

TWIN KOALAS FOR YANCHEP

A rare and significant event took place at Yanchep National Park in February 1996—the first recorded birth of twin koalas in Western Australia. While twin-koala births are not unheard of, this pair is thought to be unique in having survived infancy.

Koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) breed during the summer months, and females generally produce a single young each year. After a pregnancy of about 35 days, the young koala, which is about a centimetre long and weighs half-a-gram, crawls into its mother's pouch and attaches itself to one of her two nipples for five to six months.

The twins, both females, were born to mother koala Inky and father koala Bindi, both residents of the park, and were first noticed when they started appearing outside their mother's pouch in late August. However, news of their arrival was not released until they had survived the critical first seven months. Now, both look like becoming permanent stars of Yanchep National Park.

To celebrate the birth and survival of the twins, CALM held a naming competition in conjunction with Radio Lollipop and Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH). The winner was 12-year-old Tammie Mires of Bateman, who chose the names 'Euca' and 'Lyptus'. The prize entitles her to a weekend away with her family at Perup Wilderness Lodge (near Manjimup), a set of CALM's Bush Books, a Gold Star Pass, which entitles the family to free entry to all CALM-managed national parks in WA, and a year's subscription to *LANDSCOPE*.

The naming competition gave Western Australian children visiting PMH for



treatment the opportunity to choose names for the twins. The competition was run by Radio Lollipop for CALM during a two-week period, and the winning entry was decided by a panel of representatives from Radio Lollipop, PMH and CALM.

Euca and Lyptus are members of the second generation of koalas, whose parents were among 12 adults born on Kangaroo Island in South Australia. The South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Services had agreed to donate the animals over a three-year period that began in 1992. Before leaving South Australia, the animals were tested for chlamydia, the disease that had decimated Yanchep National Park's older koala inhabitants. Once cleared as disease-free, the 'immigrant' koalas were flown to Western Australia,



courtesy Ansett Australia, which sponsored their flights. Disease-free koalas in the new colony at Yanchep National Park now number 18 adults and four young.

Inky arrived at Yanchep in 1992, aged 18 months, while Bindi arrived in 1994, aged three years. Apart from the twins, Inky has produced one other female, while Bindi has sired a total of four young—the twins and one other female and a male.

Until the arrival of these animals, Yanchep National Park's resident koalas had become widely infected by chlamydia, so they were moved

well away from the newcomers' quarters. Of the older koalas, three females and one male were diseased. There are now only two animals left, a female and a male, quietly seeing out their lives in their 'retirement home'.

Top: 'Euca' and 'Lyptus' check out the inside of a visitor's hat. Photo - Ernie McLintock

Above: Enraptured visitors at the twin koalas' 'coming out' day. Photo - Ernie McLintock

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Shannon National Park is the home of the Great Forest Trees Drive, another nature-based tourist attraction for the south-west. Read the story on page 17.



The rugged Kimberley coast was the location of the first maritime LANDSCOPE Expedition. Read all about it on page 10.



A huge volunteer effort has helped with the renewal of the Montebello Islands and the eradication of feral animals. (See page 47.)



Science has long-known the relationship between plants and habitats. Now we are 'Prospecting for Plants' using landforms as a guide. (See page 23.)

One hundred years ago, two members of an expedition to the Great Sandy Desert became lost. Read what happened to them in 'Land of the Lost' on page 36.

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COVER

The scientific name of the little penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) means 'little diver'. The wings of these flightless seabirds have evolved into flippers for underwater propulsion. The little penguin is the smallest of the 17 penguin species. Penguin Island has the largest colony of little penguins on the west coast. See 'The Changing Face of Penguin Island' on page 28.

Illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky



Managing Editor: Ron Kawallak
Editor: David Gough
Story Editors: Ray Bailey, Verna Costello, Mitzi Vance, Carolyn Thomson
Scientific/technical advice: Andrew Burbidge, Ian Abbott, Paul Jones and staff of CALM's Science & Information Division
Design and production: Maria Duthie, Sue Marais
Finished art: Gooitzen van der Meer, Maria Duthie, Tiffany Abern
Illustration: Gooitzen van der Meer
Cartography: Promaco Geodraft
Marketing: Estelle de San Miguel ☎ (09) 334 0296 Fax: (09) 334 0489
Subscription enquiries: ☎ (09) 334 0481
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