CALM NEW

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

October 1993



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Spotlight on fire science



Copies of LANDSCOPE are kept at Como, where stores officers Craig Simpson, left, and Neil Moore each cast an expert eye over the latest issue of the award-winning magazine. Photo by Verna Costello

Clean sweep for LANDSCOPE

A CLEAN sweep of a story entitled To Catch a the annual Alex Harris Medal awards and a public relations award for excellence in communication completed a successful month for CALM's flagship publication LANDSCOPE.

Three LANDSCOPE stories won awards for excellence in science and environmental writing in the third annual competition for the highly coveted Alex Harris Medal.

Chief wildlife officer with CALM Dave Mell, and co-author John Wetherall of Curtin University's School of Biomedical Science, won the Alex Harris Medal for Thief. The story documents how DNA fingerprinting has made it possible for CALM wildlife officers and Curtin University scientists to disprove claims by unscrupulous bird breeders that they can breed rare species of cockatoos. The process has also provided valuable data to assist legitimate breeders with their breeding programs.

Commun-CALM ications officer David Gough's story, In Search of the Perfect Pine, on breeding programs to improve pines in WA (Autumn 1992); and Hunters and Gatherers, by CALM wildlife officer Trevor Walley and WA Museum head of anthropology Peter Bindon (Spring 1992), on use of plants and animals in the south-west by Nyoongar Aborigines, received the two commendation certificates.

The awards were presented at a special ceremony held at Curtin University as part of the recent Australia New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS) Congress on September 30.

Earlier in the month LANDSCOPE also won the 1993 Award for Outstanding External Communication in the second annual Public Relations Institute (WA) Awards for Excellence.

The award was accepted on behalf of CALM by director of Corporate Relations Ron Kawalilak.

Ron said the award recognised the magazine's success in creating community interest in conservation and land management issues, programs and successes in WA.

"It also recognises LANDSCOPE's role in the getting wider community involved with CALM in preventing and solving conservation and land management problems," he said.

FIRE researchers, land managers and others involved in fire management gathered in Perth last month to look at the latest advances and

concepts in bush fire science.

Forging links

Landscape Fires '93, hosted by CALM and the Bush Fires Board at Como, focused on forging links between fire behaviour and fire ecology.

Six sessions covered issues such as new developments in fire danger rating and fire behaviour, fire measurements for fire ecology and the interaction among fire, plants and animals.

A major part of the conference was dedicated to bushfires and the urban interface, with speakers from Victoria, NSW, the ACT and WA canvassing the technological and social aspects of wild fires and controlled burns.

CALM General Manager Roger Underwood, in officially opening the conference, said fire was probably the single most controversial and demanding issue facing land management agencies in Australia.

It was controversial because agencies such as CALM had to negotiate a minefield of complex interactions among social values, legislation, by Nigel Higgs

environmental values, science and conflicting community expectations.

"More often than not we find ourselves caught in the crossfire between interest groups or trying to develop compromises with uncompromising people," he said.

Demanding

"Fire also is the most demanding because the cost of getting it wrong is so large and because accountability for getting it wrong is so obvious.

"If people or townships are consumed in a bushfire, and CALM's or the Bush Fire Board's policies or fire protection measures are found to have been deficient or irresponsible, we are in huge trouble, even as individuals.'

He said the biggest difficulty in implementing fire policies came from urban people who were completely unthreatened by bush fires and who didn't see it as their problem.

"I don't yet have the solution to this problem but I do know that if managers, rural communities and environmentalists can work together cooperatively, then fire protection and environmental out-comes always will be higher than if they don't," he said.

to emerge from the papers and discussions were:

- The dynamic influence of fire in the landscape and the fact vegetation inevitably changes with
- The need to consider management applications of fire in the context of fire as a natural disturbance.
- Benefits that result from collaboration between people studying different aspects of fire.
- The need for effective communication between researchers and managers.

The landscape fires conferences were initiated six years ago by the Mathematics Department of the Australian Defence Academy in Canberra.

The concept originally was to provide a forum in which people working in fire science could get together.

The forum now has broadened to include fire managers.

