neighbour Policy, which aims to strengthen partnerships between CALM and the 10,000 landowners whose properties join CALM-managed lands.

CALM Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, said his objective in setting aside some funding was to take advantage of CALM's relatively higher staff numbers in the south-west to assist other regions that had fewer staff, to carry out important projects that might not otherwise be able to be done.

High priority

"A high priority is to improve feral animal and weed control across the State. I believe this initiative will offer interesting and rewarding opportunities for conservation employees in the south-west to work in different parts of the State and deliver on-ground outcomes for conservation," Keiran said.

The initiative involves sending CALM personnel from the State's three forest regions between Mundaring and Walpole to other districts for a range of conservation works in nature reserves, conservation parks and national parks, in the north and the interior of the State, as well as in the Wheatbelt and the south coast with the focus on feral animal and weed control.

Other projects will include monitoring native plants and animals, native seed collection, planting seedlings, signage, rubbish clean-up and track maintenance.

On former pastoral leases acquired for addition to the conservation estate, the work will include erosion control and cleaning up homesteads.

A group has already been in the Mid-West undertaking rangelands restoration work including homestead clean-ups, fence maintenance and creating firebreaks.

Kimberley Region

Eight CALM employees from Harvey and Collie have been camping out in the Kimberley Region for six weeks doing nature conservation work at Geikie and Windjana gorges in the West Kimberley and controlling weeds in the East Kimberley.

Tasks include feral animal control, fencing and maintaining threatened ecological communities.

About 40 employees will work on selected projects for about 12 weeks each year.

There will be benefits to CALM's neighbours in both the agricultural and pastoral zones through reduced impacts on those lands from feral animals, weeds and wildfires, reinforcing CALM's commitment to the draft Good Neighbour Policy.

Most of the employees will return to their home districts in the south-west before the peak of the fire season.

Working Together

The release of the draft *Good Neighbour Policy*, highlighted as the lead article in this edition of *Conservation News*, is a significant initiative for the Department.

Our immediate neighbours include farmers and pastoralists, miners, Aboriginal communities, local governments, other Government agencies and suburban householders. The draft policy sets out, for the first time in one document, what neighbours can expect from us on a range of day-to-day, cross boundary issues such as fences, fire, ferals, weeds and so on.

The draft policy is, by necessity, fairly prescriptive in many respects. However, what sits behind it is a commitment to improving the two way understanding between CALM and our neighbours – we should be understanding and responsive to the practical needs of our neighbours, and equally we want neighbours to understand and respect the values of the land we manage on behalf of the community.

It is essential that CALM staff “walk the talk” in respect of the *Good Neighbour Policy*. We will be measured by what we do and how we do it, rather than just the words in the document. We have already taken steps to improve our performance in feral animal and weed control, and will continue to pursue extra funding for that purpose.

I am confident that the *Good Neighbour Policy* will lead to a new level of understanding and cooperation with our farming, pastoral and other neighbours.

Keiran McNamara, Executive Director



Dryandra flowers on show in new book



From left: Author Peter Foss, WA Herbarium Manager, Dr Neville Marchant, CALM Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards, author Jonica Foss, CALM Editor, Carolyn Thomson-Dans, author Patricia Gurry, CALM Senior Principal Research Scientist, Bruce Maslin, and CALM Graphic Designer, Natalie Jolankoski. Photo – Rhianna King

FLOWERS at Dryandra Woodland – one of the wheatbelt’s largest remaining areas of original bushland – have been captured in CALM’s latest Bush Book.

Wildflowers of Dryandra Bushland stemmed from years of collecting, photographing and identifying flowers by Perth couple Peter and Jonica Foss, and Jonica’s sister, Patricia Gurry.

Peter Foss, a former WA Environment Minister, his wife, Jonica, a WA Herbarium volunteer, and Patricia, a member of the Nature Photography Group and also a WA Herbarium volunteer, gathered forces to honour a book dedicated to Jonica and Patricia’s father, the late John Currie, a senior forester at Dryandra for more than 35 years.

Dryandra Woodland’s 27,000 ha have 816 recorded plant species, 32 of which are described in the Bush Book.

The Bush Book is a practical guide to help people learn about and discover WA’s unique plants, animals and special features, region by region. More than 250,000 copies of Bush Books have been sold since the series started in 1996.

Wildflowers of Dryandra Bushland is the 29th.

The book was launched by Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards at a function attended by Members of Parliament, the authors, CALM’s Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, the book’s editor, Carolyn Thomson-Dans and graphic designer, Natalie Jolankoski.

