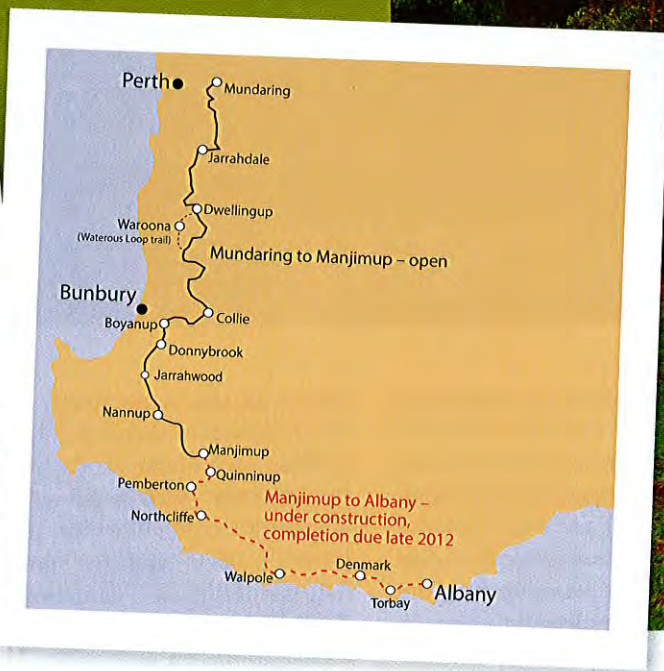
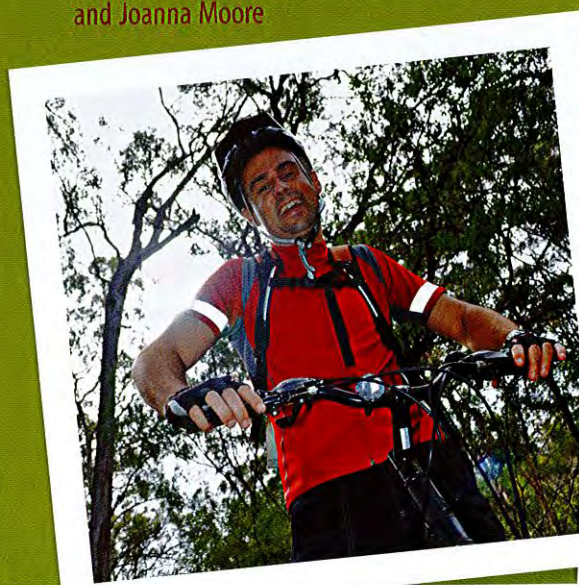


The Munda Biddi adventure grows

Two recent additions to the Munda Biddi Trail take the popular off-road cycle touring track through stunning karri forest near Nannup as well as past picturesque farmland and through bushland between Torbay and Elleker, near Albany.

by Nick Detchon, Leanne Robb, Kerstin Stender and Joanna Moore



In exciting news for cycling enthusiasts, Western Australia's premier off-road cycle touring track, the Munda Biddi Trail, now has two new sections open in the south-west. Agencies including the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), the Munda Biddi Trail Foundation and the Torbay Catchment Group have been working together to construct the new sections, progressing towards the final goal of a 1,000-kilometre trail extending from Mundaring near Perth to Albany on WA's south coast.

The Munda Biddi Trail is complete from Mundaring south to Manjimup, giving riders almost 600 kilometres of trail to explore, more than half the final distance planned. And the trail—which takes its name from Nyoongar for 'path through the forest'—is recognised as a world-class nature-based cycling experience.

Cycling through the tall trees

The newest section connects Jarrahdale to Manjimup and offers cyclists an additional 110 kilometres of trail, made up of nearly 10 kilometres of purpose-built single track linking a network of existing roads and trails through attractive natural environments. It can be split into four parts, providing for riders with different capabilities. Overnight accommodation options also vary, ranging from Munda Biddi Trail shelters, to camping and town site accommodation. The four parts are Nala Mia camp site, near Jarrahdale, to Nannup (27 kilometres); Nannup to Donnelly Mill (37 kilometres); Donnelly Mill to Karta Burnu camp site (23 kilometres); and Karta Burnu to Manjimup (23 kilometres).

For the first time, the trail passes through magnificent tall karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*) forest. The

name of the most recent purpose-built hut, Karta Burnu, means 'hill of trees' in the Nyoongar language. This reflects its location within the Foresters Wood arboretum. Karta Burnu boasts stunning views over the Donnelly River Valley from its three-sided jarrah verandah.

A different experience on the South Coast

Located closer to Albany is the Torbay Rail Trail, between Torbay and Elleker on the south coast. While not currently connected to the rest of the Munda Biddi Trail, the eight-kilometre Torbay Rail Trail will form part of the Munda Biddi when it extends through to Albany in late 2012. The trail was a joint effort between DEC and the Torbay Catchment Group, which undertook extensive planning for this community trail before DEC joined the project.



