

THE NEXT BEST THING TO BEING THERE

Now most of us would rather be visiting and experiencing WA's special places in person. But sometimes, for those of us more confined to the city, raising our families and earning a living, that is just not possible. Luckily, and in the words of my colleague and marketing guru David Chandler, there's always LANDSCOPE.

In this issue we take you from some of the most isolated and beautiful spots in the Kimberley through to a little known but biologically rich area along the south coast. With many stops of interest in between.

Somewhat off the beaten track, is little known Peak Charles National Park. In 'Granite Islands in a Sea of Bush', Land for Wildlife Coordinator Penny Hussey examines the species richness to be found around the granite outcrops that tower over the dry sandplain heaths and salt lake systems south-west of Norseman.

Closer to home for many, and less than 20 minutes drive from central Perth, the Swan River and its foreshores provide habitats for a variety of plants and animals, including the migratory wading birds that travel there from as far afield as Siberia. In 'Discovering the Swan', Carolyn Thomson-Dans, Peter Dans and Ann Storrie explore the conservation significance and recreational attractions of the river, the Swan Estuary Marine Park and its adjacent nature reserves.

In 'Cruising the Wandjina Coast', CALM's Kimberley Regional Manager Chris Done joins a small group of tourists, including internationally-known artist Ken Done (see cover and pages 28-29 and 35), on a trip through some of the natural attractions that make the Kimberley so special.

And in 'Filling the Gaps', Keiran McNamara, Tony Brandis and Angus Hopkins describe the results to date in a multi-million dollar program to develop a conservation reserve system in the Gascoyne-Murchison area, to protect the region's unique ecosystems and their associated biota.

For those of you wanting to sleep under the stars and get your hands dirty in the name of conservation, there are LANDSCOPE Expeditions. Whether your interest is in working in the grandeur and remoteness of the Gibson Desert with plants and animals that few people ever see, exploring the Zuytdorp Coast north of Kalbarri, or assisting in the reintroduction of endangered species within the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, there is a unique experience waiting for you. There's still time to book your place to take part this year in field-based study and research projects in the outback—an area named as one the 10 most significant wild places in the world by National Geographic magazine's list of millennium must-sees.

For your free copy of the LANDSCOPE Expeditions 2000 brochure, call (08) 9380 2433 or fax (08) 9380 1066, or download a copy from CALM's award-winning NatureBase website at www.calm.wa.gov.au.

Go bush with us in the cause of conservation.

RA Kenneth

Executive Editor

ARGYLE DIAMONDS . . .

If the more than 450 wallabies stranded on two islands in Lake Argyle in March could talk, they would probably agree.

Argyle Diamond Mine—the benevolent rescuer—financed helicopter reconnaissance, a boat charter to the islands and food pellets that saved the agile wallaby (*Macropus agilis*) population from starvation.

CALM's Kimberley Regional Manager Chris Done said the stranding was caused by the sustained and heavier-than-usual seasonal rains, courtesy of Cyclone Steve, which impacted heavily on the Kimberley.

"Lake Argyle, WA's largest man-made reservoir, reached a record level, some two metres higher than the previous highest in 1982-83,"

Mr Done said. "The rains flooded the wallabies' usual range, trapping them on higher ground, which became isolated islands. The adjacent lush pastures of Grass Castle Plain (from Mary Durack's book *Kings in Grass Castles*) were covered by two to three metres of water.

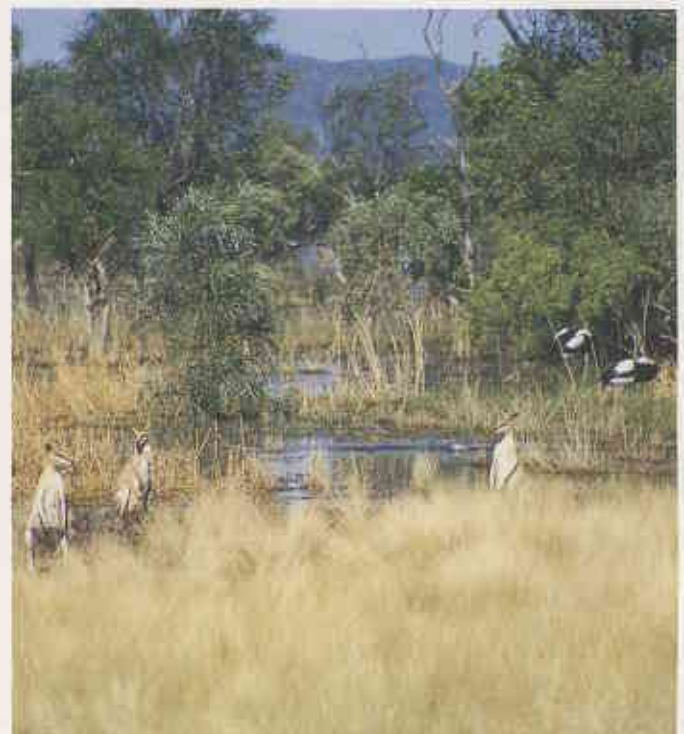
"Fortunately, there was plenty of roughage (mainly spinifex) on the newly created islands, and easterly winds had begun to blow ashore some ribbon-weed (an aquatic plant), which the wallabies seemed to find quite palatable.