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Managing Editor: Sue McKenna

Journalist: Tracy Peacock

Contributing Editor: Rhianna King

Design and Production: Alison Blackwell

Telephone: (08) 9389 8644

Facsimile: (08) 9389 8296

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‘Fantastic’ healthy response

PLANNING is already underway for next year’s Physical Activity Awareness Day, an initiative of the Premier’s Physical Activity Taskforce.

Activities conducted on 1 September this year by CALM at regional parks and The Hills Forest Discovery Centre attracted a range of people.

The Department’s Healthy Parks, Healthy People Project Coordinator, Cathy Gazey, said it had been fantastic to see people join the

activities conducted by CALM.

“The activities were part of a broader State Government initiative to increase physical activity levels in the community,” she said.

“Our aim went a bit further – we also wanted people to see how easy and stimulating it was to be active in one of our beautiful parks.

“We conducted four walks which demonstrated that 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise for good health

could be done in our parks.

“The walks were held at The Hills Forest Discovery Centre and Canning River, Hertsman Lake and Yellagonga regional parks.

“At Canning River Regional Park we enjoyed a brisk walk along the river, in gorgeous weather, and discovered mellaleucas, various waterbirds and other wondrous natural features, while, believe it or not, actually enjoying our 30 minutes of physical activity!”

Cane toad surveillance team



Martin Hadley assembling a trap. Photo – CALM

A FOUR-person cane toad surveillance and control team has been based in Kununurra to implement surveillance and control actions.

It will also investigate cane toad reports in the East Kimberley and Victoria River region.

The team has so far covered 25,000 km in the area and identified 120 waterholes, ponds and swamps that are potential cane toad habitat. They also have inspected around 55 waterways.

Traps have been set up in caravan parks and truck yards around Kununurra, Wyndham and at Lake Argyle, in the Keep River National Park and adjacent Aboriginal communities, at Timber Creek, the nearby Big Horse camping area, the Coolibah crocodile farm, Coolibah, Fitzroy and Bullo River Station, the Victoria River Bridge and several water bodies near Victoria River. A grid of traps has been set up in an area five to 10 km west of Victoria River Bridge beside the highway and river.

The team’s acting coordinator is Karin Carnes, CALM’s Kimberley Biodiversity Facilitator.

She has worked in the region in the tropical land management field for four years, first for CALM at Purnululu National Park and then for the Department of Agriculture’s rangelands monitoring and lease inspection program, returning to CALM last year.

“My role is to look after the on-the-ground work, develop and implement the works program, review the operational works plan on a regular basis, manage the team and control activities both in Western Australia and the Northern Territory,” she said.

“I make sure that our works program matches our requirements,” she said, adding that liaison with land managers and agencies was another big part of the work.

CALM’s Kimberley Regional Manager, Gae Mackay, said the Cane Toad Initiative was progressing well.

“We have employed contractors for periods ranging from four weeks to one year to carry out the work,” she said.

The team members are:

- **Andre Voegeli**, originally from Switzerland, who has been in Australia for more than 10 years. He is tackling all the challenges of the tropics with a great sense of humour;
- **Martin Hadley**, a pilot who is dedicating his time and energy to the cane toad control team;
- **Leon Jacky**, who has grown up in the Kimberley Region with most of his family living in Broome; and
- **Craig Mills**, who recently joined the team to add his extensive experience in field work within nature conservation projects.



