



ecoeducation news

Statewide

July 2009 No 26

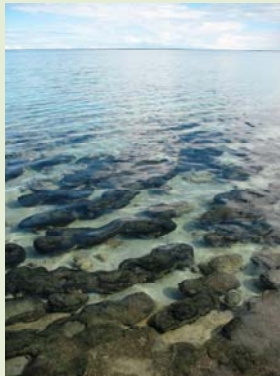
Hello colleagues,

Shark Bay, Ningaloo Professional Learning Symposium

I'm back from leading another great EcoEducation teacher symposium at Ningaloo and Shark Bay.

This year we had more couples and university lecturers attend the symposium, which added a range of different perspectives to our experiences. At Ningaloo, we observed turtles, endangered black-footed rock wallabies, osprey, wedge-tailed eagles and other birds.

Snorkeling over the Ningaloo reef was also a great highlight with leatherback and green turtles, a leopard shark and multitudes of different fish and coral.



We knew we were in for an interesting experience when we arrived at Shark Bay and the Bush Ranger teachers and helpers were called to help rescue a few tourist cars out of the soft sand.



Two of our teachers were selected out of hundreds of people to feed the dolphins at Monkey Mia and five native mice were caught during a trapping session. Other highlights included visiting endangered species and pens, looking at the peninsula geology, dolphin antics during a catamaran ride over the sea grasses, Shell Beach, the stromatolites and the feral animal-proof fence across the Peron Peninsula.

Conference booths

EcoEducation set up a booth at the Primary Science Conference and the annual Conference of the Science Teachers' Association of Western Australia (CONSTA) this year. Let us know if you appreciated finding out more about EcoEducation through these booths.

Tuart Professional Learning

Several teachers recently attended a very informative Professional Learning symposium on tuarts. We were caught by a storm while outdoors learning about tuart ecosystems from DEC author Robert Powell.



The session included encounters with a range of birds and a talk from DEC Projects, Policy and Science Advisor Drew Haswell about threatening processes and tuart remnants. Teachers enjoyed the hands-on activities with the Tuart Kit, which can be borrowed from EcoEducation, and took suggestions on how to best use their free tuart DVDs and other resources.

Elaine Horne, Senior EcoEducation Officer, DEC

News from Bush Rangers WA

Hi all,

Bush Ranger cadets have had some amazing opportunities recently with the 'Reward Experiences' program provided by DEC. Duncraig Senior High School Bush Ranger cadet Danielle Paxman put a story together after visiting Shark Bay in a recent Rewards Experience.

Denham is a small town in the magnificent World Heritage Area of Shark Bay. Just 76 kilometres from the town is a homestead where we stayed for a week, working with the park rangers there.

Over five days, three groups worked at Monkey Mia with the dolphins. These determined cadets also helped native animals by coiling barbed wire and pulling stakes out of the ground to stop animals from hurting themselves. Another group did some wood-collecting and brushing at Bottle Bay and, around the

homestead, and spread the wood along trails to discourage visitors from walking off the paths.

On day four, two cadets helped rangers with a trapping project for monitoring native mice and, more importantly, rare quenda populations. The rangers have released the quendas at the national park to try and repopulate the area. The cadets found seven quendas, almost quadruple the previous months' record of two per day. Needless to say, the ranger, cadets and instructor were quite excited.

Parents of the cadets were kept up to date by a Google group set up by a cadet instructor and a daily newspaper called 'Shark Attack' was also created to highlight the achievements and anecdotal moments of the adventure.



Two-minute showers, red dust, makeshift freezers and fridges, hot mineral spa baths, meeting wonderful rangers and creating lasting friendships are our memories from the trip.

Thank you to Ranger Roger Whitelaw and his colleagues.

Rich Weatherill, Bush Rangers WA Coordinator, DEC



ecoeducation news

News from the Perth Hills National Parks Centre and the Henderson Environmental Centre

World Environment Day 2009

On Friday 5 June EcoEducation hosted another action-packed day of events to celebrate World Environment Day at the Henderson Environment Centre. Years 4-7 from Heathridge Primary School, Year 5 from Iona Primary School, Year 7 from Liwara Primary School and a home schooling group shared the day with a range of talented presenters. Luckily the weather held off and enabled all activities to go as planned.

As always, the live animals were a big hit with students and teachers who enjoyed the Kanyana mammals and Birds of Prey Conservation WA raptors. Information on invertebrates, Nyoongar culture, the Tuart Walk and *Western Shield* activities were also mentioned as highlights in the day's evaluation.

Fire

The 'Fire - a force of life' program involves secondary students studying a wildfire site and a controlled burn site to compare biodiversity and the environmental effects. A new site for wildfire study has been sourced this year in an area severely burnt in January 2007 and new data, maps and photos have been collated, with valuable assistance from DEC's Perth Hills District Fire Coordinator Kevin Pollock.

This program coincides with recent changes in the Geography curriculum, with 'Natural Disasters' introduced as a new topic and in Outdoor Education with fire as an example in stage 2A.



Last year we had six groups engaging in the fire program and this year we have had 20 groups involved in the program so far. Teachers have been very satisfied with the new fire site and the range of information available to support the study.

Aboriginal culture

Engaging students in understanding Nyoongar culture has been an important feature of EcoEducation for many years and we currently have several projects planned to strengthen our programs.

Stronger ties are being developed with DEC's Aboriginal Heritage Unit to enable the exchange of ideas and skills. By sharing our strengths we can support each other and ensure students get a good cross section of information on Nyoongar culture throughout their school years.

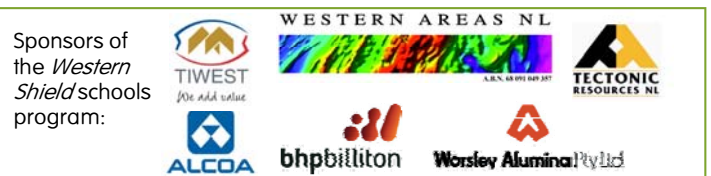
Stephen Crane, EcoEducation Team Leader, DEC

Free teachers package

A new EcoEducation national park package *Caring for Places* will be given free to all teachers bringing students on excursions to our centres and will also be available at the EcoEducation Professional Learning Symposia on 19 and 26 November. Contact ecoeducation@dec.wa.gov.au or South West EcoEducation Project Officer hannah.hampson@dec.wa.gov.au for details.

Free incursion

Answer this question to receive a free *Western Shield* 'Saving Threatened Fauna' incursion for two classes at your school. Question: Name four threatened species that are being re-introduced to Shark Bay and one feral animal that is being controlled there. Call Elaine Horne on 9334 0387 to give the answer. Please leave a message on voicemail if there is no answer.



Statewide

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Contacting EcoEducation in the South West Region
For enquiries or excursion bookings contact DEC's Bunbury District Office on 9725 4300 and ask for EcoEducation or contact Hannah Hampson, EcoEducation Project Officer
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Visit DEC's website at www.dec.wa.gov.au

Florabase Plant of the Month

Native foxglove
Pityrodia axillaris



See what's flowering each month:
www.dec.wa.gov.au/florabase