

Greetings all,

As the year draws to a close, it's time for us to thank all our patrons and staff for the wonderful year we've enjoyed.

To all the teachers, students, parent helpers, bus drivers and EcoEducation Officers, Kristy and I appreciate your company and hope you feel that you have taken part in worthwhile programs that have made a difference. We hope you **know** a little more, **care** about the environment a little more and, above all, become more **involved** – active citizenship!

With the summer break ahead, we wish you a relaxing, safe holiday and festive season and look forward to seeing you all, with friends, again next year!

Good adventures,

Janet Date, Project Officer, EcoEducation, CALM



See you next year!

Photo - Kristy Pengelly

Year highlights – just the short list!

- CALM Bush Ranger Units working on the 'Gate Keeper' Project in Margaret River – thank you Geographe Education Support Centre, Gosnells and Rossmoyne Senior High Schools, and Chisholm Catholic College.
- The inaugural *Christmas in July* Professional Learning (PL) opportunity at Margaret River Eco Discovery Centre (MREDC) – especially the caving!
- *Marsupial Monitoring* at Wellington Discovery Forest (WDF) in September and MREDC in November. Thanks CALM's Nature Conservation staff and *Western Shield* Program Manager, John Asher.
- Starting the Outback Safety and Survival courses in our region, with EcoEducation Officers taking part to develop and hone their skills and knowledge.
- Involving small schools in our program, the delightful Wubin Primary School and its six Years 4 to 7 students and the five Year 5 students from Kirup Primary School.
- Holding two outstanding 'Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a Night' PLs.
- Hosting a whole-of-staff PL for North Dandalup Primary School.

Casual job, one of the best!

If you've decided to work part-time in 2006, or are looking for some extra casual employment and like the thought of working in our magnificent jarrah forest while enjoying the great outdoors then, you'll be interested to know that EcoEducation is looking to employ two casual EcoEducation Officers for the WDF Centre. Or, maybe you know someone that would be interested. Please contact Janet for further details.

Marsupial Monitoring in Bramley National Park

EcoEducation once again extended an opportunity for school students to be involved in *Western Shield* monitoring in Bramley National Park.

Year 6/7 students from Denmark Primary School took part in the monitoring on the morning of Thursday 3 November. But, after the cold night before, they didn't find any animals in the monitoring traps they checked. However, there was a moaning frog and pygmy possum caught in the pit traps on the grid transect.

On the morning of Friday 4 November, after a warmer night, the participants of the *Western Shield* 'Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a Night' PL caught a Nicholls' toadlet in a pit trap and a brushtail possum in a Sheffield trap.

Over the years, the monitoring on this transect has not proved to be very successful because of impacts of residential development and introduced species. For this reason, the transect is now being considered for closure.

If this happens, we will 'tag along' at another less impacted site and the monitoring will possibly occur in October in 2006. Watch this space for updates for your bookings!

Pygmy possum. Photo - Lorraine Ellis



Thank you Geographe Education Support Centre (ESC)

The building and construction student team from Geographe ESC have created habitat boxes for the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). The boxes were made at South West Regional College TAFE's, Bunbury Campus, under the careful guidance and supervision of Peter Cook, Lecturer, Gillian Piirto, Geographe ESC Social Trainer and Matt Phipps, Geographe ESC Assistant. These 'possum' boxes have been established in the Wellington National Park.

The keen students, who are also CALM Bush Rangers, will continue to make habitat boxes for CALM next year – 'bat' boxes are next!



In the workshop at TAFE, Janet receiving the boxes from students Sean Strong, Matthew Smith and Ben Coyne. Photo by Gillian Piirto.

New Biology excursion for MREDC

Lorraine Ellis and her Newton Moore Senior High School Year 11 Biology students gave valuable feedback after completing the newly developed Biology excursion at MREDC.

The day provided students with the opportunity to gain an overview of the area, the ecological community and the monitoring methods used in representative data collection.

The students worked with commitment, gathering data from their 100-square-metre quadrat including flora communities, canopy density and height, pH of the soil, animal scats, tracks and traces.

Once they had returned to school, they collated the data to give a picture of the jarrah forest over a continuous 400-square-metre area.

If you are a Biology teacher why not bring your students to either centre during 2006 for a field trip to the jarrah forest?

2006 camp venues

Book your 2006 camp now! Both these venues are very close to our excellent program centres and nestled in picturesque forests.

Wellington Forest Cottages

Heather and Rob, managers of the Wellington Forest Cottages, welcome your enquiries about hiring their eight cottages each sleeping eight people. Offering camp catering, hall for hire and over the road from WDF!

Summer specials are being offered to teachers and their families, including five nights' accommodation (Sunday to Thursday) for \$363!

Book now by contacting Heather or Rob on phone: 9728 3043, fax: 9728 3315 or email (forestcottages@bigpond.com).

Wharncliffe Mill Forest Camp

This camp is co-located with the MREDC. There is bunkhouse style (42-bed) accommodation and camping sites (for 100 people). Facilities include a kitchen (with a gas cook-top and two refrigerators), electric barbecues, designated fire rings, picnic tables with chairs and a state-of-the-art ablution block. To book phone Shan at CALM's Busselton Office on 9752 5555.

While on camp there are many other outdoor and visit opportunities close to each venue such as abseiling, canoeing, agriculture, viticulture and mining industry visits. Also, if you're staying at Margaret River remember to visit CALM's caves!

