



## South West Region

December 2009 No. 25

Dear colleagues,

It has been a busy year for EcoEducation in the south-west. Our new range of incursion programs have been thoroughly tried and tested.

Bunbury Catholic College's Cameron Samuels has helped develop the *Biodiversity Quiz* to test students' understanding of biodiversity and the jarrah forest ecosystem. The quiz takes about one hour and challenges students with a range of objects from the ecosystem. The quiz is suitable for Science, Society and Environment or Geography students from Years 8 to 10. Next year is the International Year of Biodiversity so this could be a fun way to introduce the topic.

An Early Childhood incursion was developed at the beginning of the year at Dalyellup Primary School, to stimulate children's curiosity in nature and Wilson Park Primary School hosted an EcoEducation Officer to run the *Western*



*A Year 2 student getting curious about invertebrates.*

*Shield – Threatened Species* incursion.

Halls Head Primary School invited EcoEducation staff from Perth Hills and the South West to run back-to-back incursion sessions for the entire school over two days for their science week.

Wellington Discovery Forest also hosted whole-school excursions with Kirup Primary School and the Kurrawang

Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School. The prize for the school to travel the furthest distance to attend an EcoEducation excursion goes to Kalbarri District High School!

By now I hope that most of you have spoken with Administration Officer Bonnie Patience while booking programs. Bonnie has revolutionised our systems so hopefully booking and invoicing has become easier for all concerned. If you have any enquiries about bookings Bonnie can be contacted Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at the DEC South West Regional Office – details overleaf.

John, Gene, Julz, Carolina, Michelle, Bonnie and I wish you the best for Christmas and the New Year. We hope you have a relaxing break and look forward to seeing you in the forest next year.  
**Hannah Hampson, Project Officer, DEC**

## Brush-tailed phascogales

My first sighting of one of these delightful creatures was actually while guiding a night walk for one of our groups at the Margaret River Eco Discovery Centre. I was having a little trouble with the connections in my torch and stopped close to the Bramley Brook to listen to the sounds changing as evening drew on. It was a beautiful still night and luckily the almost full moon was illuminating the forest well. One of the students pointed to a large tree and asked 'what is that'? We could see a perfect silhouette of a small silver-grey mammal with a beautiful bottle-brush tail. It was running head-first down a huge tree on the other side of the brook. We watched it for several minutes going up and down the trunk of the tree.

The brush-tailed phascogale, or wambenger, is a carnivorous marsupial that forages in the tree canopy. These animals are active between dusk and dawn eating small invertebrates like cockroaches, centipedes, beetles, spiders and moths as well as nectar and other small animals as the opportunities arise. Their home range can be 20 to 70 hectares and individuals can have more than 20 nest sites that they might use throughout the year, which include hollow trees or rotting stumps. They collect tree bark and also use feathers and fur to line their nest. It was a great opportunity to see the nocturnal marsupial at work gathering food.



*Brush-tailed phascogale.*

**Hannah Hampson, Project Officer, DEC**





# ecoeducation news

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### Edith Cowan University PL

Edith Cowan University (ECU) PL events were held at Leschenault Peninsula Conservation Park this year. Concurrent sessions were held in conjunction with Ribbons of Blue Coordinator Chris Gibbs. Student teachers spent half a day studying macro-invertebrates and the Ribbons of Blue program and half a day taking part in EcoEducation programs on the tuart woodlands that are offered in the conservation park. The student teachers had previously looked at jarrah forest when they visited Wellington Discovery Forest in their second year and this visit to Leschenault Peninsula complemented their understanding of two of the important forest ecosystems in the south-west.



*Left and below: Students taking part in the Ecosystem Explorers excursion.*



### EcoEducation from the Valley of the Giants

DEC Walpole District Interpretation Officer Christie Mahony recently visited Wellington Discovery Forest to observe an EcoEducation excursion in action. Christie plans to adapt *Ecosystem Explorers* to the tingle forest at the Valley of the Giants. Next year, schools will have the opportunity to book a full-day excursion or a shorter hour-long activity looking at the tingle forest ecosystem and the famous Tree Top walk.



*Right: The Tree Top walk.*

### Contacting EcoEducation in the South West Region

For any enquiries, bookings for excursions or PLs please contact Administrative Assistant Bonnie Patience at DEC's South West Regional Office.  
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