

Fitzgerald River National Park report released

A scientific report on the flora, fauna and conservation values of Fitzgerald River National Park has revealed that it is one of the most diverse areas for flora and fauna in WA. For example, although some 1300 plant species were already known from the park, the survey took this number to nearly 1750—more than those recorded for the entire British Isles!

In addition, 184 species of birds, 41 reptiles, 21 mammals and 11 frogs were recorded, including many species that are rare and endangered.

The report was released at an informal launch at Twertup Field Studies Centre within the park.

The survey began in 1985 after the Fitzgerald River National Park Association was suc-

cessful in obtaining National Estate Programme funding of \$80 000 from the Western Australian Heritage Committee to employ both a zoologist and a botanist for two years to conduct the survey.

In due course, Andy Chapman (now CALM's ecologist in the Goldfields Region) was appointed as the zoologist, and the late Ken Newbey as botanist.

In addition, fifty members of the Fitzgerald River National Park Association contributed a total of 407 working days towards establishing the survey; this involved 50 people whose efforts were directed, largely, towards digging and checking about 600 pit traps.

CALM contributed with administrative help, ranger assistance, techni-

cal advice, materials for the survey, loan of a truck and drilling rig, and publication of the results in the April 1995 issue of *CALMScience*.

Launching the scientific report at Twertup, CALM's South Coast Regional Manager John Watson praised the high level of co-operation from all involved.

"The timing of the study was crucial, as it immediately preceded the beginning of CALM's management plan for the Fitzgerald River National Park in 1987, John said.

"This meant that arguments to protect the nature conservation values of the area were based on fact and not upon assumptions or emotions, one of the key principles espoused by Ken Newbey."

Andy Chapman also thanked the many peo-

ple who had contributed to the survey and paid tribute to Ken Newbey, who had passed away the year following completion of the fieldwork.

The meeting was also addressed by Ian Worth, the son of the late Doreen and Horace Worth, who built Twertup as a residence adjacent to their quarrying business in 1963.

Ian expressed the view that his parents would have been pleased that Twertup had been maintained and used for environmental studies and recreation purposes.

Having Ian and Leila Worth present was a bonus, and the choice of Twertup for the occasion was appropriate to what became an enjoyably nostalgic weekend, that brought together many of the people who helped with the 1985-87 survey.



Andy Chapman and Brenda Newbey at the launch. Photo by Kaye Vaux