This year's gathering was the fourth conference but the first held away from the Defence Academy campus.

This year's conference was organised by a team including Neil Burrows, Gordon Friend, Lachy McCaw from CALM and Malcolm Gill from CSIRO



Principal research scientist Gordon Friend, and Melinda Brouwer from The Australian Heritage Commission in Canberra, study one of the displays at the Landscape Fires '93 Conference. Photo by Verna Costello

FROM MY DESK =

I recently spent two weeks in Malaysia attending the Commonwealth Forestry Conference in Kuala Lumpur and inspecting tropical rainforest and plantation management in Sabah. While the Commonwealth Conference and the field trip proved to be excellent forums for exchanging information, I found as I always do that the principal benefit that comes from seeing and learning about other people's problems and achievements is that it enables you to see your home situation from a new perspective.

I was very impressed with what is being achieved in Malaysia. I had the opportunity to obtain first hand information about Malaysian forestry because many of the senior foresters were friends who I had first met in Australia during my undergraduate training 25 years ago. The overriding impression I gained was that Malaysia was determined to make its mark in the world in forestry and a range of other activities where they perceive they have a comparative advantage.

While there were differing points of view expressed, there was, despite the amazing diversity of cultures that occur in the country, a strong sense of national pride and purpose. I gained some understanding of why so many of the Malaysians I met demonstrated such enthusiasm for getting on with the job from a young man who was my guide through the Kota Kinabalu National Park. When I asked him why there were extensive patch clearings of rainforest on the 30 degree slopes adjacent to the park, he explained that the clearings were made for paddy fields. The farmers there are dependant on shifting cultivation (which involves slashing and burning of the forest) to create the fertility needed to produce the annual rice crop. If the rice crop is not produced the farmers have a pretty tough time, he explained, because there are no social security nets in Sabah. He spoke with some authority, because his father, mother, brothers and sisters all depended on the paddy fields for their survival.

There were a number of papers at the conference from authors who were responsible for managing tropical rainforest in a number of Commonwealth countries who confirmed that the loss of tropical rainforest is principally the result of clearing for agriculture. One of the themes of the conference was the key role that sustainable forest management has to play in conserving the rainforest. There was general agreement that unless farmers, like my guide's family, can derive some income from the forest, the tropical rainforest would continue to be destroyed.

I was impressed by the vigour with which many speakers from tropical countries, including the Prime Minister of Malaysia, condemned the actions of organisations based in wealthy countries, which in the words of one of the speakers were "sabotaging" attempts to develop sustainable management strategies for forests by seeking to impose bans on tropical forest products such as timber.

I will leave it to readers to determine the relevance of the above to conservation and management of public lands in Western Australia.

Dr Syd Shea, Executive Director

A fence to outfox the ferals

EARLIER this year Kimberley regional and district staff completed a rainforest fencing project to keep out feral cattle and donkeys from the wilds of Cape Bougainville.

Cape Bougainville is 200 square kilometres of wilderness, remote, including more than 700 hectares (10 per cent) of the State's rainforest, and is one of the few places in the Kimberley not yet colonised by these animals.

The cattle and donkeys not only trample and destroy vegetation, they also open up the denuded ground to invasion by savannah grasses which, when dry, provide ideal fuel for bush fires.

Joint venture

Those involved in the fencing project were a combination of CALM regional and East Kimberley district officers: district manager Mark Pittavino, district operations officer and project field coordinator David Grosse, regional projects officer Alan Thomson, district wildlife officer Russell Gueho, ranger Alex Rogers, and the crew and officers of the Royal Australian Navy patrol boat HMAS Wollongong

Cape Bougainville is accessible only by air or sea. The five CALM staff travelled for one-and-a-half days each way on the Wollongong, which also carried the necessary fencing materials, food, water, tents, etcetera.

Because the land is an Aboriginal Reserve. permission to carry out the project was obtained from the Aboriginal Lands Trust, which administers the area.

Two kilometres of

By Verna Costello

three-strand barbed wire were used to construct the fence stretching from west to east of Cape Bougainville, across the neck that connects it to the mainland.

