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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
& LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Volunteer News



Department of Conservation and Land Management



December 1990

Help For Our Rare Flora

Thirty-two volunteers from across the State have accepted an invitation to participate in a program that will assist in the management and protection of the State's rare and endangered flora.

The volunteers, mostly from within the south-west land division, have been selected for the program based on their interest, knowledge and ability in the area of rare plant identification and management.

The State's rare flora is managed under legislation in the Wildlife Act. The Act provides for the creation of a list called the Declared Rare Flora list (DRF).

These species are afforded special protection under the legislation. In order to determine which plants should belong on the list, or remain on the list, information on the status of all rare plants is needed on an annual basis.

There are over a thousand rare plants in Western Australia, yet not all are deserving of the special status as DRF plants. The DRF currently contains over 300 species of flora.

Volunteers offer their services

The task of collecting up to date information on the status of each of these plants is an enormous one. This is where community-based volunteers will assist the Department to achieve an important conservation objective.

Volunteers will assist CALM by monitoring one or more species of endangered flora and reporting specific information back to the Department's biologists on a regular basis.

This innovative idea was put forward by Dr Kingsley Dixon of the

Kings Park Board in his capacity as a member of the Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.

In January of this year, the committee endorsed Dr Dixon's idea and called on Colin Ingram and Dr Ken Atkins to put forward a proposal that would allow amateur botanists the opportunity to contribute to the Department's efforts in rare plant management.

Since then, District Managers have nominated nearly 40 botanists from throughout the State. The enthusiasm of the volunteers is exemplified in that nearly all have taken up the invitation to be involved in the program.

Training for the new volunteers began in November.

The training program includes an introduction to CALM, the law relating to endangered flora, the endangered flora data base, use of rare flora report forms, and how to accurately record the location of plant populations.



CALM staff and volunteers at a training day held at Narrogin early in November.

Minister Praises Friends' Efforts

Volunteers from the *Friends of Marmion* group received praise from the Minister for the Environment, Mr Bob Pearce, at the recent launch of the Marmion Marine Park Management Plan.

Speaking at the official launch of the Plan at Hillarys Boat Harbour, Mr Pearce said that, "volunteers were playing an important role in the management of the Park, particularly in the provision of information."

Sixteen members of the group have recently completed a training course in conjunction with the Underwater World volunteer training program.

The group officially opened the doors of CALM's Hillarys Boat Harbour Office on weekends for the first time on September 26.

Over 220 visitors sought information over the weekend.

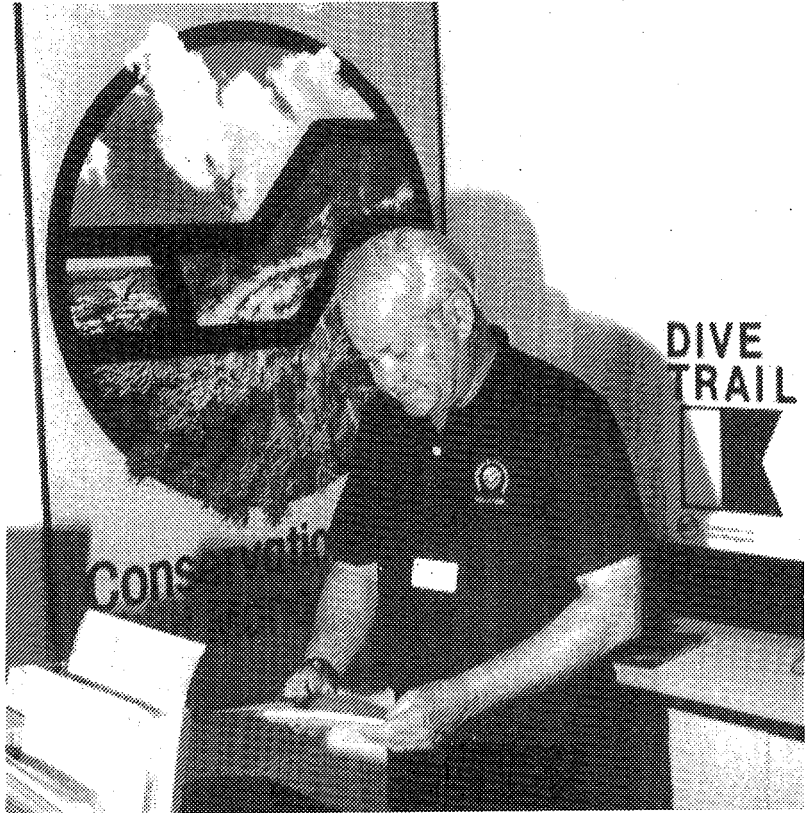
CALM's Metropolitan Region Information Officer, Ms Rae Burrows, has been responsible for the creation of a display that provides information on whales, dolphins, seals, the Marmion Marine Park environment and diving information.

