

First term was over so quickly! With Labour Day and Easter holidays it was as if the term had just started but then the end of term was looming. We would like to thank all those teachers who provided us with the opportunity to present the EcoEducation survey to their Years 6, 8 and 10 students. The survey results will provide valuable data for assessing the EcoEducation programs at Wellington Discovery Forest (WDF) and will be part of our key performance indicators (KPIs).

Are you having problems with the cost of buses for excursions? Have there been changes in the implementation of risk assessment for excursions in your school? What is the biggest drawback to coming to the forest for an excursion? We would be interested to have some feedback on the issues you face. Please email me your story - janetD@calm.wa.gov.au - to help us plan for 2006.

Meanwhile, in the forest, the year has started with a flourish and I look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Cheers, **Janet Date** Project Officer, EcoEducation, CALM

EcoEducation staff upgrade their skills



Phoebe making fire. Photo - J Date

On 1 April, Kristy, Wink, Phoebe, Sara and I attended the 80th Outback Safety and Survival course. The theory session was held at CALM's Kensington office with the practical sessions in the Lane Poole Reserve near Dwellingup.



Kristy with an endangered south west carpet python. Photo - W Ferris

This course, hosted by CALM since 1989 and presented by Bob Cooper Outdoor Education Pty Ltd, has now provided more than 1500 people with the competencies of basic bushcraft, navigation and survival skills enabling them to travel throughout Australia, preparing them for any eventuality.

The course has won the award for Excellence in Safety Training from the WA Safety Institute of Australia. We all enjoyed the weekend, learned new skills and honed those that we did have. Now we appreciate and feel able to work in the bush with even more confidence!

Gatekeeper project at Margaret River Eco Discovery Centre (MREDC)

CALM Bush Ranger units are leading a restoration project at the entrance gate of the MREDC and Wharncliffe Mill Forest Camp. The 'Gate Guardians' Geographe unit initiated the project with EcoEducation Project Officer, Janet Date, and National Park Ranger, Clare Forward. Together, they have removed a weed infestation of broom bush (*Genista monspessulana* – look it up on www.naturebase.net/florabase) from the gate area with the assistance of the Gosnells and Rossmoyne Bush Ranger units.

The weed is still in the area and the project is expected to continue in June and then annually until the weed is eradicated. Thank you Bush Rangers for your untiring community work on this project!

If your school would like to participate in the Gatekeeper project please contact Janet. Details next page.



Entry to MREDC and Wharncliffe Mill getting a clean-up. Initial clearing of the thick weed was carried out by the Geographe, Gosnells and Rossmoyne CALM Bush Ranger units. Signage by the Geographe Unit. Photos - J Date



Did you know? Bat fact ...

If landholders provided bat habitat boxes in their orchards they could reduce the amount of insecticides they use every year? There are eight species of bats in the South West. Several of these are insectivores and their calls are audible to humans. These insect-eating beauties can be seen in the evening skies at both WDF and MREDC on our Sense-ational Nightlife excursion.

Most of these bats do not live in caves but roost by day in small colonies in the trees or tree hollows of the forest. Some, however, live fairly solitary lives under peeling bark, beneath the skirts of grasstrees (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*) or even in dense clusters of leaves.



The chocolate bat (above right) and Gould's wattled bat (above), both common in the South West.

If you enjoy exploring caves but don't want to go into a bat cave, see if you can fit in a trip to one of CALM's caves 15 km south-west of Margaret River. Calgardup Cave's self-guided tour (with helmets and torches provided) caters to all ages and has interpretive signage. For more adventurous students, Year 7 and above, book a tour in the Giants Cave where you will have to walk, climb vertical ladders and scramble over rocks as part of the adventure. To book, telephone 9757 7422.



Bat and you could win

If you would like to win a *Christmas in July* PD, name the bat species featured on our website in the 'Plants and Animals', *Getting to know WA's plants and animals - oddities* section and email your reply to janetD@calm.wa.gov.au. The first person to send a correct answer will win his or her choice of a PD place. See what you will get, below.

Semester break Professional Development (PD)

Christmas in July PDs

Come along all teachers, young and old, adventurous and staid, to enjoy a peaceful, relaxing retreat on our forest PDs, which also include a lovely festive meal. Start or finish your 'holiday' with a refreshing, energised experience offering a term project that includes a trip to the forest! Our PDs offer:

- snapshots of our activities (from night walks to 'pootering' and so much more);
- resources to use in the classroom;
- knowledge gained for risk assessment of our forest setting; and
- Introductions to our EcoEducation Officers.

Where: WDF

When: Sunday 3 July, 4pm to Monday 4 July, 3pm.

Cost: \$77 (includes 'Christmas dinner', cottage accommodation, other meals, activities, resources and GST).

Where: MREDC

When: Thursday 14 July, 4pm to Friday 15 July, 3pm.

Cost: \$77 (includes 'Christmas dinner', bunkhouse accommodation, other meals, activities, resources and GST).

Congratulations, a *Christmas in July* PD winner!

In the last issue, readers were asked to identify an image, which was the hind feet of a western grey kangaroo. The first correct answer arrived at 12:01am on 4 March from the very keen Ms Suzie Spiers, the Year 6/7 teacher at Nyindamurra Family School. Congratulations Suzie and we look forward to seeing you at one of the PDs in July.

Whole school Professional Development

Do you have new members of staff? They may not know of EcoEducation and our programs. Why not bring your whole staff to one of our idyllic locations in the South West forest? Contact Janet if your school or learning area department would like to organise an exclusive PD (half day, whole day or overnight), tailored to your individual needs.

Special excursion prices

World Environment Day 5 June

We are offering a \$50 discount for all day excursions at WDF on Friday 3 June and at MREDC on Tuesday 7 June.

Last week Term 2

June 27 to July 1: All standard day excursions \$6.05 (GST inclusive) per student.

Contacting EcoEducation in the South West

For any enquiries, bookings for excursions or PDs, please contact: Kristy Pengelly at CALM's Wellington District Office:
Ph: 9734 1988
Fax: 9734 4539
Email: wdf@calm.wa.gov.au

For the development of programs and educational liaison, please contact:
Janet Date at CALM's South West Regional Office.
Ph: 9725 4300
Mobile: 0427 980 306
Email: janetD@calm.wa.gov.au

Further resources and information are available from CALM's NatureBase website at www.naturebase.net/schools.