Craig Mills and Andre Voegeli. Photo – CALM



Leon Jacky in the field. Photo – CALM



Karin Carnes and Andre Voegeli. Photo – CALM

Twenty years ago this month... October 1985

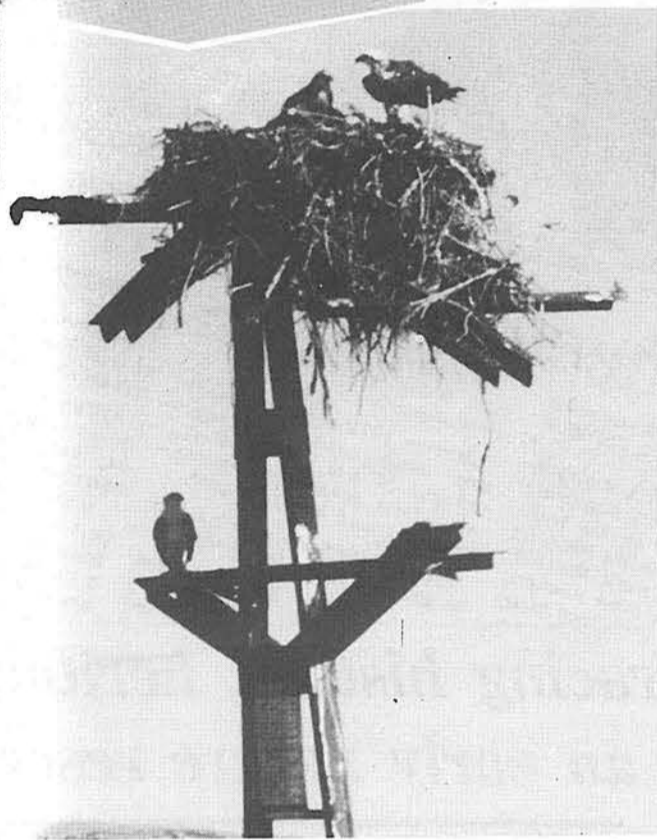


CALM News

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Home with a harbour view



OSPREYS nesting on the old lead light tower at "Point Samson". The structure was originally used to help guide ships into the Pt. Samson jetty. Story, more pictures page 3.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE ...

Migratory waders fly in

By JIM LANE

CALM got off to flying start in March and April this year as more than 1.5 million migratory waders prepared to leave the Australian continent for their breeding grounds in eastern Russia.

than 180,000 of these birds departed via Roebuck Bay and Eighty Mile Beach alone.

Even more impressive is the number of birds on return migration which will funnel through this remote stretch of the Western Australian coastline during spring and early summer.

Previous work by the North West Wader Expedition has shown that the Broome - Port Hedland coastline is of critical importance to a large proportion of Australia's "transequatorial migratory waders"; both as a southward-passage feeding area for birds "in transit" and throughout the southern summer for numerous species which do not move on.

The area regularly holds more than a half-a-million waders (more than 30 per cent of the national total) and is probably used by many more individuals on migration, making it the most important area of wader habitat in Australia and the seventh most important in the world.

Australia has international obligations to protect these species and the habitats they use.

The Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Treaty, which came into force in 1975 requires both countries inter alia to "endeavour to establish sanctuaries and other facilities for the management and protection of migratory birds" and to "take appropriate measures to

preserve and enhance the environment of (migratory) birds ..."

Essential for the fulfilment of these obligations is an understanding of the numbers, distribution and migratory pathways of wader populations.

The North West Wader Expeditions, which began in August 1981, have played a leading role in the development of such an understanding.

Conducted by scores of volunteer wader enthusiasts from around Australia, with low-key technical and logistical support from former Wildlife sections of CALM, the North West Wader Expeditions have provided a convincing demonstration of the way in which valuable studies can be undertaken in a highly cost-efficient manner through the close operation of government and public.

They deserve continued support.

Footnote: A full report of the Fifth North West Wader Expedition is contained in "The Stilt" No. 6, Autumn 1984, published by the Australian Wader Studies Group of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union.

ABORIGINAL RANGER TRAINING IN NW

By MARY COLREAVY

AFTER many months of negotiation and planning, a joint Commonwealth/State programme has started which will train selected Aboriginals to be National Park Rangers.

Aboriginals, whose traditional country is the Hamersley Range and Millstream areas, have been asked to nominate suitable trainees for the scheme.

Initially up to six people will be employed for three months work experience at Millstream-Chichester National Park.

During this time they will accompany the Rangers at Millstream and Hamersley Range while on patrol, assisting with routine tasks such as rubbish removal and maintenance of public facilities and also get involved in some special projects under the supervision of the Rangers in Charge, Ron Hollands and Keith Cunningham.

A Training Village has been built near the Millstream headquarters.

There are five self-contained, transportable living units and a classroom.

One of the first projects will be to landscape the village area. Staff from the Karratha Nursery will provide advice on tree planting.

By the end of the work experience phase, a Training Officer from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service will have joined the team at Millstream and four of the trainees will then be chosen to undertake a 12-month full time Park Ranger training course.

This course will include a lot of practical work as well as formal tuition.

They have also made a list of Aboriginal skills and traditions to teach the WAUATPALA (European) rangers.

While the emphasis in the course will be in teaching about the skills and values of National Parks, there will be both formal and informal opportunities for both Aboriginal trainees and existing rangers to learn from Aboriginal elders.

A big crowd of well-wishers turned up to celebrate the start of the programme on October 3 with a barbecue lunch by Deep Reach Pool at Millstream.

Director of National Parks, Chris Haynes, welcomed the first three trainees, Maitland Parker, Bruce Woodley and David Daniel.

Robert Cheedy, Ken Hughes and John Parker will be joining them soon.

Chris explained to all the visitors what an important occasion this is for the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

He spoke of the long traditions of Aboriginal people and of the traditions of National Parks.

Drawing together these traditions was not always an easy task, but he felt that though this project will develop an exciting new dimension, a cultural perspective, for Park management in Western Australia.

