

PARK ANTICS

For this special *LANDSCOPE* in which we celebrate the centenary of national parks in Western Australia, we have temporarily moved out of the urban scene and into the parks.

The word 'antic' simply means 'a grotesque, fantastic, odd, or ludicrous gesture or posture; a trick'.

The evolution of life on Earth itself could easily be described as the greatest antic ever. However, unlike most other animal life, humankind's trait of changing its environments and habitats to suit its immediate needs, is perhaps the most concerning trick of all.

For this very reason, our national parks and reserves system is there to protect our natural environments and native species from overuse and abuse by a growing, rapidly-mobile human population. The following are some of the antics and events that have occurred in national parks; some have been humorous, some testy and some life-threatening.

Nambung National Park's Pinnacles Desert attracts the attention of many foreign visitors. One Japanese maestro performed on a grand piano at midnight in a direct telecast by satellite to millions of viewers at home. The logistics of the 'show' and the supervision needed were, you might say, a ranger's nightmare. Another Japanese artist soon responded and complete with surveyors, cameras, sound equipment, rakes and shovels, proceeded to rake concentric circle patterns in the sands around chosen pinnacles. Floodlighting and the sound of water dripping into ceramic bowls at night created a oneness with the



constellations above and what appeared as the vast cosmic graveyard in the park.

The Pinnacles Desert has also been the photographic stage for beautiful mannequins in high fashion clothes.

Some 100 years ago in the Kimberley, one of the most tragic events took place in what is now Tunnel Creek National Park. There, Jandamarra, or Pigeon as he was also known, was gunned down in a fierce battle with pastoralists and police. History will depict him as a fine guerilla leader of the Bunuba people in their quest to resist an invasion by Europeans into their country.

National parks are wild places and therefore can be dangerous for visitors. After many warnings from rangers in Torndirrup, an elderly man was observed hanging over 'The Gap' with camera in hand, while his wife held him by his belt loops. Similarly, climbing loose-rock vertical walls in Karijini and Kalbarri is foolish, while throwing rocks into gorges where people frequently walk below is deplorable. Hence a ranger may be forgiven for suggesting there are two

types of park visitors: tourists and terrorists.

On a lighter note, a visitor at Millstream abided by the sign about dogs. He was later found in the park with his pet on which he had painted a large diagonal red stripe. Further, a couple who were apprehended making love on a popular Leeuwin-Naturaliste beach, expressed indignation when asked by the ranger to move along. He was curtly reminded of the nearby sign that read 'This is your National Park—Slow down and enjoy it'.

Consequently the then Director of National Parks decreed that 'doing what comes naturally is passive recreation, but should not be in an area that offends other visitors'.

So...it's not only frogs that go 'bonk' in the parks.

BY JOHN HUNTER

DID YOU KNOW

- *The fees charged for commercial filming and other events approved in national parks go directly into that park's accounts to provide new facilities, safety equipment and general maintenance.*
- *While all native animals are now protected, Government 'doggers', some 50 years ago, lawfully hunted dingos to extinction in Nambung National Park.*
- *The safety of all people in national parks is the Department's concern, but still remains the responsibility of the visitor.*

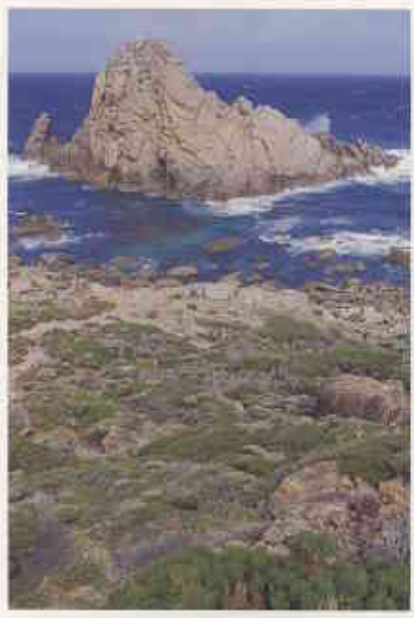
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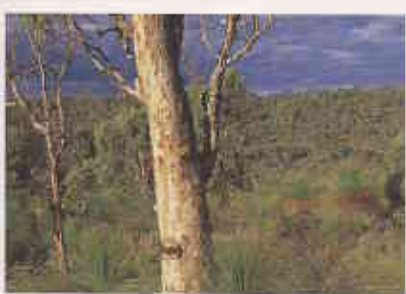
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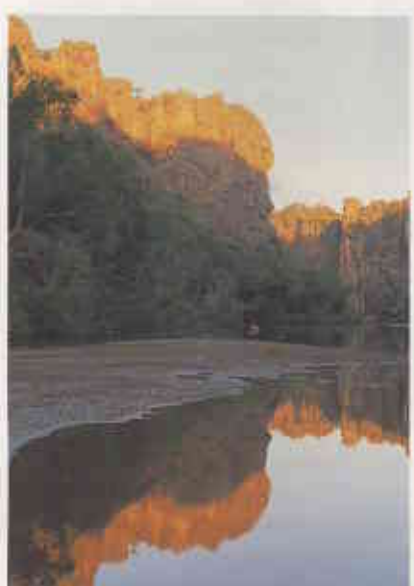
Sugarloaf Rock is just one of the many features that make Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park the most visited park in WA. (See page 10.)



Premier Park: John Forrest National Park is Western Australia's oldest park, celebrating its centenary year. (See page 22.)



Pinnacle of Parks: These unusual formations make Nambung National Park well known the world over. (See page 36.)



Windjana Gorge National Park holds important clues to the evolution of fish. See 'Old Fossils' on page 28.



William Bay National Park displays a miniature version of karri forest flora. (See page 42.)

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With 67 national parks spread across the State, park rangers are often the first contact that visitors have with the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). Apart from providing visitors with information and guidance, they perform a vital role in the day-to-day management of their local environment.



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