Above Cyclists at Kartu Burnu camp site near Manjimup.

Opposite page
Left Keen cyclist Matt Moulten.
Photos - Kerstin Stender/DEC

Torbay Rail Trail enables cyclists, walkers and horse riders to share the trail. An attractive segment of the trail splits into two, divided by a line of melaleuca trees, with a flat section passing through adjoining farmland. Our four-footed users have the luxury of a soft sandy surface, while a firmer gravel surface caters for the two-wheeled and legged users.

The community trail component of Torbay Rail Trail was funded through Lotterywest and the Department of Sport and Recreation trails grant. Funding for this, and the other new section, also comes from the *Royalties for Regions* scheme, through the Great Southern and South West development commissions, Lotterywest/Department of Sport and Recreation and DEC, with assistance provided by prison work crews from the Department of Corrective Services.

Taking environmental and cultural concerns seriously

Minimising the adverse environmental, cultural and social impacts of trail development is vital. The majority of trail development time is spent in planning, and construction begins only once a wide range of tasks has been completed. The first stage involves scouting potential routes and identifying key constraints, such as big rivers, wilderness zones, dieback risk areas and private property. Once potential routes have been identified they are taken to the community for broad consultation and feedback.

Community feedback and extended time in the field applying the proposed alignment options are then used to work up the detailed alignment. Results from flora and ecosystem surveys and dieback assessments are collated, along with information about

culture, water protection, and tenure and reserve status. Consideration is given to soil compatibility, erosion, conflict between different park user groups, other commercial uses, visual landscape management and fire and tree harvesting operations, among many other issues. Consultation with local Aboriginal groups also occurs, such as through the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council and local claimant groups. Once the final alignment has been identified, elders are taken out to inspect sections of new trail construction, including bridges and camp sites.



Above Cyclists exploring a new section of the Munda Biddi Trail take a breather among the karri trees at One Tree Bridge. Photo – Leanne Robb/DEC

Left The view towards Shelter Island from the mouth of the Torbay Inlet, near Albany. Photo – Jay Sarson/Lochman Transparencies

Below A Donnelly River bridge crossing. Photo – Leanne Robb/DEC



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Munda Biddi Trail Map 5, covering the new Jarrahwood to Manjimup section, is now available and can be purchased from DEC, the Munda Biddi Trail Foundation (www.mundabiddi.org.au), or from bicycle, tourist and other retail outlets around the state. Visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/shop to order online or call DEC customer service staff on (08) 9334 0437 or (08) 9334 0481.

Planning and construction of the Munda Biddi Trail by DEC staff using minimal impact techniques ensures that the final trail is sustainable. The responsibility of the user then starts, with *Leave No Trace* principles providing a useful guide. To further reduce environmental impacts, fires are not permitted on the Munda Biddi Trail, with the use of fuel stoves recommended instead.

Towards the final goal

Work never stops for long on extending the Munda Biddi Trail, with construction carried out by four teams from DEC's Recreation and Trails Unit with assistance from Department of Corrective Services prison work crews. Through the project, members of these work crews are learning new

skills in earthmoving, carpentry and general construction techniques. The Department of Corrective Services has been involved in the project from the beginning, providing a significant and valuable contribution.

With the trail now open to Manjimup, the focus for construction has shifted south of the town, with two teams focusing on developing the southward leg from Manjimup and two heading north from Albany. Great progress has already been made and the opening of the Albany to Denmark section is expected in mid-2012. Working towards Walpole, the four teams plan to meet there in late 2012—their work enabling riders to travel more than 1,000 kilometres on this unique cycle path through the forest.

- 44 Looking after country
The landscape-scale Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy is being implemented thanks to a number of important partnerships.
- 52 Life on the edge: intertidal reefs of the Marmion and Shoalwater Islands marine parks
A study is being carried out into algae and invertebrate communities on intertidal reefs in two important Perth marine parks.
- 58 What's in a name?
Aboriginal names feature commonly in the names of south-west plants and animals but that's not the case for south-west birds.

Regulars

- 3 Contributors and Editor's letter
- 15 Bookmarks
The Michael Morcombe eGuide to Australian birds
Australasian nature photography
Deepsea Whale Rescue
- 24 Feature park
Nambung National Park
- 51 Endangered
Rare banksia and eucalypt woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain
- 62 Urban Antics
Life's a beach

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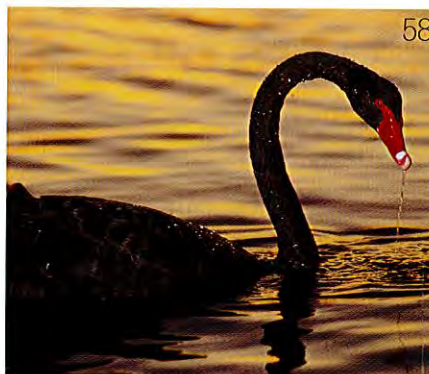
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44



58



32



12