Drawing together these traditions was not always an easy task, but he felt that though this project will develop an exciting new dimension, a cultural perspective, for Park management in Western Australia.



CALM has provided the training facilities, a vehicle and supervision, while the Federal Department of Employment and Industrial Relations is subsidizing the wages of the trainees throughout the scheme.

The State Government has promised on-going employment to those persons who satisfactorily complete the training course.

Wendy Hubert, Chairperson of the Ngurin Committee (a Roebourne Community group) wrote of the training proposals:

"The Aboriginal Ranger Training Scheme is actually the best programme we have had from the Government.

"I believe it will give us a sense of pride and dignity to have our people working in our country again, helping us to retain our culture and heritage."

The Aboriginal communities have suggested many subjects which the trainees should learn.

STAFF QUALIFY IN FIRST AID

Volunteering to attend a first aid course means taking on a responsibility for fellow workers, and 10 CALM officers were congratulated by CALM General Manager Roger Underwood for accepting that responsibility.

Those who qualified for the St. John Ambulance Associations' First Aid Attendant's Certificate are Carol Bell, System Analysis; Margaret Buckland, Information; Donald Challis, Marketing; June Ellis, Information; John Ireland, Administration; Rodney Martin, Land and Wildlife Administration; Wendy Rawlins, Protection; Danny Serafini, Carpenters Shop; David Ward, Research; and Jennifer Bartle, Murdoch House.

The primary aims of the course are to save lives, to prevent an injured person from further harm, and to be able to care for the person until medical help arrives.

The participants were required to undergo training and then pass an exam to qualify for their certificates.

The first aid course is part of the commitment the Department has made toward safety, health and welfare in the workplace, Mr Underwood said.

Seminar looks at treated timbers

A shift to using preservative treated timber and softwoods is necessary because supplies of hardwoods such as jarrah and karri are becoming less available.

This was the theme of a seminar, "Preservative-treated Timber, its Specification, Care and Application" held at Como recently.

Its function was to inform the timber industry about aspects of treated timber.

About 60 timber growers, treaters, specifiers and consumers attended the two-day workshop run by the Institute of Wood Science in conjunction with CALM.

"The message was that timber resources are changing and that we have been depending on mature, durable jarrah for high hazard conditions," said Phil Shedly, Inspector Utilisation at CALM.

"We will have to learn to use non-durable pine and less durable regrowth in the future."

Experts from throughout Australia attended the seminar, including John Barnacle, principal experimental scientist with CSIRO Division of Chemical and Wood Technology, Victoria.

He spoke of the care of treated wood, the importance of making the correct specifications when ordering preservative-treated timber and on the agencies affecting the performance of timber.

Another speaker was Bob Barrett, deputy chief electrical engineer with Central West County Council in Parkes, NSW.

He has studied the use of wood poles and how to get an acceptable standard of reliability with least cost.

Other speakers were Dr Harry Greaves, senior principal research scientist with CSIRO Division of Chemical and Wood Technology, Victoria; Don Keene, a professional forester with CALM and acting manager of the timber production branch; Don Price, quality control manager for Radiata Pine Research Institute; Richard Smith, representing the Technical Committee of the Timber Preservers Association; and John Sykes, co-ordinator of Information Systems with Westrail.



SOCIAL FUNCTION

A wine bus tour has been arranged for Nov. 17 by the Social Club.

A bus, courtesy of Hammersley Wine, will carry 40 people to Houghtons for a barbecue after the wine tasting tour.

A barbecue pack, wine bread and salads are included in the charge of \$8 for members and \$14 for non-members.

The social club has also bought a cricket bat. The bat is kept in Mapping by Chris Simms.

The upcoming Christmas season is the next period given consideration by the Social Club. Preliminary plans include a staff Christmas party at the South Perth Yacht Club and a children's Christmas party.

Further details will be in the next issue of CALM News.

Twenty years ago this month... October 1985



From my Desk

OVER the past 15 years, there has been a flood of books and articles on management. I believe that many of our management systems have not kept pace with changes in technology and the increasing complexity of our society means that management systems have to be reviewed.

But, I have felt that some of the literature on the subject have added to rather than contributed towards resolving management problems.

In particular, I have found "management jargon" hard to understand, and the tendency to favour complexity rather than simplicity unhelpful.

Two books recently published in the United States — "The Pursuit of Excellence" and the "Passion for Excellence" — have presented a new approach to management.

The philosophy espoused in these books is controversial and I certainly don't believe they are the "Bibles" of Management.

But, their advocacy of simplicity, informality and participation in decision making is very attractive.

I have requested that these books be purchased by the Library.

