



# Perth's Great Cocky Count

**MORE than 550 volunteers registered for the 2011 Great Cocky Count—Carnaby's black cockatoo census which was held in Perth on Thursday 7 April.**

DEC Swan Region Ecologist Geoff Barrett said early results showed this year's count had built on the success of last year and provided a 'snapshot' count of the total number of birds visiting the Perth region.

"We've retained 70 per cent of our volunteers from last year and have seen a 60 per cent increase in new volunteers," he said.

"Of the 120 night roost sites in the greater Perth region uncovered in the 2010 Great Cocky Count, 112 were scheduled to be revisited, with 40 new roosts counted as far afield as Esperance, Albany

and Yanchep.

"To date, 109 surveys have been returned which is fewer than expected, however, the cold, rainy weather will have put many people off.

"So far, our results show that 3,250 birds were counted and 12 new roosts were discovered in the greater Perth region, suggesting that we did a good job of identifying most of the roost sites last year.

"A comparison of numbers of birds counted across 65 roosts that were surveyed in both 2010 and 2011 suggests that the average number of birds per roost is about half what it was last year.

"For example, 56 birds per roost were counted in 2010 compared with 27 in 2011.

"This is probably due to rain which fell for the first time in about two months on 7 April 2011, which seems to have dispersed the birds.

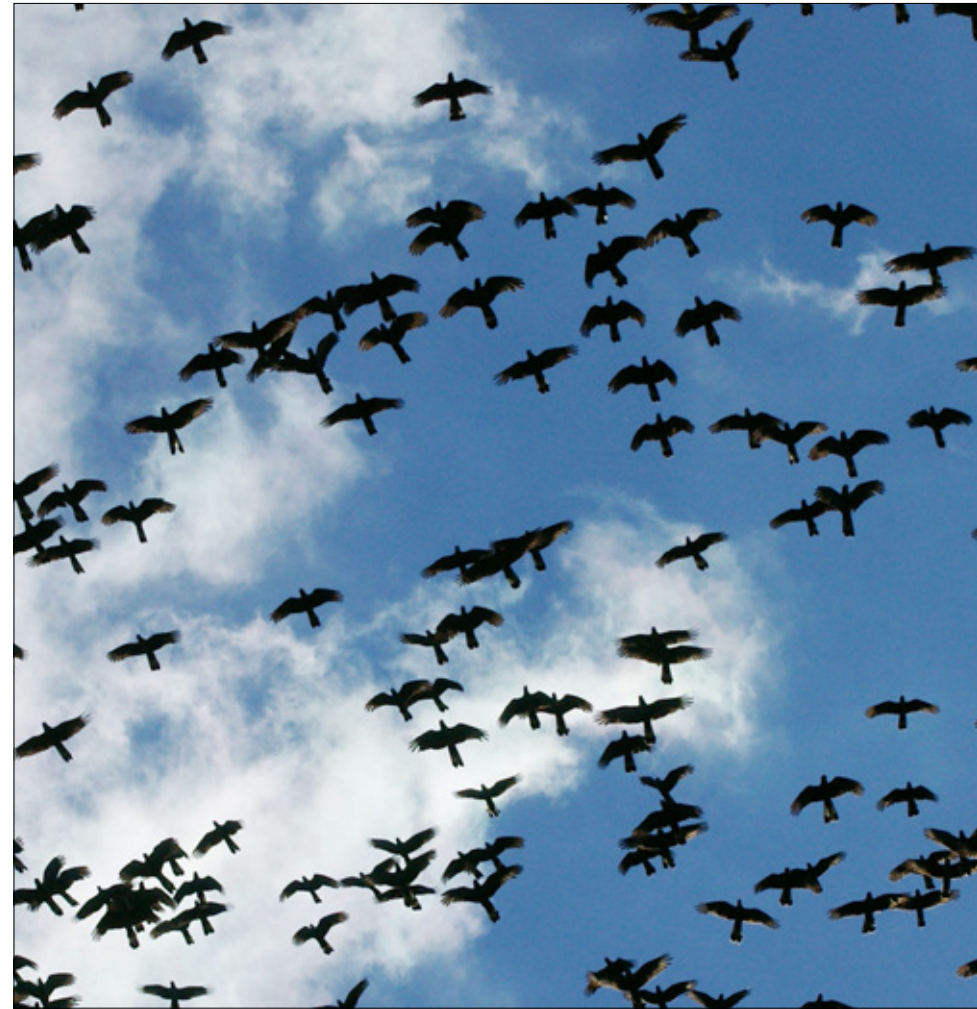
"These results make follow-up monthly surveys over the next four months even more important, so we can confirm whether there has been true decrease in the number of birds per roost. If it is a true decrease, it probably means that the birds are roosting elsewhere."