The centre is also equipped with video information on marine management.

The office will be open on Sundays from 9am to 4pm. Normal office hours will prevail weekdays.

Valued resource

All our valued volunteers who have registered with CALM are eligible to obtain CALM publications at reduced prices through the COMO reception desk. Orders can be placed by telephoning (09) 367 0333 or writing to PO Box 104 Como WA 6152.



Friends of Marmion Marine Park volunteer, Don Edwards, hands out information to visitors in the park at weekends.

Calcified Tree Root Restored

Volunteers from speleological clubs camped at Boranup Hut in the Lee-win-Naturaliste National Park helped to restore one section of Colgardup Cave called the "Calcified Tree Root Chamber".

The work was necessary to formalise several access routes to the calcified tree root in order to reduce degradation of the formations within the chamber. The 15 volunteers worked long hours building a trail through the cave to the tree root which is the main feature of the cave.

Material for the job was supplied jointly by CALM and the speleological clubs involved with the restoration.

The trail to the tree root was designed to ensure visitors enjoyment without causing harm to themselves or the root.

The volunteers worked under difficult conditions and at one stage all the materials had to be transported through a small gap for about 10

metres, making all the workers wet and cold in the process.

The new trail was fenced with PVC and plastic chains to prevent any inadvertent damage from occurring. An information sign was erected and the area was swept clean to remove any tell-tale footprints.

All the participants were delighted to discover formations previously hidden by sand deposition.

In the end the volunteers achieved the objective of creating the trail and restoring the cave. According to Park Ranger Rob Klok, "everyone enjoyed torturing their bodies to repair the damage, which occurred over a number of years when the cave was a tourist attraction."

CALM District Manager at Busselton, Ian Rotheram, would like to thank all participants for the work done. Another restoration day of a similar nature is planned for Bride's Cave later in the year.

Volunteer work for researcher

"It wasn't easy to get into the labs, not because they didn't want volunteers but because this was breaking new ground and a mechanism wasn't yet in place for taking in research lab-minded volunteers.

"I'd worked in the research field in Sydney University for 40 years before retiring, so it seemed only natural to volunteer to do research work when I found myself with spare-time in Perth.

"What possesses a person to donate his or her free time? In my case it was a feeling of isolation, of not meeting and relating to people, and I guess an overall boredom. Just two days a week at CALM has changed all this.

"What am I doing in CALM? The simple answer to this is fungi research under the direction of Senior Research Scientist, Dr Elaine Davison. Dr Davison has isolated several fungi from Karri trees and has them growing on agar (a seaweed-like substance which forms a suitable gel with water). The trouble is that the fungi cannot be identified until they "fruit" and this they do on agar. Fruiting means sending up fruiting bodies as mushrooms do when growing in soil.

"My task is to try to grow these fungi on a range of media which may encourage them to fruit. Firstly, we try wood chips from eight different types of tree and packed in bottles. Then, wheat mash and lastly toilet rolls, wetted and placed in oven bags. You may wonder why toilet rolls would be chosen but they are a cheap and ready source of cellulose for the fungi to metabolise. All of these media have to be sterilized to prevent the growth of unwanted fungi, the spores of which are always floating around in the air.

"Our fungi are growing beautifully in these media but they are not yet up to the fruiting stage. However, this is a long term project and may not yield any results for at least a year, long after I am back in Sydney." - PETER BLACKWELL



Volunteers preparing to dive into the "icy" depths.

Serpentine Spring-Clean

A group of volunteer divers gathered recently at Serpentine National Park to clean up the park's most popular swimming hole.

As they donned wet suits, curious visitors wondered just what it was that could entice this intrepid group into the water on such a cold day.

Volunteer divers worked in teams and were soon bringing bags of rubbish to the surface.

This included credit cards (current), sunglasses, plastic sunshades and a Swatch watch covered in slime and grime but still ticking away and keeping beautiful time.

A find of a quantity of bones caused some concern to divers but these were later identified as those of a hapless kangaroo that must have fallen into the pool.

One item which puzzled and amused the divers was a sign pro-

truding from the mud with only "Thank You" showing.

When dug out, it read "No Swimming In This Pool Thank You". I had wondered what had happened to that sign.

A number of underwater snags that could pose a safety hazard to swimmers were also removed from the pool.

Divers were able to survey the pool which enabled an accurate plan of the pool specifications to be drawn. The pool's depth has always been a contentious issue and many visitors have assured me that it was somewhere between 70 m and bottomless ... another myth laid to rest. I am now confident that the pool is a modest 8.5m at maximum depth.