Any organisation such as ours does need rules and regulations.

I believe, however, there is a large hidden reservoir of resources in the Department which are currently being used in unnecessary bureaucratic functions.

It is impossible for me or any other member of the executive to release these resources because some of the practices which are followed are entrenched and well hidden.

One of the ways by which we can fix up the system is to devolve more responsibility to the regions.

I appreciate that officers in regional centres are more comfortable with greater regional autonomy and policy guidelines are established.

A large number of officers are currently on leave and the

SUE CELEBRATES



Youth trainees for CALM

By Trevor Hislop

CALM is currently developing two types of traineeships to operate within the Department. It is hoped to employ 90 trainees in the Land Management area and 60 in the office area.

Both traineeships will comply with State/Commonwealth Government's guidelines for trainees.

We are waiting for agreement on the wage and conditions package that will apply to trainees.

If this is resolved in the recruitment will start in November 1985 and again in January 1986.

The State and Commonwealth Governments consider traineeships as the major way with which to fight unemployment.

months training, with a minimum of 13 weeks spent at Technical College. The remaining time is spent getting broad-based work experience during which trainees will learn basic transferable skills, the obligations of work, the ability to work with other workers, and long hours.

Ironically, it is in the Government sector where this trend is most prevalent.

Between 1971 and 1981 government employment of teenagers dropped 50 per cent in W.A., while total government employment increased by 30 per cent.

The traineeship system is a way to start redressing this problem.

In addition, the fact that traineeships in particular improve the skills of people who are unemployed, time spent in training will also be extremely valuable.

If they choose to continue or part time study their skills will also be extremely valuable.

Office trainees will do a broad range of clerical keyboard skills, both of which are currently in reasonable demand.

While it would be naïve to expect high productivity from trainees, we believe they will make a significant contribution to the workforce.



Ranger Mike answer enq...

Tracing history, heritage of an early nature reserve

By John Hunter and Jennifer Muir

He said the area was rapidly being denuded of flora and recommended a "permanent caretaker" be placed at the Serpentine Falls to preserve the flora and protect it from

the "trainloads of excursionists who visit the Serpentine Falls every flower season".

Around the turn of the century, part of the area now within the present

day Serpentine National Park was mined for gold and silver by men who worked the Darling Range ridges as far south as the Donnybrook and Greenbushes gold and tin fields.

LIONEL CALLS IT A DAY

Not many CALM members have worked for both the Forests Department and the National Parks Authority, but the department's longest-serving ranger, Lionel Gunson, has done just that.

Lionel, who retires at the end of the year, has been a forester and ranger for the past 30 years.

He joined the Forests Department in 1939 as a telephone boy taking fire messages.

After military service, which took him to NSW where he worked in various government departments, Lionel returned to the Forests Department in the South-West in 1954, where he worked for eight years.

In 1962, he decided to try his hand as a forest ranger and he has never looked back.

For the last 23 years

Lionel has been Head Ranger at Walpole National Park.

In the early years, he was mainly involved in developing the Coalmine Beach camping area on Nornalup Inlet.

And while Lionel was responsible for designing and supervising the building of roads, walk trails and the caravan park, his wife Dorothy looked after the tearoom facilities for campers and visitors.

Together they worked hard to make the area popular. And it was—as one satisfied visitor wrote to the "West Australian" in 1967: "...a delightful camping ground, shady and select, with spotless (facilities)...run locally by a ranger and his assistant, both of whom we have

always found to be most helpful, friendly and courteous."

"We have visited them for the past five years and nothing has been too much trouble for the range."

Well-known and respected by many for the knowledge and enthusiasm he brought to his work, he will be missed.

A send-off in his honour will be held November, 28 at the Walpole Country Club.

For more information, contact Hugh Chevis.



Ranger in charge Peter Jeffs checks an Elliot trap on his rounds of the park.

Landcare Exhibit a Royal Show winner

CALM's Landcare Exhibit at the Perth Royal Show was again a winner for all those who visited and for the Government departments and allied groups that took part.

There was a concerted effort to bring closer together the major sponsors of the exhibit – the departments of Agriculture and CALM. In addition, CALM also chose to launch its draft Good Neighbour Policy so that there was maximum media coverage to visiting farmers and rural landowners.

On the opening day, Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards was shown around the displays by RAS councillor and the chairman of the organising committee, Bevan Bessen. As usual she was impressed by the quality and ever-changing arrangement of the village-styled exhibit.

This year, the CALM contribution featured the usual large walk-through aviary of waterfowl and a wetlands environment liberally adorned with national park, wildlife and fire management signage. Included was the 'animal house' where CALM volunteer carers brought a range of unusual wildlife for up-close and personal inspection by wide-eyed children and bemused adults.