The Great Cocky Count is a Birds Australia-DEC joint project. The partnership between DEC and Birds Australia is helping to map critical habitat of Carnaby's black cockatoo, with the aim of protecting the species from further decline.

To be part of the ongoing Great Cocky Count, or provide information about a Carnaby's black cockatoo night roost site, contact Geoff at [geoff.barrett@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:geoff.barrett@dec.wa.gov.au) or on (08) 9423 2907.



*Carnaby's black cockatoos come in to roost in Bentley, Perth. More than 400 cockatoos use the Bentley night roost site.*



*Carnaby's black cockatoos fly over Yanchep National Park.*





*John Wheeler from Yanchep National Park soothes koala Cinder as she settles into her new home at Awaji Farm Park, Japan, cared for by new keeper Hiroko.*

# DEC social media presence

**FOLLOWING the implementation of social media guidelines for DEC staff, the department has increased its presence on the popular social networking sites twitter and facebook and the video sharing platform YouTube.**

Web Publishing and Community Information Manager Julia Poletti said staff were encouraged to consider social media marketing opportunities as part of broader communication strategies.

"DEC's [twitter account](#) is used to 'tweet' media releases and other approved corporate information as more and more staff realise the opportunities these new platforms provide," she said.

"There are currently 145 people 'following' DEC's tweets, with numbers growing weekly.

"We also have a [facebook page](#), which is used to promote the department's activities to other facebook users.

"*Nearer to Nature* has also jumped on board, using their facebook page to promote their school holiday programs and related initiatives.

"DEC's [YouTube channel](#) is in its infancy and has received some 250 page views to date. Visitors to the channel can view

vignettes about DEC's parks and visitors services as well as the department's employment opportunities."

If you work for DEC and would like something posted on any of the above social media platforms, you will need branch manager approval. Approved requests can be emailed to [webcontent@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:webcontent@dec.wa.gov.au).

"You can also stay informed with DEC media releases, fire updates and quarterly reports via RSS feed," said Julia.

"RSS stands for 'really simple syndication' and is a format for delivering regularly changing web content in a fast, convenient and condensed way.

"RSS feeds save time by delivering filtered content to the user rather than their having to manually visit a website."

Readers can visit the following links to view or subscribe the [DEC media release RSS feed](#) or the [quarterly performance reports RSS feed](#).

The social media resource page on the intranet has policies, guidelines and references aimed at helping staff learn about these new ways to communicate. If you are a DEC employee with an idea for a social media opportunity, visit DEC's [social media register](#)—the possibilities are endless.

## Yanchep koalas gifted to Japan

**THERE'S not many 'good news' stories coming out of Japan at the moment but the recent gifting of four koalas from DEC's Yanchep National Park is one of them.**

During March, DEC Senior Ranger John Wheeler and Visitor Services Manager Heather Beswick had the privilege of travelling to Japan with the four koalas – Juncea, Jenga, Cinder and Mandu.

The four Yanchep-born koalas travelled to Awaji Farm Park in the south-east corner of Awaji island, where they met their other Australian friends Jason, Chocolate, Karri and Bilby, who were previously gifted to Japan.

They arrived without incident and over a few days John and Heather worked with staff at the park to settle the koalas into their new home.

After this, Yanchep National Park's four koalas were officially handed to the Japanese people in a gifting ceremony.

Heather said the gifting was a representation of the ongoing strong relationship between sister cities Hyogo and Perth.

"The koalas are truly cherished by the Japanese people and to see the expressions of sheer joy and delight on their faces was an absolute pleasure," she said.

John said Juncea, Jenga, Cinder and Mandu were a very special and unique symbol of an ongoing partnership.

"The staff at the koalas' new home are incredible and show amazing dedication to the privilege of caring for their new additions," he said.

Yanchep National Park Manager Ali Pritchard said while koalas were not native to WA, the population at Yanchep had historical significance and was a key tourist attraction.

"Gifting these four koalas—which are iconic Australian animals—to another country such as Japan is a great thing to be a part of."



# Students explore the tingle forest at night



Guide Helen Nash (right) with Denmark Primary School students in the tingle forest.

