



CALM News

Official newspaper of the Department of Conservation and Land Management

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BARRY HODGE hands over the brass plaque commemorating the official opening of Irabina at Dryandra Settlement to Ken Wallace.

Study centre opens

CALM Minister Barry Hodge officially opened the study centre at Dryandra Forestry Settlement recently.

The study centre, called "Irabina", which is Aboriginal for "awakening", will be used by tertiary, secondary and primary school groups, as well as naturalists' clubs and other groups wanting to study nature in the Dryandra Forest.

The centre has room for about 50

people, with chairs and tables, information displays and stuffed animals.

Narrogin District Manager Ken Atkins said work will continue on the centre, as funds become available and visitor use gives them some idea of what is needed at the centre.

"Ultimately we hope to have slide show and video facilities for visitor use," Ken said.

The work was done through a CEP project last year.

As part of the project, the study centre was developed, the facilities around the Nissan huts were upgraded, usage areas and access were defined, and the swimming area upgraded.

A large volume of resource material was also put together, which will be available in the near future, and work was being done on putting together a herbarium which will be housed at the centre, Ken said.

Softwood Sharefarming Scheme

SEMINAR ATTRACTS FARMERS

By Colleen Henry-Hall

ATTENDANCE at a seminar on softwood sharefarming at Albany recently showed that a good many farmers are interested in the joint Government-landowner scheme.

The seminar, organised by CALM's South Coast Region staff, attracted almost a hundred farmers, bank managers, accountants and farm advisers.

Experts from inside and outside the Department discussed the management of pine plantations, why one farm manager signed up his property, and details of the scheme.

A local farm adviser developed a comparative profitability study of traditional farm practices and pine sharefarming and concluded that in the first year a sheep-only farm would be slightly more

profitable, but that dollar benefits on a sheep and pines farm come from the indexing of the share-farming annuity with the CPI.

CALM Acting Region Manager for Albany, Hugh Chevis, said: "I was pleased with the turnout, with the discussion and the presentation, which I think was very objective."

"We had a range of speakers from outside the Department who told the audience their impressions of the scheme, and the overall impression was that they supported it."

"We're expecting to hear

now from farmers in the area who want to diversify their crops, or want a secure annual income to pay their living expense."

The first pine planting under the scheme has recently been completed on three farms in the Kalgan and Nanarup areas near Albany.

One participating farmer, Ken Cantwell, said: "I'm very satisfied with the attitude of CALM staff."

"They've been easy to work with and easy to negotiate with, often bending over backward to get everything done on time and done well."

Birdhide built at Ningaloo

By Richard Grant

SPECIAL arrangements for birdwatchers are being made at the proposed Ningaloo Marine Park near Exmouth.

RESEARCH MANAGER

DR ANDREW BURBIDGE, Senior Principal Research Scientist at Woodvale, has been appointed Divisional Manager Research for CALM.

Dr Burbidge became Senior Principal Research Scientist with CALM following the amalgamation in 1985.

He had been with the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife since 1968 as research officer, senior research officer and then chief research officer.

He was an assistant professor of zoology at the University of Texas at Austin 1967-68, after earning his bachelor's degree and doctorate at the University of Western Australia. His thesis was on the biology of south-western Australian tortoises.

A special interest these days is desert mammals, a subject he has explored in many publications.

Dr Burbidge will divide his working week between Como and Woodvale for the next few months, before moving permanently to Como.

Cape Range National Park Ranger, George Duxbury, said a boardwalk and birdhide have been built at Mangrove Bay for public viewing of trans-equatorial migratory wading and other local seabirds.

The work was carried out by Westrek, a youth employment scheme funded by the State Government.

Twelve young people recently spent two weeks at Mangrove Bay building the boardwalk and birdhide under George's supervision.

Mangrove Bay is an isolated community of mangroves surrounding a lagoon in the intertidal area between the beach and the neighbouring Cape Range National Park.

Long flights

The birdhide was built to overlook the lagoon where the migratory birds rest and feed during their long flights from as far away as the Arctic Circle.

A big number of nomadic seabirds also could be seen in the lagoon.

George said a spur road from the new Yardie Creek Road and a parking area would give visitors access to the birdhide.