Away from the furry creatures, the

By 'committee man'
John Hunter

raptors exhibit featured educational talks and various birds of prey complete with curved beaks and razor-like talons. Also, in a secure and specialised aviary, Yvonne and Fred Varris passionately dispensed information and selected handling of their various species of black cockatoos.

The CALM Bush Rangers once again patrolled the displays and gave out information on the work done in the community by this corps of conservation cadets. Also not to be forgotten and a must for every Perth Royal Show, Yanchep National Park staff Rob Narrier and Eddie Wilkes enthralled and entertained as usual with their Indigenous artistry and culture.

This year, a replica Tree Top Walk display over a well-vegetated Bibbulmun Track saw many people get a bird's eye view of the entire exhibit. It was such a hit it will no doubt be repeated next year.

Many thanks to all those who helped during the year especially Marg Buckland and her corps of CALM volunteers, and Wildlife Officer Peter Lambert.



John Forrest Senior High School CALM Bush Rangers (from front) Cara Jones, Jason Glover and Jessica Thompson feed the black cockatoos at CALM's Perth Royal Show stand. CALM 2004 Volunteer of the Year, Yvonne Varris, coordinated the cockatoo display. Photo – Sue McKenna

Royal Show crowds love the black cockatoos

REGISTERED black cockatoo carer Yvonne Varris says Perth Royal Show crowds love to see her display of black cockatoos.

Since 2002, when CALM's Senior Wildlife Investigator Rick Dawson asked her if she'd like to show her protégés at the show's conservation stand, Yvonne has said yes.

"The amount of positive exposure the black cockatoos get is fantastic. Three years ago we opened the aviary doors for the first time and let groups of people have what we call 'a very real cockatoo experience'," Yvonne said.

"When one of the birds lands on a stranger's shoulder and leans around to give a kiss, or is passed over to them, or the person gets to feed an almond to a black cockatoo, sheer delight beams through.

"They come out saying: 'Did you see that', 'That was amazing', 'I had no idea they were so big', 'They are so gentle' or 'How can we help them?'"

She said this year it was apparent that the cockatoo gang had a following when showgoers asked: "Where's Mate and Missy? Are they okay?"

"And yes, they're fine," Yvonne said. "They just didn't want to come."

As the show ended, Yvonne started planning how she would do things next year.

"And as much as we say 'never again' we always say 'see ya next year'," she said.

And why?

"For Western Australia's black cockatoos," she said.



Cadell Shalders of Coogee holds Pandora, a black kite, under the watchful eye of CALM registered wildlife carer Yvonne Varris, at CALM's Perth Royal Show display. Photo – Sue McKenna

New rules for watching nursing whales close to shore

CALM is currently drafting new rules aimed at protecting nursing whales and their calves that are close to shore and their calves from spectators getting too close.

The Department's Senior Marine Wildlife Officer, Doug Coughran, expects the amendments to be in place by the 2006 whale watching season.

"The aim is to protect the nursing mothers and calves. If a calf does not get sufficient nursing then its chances of survival are seriously compromised," he said.

"While we can watch them from a distance, it's important that whales are not disturbed."

Currently, a legislative notice under the Wildlife Conservation Act requires swimmers to remain at least 30 m from all whales, while boats, kayaks and canoes must stay at least 100 m away, with penalties for people who disturb whales by approaching closer.

Doug said the amendments would mean that if a mother and calf were within 100 m of the

shore, then swimmers must maintain a distance of at least 100 m from both the mother and calf. There would be no change for the vast majority of situations where whales, including nursing mothers and calves, were more than 100 m from shore.

People in boats or on kayaks, surfboards or canoes or similar craft, must stay at least 200 m away from both whales.

Doug said the move to amend the rules had been sparked by an incident off a metropolitan beach in early September when a southern right whale and her calf were harassed.

"People were getting too close. The mother was harassed up and down the coast as she was looking for a place to settle and nurse her calf," he said. "While most people want to do the right thing, the overwhelming public interest in whales means that we must have specific rules for these situations that everyone can understand to help us meet our objective of protecting the whales."

Spring burns planned

CALM started its prescribed burns this month in a bid to reduce the impact of summer wildfires.

Up to 157 controlled burns for spring through to early summer have been identified with the overall burn program target for the south-west forests in the 2005-2006 year of about 200,000 ha.

The Department's Acting Fire Services Manager, Roger Armstrong, expects another long fire season.

He said rainfall in the south-west this winter bordered on average after a long period of below average years.

"We're expecting this year's fire season to be like last year with December, January and February being the peak time," he said.

