

FOREST REVIEW RELEASED

A major review of forest management in Western Australia has been released.

A new 80 000 hectare national park is proposed, containing 32 000 hectares of virgin jarrah, karri and tingle forests and the highest quality wilderness values in the south-west.

The national park will stretch from the Frankland River to the Denmark River, linking the Mt Frankland and proposed Mt Lindesay National Parks and the Lake Muir Nature Reserve.

The park is only one of 18 new conservation reserves proposed in south-west forests, totalling 124 000 hectares.

Despite these massive additions to the conservation reserve system, the review maintains that existing levels of wood yield from the forest can be sustained in perpetuity.

Forest managers realised that estimates of the level of wood production in the 1987 Timber Strategy were too conservative, as a result of sophisticated technological developments that made it possible to make precise estimates of the standing volume of wood, the size class distribution, and growth rates of the forest.

The level of sustainable



wood harvest from the karri and jarrah forest is 1 360 000 cubic metres of jarrah, 417 000 cubic metres of karri and 508 000 cubic metres of marri.

'Operation Foxglove' is another initiative of the review. Research has shown that the introduced fox is the most serious cause of small mammal

decline in forest areas and is arguably the greatest threat to conservation and biological diversity of the forest fauna.

CALM will dramatically increase fox control in WA forests to boost the numbers of threatened native animals in key areas. The Department has set a 10-year target to make 20 per cent of the forest fox-free.

Important changes to timber harvesting operations have also been recommended. More old trees will be retained, smaller and more dispersed sites will be cut, harvesting will follow natural vegetation lines to minimise visual impact and the size of individual areas to be harvested will be reduced dramatically.

If the recommendations of the review are accepted, every stream in the forest will be

Tingle forest will be included in a new 80 000 hectare national park that is proposed under the review of forest management.
Photo - Grant Wardell-Johnson

Below: The Albany pitcher plant, which is confined to a few swampy areas near Albany, is one of the unique plants that will be protected under the new plan.
Photo - Grant Wardell-Johnson

protected from timber harvesting, extending existing river and stream zones by five times their present area. In total, 63 100 hectares in the Southern Forest and 91 400 hectares in the Central Forest and Swan regions will be allocated to river and stream zones - a total of 154 000 hectares (see article on page 40).

Sites with cultural, water, aesthetic and conservation significance will also be given special protection.

Another highlight of the review was a cooperative study between CALM and the Australian Heritage Commission.

The two agencies have worked closely to assess WA's southern forest for heritage values worthy of listing in the Register of National Estate, a national inventory of significant places in Australia's cultural and natural history.

More than 100 day use visitor sites in WA forests will be redeveloped or upgraded over the next 10 years, and at least 10 new campsites in forest areas will be developed to cater for increased demand.

The public is invited to make submissions on the review of forest management, which is open for comment for three months.



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Each year more people seek wilderness experiences, but many are unprepared for the difficulties they might encounter. Learn about the basics of outback safety and bushcraft on page 35.



Botanists search for a eucalypt last seen by Giles in his expedition across WA deserts 115 years ago. See page 28.



Will the honey possum become a secondary victim of dieback disease? See page 22.



Australia is a land of lizards - tough competitors evolving amid spinifex and wildfires in the Great Victoria Desert. Turn to page 10.



Straight and vigorous pines don't grow by accident. Years of research and breeding have gone into producing the perfect pine. See page 49.

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COVER

The tiny honey possum (*Tarsipes rostratus*), seen in our cover illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky, feeds almost exclusively on nectar and pollen. However, most of its important food plants are threatened by dieback disease caused by the *Phytophthora* fungi. The endangered scarlet banksia (*Banksia coccinea*) is one plant species used by the possums that is highly susceptible to the dieback disease. See story on page 22.



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