The glass and rubbish collected by the volunteer divers will go some way to removing hazards experienced by swimmers at Serpentine and is a good illustration of some of the more unusual tasks that volunteers can be deployed in. -DAVID LAMONT

**Concerned
Catholics
Clean-up
John Forrest**

Catholics Concerned for the Environment may not be the most well known environmental group around, but they are keen to put their concern into action.

The group did this by completing a roadside rubbish cleanup adjacent to John Forrest National Park in September.

The program was initiated by group leader Gerrad Leahy. He and

three

nine volunteers turned up in mid-September. Under the guidance of Senior Ranger, George Duxbury, they proceeded to collect rubbish along several kilometres of road, making the entrance to the park a far more attractive sight to visitors.

George is hoping that the group will adopt and clean a section of the entrance road into the park on a regular basis.

Herbarium Volunteer Honoured

Volunteer Daphne Edinger was presented with an outstanding service award by the Minister for the Environment, Mr Bob Pearce, at a ceremony in September to recognise volunteers for their valued help.

The award was given to Daphne to acknowledge the help and support she has given to the W.A Herbarium since 1983.

The Herbarium has a vital role to play in conservation. Its responsibilities include collecting, identifying and mounting native flora.

This work provides other government bodies and private organisations such as the Agricultural Department, the Environmental Protection Authority, and private consultants, with the necessary information to make decisions on areas in need of protection.

Daphne is one of many volunteers involved in programs for the Herbarium. Some of the programs included are; specimen preparation, field trips to collect species, and maintenance of the Herbarium collection.

The magnitude of the work

that the Herbarium undertakes is enormous, and volunteer co-ordinators Bob and Barbara Backhouse are involved in setting job allocations for the volunteers.

Whatever your background, your participation in the volunteer program can help the Herbarium achieve the aim of conserving our native flora for future generations to enjoy.

NOTE — If you are interested in joining as a volunteer, contact Vicki Hamly at the W.A. Herbarium on 367 0500, or Bob and Barbara Backhouse on 293 4072.

Successful Orchid Survey

In early October, 20 volunteers from Perth assisted CALM Research Scientists to carry out an extensive survey of rare orchids in the Fitzgerald River National Park.

The survey was hailed as a success with some significant discoveries being made, although the week-long project was cut short, due to heavy rains forcing the closure of several tracks.

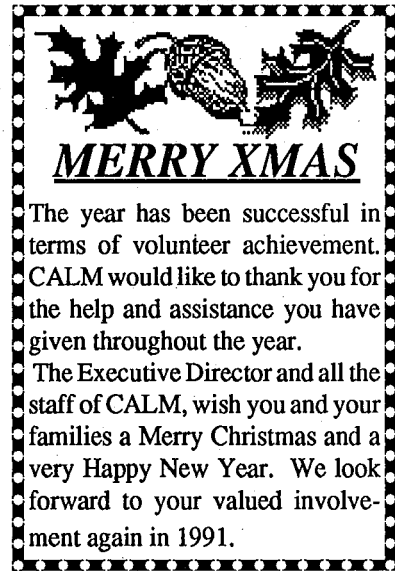
Leader of the expedition, Senior Research Scientist Dr. Steve Hopper said that, "the weekend was most productive". One new species of orchid was discovered and four

species not previously seen in the Fitzgerald River area were also discovered.

Five species of orchid on the D.R.F. list (Declared Rare Flora) were re-located on East Mount Barren and, from all accounts, appear to be recovering well following the devastation caused by the wildfires 12 months ago.

Most of the volunteers who took part in the survey were from the Perth based "W.A. Native Orchid Study & Conservation Group", and many thanks go to them and the other volunteers for their valued assistance.

-CRAIG MATHEWS.



This short poem was written by Jacqui and Bruce Went of Morphett Vale, SA. They visited Cape Range National Park this year and experienced the hospitality of Campground Host Ian Ulyatt.

C is for the country and the colour,
and the care we have from our considerate host.

A is for the air so aromatic,
and the azure sky along this lovely coast.

L is for the light that has us lingering,
as we loll and laze upon the shore.

M is for Mesa the magnificent,
a memory we shall keep for ever more.

Put them all together they spell
Ian

He really is the Host with the most

Volunteer News Is For Volunteers

Your comments, letters, articles, photos and notices of upcoming events are all welcome and we'll do our best to publish them.

This newsletter can only be effective with your contributions so if you think you have something interesting to say, or wish to make us aware of a CALM volunteer project, please feel free to do so.

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