Another birdhide built at Ningaloo

Another birdhide will be built inland from Mangrove Bay at an old bore used to water sheep on Yardie Creek Station, which formerly made up a large part of the Cape Range National Park.

Water troughs will be installed and water pumped from the bore to attract land-dwelling birds for park visitors to observe.

George said both sites were important bird observation and interpretative areas.

The Mangrove Bay project, which cost about \$7,000 had achieved a double benefit.

As well as providing work experience for unemployed young people, the project had a valuable conservation role which allowed national park visitors to observe a fascinating array of birdlife in their natural surroundings.

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OPERATIONS Officer Terry Maher (left) locates Geoff and Margaret Davey's farm after the recent Softwood Sharefarming seminar in Albany.

FUNDS TO AID MONKEY MIA DEVELOPMENT

CALM'S Executive Director, Syd Shea, handed over \$265,000 to the Shark Bay Shire Council at Denham in early June for development works at Monkey Mia in 1987-88.

The money was part of a \$481,000 grant approved to the Shire by State Cabinet.

The grant is to improve management of Monkey

Mia and to protect the dolphins which are a major tourist attraction.

The funding was approved as part of the Shark Bay Planning Strategy which was released by the State Planning Commission and CALM for public comment on May 13.

Under the terms of the strategy CALM will enter into an agreement with the Shark Bay Shire to jointly manage Monkey Mia.

This is necessary because of the large increase in the number of tourists visiting Monkey Mia following the sealing of the Hamelin-Denham road last year and the promotion of the dolphins.

The \$265,000 will be spent on a water bore, tanks, and pipes, an ablation block, parking facilities and roads and a vehicle.

Other works to be carried out with the Govern-

ment funding include landscaping, fencing and signposting the area from where the dolphins were viewed, the construction of a boat ramp, and the upgrading of the road from Denham to Monkey Mia.

The final payment of the funding was made to Shark Bay Shire President John Sellenger, while Dr Shea was hearing submissions to the Shark Bay Planning Strategy.

AWARDS

GREENING Australia is calling for nominations for the 1987 John Tonkin Tree Awards.

The awards are recognised as among the most significant environmental awards in the State.

A number of the awards carry cash prizes of up to \$1000.

Nomination forms are available from CALM, local government offices, the Department of Agriculture, public libraries or by contacting Greening Australia on (09) 481 1395.

From my desk

I have noted in recent issues of CALM News that the Expedition Skills Leadership courses are still being strongly supported by the Department and that community support from many walks of life ensures that there is no shortage of candidates.

When the concept of these courses was first proposed by Lesley Pearce of the Education Department seven or eight years ago, I wondered whether they were worthwhile, and more particularly, what they had to do with the then Forests Department.

Lesley Pearce had graduated from similar courses in Victoria and the US, and after a long weekend at camp Quararup at Albany with interested people from Education, Sport and Recreation and a number of recreation organisations, the need for our involvement became much clearer.

Foremost among the reasons for establishing such a training programme in Western Australia was that with the opening of the Bibbulmun Bushwalking Track in 1979, a lot of youth leaders, teachers etc., were taking groups of young people into the forest for outdoor excursion experiences.

Very few of these leaders had any real experience or expertise in leading such expeditions.

As a result there were situations developing where school children with no training, ill equipped, not properly clothed and poorly led, were being put into situations of physical stress and consequent risk.

And so, rightly or wrongly, foresters at first, and now a wide range of CALM staff are drafted each year as leaders or co-leaders for the Expedition Skills Leadership courses.

Some of the co-leaders have questioned their own ability in this role, but by all accounts they have performed very well.

From a Departmental viewpoint we could not ask for a better opportunity or for a better classroom out-of-doors, to tell the story of CALM and its approach to Land Management.

And most of the clientele are people who will have numerous opportunities to pass on the good word to school groups, community organisations and so on.

So I trust we will be able to maintain our links with this outdoor training activity, and continue to pass the word to recreationists under the most optimal environmental conditions.

PETER HEWETT
Director of Forests

THE Planning Branch can turn out one major management plan per planning officer per year.

With five officers, that's five plans a year, but with 16 million hectares of land that need management plans, the Planning Branch have work enough for many years to come.

Branch Manager Jim Williamson addressed a research seminar at Como recently to explain the planning process in CALM.

