

DRYANDRA OF COURSE

The beauty and ecology of Dryandra Woodland is ready to be explored through a weekend course offered by CALM.

Participants will have first hand experiences with Dryandra's native plants and animals as well as Aboriginal culture. The course aims to develop an understanding of the complexities of conservation issues and familiarise people with research techniques.

The scenic Dryandra Woodland protects wandoo woodland and brown mallet plantations on the edge of the

Wheatbelt about 160 km south-east of Perth.

On a recent course, CALM Senior Research Scientist Tony Friend demonstrated some of the research and recovery practices which helped bring the numbat, WA's mammal emblem, back from the brink of extinction. Course participants then tried their hands at radio-tracking, baiting and trapping native animals in the woodland.

When Tony began research on numbats in 1982, spotting one numbat per 200 km of driving in Dryandra was the norm. After more than a

decade of research and an extensive fox baiting program, it is possible to see more than 20 numbats per 200 km. As well as numbats, participants can also see endangered tammar wallabies, red-tailed phascogales and woylies.

Part of the fascination with the recovery of numbats lies in the clever method of baiting foxes. When baiting any feral animals, care must be taken not to damage native species.

The task has been made easier in Dryandra by using a toxic substance that exists naturally in poison plants (*Gastrolobium* spp.). Native animals have lived with it long enough to develop a tolerance, but as foxes are a more recent introduction to this area, they are not so lucky. The result is that foxes which eat the bait die, while native meat-eating animals such as the chuditch are unaffected.

Another important part of the course is understanding and participating in Aboriginal cultural activities. CALM's Aboriginal Liaison Officer Noel Nannup demonstrated how

his Nyoongar ancestors in the Dryandra area used resources such as ochre, grass trees and even kangaroo droppings. He took the group to a red ochre pit, where he demonstrated a technique used by Aborigines in northern WA to sift ochre using a deceptively simple looking device called a *yandi* dish.

Course participants learnt about Nyoongar culture and technology, and gained an appreciation of Aboriginal people as the first ecologists to manage the landscape.

They also played an entertaining role-playing game to help understand the needs of each community group and find ways of managing the area to accommodate those needs, while maintaining the conservation values.

But the important point participants took away with them was that conservation management is highly complex in and of itself, even before any public consultation process is entered into.

Other topics discussed included brown mallet plantation management, bush corridor use and fox-baiting techniques.

The Dryandra Woodland Ecology Course is offered in spring and autumn. Further details can be obtained by contacting CALM Community Education and Interpretation Officer Lotte Lent on (09) 364 0777 or CALM's Narrogin District Manager Tim Bowra on (098) 811 444.



Above left: Participants try their hands at sifting ochre. Photo - Lotte Lent

Left: CALM's Tony Friend demonstrated the radio-tracking technique used to locate mammals in Dryandra. Photo - Jiri Lochman

LANDSCOPE

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Flower arrangements featuring eucalyptus foliage are becoming popular with florists. Find out why on page 35.



Unseen for more than 100 years and believed to have been extinct, Gilbert's potoroo turned up quite unexpectedly. See page 28.



Salinity is a problem in the State's south-west, but farmers, communities and government agencies are working to find solutions. See page 39.



A giant dragonfly lives in the south-west of Western Australia. You can find out more about this ancient relict of the jarrah forest in 'Western Petalura' on page 52.



The thick-billed grasswren is one of several animals that may be reintroduced to Shark Bay as part of an ambitious project. See 'Return to Eden' on page 22.

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COVER

The stunning royal robe (*Scaevola striata*) is one of a host of fabulous fanflowers found in Western Australia. Suzanne Curry discusses this and other species in the family Goodeniaceae on page 10.

The illustration is by Philippa Nikulinsky.



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