"Although this was an animal welfare emergency, rather than a conservation issue, CALM picked up the challenge of organising food drops despite a lack of resources.

"It became obvious that a sponsor was required, so I approached the nearby Argyle Diamond Mine, which responded promptly

Below: Agile wallabies and jabirus on Grass Castle Island.

Photo - Chris Done/CALM



... ARE A WALLABY'S BEST FRIEND

by offering to fund the rescue."

Argyle environmental coordinator Jeff Waddington said the company was more than pleased to assist in the rescue.

"The big wet season had quite an effect on the Argyle mine, with a lot of road damage and the mine isolated for days at a time," Mr Waddington said. "We have a strong commitment to assisting the Kimberley community and the wallaby rescue was a great cause that complemented our ongoing environmental work."

Others involved in Argyle Diamond Mine's animal rescue were AGWEST (formerly Agriculture WA) District Veterinary Officer Tony Tully, who checked the nutritional value of the ribbon-weed, and provided advice on the wallabies' general condition.

Director of Lake Argyle Cruises, Steve Sharp, also kept a keen eye on the animals and continued



providing information until their situation began to improve.

"Several food drops were made, but with the lake dropping about three to four centimetres a day, the islands began increasing in size, gradually revealing a

small amount of new 'green pick', eagerly devoured by the animals," Mr Done said.

"Desperate circumstances can sometimes be alleviated by relatively simple actions. In this case, prompt action by Argyle Mines, AGWEST and CALM certainly made life much more comfortable for the Argyle agiles."

Above: Euros stranded on a small island in the Pumpkin Islands group.

Below left: CALM's Brett Lewis (left) and Steve Sharp take a break from unloading 'roo pellets from the cruise boat Silver Cobbler.

Photos - Chris Done/CALM

Below: CALM's David Grosse (left) helps Chris Done rescue a euro.

Photo - Gordon Graham/CALM

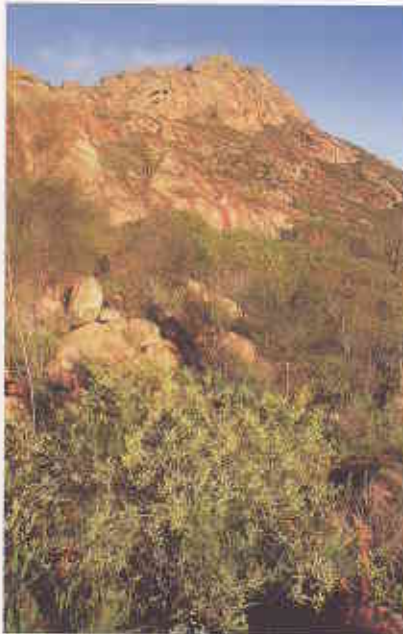




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Peak Charles and Peak Eleanora, protected within Peak Charles National Park, form granite islands in a sea of bush. See page 10.



Butterflies have a short life span, but they bring pleasure to many people who visit Rottnest Island. See page 23.



The Swan River is a recreation area for humans and a home for migratory birds. See page 16.



A partnership between State and Commonwealth governments, and a group of pastoralists is helping to fill the gaps in the conservation estate. See page 43.



Many marine creatures have evolved ingenious survival methods. See page 49.

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C O V E R

Well-known Australian artist Ken Done captures the colour and turbulence of the horizontal waterfalls on the Kimberley's Wandjina Coast.

Painting by Ken Done
Racing Tide, Kimberley Coast, May 1999
(51 x 36 cm) oil crayon and gouache
on paper.



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