With so many areas needing plans, it is necessary to prioritise them so the most "important" ones are done first.

To make the list,

PLANNING BRANCH RESEARCH SEMINAR

Planning Branch look at several points: they consult with Research Branch, to find out if data is needed or is available for a certain area, and the regions are asked for a list of areas they consider important, based on user pressure, the danger of disease and the possibility of development.

Other factors that influence priority are the presence of exceptional landscapes or biological

By Colleen
Henry-Hall

values and Government direction.

Once the five-year rolling programme is organised, it is put up for approval by the directorate, and a project team is formed with representatives from the region or district, a planning officer

and perhaps a specialist.

Jim said: "This approach has worked well to make sure the regions and districts have input into the plan."

General objectives are worked out first and approved by the policy directorate and the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority or the Lands and Forests Commission.

Draft plans are prepared, submitted to the

NPNCA or LFC for approval, then released for public comment for at least two months.

The draft is amended if necessary, resubmitted to the NPNCA, LFC and policy directorate, and then to the Minister for approval before the final plan is published and released.

If the Minister makes changes to the plan, they must be noted in the Government Gazette.

Jim said: "Four plans have made it through this process so far, with sixteen in the pipeline."

Final plans for the Shannon and Lane-Poole Reserve are close to being released, he said.

Specialty wood auction

By RAE BURROWS

A GIANT marri burl sold for \$172 at the first auction of specialty timbers and craftwood held by CALM in Manjimup.

Italo Palermo was uncontested in his bid for the huge burl which completely surrounded a large section of the trunk of a marri tree.

Bidding was far more lively for the rest of the 20 parcels of a variety of logs and burls.

Most of the items were sold for well over the upset price — some for more than five times this opening bid.

Logs of Sheoak, Hakea, Peppermint, River Banksia and Warren Cedar were auctioned and prices up to \$150 per m³ paid.

CALM Senior Forester Ron Kitson said that the number of people attending and bidding at the auction, coupled with the very positive comments received after the proceedings, will ensure that similar auctions will be held in the future.

He said that there will be more of those types of logs

and burls offered in the future.

"People who attended the auction were asked for constructive criticism and comment," Ron said.

"Ideas on how to present the wood for auction was forthcoming and should assist in setting up future auctions."

"CALM logging contractors will continue to produce specialty timbers as they are encountered in the forest."

Ron said: "It's apparent that some craftspeople are unable or unwilling to go into the forest to obtain these materials themselves."

"We will continue to try and assist the woodcraft industry by supplying raw material for sale from stockpiles because it is an important developing cottage industry."



Potential buyers gather round to bid on specialty timbers and craftwood at a CALM auction at Manjimup.

SEEDS FOUND

MAPPING Branch's Chris Simms woke one morning shortly after Arbor Day to find in his yard a small packet of tree seeds tied to a string and the remnants of a pink balloon.

The envelope said North Cottesloe Primary School student Clair Paxton had released the balloon as part of Arbor Day, and asked the finder to please plant the seeds.

"I found it ironic that the seeds would land on a CALM employee's lawn, since the Department is probably where the seeds came from in the first place," Chris said.

He also thought his Yangebup home was a fair distance for a balloon to travel from North Cottesloe, but Chris found out upon ringing the school that a balloon had been picked up in Esperance in another year.



Chris Simms and the packet of seeds.

Roadside dieback guidelines

THE Roadside Vegetation Conservation Committee has developed guidelines to minimise the spread of dieback along roadsides.

Committee Executive Officer Penny Hussey said the committee was seeking the support of local government authorities to implement the guidelines.

She said about half of WA's local government districts were affected by dieback and that about one tenth of the State's unique flora was susceptible to the disease.

Penny said the disease was no longer confined to State forests, but also could be found in national parks, nature reserves and along roadsides.

The affected area stretches from Kalbarri in the north across the State's south-west to beyond Esperance.

Penny said the committee consulted with the Department of Conservation and Land Management in drawing up guidelines, which have been distributed

ed to all councils in the susceptible areas.

In particular, the guidelines urge authorities to clean heavy machinery and roadworks vehicles, a major cause of the spread of dieback, and to programme road and earth moving works in the drier months of the year.

(Dieback lives in the soil and spreads locally by the movement of spores in water or over larger areas by the transport of infected soil.)