CALM's caves – just 15 kilometres south-west of Margaret River.

Calgardup cave's self-guided tour (helmets and torches are provided) caters to all ages and has interpretive signage. Alternatively, for more adventurous students, recommended Year 7 and above, book for **Giants** cave. You will walk, climb vertical ladders and scramble over rocks as part of this adventure.

To make a booking for either cave please phone 9757 7422.

Summer holiday guided activities - fun for the whole family

CALM is offering interpretive activities for two weeks during the summer holidays in January. Everything from beach walking and spotlighting to talks and videos can be enjoyed as a family group at Contos Campground in the picturesque Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park. The campground is located just 15 kilometres south-west of Margaret River, off Caves Road. For the latest information, call the Busselton office on **9752 5555** in December.



Did you know?

The Wellington Dam overflowed in October? The rainfall in the Collie River catchment has been very good this year, so much so that the dam overflowed creating spectacular photo opportunities for many thousands of National Park visitors.

Top: The Wellington Dam overflowing in October 2005. Above: A very different sight in August 2004. Photos – Leon Price

An end-of-term quiz challenge

Can you tell us when the last overflow was? The first correct year and month answer will win a \$50 discount towards an excursion to either WDF or MREDC in Term 1 2006. Email your guess to Kristy (wdf@calm.wa.gov.au) from 9am 1 December 2005. Good Luck!

Denmark Primary School Year 6/7 class deservingly won our last competition. They correctly identified prickly moses as *Acacia pulchella* and received a \$50 discount for their next visit to either of our South West Region's centres.

Congratulations Margaret Holmes and students! We look forward to seeing you again soon.

Prepare for your class camp and excursions

Join us for an overnight PL at MREDC.

Sleep under the stars in your own tent or stay in our bunkhouse; carry out the Department of Education and Training Excursions Policy's Risk Management Assessment; develop awareness, knowledge and attitudes commensurate with EcoEducation programs and excursions; book your preferred dates throughout the year at either WDF or MREDC; explore CALM's website; hone your investigative skills; and so much more!

When: Friday 17 February 5.30pm to Saturday 18 February 3pm

Cost: \$77 (includes meals, accommodation, resources and activities and GST)

Book now with Kristy!

Outback Safety and Survival course SW2

Wellington District again hosted the extremely popular Outback Safety and Survival course in November. The diverse group, which included CALM Bush Ranger Unit Leaders, teachers, mine workers and even a journalist, learnt a great deal and thoroughly enjoyed the weekend.

Another course is being offered by CALM's Wellington District in April 2006. For more information about this very worthwhile and successful course, and to learn how to prevent a mishap from becoming a tragedy, please contact Kristy.

Whole School PL

Do you have new staff members? They may not be familiar with EcoEducation and our programs. Why not bring all your staff to one of our idyllic locations in the south-west forest? Contact Janet if your school or department would like to organise an exclusive half-day, whole day or overnight course, tailored to your individual needs.

Goodbye and all the best!

After a year of healthy outdoor work with EcoEducation, Chelsea and Renee have moved onto further studies at university. We thank them for being valuable members of our team and wish them all the best and success in their studies.

Also, thank you to Wink, Carolina and Adele our EcoEducation Officers, Phoebe and Ken our EcoEducation CALM support staff and Kristy our EcoEducation Schools Coordinator for a wonderful year. I look forward to working with you all again throughout 2006.

Why Wellington Week?

One threatened species that was locally extinct, prompted *Western Shield* 1080 fox baiting to commence in Wellington National Park. After a three-year period of intensive baiting regime, CALM scientists decided to reintroduce the locally extinct species.

In 1999, the woylie or brush-tailed bettong (*Bettongia penicillata*) was successfully reintroduced to the national park. The animals were translocated from Batalling Forest Block, where numbers were not in decline due to the high prevalence of *Gastrolabium sp.* (the 1080 bush).

So, each year since the inception of EcoEducation in CALM's South West region, we have a week of excursion discount prices to celebrate this success story.

The story is much greater than this though. The only Australia-wide removal from the Threatened Species List is the woylie!

They are such interesting creatures. Woylies are small nocturnal rat-like kangaroos, with yellowish grey fur and a black crest on their tail. They build a stick nest to live in on a sheltered area of the forest floor. When they are frightened from their nest, they bound in a crouching position with their head held low, back arched and tail almost straight.

Woylies are small marsupials, weighing up to only 1.6kg. They have many interesting facts about them, which can be found on CALM's NatureBase website (www.naturebase.net) under the 'Fauna Species Profiles' in the Plants and Animals section.



Woylies. Photos – Janet Date

Contacting EcoEducation in the South West

For any enquiries, bookings for excursions or PLs, please contact:
Kristy Pengelly at CALM's Wellington District Office.
Ph: (08) 9735 1909
Fax: (08) 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: (08) 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.

Special excursion prices Term 1 2006 Wellington Week (WDF)

Special prices for 'Wellington Week' include bookings from 20 to 24 March (inclusive). All standard day excursions at WDF will be \$6.05 (GST inclusive) per student.

Pre-Easter special

The last week of Term 1, 10 to 13 April (inclusive), at MREDC and WDF will have discount day excursion prices of \$6.05 (GST inclusive) per student.

Book special dates early to secure your preference and avoid disappointment!