The total project was completed in nine steamy days in the wet season. This included three days total travelling time, with the team finishing the fence by the sixth day, and spending the remaining one-and-ahalf days on an inventory of fauna and flora.

A cyclone, approaching from the south, dissipated before reaching the team, but the remnants still made for a rough return trip on the high seas.

The team members were a tough lot, making light of extremely harsh conditions.

They slept on the ground under tarpaulins, amid the rain and lightning that occurred on most nights, and working in the heat and humidity during the day took the fun out of every aspect of the job, all of which had to be done by hand.

This included the spreading of fencing materials along the fenceline, manually clearing two kilometres of fenceline and digging the post holes. There were no services or facilities for 'soft living' ('soft living' being equated with showers, beds, airconditioning, toilets etcetera).

Curious croc

There were lighter moments. As it approached shore with the first load of fencing and camp supplies, Alex and David's punt occasionally became an adventure. The cooperation of the

The Wollongong had to anchor six kilometres from shore as the waters between were uncharted, therefore

attracted the attention of a

large saltwater crocodile

that had to be fended off by

Alex using an oar.

Consequently, the numerous trips it took to ferry materials to shore by a 14-foot CALM punt and a 15-foot naval dinghy

Alan Thomson ties wire to fence posts in far from ideal conditions.

Photo by Russell Gueho

Navy in this exercise was greatly appreciated and vital for the successful completion of the project.

The project was made possible by CALM principal research scientist Norm McKenzie who successfully negotiated with the Federal Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories (DASET) for fundi of \$9000.

The grant was made as part of its National Rainforest Conservation Program.

Staff will return about once a year to carry out maintenance work on the fence and to continue the biological surveying of this fascinating area.

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Managing Editor: Ron Kawalilak Editor: Verna Costello Contributing Editor: David Gough Design and Layout: Sandra Van Brugge, Stacey Strickland

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Dinner at the dogs

NO, not a dog's dinner, but a CALM Social Club nosh-up in the private function room at Cannington Greyhounds, cnr Station Street and Albany Highway, on Saturday November 20. Note it in your diary.

Dear Dr Shea,

points.

success.

THE above Association

recently sponsored a

Landcare and Environment

Action (LEAP) program

here in Nannup. The six-

month program resulted in

a delightful riverside walk

trail with look-outs and

timber seating at strategic

Our committee wishes

to thank the local CALM

office for their valued

assistance in making this

project an outstanding

on-the-job supervisors from

CALM and a coordinating

We were supported by

For \$5 for Social Club members and \$40 nonmembers, the victuals (food) include a five course carvery buffet, accompanied by house spirits, (no, not ghosts) for a four-hour period, while beer, wine and soft drinks

will be available from 6.30pm Saturday through to 1.00am the following

There will by mystery and spot prizes and you will be royally entertained by a disc jockey. You can even bet your cash on the

canines. Contact Rick Currion on (09) 334 0329 for further details.

Note: Total cost to each member bringing a partner

THIS column is divided into sections dealing with 'for hire', 'for sale', 'surplus equipment', 'swap', or 'wanted'. If you have any equipment or requirement that you wish to advertise through this service, please send or fax type-written details to:

> The Editor, CALM NEWS,

Corporate Relations Division

Wanted

6 x 4 single axle trailer in reasonable condition. Contact: Terry Ashcroft Jarrahdale (09) 525 5293.

For Sale

Toshiba T2000 (AT) Notebook computer, 3 megb. RAM and VGA screen. Price neg. Phone Patrick (09) 334 0500.

Complete sets of original Forest Focus publications. individual publications, all in excellent condition. Phone Paul Marsh, Manjimup (097) 711 788.

Spend \$600 on new hard

disk and Apple Mac PC is

yours. Phone Peter Hollings

(09) 334 0372.

One CRT Valetrange VDU monitor arm in excellent condition. Normally \$300. Also Will sell for \$150 to first to call Natalie Burton (09) 538 1078

For Hire

Lewis saw with experienced operators. \$30.00/ hr plus wages and plant. Contact Peter Moore, Collie (097) 34 1988.

officer who ensured that all stages completed were of an excellent standard.

