

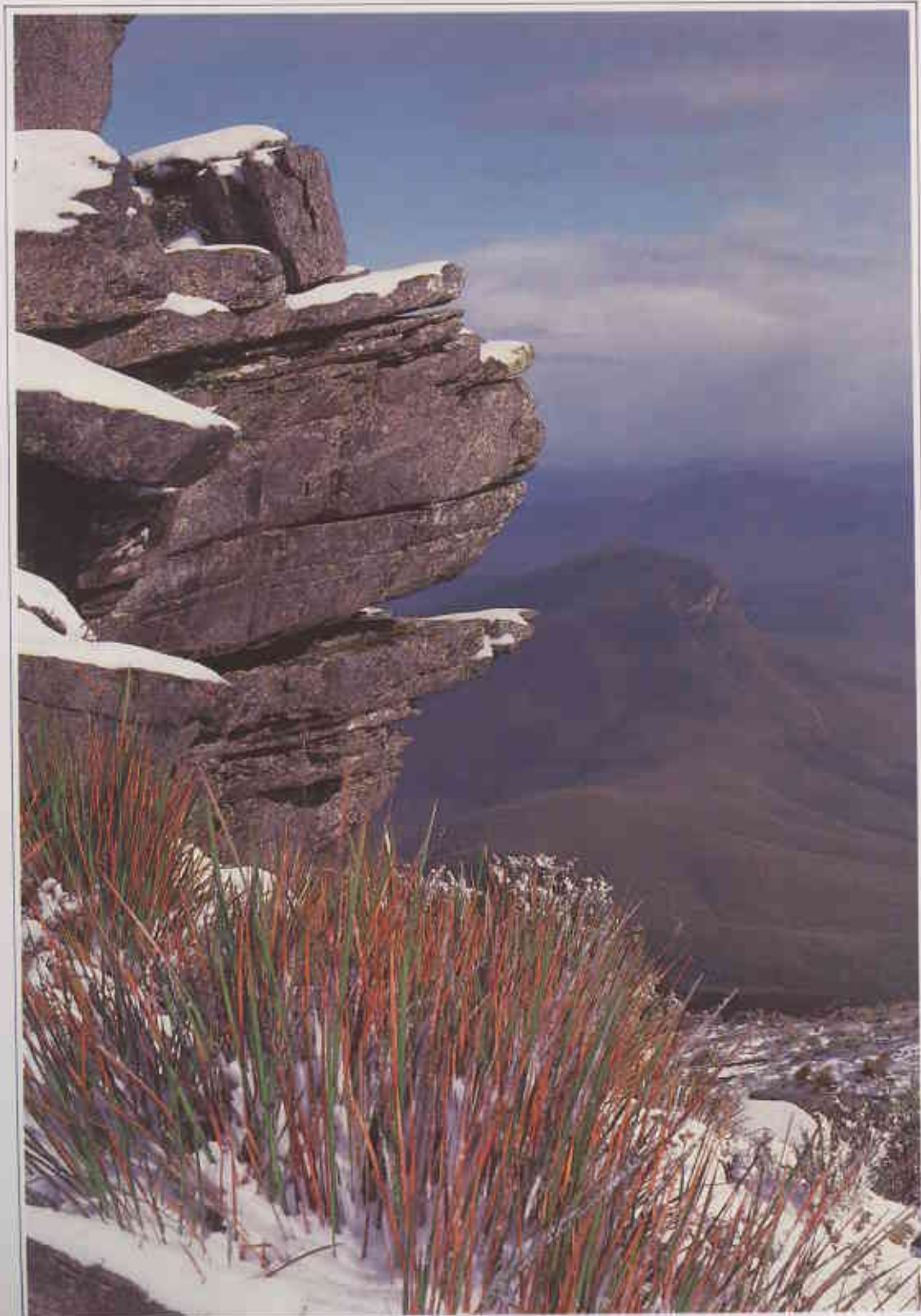


We've all heard that life in the deep south is tough, but winter in the Stirling Ranges is obviously the icing on the cake.

Assistant Ranger Allan Rose, and Ranger-in-Charge Brad Cockman were patrolling the top of Bluff Knoll in the Stirling Range National Park one chill winter morning in July when the weather gave them a taste of foreign climes.

The heaviest snowfall for 12 years descended on the Ranges (and rangers), giving Brad and Allan an experience had by few West Australians. Three times during the morning snow-clouds blanketed the high peaks of the ranges, freezing plants solid and leaving snow between 7 and 10 cm deep on the ridges, and halfway down the sides of Bluff Knoll.

In keeping with the hallowed traditions of a European heritage, Brad just had to build a 1.2 m snowman on top of the knoll. Allan was brave enough to pose for the photo even though he was directly in front of a 600 m drop. Later, Allan took these incredible pictures. Who needs a Cook's tour of Europe anyway?





Landscape

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COVER PHOTO

A tender moment between human and whale shows the care which was a feature of the highly successful Augusta whale rescue.

Photo courtesy of the Western Mail.

A Conflict of Interests

Why are there so many conflicts when it comes to our natural environment? There is conflict among industrial groups exploiting natural resources; environmentalists advocating preservation of wildlife; government agencies; and recreation groups.

In an ideal world we would have a total understanding about ecosystems and natural resources, and of the long term needs of the community. But this is not an ideal world, and much of the conflict stems from a lack of agreement about environmental impact and human needs.

Take whale strandings for instance. From the time whales beach, tissue damage occurs due to a rise in body temperature and the sheer weight of the mammal. We don't know how long they have to lie there and how hot they have to get before the chances of survival are next to nil. Strandings may be part of a natural culling process or accidents caused by human impact on the environment. And, what about the people who turn out in large numbers under often adverse conditions, and become so emotionally caught up in saving these creatures? What weight do we put on their need?

It is not an ideal world. We are a long way from knowing the answers to too many important questions.

There is a need for more investigation, better communication and a broader understanding of environmental processes and human needs.

This brings us to *Landscape* and its purpose. Its prime objective is to achieve an understanding about conservation of ecosystems and management of natural resources.

Landscape's aim is to provide expert information on the major conservation issues, latest developments, research in progress and general features of the State's wildlife, national and marine parks, nature reserves and forests.

It will give a balanced representation of viewpoints and will not shy from contentious issues.

Landscape will inform readers about the natural wonders of our environment, the management considerations involved and the lifestyle of its inhabitants. It will not provide all the answers, but it will present the facts and therefore a basis for sound argument.

Landscape is Western Australia's own conservation and wildlife magazine.

Wetlands

The theme for this year's World Environment Day has been 'Wetlands — Not just for the Birds'. In this issue of *Landscape* we feature the ecological importance of wetlands.