The guidelines also suggest that dieback hygiene specifications be written into roadwork contracts and that local government authorities make sure that they are adhered to.

Penny said the committee was also aimed at testing a project aimed at testing a method to eradicate

spot infections, such as new outbreaks found along road verges.

She said that even if the method works, it could only be used to control small outbreaks.

Preventing the spread of the disease was the best way of limiting its effects on WA's flora.

This could only be achieved with the help of the public and by the co-operation of local government authorities.

DIEBACK KILLS WILDFLOWERS



Roadside Vegetation Conservation Committee
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These seniors enjoyed the outing to Yeagerup Beach with Parks and Reserves Officer Alan Sands recently.

Golden Oldies visit our Parks

SENIOR citizens were given an insight into CALM's involvement in the Southern Region on tours arranged by Parks and Reserves Officer Alan Sands for Senior Citizens Week recently.

One tour went to Yeagerup Beach and the other to nearby national parks and recreation sites such as Beedelup, Big Brook and One Tree Bridge.

Alan said: "We also got an insight into how senior

"For example, many of them said they enjoyed the increased access like the stairs at Beedelup Falls.

"But we've also unwittingly prevented them from going into some sites by bad design, such as using round lateritic gravel on inclines, which is easy to slip on."

Alan is interested in doing something similar next year, because "the response was amazing" with seniors from Perth calling up to take part in the free

CALM News is the Department of Conservation and Land Management's monthly staff newspaper.

We hope you will become involved in its publication by sending articles (up to 400 words), letters, photographs (with captions), minutes from meetings and items of interest to:

Colleen Henry-Hall,
Department Conservation and Land Management Como WA 6152 — phone 367 0333 ext 322.

EDITOR: Richard Grant 386 8811.

Pilbara prescribed burn a first

THE first-ever aerial prescribed burning has been done on the CALM estate in the Kimberley this year.

The need for protective burning around the Bungle Bungle massif was forecast last year when thousands of feral donkeys and cattle were removed from the area and grass grew prolifically with the reductions in feral animal grazing.

Arrangements were made with the Bush Fire Board to use a Britton Norman Islander doing prescribed burning for pastoralists in

By CHRIS DONE

the Kimberley (also a "first") to do a small trial burn.

Strategic protective strips were considered the best way to reduce the impact of the almost inevitable bushfire late in the season.

Over the next few years it is planned to develop a fire regime close to that imposed by the original Aboriginal inhabitants.

This will allow for the many species of native animals and plant

associations in the area to prosper.

Knowledge and assistance from local Aboriginals is being sought.

Until such a regime is in place over the whole reserve (the National Park and Conservation Reserve covers some 320,000 ha of which one-tenth is covered by the Bungle Bungle massif) the area is at great risk from wildfire.

The success of the trials this year indicate that more protective strip burning may be needed over the next two or three years to help overcome this problem.

MONTEBELLO SURVEY FOR FLORA

PILBARA District Wildlife Officer Kevin Marshall took a welcome break from his law enforcement duties in early June to carry out a week-long flora survey at the Montebello Islands.

Kevin flew from Karratha to the Lowendal Islands on a Bond Petroleum seaplane to board the Department of Fisheries research vessel MV Flinders for the joint exercise.

(The Lowendal Islands are a small group of islands north of Barrow Island and are managed by CALM as a nature reserve.)

When the MV Flinders moored in Kelvin's Passage on the corner of North West Island in the Montebellos, it was greeted by unseasonal weather conditions that produced three days of continual rain followed by days of 25 knot winds.

While the research vessel worked the Pilbara trap line and fisheries' researchers Senior Technical Officer Jerry Jenke and Technical Officer Chris Burton tagged north west snapper for Research Scientist Dr Mike Moran, Kevin collected flowering flora species on the islands.

Sixty five flowering plants were collected from North West Island, Primrose, Carnation, Bluebell, Trimouell, South East, Hermit, Delta, Campbell and Brooke islands.

The specimens will be forwarded to the State Herbarium in Perth and Karratha where they will be added to the Pilbara flora collection.

Kevin said the abundance of flora and fauna on the islands and offshore was remarkable considering that Trimouell and Alpha islands were British nuclear testing sites in the 1950s.