The 2004-05 burning program covered 213,102 ha in the south-west forest areas, of which 52 per cent was burnt last spring and early summer.

By Tracy Peacock

Prescribed burning minimises the impact of bushfires, particularly those near town-sites and the metropolitan area.

Last year's fire season was extremely busy for CALM, with staff attending 406 wildfires in the south west, of which 19 fires were greater than 100 ha.

The total area of wildfires attended by CALM in 2004-05 was 3,832,950 ha, including 50,569 ha in the south-west.

The metropolitan area also experienced bushfires in the 2004-05 season when 27,000 ha of bush in the Perth hills and half of Yanchep National Park was burnt.

Full details and maps of areas scheduled for prescribed burning are available at CALM's offices and work centres throughout the south-west and on CALM's website at www.naturebase.net.

Bird banding at Rowley Shoals

AN ambitious program is underway to band a colony of red-tailed tropicbirds that nest on Bedwell Island in the Rowley Shoals.

It's being undertaken by CALM's West Kimberley Marine Operations Officer, Mike Lapwood, with assistance from Broome bird expert, Chris Hassell.

The colony has grown from a reported three birds in 1977 to about 75.

"Although the species is very wide-ranging within the Indian and Pacific oceans, very little is known of the life cycle and breeding regimes of these birds," Mike said.

"This project will identify each individual member of the colony, their breeding patterns and whether the birds leave the colony to go elsewhere."

The project, supported by the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS), will be ongoing with new 'recruits' in the colony banded regularly and breeding sites monitored.

The isolation of the Rowley Shoals Marine Park is probably the birds' best protection.

Located some 180 nautical miles west of Broome, less than 300 people per year visit Rowley Shoals.

With the newly-released Rowley Shoals Marine Park Management Plan, the long-term intrinsic values of the area will be further enhanced.

"An area of such biological richness, sheer beauty and extreme isolation deserves this protection for the benefit of all future generations," Mike said.

Man fined \$2000 for unlawful possession of reptiles

A Port Kennedy man has pleaded guilty to the unlawful possession of reptiles in the Mandurah Magistrates Court.

Thirty-seven-year-old Lee John Jeavons was fined \$2000 and ordered to pay costs of \$700. All the seized fauna and containers were forfeited to the Crown.

He had been charged with:

- 10 charges of being in possession of protected fauna (reptiles) when such fauna was not lawfully taken, contrary to Section 16A(1) of the Wildlife Conservation Act;
- four charges of keeping fauna (reptiles) in captivity or confinement without a licence, contrary to Regulation 28(c) of the Wildlife Conservation Regulations; and
- three charges of failing to observe the conditions of a licence issued to him under the Act and Regulations, contrary to Section 25(1)(g) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

The offences took place in October 2004 when he was found to have unlawful possession of 76 reptiles including pythons, tiger snakes, lizards and geckos following the simultaneous execution of search warrants by wildlife officers at three different premises.

Nature Protection Branch Manager David Mell said unlawful activities such as the unauthorised collecting of protected reptiles from the wild were dealt with firmly by CALM.

People trapping reptiles in the wild for personal gain risk substantial fines. A licensing regime to enable people to keep frogs and reptiles (herpetofauna) as pets was introduced in Western Australia in 2002. Currently there are more than 1400 herpetofauna licence holders in WA.



Caption (from left): Nyoongar Elders Sam Williams and Treasy Woods, CALM's South Coast Acting Regional Manager, Martin Lloyd, Environment Minister, Dr Judy Edwards and CALM's Director of Parks and Visitor Services, Jim Sharp, at the launch of the new facilities. Photo - Geoff Harriett

New \$750,000 visitor facilities at Bluff Knoll

NEW visitor facilities worth \$750,000 were officially opened last month by Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards at the popular Bluff Knoll tourism attraction in the State's South Coast Region.

The facilities provide greater access to Bluff Knoll, in the Stirling Range National Park, which attracts around 60,000 visitors a year.

Bluff Knoll is the highest peak in the region and part of an important protected mountain area of the Stirling Range.

It also lies within the South-West Botanical Province, an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot.

"Increasing access to Bluff Knoll and Stirling Range National Park, while at the same time conserving and protecting these biodiversity values, will enable more people to experience these areas of cultural significance and natural diversity," Dr Edwards said.

The funds were used to improve parking areas and bus bays, build raised walkways, viewing platforms and sheltered sitting and picnic areas, put in place composting toilets, and add safety information and information panels about the area's geology, biodiversity and Nyoongar culture.

The new facilities showcase the State Government's vision to create better visitor facilities in national parks and conservation

reserves.

