

Western greys safely moved

GROUPS of western grey kangaroos in the Esperance area have been relocated in the interests of visitor health and safety.

The animals have been moved from Lucky Bay campsite in Cape Le Grand National Park to Helms Forestry Reserve, a 3600 hectare block north of Esperance.

CALM Esperance wildlife officer Bernie Haberley said the western grey's numbers had increased to the extent that fiercer competition for territory and food had occurred.

"It was the big male 'roos we were worried about; if they'd been left at Lucky Bay they could have become aggressive towards humans as well as each other," Bernie said.

"Serious injury being inflicted on visitors to the campsite was a distinct possibility.

"The 'roos were relocated in two lots, with each lot comprising a family group.

"However, we're leaving enough young animals at Lucky Bay for tourists to see as this is one of the park's highlights, particularly for overseas visitors.

"Unfortunately, tourists love to feed these animals, which leads to an increase in their numbers, and unless people get tired

of feeding them, which is highly unlikely, further relocations may become necessary.

"To reduce this possibility, park staff will, through the use of signs and by personal contact, try to educate and discourage visitors from

by
Verna Costello

feeding the kangaroos.

"Helms Forestry Reserve was chosen for the relocation destination as it's well stocked with food and water and

because it's close to Esperance we'll be able to monitor the 'immigrant animals' closely."

The Lucky Bay 'roos also will be monitored each year to determine if further relocations will be necessary.

Bernie had a warning

for would-be recreational shooters hoping to bag a western grey:

"Don't—regardless of how high their numbers are, kangaroos are still a protected species and there's a penalty of up to \$4000 with confiscation of firearms," he said.



Esperance district wildlife officer Bernie Haberley, with son Thomas (3), releases a kangaroo in Helm's Forestry Reserve. Photo courtesy Esperance Express



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Officer Bernie Haberley releases a
aroo into Helm's Aboretum under the
inated eye of his son Thomas (3).