TOR...LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The men involved were Carl Beck, Bill Stallard and Jim Green.

Please accept the sincere thanks of our committee for the expertise and manpower extended by CALM during this

We intend making another submission for funding when this is available and we look forward to the continued support of CALM to achieve our goals. Yours faithfully,

Nannup Tourist Ass.Inc.

STAFF NEWS

Appointments:

Bobi Hollier, Officer, Bunbury.

Promotions confirmed:

Simon Hancocks, Senior Policy Officer, Nature Conservation Division, Crawley; Kerry Ruddick, Data Processing Supervisor, Finance Branch, Como; Annie Holt, User Support Officer, Timber Supply Branch, Como; John Lloyd, District Manager, Manjimup; Mark Brabazon, Executive Officer, Corporate Executive, Crawley; Stefan Kern, Senior Computer Operator, Information Systems Branch, Como.

It's geo-logical

Melaleuca arenaria it is written: 'Presumed extinct and unknown in cultivation. There seems little hope that this species will be rediscovered.'

The plant was collected only once, in 1922 by botanist Charles Gardner. Seventy years later at Dwellingup I decided that this was the plant with which I could test a theory -the practicality of applying geology in prospecting for rare and endangered plants.

Gardner wandered Western Australia for decades, discovering and gathering information on its plants.

The man has been described as erratic, excitable, energetic, enigmatic, fortuitous and more. His character, style, energy and abilities are legend.

Many of Gardner's plant locations, however, are vague and sometimes even misleading. Nevertheless, he took pride in correctly describing a discovered plant's habitat.

This means his soil

by Rob Buehrig

descriptions are accurate and this led me to believe that the key to unlocking Gardner's M. arenaria location was geology.

The advantage of using geology is threefold, and is like looking for a book in a library, once we know the subject and recognize its

First, by subject, we know it is on this shelf, not that one

Second, since we have the cover programmed in our mind's eye, it is more easily recognised and plucked from the shelf.

Third, using a computer to re-index, we can quickly shift from the subject to a specific book, then to all books on the subject.

Gardner described the soil habitat of M. arenaria as 'yellow sandy gravelly

He also named the plant arenaria,' which means 'pertaining to or growing

Reading the reference key on the Geological

Survey Map of Corrigin, we find: ... reworked Cainozoic sandplain yellow and white sand containing locally abundant limonite pebbles'.

Checking the map for the occurrence of the formation near Gardner's original M. arenaria location, we see it in a large nature reserve nearby.

Without stepping from the office, we have laid out the strategy.

The field stage of my search for M. arenaria, was on a three-day field trip in the Narrogin District.

It was a Friday and the Corrigin Water Reserve gate, behind which I wanted to find some plants, was locked.

My subconscious mind must have prearranged that I be only 55 kilometres from Gardner's footsteps trodden 70 years ago.

I made a dash for my spot on the map and was delighted. There, surrounding me in abundance as I stepped from my car, was Melaleuca arenaria.

The geologic approach



Snr. technical officer Rob Buehrig shows us the location of Melaleuca arenaria. Photo by Barbara Giles.

is simple, cheap and has great potential as a time saver when searching for rare and endangered plants.

In addition, the method gives a double thrill to the chase. First, by revealing a plant's secrets in the office and second, when it is discovered, where expected, in the field.

Note: Using the geology method, another population of M. arenaria was found on a recent trip to the Narrogin District.

Vermin proofing of **Thomson Lake NR**

CALM's Perth District has just completed more than nine kilometres of vermin-proof fencing around Thomson Lake Nature Reserve.

Thomson Lake is part of a chain of wetlands in the Beeliar Regional Park and the fence is being erected to protect wildlife from foxes and domestic

A number of sponsors, including Alcoa Australia, Homeswest and City of

Cockburn, have supplied finance and materials to help with the project.

Perth district reserves officer Rod Martyn said that the reserve was an important breeding site and refuge for water birds and one of the few pristine freshwater wetlands in the Perth area

"The lake is included in the Ramsar Treaty of Wetlands of World Importance," Rod said.

The reserve includes

some .300 hectares of woodland and open forest and supports a diverse range of flora and fauna.

