

YOUNG PEOPLE CREATE HOMES FOR NATIVE ANIMALS

Nature conservation has been combined with the employment and training of a group of young people in a major initiative at CALM's Hills Forest Activity Centre at Mundaring.

The group trains under the Commonwealth Government's Green Corp Program, which provides young Australians between 17 and 20 years of age with opportunities to become involved in conservation projects.

The trainees are working with CALM to re-create suitable habitat that will encourage native animals to return to the area around the Centre. This involves building and placing nest boxes in trees, creating rock dens, installing hollow log dens and establishing an animal hide and feeding stations. The group has also undertaken some rehabilitation work, including reseeding cleared areas near the Centre with native species such as sheoaks, jarrah and marri—all part of The Hills Forest Fauna Enhancement Project.

CALM's Mundaring Nature Conservation Program Leader John Carter said the area around the Centre had been heavily logged in the early part of the century for the Mundaring Weir and Goldfields Water Supply Scheme.

"The regrowth forest is relatively young and there's a lack of suitable hollows and dens for native animals," Mr Carter said.

"Through Operation Foxglove (part of Western Shield), which is controlling foxes in the northern jarrah forest, the number of native animals is increasing.

"Monitoring and surveys already show that the number of native animals in the area has steadily increased over the past five years.

"For example, in April 1996, we reintroduced woylies into the forest to the east of the Activity Centre. Our trapping is now revealing second and third generations, which means the animals are doing very well indeed."

Mr Carter said that more than 100 nest boxes, 25 cockatoo 'tubes' and 60 dens had been installed. The nest boxes are for species, such as brush-tailed possums, brush-tailed phascogales, mardos and bats, which need tree hollows. The metre-long tubes, simulating larger tree hollows, have a nest of leaf and wood chips lying over a wire mesh base. Because the smooth interior of the pipes provides no 'claw-hold', there's an internal ladder, so the birds can climb in and out.

The rock dens are for ground animals like the chuditch, quenda, dunnarts and reptiles.

"Now, the new nesting and feeding sites will encourage more native animals to return and breed around The Hills Forest. This, in turn, will provide an opportunity for visitors to the Activity Centre to interact (without interference) with the native animals in their natural habitat," he said.

The Hills Forest Activity Centre is an integral part of CALM's environmental education program, designed so school groups and families can learn



about the forest in a pleasurable way.

The enhancement project is expected to add a further dimension to activities such as *Go Bush!* (which attracts 16,500 people a year), as well as other educational and recreation programs."

The project is also attracting sponsorship: Timber Traders Cockburn, Hamilton Sawmills, Stephanelli Sawmills and Colli and Sons have donated timber and other materials for more boxes, while

Applecross Primary School's fundraising activities have raised \$2,000 towards the project.

Top: Troy Gelder (left) and Corey Connolly digging an animal den.

Photo - John Carter

Above: Green Corps members Leanne Moyle (standing), Linda Trunkfield (right) and Janelle Booth (rear) planting in a degraded area.

Photo - Brad Hasson

LANDSCOPE

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Can WA's sharefarming plantations also help fight greenhouse gases? See 'Farming Carbon' on page 17.



With increased numbers of travellers, the Canning Stock Route is in need of some TLC. See 'A Track Winding Back' on page 10.



The job of a CALM Wildlife Officer is as much about dealing with people as it is about protecting our native wildlife. See 'On the Wild Side' on page 23.



The Esperance Lakes Nature Reserves are a haven for water birds and a significant international wetland. See 'Picture the Lakes' on page 36.



There are billions of tiny white shells lining the 150-km Shell Beach in Shark Bay. But why are there so many concentrated here? Find out more on page 49.

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COVER

Two years into the Western Shield program and already three Western Australian native species have been brought back from the edge of extinction, and others are growing in abundance. 'Bouncing Back', on page 28, looks at the successes of the first two years and at where we hope to be at the turn of the century.

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