Kevin also collected

various species of seagrass from the shallows on the west side of Brooke Island, in an area which seemed suitable to habitat dugongs.

The 16 samples have been sent to Bob Prince at Woodvale for analysis.

A large number of shells, including 15 species of cowry (some endemic to the Montebellos), three species of cones as well as a variety of other shells, bubble and others were recorded throughout the islands.

There was also evidence of recently completed nests on South East Island by both terns and seagulls, and numerous white breasted eagles, ospreys and other seabirds were sighted though no nests were found.

Green turtles were abundant in the offshore waters and Kevin saw evidence that they had been onshore at Trimouell Island.

Dick Morgan, who has been cultivating pearl shells in Faraday Channel opposite Home Lagoon on Hermit Island since 1980, was able to provide Kevin with useful information on sea grasses and other wildlife activities.

Kevin said the Montebello Islands have been a prohibited area under Australia's Defence Act and anyone wishing to enter the area needed naval permission.

However, the islands which are about 70km offshore are within a day's sailing of Dampier and are becoming increasingly popular with local people and charter boat operators.

BURNING PROGRAM PREVENTS WILDFIRES

CALM'S programme of prescribed burning aims to minimise the risk of high intensity, uncontrollable fires in the State forests in summer.

The programme, undertaken every four to eight years to establish and maintain fuel reduced buffer zones, protects public lands, adjoining private property and forest from the devastating effects of summer wildfires.

Special consideration is given to common boundaries with private property and towns.

The programme is carried out during mild conditions in either spring or autumn when the intensity of the fire can be managed to avoid damage to the forest.

The burning programme ensures the strategic buffers, with their much lower fuel quantities that shows the fire and reduces its intensity, surround areas with high values such as towns, private property, forests and pine plantations.

Maintenance of the buffer zones is planned well advance of any prescribed burning.

The accumulated fuel on the forest floor is measured so a prescription can be drawn up and conducted at the intensity required to remove flammable materials without damaging the forest or the neighbouring property.

Prescription

The impact of the burning operations on the environment are considered during the planning phase, and the prescription is modified to avoid damage.

Prescribed burns can either be lit by ground crews or by dropping incendiary capsules from an aircraft, which can reduce fuel levels over a wide area in a short time when suitable weather conditions prevail.

Depending on the forest type, the variation in the fuel and the amount of moisture, the prescribed burn will remove about 70 percent of the fuel without damaging the forest values and ecosystem.

This allows summer fires to be controlled by ground crews.

CALM's burning programme is carried out between October and May each year with most work being done in milder conditions.

CALM has done a great deal of research into the effects of prescribed burning in forest areas including the effects of spring and autumn burns.

This research plus many years of observations has confirmed that prescribed burning causes no serious effects on the forest provided there is some variation in the fire frequency, fire intensity and time of burning.

CALM follows these practices as a matter of policy.

Arbor Day celebrated



CALM Minister Barry Hodge was at Como the day before Arbor Day to see that Perth schoolchildren got their trees to plant on the big day.

Schools throughout Peth and some country areas picked up 12,000 seedlings to plant on their school grounds.

Most of the seedlings were grown by Alcoa and distributed by Greening Australia, with the help of CALM's Mark Dalton, Des Carter and Mike Skipper.

PINE PLANTING PROVES POPULAR

ON May 11, 1987, the South Coast Region had a few trial plots of *Pinus radiata*.

By June 28, the region had three small pine forests totalling 580ha.

The plantations, the first major planting in the South Coast, are part of the joint Government-landowner Softwood Sharefarming Scheme.

Pine sharefarming was first mentioned in the Albany/Plantagenet area two years ago, and it became a reality when planting began on March 12.

A total of 755,000 pines (744,000 one and two-year old seedlings and 10,000 cuttings) were planted on three farms.

Because CALM has no gangs here, the planting was done by contractors supplying their own tractors and manpower, while CALM supplied planting machines, technical support and supervision.

Planting was done six

By BARRY JORDAN

days a week for six and a half weeks.

The 580ha is a fair effort for the first year's planting, but is only the first step in a 15-year, 15,000ha plus planting programme proposed to support a commercial pine industry in the area.