Construction of the vermin-proof fence was coordinated by Perth District at Wanneroo and included construction teams from Dwellingup.

CALM intends to introduce guided tours of Thomson Lake which is expected to become a major focal point for research and environmental education.

way is best

USERS of Shark Bay World Heritage Area are favourably disposed towards CALM's presence and see its management of the area's environment as he only way to preserve Shark Bay's special qualities, according to a

recent survey. The survey found that users valued its enormous area, diversity of landscapes and seascapes, the fishing, vegetation and availability of camping areas on the edge of the marine park.

Planning team members, some of whom travelled to Shark Bay in the July school holidays, talked to visitors, in particular boat users and campers around the shoreline of the marine park, from Peron Peninsula including Big Lagoon, and south around the shoreline of Freycinet Estuary.

by Allan Padgett

The information-gathering exercise, conducted by Gascoyne district manager Ron Shepherd, and planning officers Andrew Hill, Sue Hancock and me, was made possible by the participation of Swan Region marine operations manager Greg Pobar, rangers Mike Osmond and John Edwards, and their boat, Gandara. Gascoyne district staff, in particular ranger-in-charge Rex Walker, also provided valuable assistance.

The Gandara covered 451 nautical miles in 10 days, visiting areas ranging from Salutation, Three Bays and North Guano Island Nature Reserves in Freycinet Estuary to Broadhurst Reef, the wreck of the Gudrun, Faure Island and various

Greg Pobar confiscates illegally set nets in Shark Bay Marine Park. Photo by Sue Hancock

campsites including Baba Head, Shelter and Bottle Bays

An early focus of the survey was on encouraging public input to the planning process for the Shark Bay Marine Reserves Draft Management Plan.

Questionnaires were circulated throughout the Shark Bay World Heritage Area gathering input from residents and visitors on what they saw as the important values of Shark Bay, the places visited and the types of activities undertaken, and ways in which management of the area might be improved, further facilities provided, and opportunities for recreation enhanced.

Each person contacted was asked to complete and return the questionnaire to CALM for analysis by Aminya Koch, technical officer for the Shark Bay

Altogether 50 vessels were contacted on the water, and many boat owners were spoken to on jetties and at camping

Members of the planning team also spoke with 48 other campers and left each with a questionnaire for completion.

The appreciation by planners of the marine park's awesome sense of space and magnificent seascapes was tempered on a number of occasions by the discovery of illegally set fishing lines and nets, (subsequently confiscated).

Many of the fish were undersized, illustrating that the illegal efforts of some remain to spoil the sustainability of Shark Bay's popular and prolific recreational fisheries.

Such issues are being considered in the preparation of the Fisheries Management Plan and the Shark Bay Marine Reserves Plan.

We discovered people were keen to express their views on the World Heritage Area, and the planning team will make use of the extensive new data in developing appropriate objectives and recommendations for the management plans, in particular for the marine reserves, but also for the terrestrial reserves and

another bonus in raising the profile of CALM in the marine park.

Gandara, sporting the CALM logo and the presence of CALM staff were well received by the public.



Natalie Burton (left) and Di Watts are definitely not available. Photo by Tammie Reid

Upfront efficiency

CONTRARY to the sign below them, these efficient and cheery front sale or tender.

They are far too valuable to the operation of Dwellingup District Office.

Natalie Burton and Di Watts have been doing some fact finding about the role and function of Swan Region's front counters and the needs of the staff who manage these high profile positions

In their quest for truth, they took a critical look at their own front counter and immediately made changes.

A vase of fresh flowers did wonders and the removal of out-dated pamphlets and posters, was a relief.

Rationalising what information to display and limiting it to local districts by Tammie Reid

counter staff are not for and relevant saleable publications, was like a breath of fresh air and it created heaps of space.

> They organised the pamphlet display under simple headings and featured CALM's current products and programs in demand from their district.

"The biggest change we made was getting rid of all the little signs that had accumulated over the years. On top of this we counted six 'no smoking' signs in the foyer alone, something of an overkill," said Natalie.