Dr Edwards said that since 2001, the Gallop Government had committed an additional \$50 million to CALM to improve and increase visitor facilities and services within national parks and conservation reserves.

She said in 2005-06, a further \$723,000 would be spent on visitor facilities and services in parks in the Albany Region.

Key projects include:

Porongurup National Park - complete stage three of the redevelopment program at Castle Rock including an access track, steps and viewing platform at the rock summit;

Stirling Range National Park - continued community consultation for a proposed visitors' centre;

Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve - road improvements including realignment of access tracks between the research headquarters and wildlife study centre; and

Fitzgerald River National Park - improved access between the Quoin Head campsite and the beach, upgrading of the East Mount Barren carpark to accommodate larger buses, and upgrading of a five-km section of Pabellup Drive.

Other works included general road works throughout the region's parks as well as continuing a program to install gas barbecues.

End of the paper trail

By Tracy Peacock

TWO new faces are working in the Corporate Information Section on a project that will change the way information is managed within CALM.

Sandy Lund and Leanne Traynor-Dutton are working on the new Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) Project, which will see CALM move from a paper-based environment to an electronic environment.

Sandy moved from the Northern Territory to take up her position as EDRMS Project Leader, while Leanne, who worked for CALM three years ago, returned to Perth from London to work as the EDRMS Administrator.

"The interesting fact about their recruitment was that we used video-conferencing to interview them, with one in London and the other in Darwin," said Debra Rule, CALM's Corporate Information Manager.

She said Sandy and Leanne started their new jobs in mid-September and had been thrown straight into the implementation phase of the EDRMS project.

"In November everyone who uses the InfoRMS (the current records management system) to register documents and files will get the new EDRMS system," Debra said.

"By the end of the year everyone in CALM will be able to search the entire system."

Debra said the new records management system would improve information accessibility across CALM and assist in meeting accountability requirements.

"CALM has silos of information and knowledge across the Department. By replacing these silos with a single enterprise information repository, the new system will empower staff to find information by themselves and promote knowledge sharing across the Department."



Leanne Traynor-Dutton (left), Debra Rule (centre) and Sandy Lund. Photo - John Skillen

Conservation brief

Ningaloo turtle program wins award

A WA community-based project to conserve turtles, which has attracted more than 7800 volunteer hours and helped conserve a vulnerable marine species, won the 2005 Australian Government Coastcare Community Award.

The award was presented to the Ningaloo Turtle Program at the State Natural Resource Management Conference in Denmark.

The conservation program aims to increase efforts in the Ningaloo region to reduce the threats to marine turtles. The program is driven by the local Exmouth Cape Conservation Group in partnership with CALM, WWF Australia and the community.

The program was established in 2002 in recognition of worldwide declining turtle populations. Since then, 184 volunteers have monitored more than 63 km of turtle nesting beaches each season. The program has discovered significant new rookeries, reduced the predation of nests by foxes, and rescued almost 50 mature female stranded turtles.

Volunteers are involved in managing the Jurabi Turtle Centre, monitoring turtle nesting, identifying and responding to threats, training, community education and supporting other community groups in developing turtle conservation programs.

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

Contract

Robyn Nicholas, Regional Biodiversity Facilitator, Geraldton; Sandy Lund, EDRMS System Administrator, Information Management Branch, Kensington; Lydia Lange, Project Officer, Regional Parks, Fremantle; Ben Bayliss, Technical Officer, WA Herbarium, Kensington; Matthew Smith, Nature Conservation Officer, Pilbara.

Promotion

Ryan De Flores-Butler, Regional Fire Coordinator, Kalgoorlie.

Maternity leave

Rebecca Walker, Conservation Flora Officer, Kensington.

Permanent

Janet Cowan, Business and Finance Manager, Broome; Leanne Traynor-Dutton, EDRMS System Administrator, Information Management Branch, Kensington; Jeff Richardson, District Nature Conservation Officer, Wheatbelt Region, Narrogin; Dr Ian Radford, Senior Research Scientist, Biodiversity Conservation Group, Kununurra; Karen Lee Sanders, Urban Nature Coordinator, Swan Region, Kensington.

Leave without pay

Alex (Wayne) Rogers, Aboriginal Training Officer, Broome.

Contract ceased

Glen Claybrook, Ranger, Albany.

Temporary deployment

Lisa Bland, Marine Conservation Branch, Fremantle.

Resignations

John Dale, Officer, WA Herbarium, Kensington; Peter Birch, Astronomer, Perth Observatory, Bicton; Amanda Rukuwai, Leasing Officer, Park Policy and Tourism Branch, Kensington.

Married

Rhianna King (nee Mooney), Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, Crawley.