CSIRO BIRD COUNT

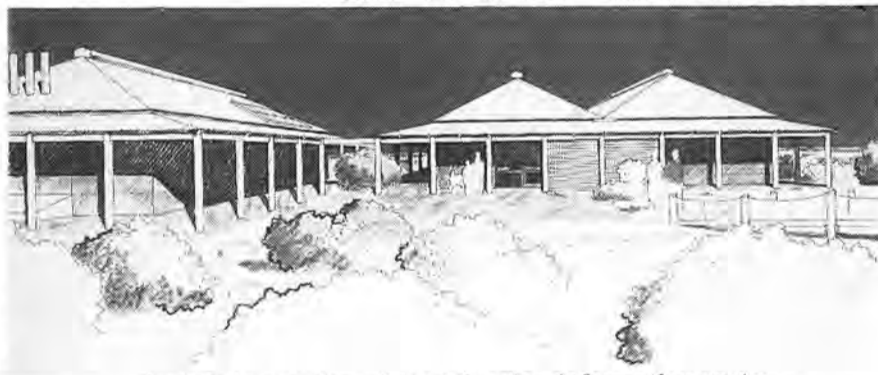
CSIRO, Division of Wildlife and Rangelands Research, is conducting a major study on the conservation and management of patches of native vegetation including road reserves.

Clearing for agriculture in the central wheatbelt has created fragments of original vegetation in isolation.

These dramatic changes have caused changes in bird populations and distributions.

As part of the study CSIRO has produced a checklist of birds in the central wheatbelt to be filled out by interested people, which will help build up a picture of bird distributions and how these change with time.

Thanks this year go to Lyn Marshall and the mechanics from Nannup and Manjimup for arranging and supplying the technical support; to Colin McKittrick for his supervision and expertise; to Glyn Yates and Kelly Cooke for their back-up support and pine unloading skills; and Terry Maher for backstage organising.



Artist's impression of the Ningaloo information centre.

Work starts on centre

WORK will soon start on a \$1.6 million visitor information centre for the proposed Ningaloo Marine Park near Exmouth.

The centre, financed by the Australian Bicen-

ennial Authority, will be built at Milyering in the Cape Range National Park, and is expected to be completed by August 1988.

The Ningaloo Marine Park will be officially opened in September this year.

CALM's District Manager at Exmouth Stephan Fritz, said the construction of the visitor centre at such an isolated site presented some interesting problems for Building Management Authority architects.

Solar cells and storage batteries will be used as a power source, and good quality ground water discovered close by will be gravity-fed to the centre.

Owing to the shortage

of conventional building materials, walls will be made of rammed earth and will serve as insulators in the hot northern summers.

Their natural colour will also help blend the centre with the surrounding landscape.

Stephan said the centre would introduce visitors to the many features of the Ningaloo Marine Park and Cape Range National Park.

It will include a display area, an audio visual room with viewing from inside the building or from an outdoor amphitheatre, and a computer-based video information system.

The centre is expected to encourage visitors to go and explore both the marine and national parks.



WILDLIFE Officers Peter Collins (left) and Les Coyne on Green Island to look at the nesting Pelicans, in the background at left.

Island home for nesting pelicans

By COLLEEN HENRY-HALL

THE PELICANS have come for the third year in a row to nest on Green Island, in Albany's Oyster Harbour.

South Coast Region Wildlife Officer Peter Collins said: "Up until three years ago, the nearest Pelican nesting site was at Shark Bay."

That first year they came to Green Island, a local fisherman spotted them and informed the wildlife officers.

Ever since then, fishermen, whose boats are moored at Emu Point, on the mainland about 500m from the island, have kept a close eye on the birds.

"If anyone the fishermen don't know heads out to the island, they'll be right behind to find out what's going on," Peter said.

In fact, South Coast Wildlife Officers Les Coyne, Ray Smith and Peter are so strapped for time that they

virtually depend on the fishermen's reports to let them know what is happening on the island.

Pelican nesting sites are communal, a bare spot on an exposed part of the island so they can see what's going on.

The first nesting site appeared on the west side of the island in 1985, with a second site appearing nearby in 1986 and a third between the first two this year.

Seagulls also use the island for nesting.

"Pelicans are very sensitive to human interference, which is probably why they've quit nesting in Mandurah in recent years," Peter said.

