

FAUNA MONITORING TRAINING SESSION HELD AT YELVERTON BROOK ECO RESORT AND CHALETs

A fauna monitoring training session that linked the TAFE Conservation and Land Management Unit "Observe and report on plants and animals", and *Land For Wildlife* notes – 'Photopoint Monitoring', 'Sand Pads' and 'Fauna Habitat' was held at Yelverton Brook Eco Resort and Chalets in November 2008..

The afternoon started at 3pm with LFW property owners meeting at the front electric gate and starting on a walk along the creekline looking for signs of birdlife, mammal diggings and runnels (tunnels in low vegetation, mostly rushes and sedges). The purpose of the afternoon was to show landholders how to carry out non invasive methods of monitoring – trapping of any kind is now very difficult due to animal ethics codes, and animal handling can lead to disease transference from humans to animals, and vice versa. Using other methods such as photopoint monitoring, sand pads, looking for tracks, scats, diggings, grazing, movement and seeing the animals themselves (spotlighting) is less invasive for the animals and humans alike.

There was lots of birdlife seen and heard, and plenty of diggings and runnels were found. Quenda diggings are like ice cream cones pushed into the ground with the pointy end in the soil; this is the quenda nose searching for food. Woylie diggings are similar to rabbits, although there are no droppings (such as in rabbit diggings); they are also digging for food.

There were also many kangaroo resting sites and obvious disturbance due to roo grazing. Although most of the kangaroos now on site are 'pets' who have been released on the site, they can be quite destructive to vegetation in confined areas. This is the same with the woylies, starting with just three, the population has expanded to approximately 30! The quendas have been on the property for some time and are expanding in numbers since the feral proof fence was installed to protect them.

On the firebreaks, the sand was perfect to look for tracks and use as 'sand pads'. Many tracks were seen – mainly kangaroos, but some woylie tracks were also evident.

The rain made it a little difficult at times to observe effectively, but there was so much wildlife on this property that everyone was sufficiently satisfied with their observations. The training outcomes were to identify at least two different species of fauna on the property, describe them and check with books to confirm that the identification was correct.

Some of the participants were very adept at spotting the birdlife and came up with an extensive list for the site. All were recorded for future reference. Some photomonitoring points were established to document changes over time.

By 6pm everyone was very damp from the cold and wet weather, so we retired to one of the chalets and had nice hot cups of tea and coffee, followed by a snack. During this time, some of the local wildlife decided to come and check out what all the fuss was about.

Thank you very much to Joy and Simon Ensor of Yelverton Brook Eco Resort and Chalets for allowing us to hold this afternoon on their property. They have offered to have a night session on spotlighting which would be wonderful! Anyone interested in being involved please contact me at the DEC office in Busselton on 9752 5533.

Cherie Kemp

WESTERN RINGTAIL POSSUMS AT WONNERUP HOUSE

The beautiful National Trust property 'Wonnerup House' near Busselton was the venue for a field day in November 2008 that showcased how our very own nature and native animals are coping with the urban environments that are now surrounding them in Busselton and Dunsborough.



Lots of people came to enjoy the warmth of the sunshine and the many different presentations from local groups. One fascinating display focused on microbats that reside in the old buildings. The

FAWNA group brought in a variety of animals that have been taken into care, while local vets demonstrated how they provided treatment. There were also people showing how well cats and dogs can be trained to leave native wildlife alone. The LFW display was on western ringtail possums, with all sorts of tips for living with them in an urban environment. If you would like a copy of the notes produced, please ring me on 9752 5533.

Cherie Kemp