

## PROPOSED NINGALOO MARINE PARK EXTENSION SURVEYED

A team of marine researchers headed for North West Cape last October to begin a field survey of the major seabed habitats for a proposed southern extension of the Ningaloo Marine Park.

The proposed extension, covering approximately 30 kilometres of coastline between Amherst Point and Gnaraloo Station, was among the recommendations in the Marine Parks and Reserves Selection Working Group Report, released in 1994. The Working Group identified about 70 sites along Western Australia's 12,500 km coastline that were worthy of further consideration as marine conservation areas.

The survey, co-ordinated

by CALM's Marine Conservation Branch, in collaboration with the Department's Midwest and Pilbara Region staffs, is partly funded by Environment Australia, through the Natural Heritage Trust's Coasts and Clean Seas Marine Protected Areas Program, and by CALM.

CALM Marine Researcher Kevin Bancroft said the main objective of the project was to develop an accurate map showing the distribution and composition of the various marine plant and animal habitats along the seabed of the proposed marine park extension.

"We also pinpointed prominent land and marine landmarks so that we could

more accurately use Landsat satellite images of the area," he said.

"We also collected photos and video footage showing key plants, animals, habitat type and human activities in the area. Areas of high live coral cover and sandy beaches, where marine turtles may come ashore to nest, were also identified. This information will be particularly useful during the public consultation and marine reserve planning processes."

The locations of the field survey sites were based on preliminary interpretations of habitat distributions from aerial photographs and satellite imagery. The data acquired during the survey will be important in determining the relative

conservation values of the respective major habitats of the proposed Ningaloo Reef southern extension. It will also contribute to the information base required for the marine reserve planning process, during which marine reserve boundaries and zones for multiple use will be considered for the area.

Mr Bancroft said the survey team focused on major plant and animal habitats such as coral reefs, algal beds and limestone reef platforms.

Apart from Mr Bancroft, the survey team included CALM's Marine Conservation Branch Manager Dr Chris Simpson, Marine Operations Officer (and 'skipper') Mike Lapwood and Marine Planning Officer Liesl Jonker.

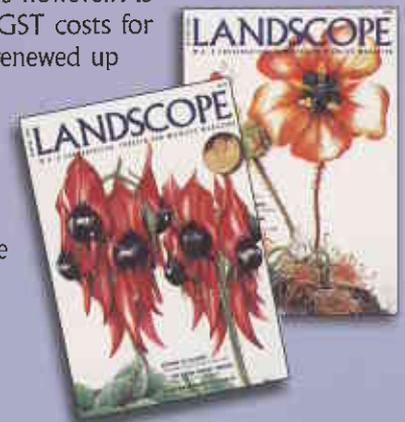
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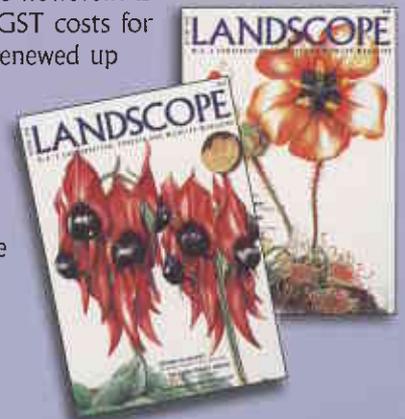
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Winner of the 1998 Alex Harris Medal for excellence in science and environment reporting.

# LANDSCOPE



VOLUME FIFTEEN NUMBER 2, SUMMER 1999–2000



How many seals or sea lions are there around WA's coasts? See 'A Tale of Two Seals' on page 42.



"What I wasn't prepared for was the magic of the experience." See 'Desert Impressions' on page 35 for the story of a LANDSCOPE Expedition.



The malleefowl has declined to 46 per cent of its former range. Read about the combined effort to save it on page 17.



Enjoy the WA environment—and don't get hurt! See 'Balancing Act' on page 23.



Traditional owners are working with CALM and other agencies to manage the land. See page 10.

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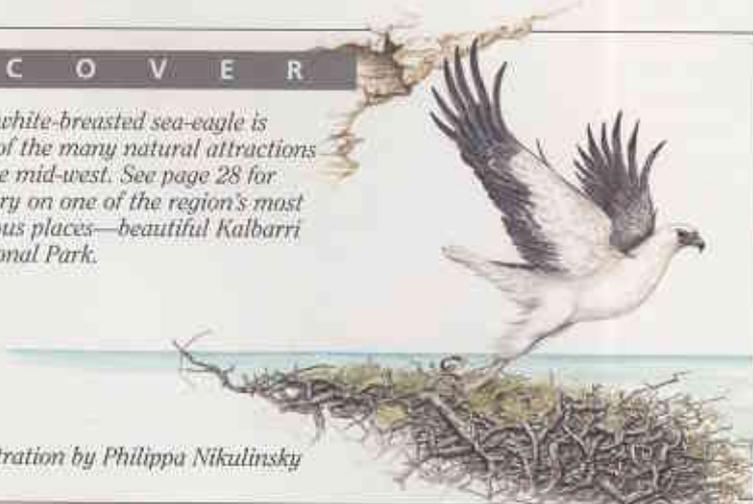


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Colour Separation by Colourbox Digital

Printed in Western Australia by Lamb Print

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Published by  
Department of Conservation and Land Management,  
Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington, Western Australia