Green Island was declared a nature reserve last year because of its importance to the nesting Pelicans.

HUNT ON FOR FERAL PIGS

FERAL pigs, or pigs that have reverted to the wild, are targets of a number of CALM control programmes.

The pigs spread dieback by wallowing in wet areas and then moving to upland sites and possibly by feeding on susceptible plants.

Pigs seldom threaten people using the forest for recreation, but removing them can reduce the risk, and also the more real chance of conflict between illegal hunters and the public.

The pigs also damage water sites and generally degrade the forest.

Mundaring District has carried out a pig control programme for two years in which pigs are trapped and shot.

Between November 1986 and February this year, Forest Worker Martin Walter removed 88 feral pigs from around Mundaring Weir.

The poison 1080 will be used in a WA Water Authority sponsored control programme in the Serpentine Pipehead Catchment.

Approval

For many years the Authority had been reluctant to allow the use of poisons for feral pig control in its catchments, but has since given its approval following the Public Health Department's conditional permission to use 1080 in domestic water catchments.

The programme began in March under guidelines set out by the PHD that include bait preparation, recovery of unused baits, the location and removal of carcasses, and that all poisoning be done by the Agriculture Protection Board or CALM.

In Busselton District, two control programmes are being run.

One makes use of a hunter who uses dogs, and the other, coordinated by the Agriculture Protection Board, uses poisoned baits.

Crocodiles - fact and fiction

THE death of a young American tourist at Kings Cascades, Prince Regent River, in the Kimberley region has spurred a flurry of media attention and fuelled the many rumours that contribute to Kimberley and crocodile folklore.

Crocodile attacks are front page news and the telephone in our Kimberley regional office at Kununurra rang non-stop after the fatal attack on Ginger Meadows.

Some of the calls were reporters from State, regional, national and international news organisations, others from concerned locals reporting sightings of large crocodiles and a few from tourists planning a Kimberley holiday and asking for details of "safe" areas and for safety procedures near waterways.

A few days later the crocodile jokes and rumours began.

The Kununurra diversion dam is a haven for Johnston (or Freshwater) crocodiles with its deep pools, floating weed mats and swamps along its 40 odd kilometre length.

Some of these "freshies" grow up to and sometimes more than 10 feet (notice how people, no matter how into the metric system of measurement they are, refer to crocodiles in feet and inches) and are often the cause of reported Estuarine crocodile sightings in the watersport area near the diversion dam wall.

These reports are followed up for verification but some lose credibility before pen is put to paper.

One complainant when

interviewed could not estimate the length of the crocodile he saw, but guaranteed that its eyes were two feet apart.

This indeed was a large animal, and to confirm our belief hurried checks with ex crocodile shooters and research staff confirmed our worst fears - at least a 70 to 80 footer.

Dogs are a favourite food of crocodiles and it is necessary to keep dogs (and people) away from the water in estuarine crocodile habitats, but yet again, when a dog goes missing it is rumoured it had to be a croc for sure.

One fuel station bowser attendant in Kununurra nonchalantly told customers to "tie up their dogs as a rogue crocodile in the dam had taken at least 36 dogs in the last couple of weeks".

Checks with the shire and local police did not verify the claims and the local dog catcher was still busier than ever.

A Wyndham man living near the Wyndham Port received radio and newspaper coverage when his dog was severely mauled by a croc; a local vet later confirmed that another dog was the culprit and that story was no longer news.

Before the Kings Cascades attack, CALM's Wildlife Officer (Mike

By MIKE OSBORN and VAL STOREY

Osborn) was dispatched to Broome to locate and capture a reported estuarine crocodile in Willie Creek north of Broome, a popular swimming and fishing spot.

Within three days the Broome Tourist Bureau was receiving media calls asking what was being done to stop crocodiles rummaging through rubbish bins in town, and a Broome resident contacted ABC radio telling people that crocodiles will actually leave the water and run people down on land.

Rumours and exaggera-

tion will always surround crocodiles, their habits and their interaction with humans.

They carry a mystique all their own and the contribution that they make as a tourist drawcard is second only to the majestic Kimberley scenery.

CALM's ongoing educational programme on crocodiles is helping people to understand and accept these saurians as an integral part of the Kimberley life, and it is pleasing to see the improving results in the attitude of the communities "living with crocodiles".