Wendy Herbertson volunteered her signwriting skills and there's now a uniformity and style to all the signs.

"The signs look good and seem more effective as people tend to notice and read them without getting lost in the clutter, said Di.

"We've also rewritten the tea fund reminder notice and even that seems to be working, with money in it for a change."

Part-time clerical officer Lisa Craig helped review the situation and identified 13 functions that staff perform at the counter and 18 responsibilities that they fulfil while working in the front counter area and that was on a quiet

A discussion paper listing the issues and ways to resolve them will be circulated by Swan Region Visitor Services.

The primary focus is for Swan Region offices, but anyone else interested in reading this document, can phone Natalie at Dwellingup.



Shark Bay fisheries. The field trip achieved The sight of the

Rebecca 'Harrises' the heavy haulers

WHEN it comes to motor vehicle maintenance, CALM Kirup's Rebecca Harris wields a mean spanner, whether she is repairing a car or heavy earthmoving equipment, such as the district's bulldozer.

Rebecca began employment with CALM as an apprentice mechanic in December, 1989 and since then her tasks have included welding, fabrication, chainsaw maintenance, and the servicing of normal plant fleet and heavy machinery.

District manager Peter Bidwell said that while no concessions had been made because of her gender, Rebecca had no difficulty in fitting into a traditionally male-dominated field.

"From day one, her conscientious approach to her work, plus an outgoing and effervescent personality, have ensured

by Julie Tassone

her popularity acceptance by both work colleagues and supervisors," Peter said.

Following the Collie Health and Fitness Seminar attended by all Kirup district staff last December, Rebecca lost no time in volunteering to instruct staff in aerobics.

She conducts a session one morning each week as part of the district's fitness program.

Rebecca said she had interested in mechanics from the time she was little more than an ankle-biter "helping dad repair the family car."

So it came as no surprise to family and friends when she seized the chance to spend a year at Bunbury TAFE College in a preapprenticeship program as a fitter-machinist.

This was followed by her four-year apprenticeship with CALM, during which time she also attended technical college for one day a week for three

Rebecca's apprenticeship finishes early in December, 1993 after which her position at Kirup is uncertain.

If CALM were able to offer her continuing employment, she says she would be happy to carry on in her present position.

"If this is not to be, I've been offered six months work with a private firm, fixing trucks and earthmoving equipment," Rebecca said.

"Meanwhile, maintain a positive outlook about my prospects after that," she said.

Rebecca Harris examines a vehicle from the CALM Kirup fleet. Photo by Julie Tassone



Mice make out

THERE is now every indication that the translocaton of the threatened Shark Bay Mouse (Pseudomys fieldi) to Doole Island in Exmouth Gulf is succeeding.

Until June of this year, this native rodent was found only on Bernier Island, 40 kilometres west of Carnarvon and was regarded as one of Australia's most threatened mammals.

Establishing another population was considered a priority for the recovery of the species and Doole Island was selected by the recovery team as the first translocation site.

It was considered suitable because it is large enough to support a viable

by Keith Morris

population and has a suitable sandy habitat.

It has no exotic predators or competitors such as cats or foxes. It does have a goanna population so some predation is bound to occur, although not at levels likely to jeopardise the success of the translocation exercise.

It is also readily accessible for CALM staff.

June, Peter Speldewinde, the technical officer overseeing the recovery of the species, took 27 mice from Bernier Island and released them on to Doole Island with the help of the Exmouth district staff.

> Close monitoring

through radio-tracking and trapping indicated that these pioneers liked their new habitat and soon established their own home ranges and burrow sites.

Since June, another 17 mice have been taken from Bernier and added to the Doole Island population.

Some of the original females have now bred on Doole Island and the animals have established up to three kilometres from their release site.

Peter reported his findings from Doole Island to the recovery team, comprising members from CALM, Australian Nature Conservation Agency (formerly ANPWS), World Wide Fund for Nature, CSIRO and Useless Loop Salt, in September.

Iced POP goes to the bush

DWELLINGUP'S health and safety coordinator Mark Humble has organised a set of gooey blue ice packs (officially known as reusable cold com-presses) to be kept all Dwellingup workplace freezers.

