

GO BUSH! GOES NEARER TO NATURE



Left: The frog search in full swing amongst the paperbarks of one of Perth's suburban wetland reserves.

Photo – Darren Gillespie

Below: Smiling faces and sparkling certificates at the end of the 'Ranger for a Day' activity.

Photo – Michael Philips

Have you ever had breakfast with joeys, learnt bushy arts, mixed it with minibeasts, cooked camp-oven cuisine or walked the 'nightshift'? If so, the chances are you know all about the Go Bush! program at The Hills Forest Discovery Centre.

For more than ten years, the Department of Conservation and Land Management has run this wide range of inventive, fun, outdoor activities. During that time, the program has drawn thousands of people out of their comfy lounge rooms and into the invigorating forest. The activities allow people to use up some energy, marvel at nature and learn something about the environment, the creatures that inhabit it or an area's indigenous and European heritage.

However, changes are afoot. Most importantly, the scope of the program is expanding from its home in the hills down to the coastal plain and coastline of Perth. The seasonal programs of activities will be conducted



by the department's Nearer to Nature team based at The Hills Forest Discovery Centre.

Nearer to Nature activities will take place in many natural areas, focusing on introducing the community to the value of the land and waters managed by the department, especially Perth's magnificent regional and marine parks. Work is being carried out to develop the sites in these parks that will enable the Nearer to Nature team to create activities that focus on the unique characteristics of each area.

The expansion has already started. Since the beginning of this year, Nearer to Nature activities have been run at Woodman Point, Yellagonga, Herdsman Lake and Canning River regional parks, Swan Estuary Marine Park and the Henderson Environmental Centre in North Beach. Activities will continue at both John Forrest National Park, and The Hills Forest Discovery Centre, just up the road from Mundaring Weir. And watch out for new activities in marine parks this summer.

Nearer to Nature can

coordinate custom-made nature experiences for clubs, schools, corporate groups, tourists or any other groups of people. You might like to improve skills, refresh minds, develop knowledge, encourage teamwork, or maybe just have fun—we can do it all.

If you would like to know more, or have any great ideas concerning Nearer to Nature, call (08) 9295 2244 or email hillsforest@calm.wa.gov.au. Keep an eye out for us in the coming months as Nearer to Nature comes to nature areas near you.



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

LANDSCOPE

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Discover some amazing lifestyles of the little-known fungi of our south-west forests. See 'Forest fungi' on page 10.



One of WA's longest serving wildlife researchers looks at changes to nature conservation in the State. See 'For the times they are a-changin' on page 20.



Two unusual beetles are attracted to large bushfires. But why, and how do they find the fires and avoid getting burnt? See 'Australian fire-beetles' on page 36.



Two wildlife rescuers recently received Queen's birthday honours. See 'Kanyana to the rescue' on page 42.



What do wildlife officers do when a large whale weighing up to 80 tonnes becomes entangled? Turn to 'When nature calls...for help' on page 42.

FEATURES

FOREST FUNGI: LIFESTYLES OF THE LITTLE-KNOWN RICHARD ROBINSON.....	10
FOR THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' ANDREW BURBIDGE.....	20
TRACKING DUGONGS DAVID HOLLEY AND DARREN CAPEWELL.....	28
AUSTRALIAN FIRE-BEETLES HELMUT AND ANKE SCHMITZ.....	36
KANYANA TO THE RESCUE MITZI VANCE.....	42
WHEN NATURE CALLS ... FOR HELP VERNA COSTELLO AND DOUG COUGHRAN.....	49

REGULARS

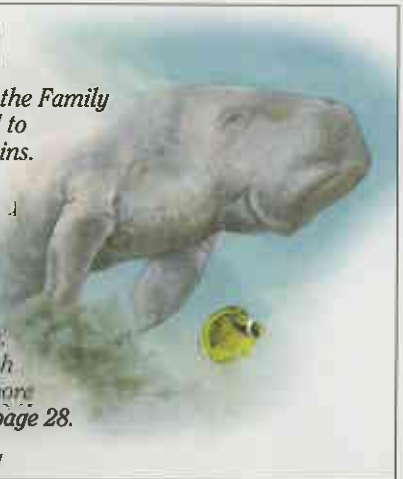
BUSH TELEGRAPH	4
ENDANGERED NET-VEINED GYROSTEMON.....	19
URBAN ANTICS A SPRING THING.....	54

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COVER

The dugong is the only living species in the Family Dugongidae, and is more closely related to elephants than it is to whales and dolphins. One of the largest and most secure populations of dugong grazes on the extensive beds of seagrass in the shallow marine environment of Shark Bay. An estimated 10,000 dugongs, representing 10 per cent of the world's population, live in the bay. A new study, involving collaboration with local Aboriginal people, is discovering more about their movements in the bay. See page 28.

Cover illustration by Phillipa Nikulinsky



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