Refreshing message from US author

By IAN ROTHERAM

Mountains Without Handrails, Reflections on the National Parks by Joseph Sax. University of Michigan Press, 1980. 109pp.

VISITORS to a national park should not be just spectators of nature, but should have to immerse themselves in the park's natural setting.

Only then can visitors

have an experience that involves the senses, stimulates the mind, teaches about nature and shows them something about themselves, says author Joseph Sax.

To do this, the U.S. Parks Service should not cater to tourists' demands for entertainment, but should offer the national parks as an experience requiring some commitment on the part of visitors.

Sax thinks that people who go to national parks want and need something quite distinct from and more demanding than Disneyland.

The book doesn't claim that everyone can or should hike for days in the wilderness, but that there should be areas within a national park where the first step onto the trail leads to an adventure in nature and wilder areas beyond.

Nannup golf day

THE Nannup Golf Day is on again, so keep October 10 free for this year's bash.

The day has two parts: The Bushrangers Belt for anybody who can swing a club; and The Stableford, for "dinkum" golfers, it's an 18-hole event with prizes.

Please send your team nominations to Nannup by September 20 and return by October 2.

Cadets 'invade' national park

By TERRY PASSMORE

AS part of their park and recreation management curriculum, 12 second-year cadets "invaded" Torndirrup National Park in the South Coast Region recently.

Under guidance from Landscape and Recreation Branch's Wayne Schmidt,

Richard Hammond and Pat Page, the cadets first developed a site plan for the Sharp Point area.

This wasn't an easy task as many factors had to be considered, including the project rationale, simple or formal style, future expansion potential and budget constraints for construction and maintenance.

After developing the plan, the cadets put it into effect by rolling up their sleeves and carrying out the heavy manual work, with ample help from Ranger Steve Keelan.

More than 15 tonnes of brush was laid in the rehabilitation phase, the car park redesigned and walk trails established, all by hand.

Alan Scott, Mark Humble and Kevin Haylock, also with sleeves rolled up, were drawn into the action, while Albany turned on its usual autumn sunshine.

The project itself was larger than the time allowed for its completion, but what was done was well done and has certainly enhanced the area.

On the final evening several of Albany District staff joined the cadets in a pleasant evening with instruction on the finer points of euchre.

From what the cadets said, it seems they all gained much from the exercise while enjoying the obvious beauty of King George Sound.

The book has been donated to the CALM Library and is available on request.

GOATS ON TRIAL

GOATS eat anything, but for trials in the Central Region, the fact that they eat blackberry plants is enough.

Bunbury Forester John Kruger is coordinating the joint trials with CALM, the Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Protection Board for the control of blackberries in two separate pine plantations.

Fifteen months ago 60 Department of Agriculture-owned domestic goats were let onto a 8ha section of Ferndale plantation near Kirup.

Three months ago, another 60 APB owned feral goats were let into a 15ha section in Folly plantation near Nannup.

Needless to say, both areas are well fenced.

In both trials the Agriculture Department check the condition of the goats, while CALM monitor the effect on self-sown pine seedlings (which invade thinned radiata pine plantations), thistles, scrub and blackberry.

In the Folly Trial the APB monitor blackberry control.

John said the Ferndale trial is very impressive.

He and Alan Seymour, District Manager at Kirup, are now organising an operational trial on 200ha of pine in Kirup.

"Goats are useful in a situation where you don't want to use poison on the blackberries for economic, environmental or management reasons," he said.

"The major problem facing the trials is security for the goats.

"We can't afford goat escapes and kid losses from foxes (or theft?)."

"With these problems under control we can implement this biological control method on large areas of plantation and stop kidding about with trials."

The changes to the plantation are startling, even after only 15 months of grazing by the goats.

Outside the fence, the creek that runs through the Ferndale plot is so choked with blackberries that it's hard to tell it's even there.

Inside the fence, the goats have stripped and trampled every blackberry plant back to the stalks, nibbled every pine seedling to a bare thin stick, and grazed the thistles down to the ground.

Getting rid of these plant pests will make it easier for operations such as thinning and pruning, and decrease the competition for nutrients, John said.

The goats will probably stay in another two years so that the long-term effect on the stand can be determined.