Mark realised that the risk of sprains and muscle injuries is possibly greater in the field and that it isn't always practical to take out an Esky each day just to keep a 'gooey blue' on hand.

With the help of Taryn Linning at the store, Mark tracked down a cheap and practical alternative - By Tammie Reid

instant cold compresses that are simple to use.

Stored at room temperature, they are squeezed until there is a POP! then shaken to activate the ammonium nitrate and water.

A single-use product, made by ACE, the cost is about \$8 per pack.

Just a reminder, in case of bruising, sprains, strains and dislocations, apply the RICE formula.

The aim of RICE is to prevent blood rushing into the injured area by reducing

swelling and minimising bruising.

Recovery will be much

quicker and the injured tissue will more likely heal without complications:

R - rest the casualty and the injured part.

I - icepacks wrapped in cloth may be applied to the injury for 20 minutes and reapplied every two hours for the first 24 hours, then every four hours for a further 24 hours.

C - compression bandages, such as elastic bandages, should be applied to extend well beyond the injury.

E - elevate the injured

part so it is above the heart and helps to drain the area of excessive fluid.

Another emergency ice pack can be found among food stored in your freezer -a bag of peas. Some peop' swear they are more effective than over-thecounter cold compresses. Make sure there are no tiny holes in the bag.

Better still, play safe by placing the lot inside another plastic bag. Cold mushy pea water is neither a pretty sight nor a pleasant sensation. Oh, and please do resist any scrooge-like temptation to cook 'em up and eat 'em later!

Volunteer guides get busy

THE Canning River Volunteer Guides have been active over the past few months running a variety of tours in the regional park. On Foundation Day at

Kent Street Weir they were busy all day taking small groups on half hour walks around Wilson Lake and Ferndale Flats. With the assistance of a

pilot from the Department of Planning and Urban Development, they also took boat trips on the Dyalgarra upstream as far as Greenfield Street Bridge. Despite the number of

people in the park and the noise of model steamboats and bush band music, birdlife was in abundance.

Sightings included spoonbills, herons, mountain

Volunteer guide Earl Howe tries firelighting the traditional way - but it looked did it! Photo by Stephen Faulds

by Stephen Faulds

ducks, swamp hens, darters, cormorants and grebes as well as the ubiquitous black ducks and an occasional hybrid.

A highlight of the guides' program in May was the Frog and Insect Tour led by John Dell from the WA Museum. As the winter rains were late arriving there were no frogs to be seen, but John brought along a couple of his own froggy friends, one of which was the unusual turtle frog, a small burrowing frog. Unlike most frogs, the

turtle frog doesn't hop, but simply pushes itself along the ground. Its short front legs are designed primarily for burrowing.

Other features of the walk included the webmaking of orb spiders and the symbiotic relationship between mistletoe and the mistletoe bird that eats the

sticky red seeds and deposits them on the branches of the host tree.

In August, there was a

tour featuring CALM wildlife officer Trevor Walley, who spoke on traditional Aboriginal use just some of its many uses. of the land and pointed out features of the wetland environment which had significance or use for Aborigines. On an earlier walk with

the Canning River Guides, Trevor pointed out that many native plants which are generally regarded as of little consequence, or purely of decorative value. were very important to the survival and culture of Aboriginal people. The zamia for example,

known as djiriji, provided food. Its flat brown seeds are poisonous unless treated in the correct way. A woolly fibre from the plant was used by Aboriginal women for sanitary purposes.

The blackboy or

'wuangai' had so many uses it was almost sacred. It was used as a firestick, its seeds were ground to make a kind of bread and the foliage was used for ceremonial head-dresses. These were

On a forthcoming tour

Trevor will be talking about other food sources such as fungi and roots. He will also give some of the history of Yagan and other tribespeople of the Canning River area. Trevor and John are just

two of many guest speakers engaged by the Canning River Guides to assist in improving public awareness of the park environment and to broaden the knowledge of the guides themselves.

Walks planned for the coming months include a closer look at fungi in the wetlands, spring-flowering orchids and a birdwalk with a guest speaker from the Royal Australian Ornithologists' Union.