**A GROUP of Denmark Primary School students recently enjoyed a night at the Tree Top Walk as part of a school excursion program designed to provide fun and experiential learning in a natural environment.**

Twenty-nine year six students were thrilled to be in the middle of the tingle forest looking for creatures that only come out at night.

Tree Top Walk guides Helen Nash and Helen Webster gave the students an evening to remember as they found possums, quokkas and spiders.

DEC's Parks and Visitor Services Regional Leader Tim Foley said the evening activity provided an ideal opportunity for the department to promote key environmental messages in a fun and interactive way.

"The children were captured by the enchantment of the forest as the guides sprinkled their magic dust on them, recounting stories about the different nocturnal animals," Tim said.

"We are privileged to have someone of as high a standard as Helen Nash working as an ambassador for the department. In recognition of her amazing skills, Helen was a runner up in the 2010 Tourism Council Awards in the category of the FACET Golden Guide Award.

"Helen is able to connect with children of all ages and her reputation with Denmark Primary School is of the highest calibre.

"The children will follow up their visit to the Tree Top Walk with further learnings in the classroom."

Helen said that she loved meeting the students and providing them with a fun-filled night-time adventure to help with their education.

"The children just absorb information like a sponge, particularly when it is presented in an entertaining and captivating way," Helen said.

Groups wishing to explore the forest at night and walk the walk are encouraged to contact the Tree Top Walk on (08) 9840 8200.

## Record visitor numbers at Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park

**WITH Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park recently breaking the 2.3 million visits a year mark, visitors are being encouraged to work with rangers to ensure their trip is safe and enjoyable.**

Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Parks and Visitor Services Coordinator for the Blackwood District Brian O'Hehir said in the past 12 months DEC rangers had stepped up their patrols throughout the national park to keep visitors safe.

"We have simple rules in place to protect visitors and the national park itself, which stretches 120 kilometres along the coastline from Bunker Bay in the north, to Augusta in the south," he said.

"Protecting the park's natural assets

is essential and while most visitors to the park are overwhelmingly doing the right thing, there are some who choose to ignore the rules, and regrettably we've had to issue 442 on-the-spot fines for offences such as lighting illegal fires, bringing dogs into the national park or damaging vegetation.

"Since November 2010, DEC rangers have also attended 13 illegal fires within the national park which could have easily got out of control.

"Visitors are the lifeblood of the national park but there are times when DEC rangers need to use their powers under the Conservation and Land Management Act to deal with anti-social activities such as the riding of unlicensed motorbikes or itinerant campers who have set up outside designated camp sites.

"These selfish actions not only cause tensions with other visitors but also impact on the national park's vegetation, leading to erosion and site degradation."

Brian said a draft management plan for the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Capes area had recently been prepared by DEC in consultation with the Capes Parks Community Advisory Committee, on behalf of the Conservation Commission of Western Australia.

Public submissions on the draft management plan are currently being analysed.

"The new management plan will focus on protecting key values and addressing cross boundary issues such as feral animals, fire, weeds and recreation management," he said.



DEC Senior Ranger Gilbert Stokman at Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.



# ECN creator retires

## DEC communications leader Ron Kawalilak has hung up his boots.

The long-serving Director of Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs retired on 15 April, after 22 years in charge of publishing, communications, community education and public participation planning for the Department of Environment and Conservation and its predecessor, the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

After joining CALM in November 1989, Ron set important policy directions for the relatively new department, taking the lead in developing strategic communications and public affairs services across the organisation. He expanded CALM's small in-house publications unit into a communications enterprise providing media liaison and public participation expertise as well as a range of community education programs, internal and external websites, and a variety of high quality, award-winning saleable publications, including the department's flagship quarterly magazine, *LANDSCOPE*, and its offshoot, the popular *LANDSCOPE* calendar.

Recognising public enthusiasm for nature-based tourism, Ron was instrumental in

pioneering the *LANDSCOPE* Expeditions which ran from 1992–2009. He also oversaw DEC's very successful Bush Rangers program and a suite of community education outreach programs. In 2006 he was responsible for combining and consolidating communications and publishing services in the amalgamation of CALM and the Department of Environment.

Ron is also responsible for initiating the current electronic format and distribution of Environment and Conservation News.

More recently, with his typical innovative style, Ron played a key role in guiding the development of DEC's web presence to include social media initiatives.

Ron's extensive knowledge, experience and leadership in public affairs and communications will be greatly missed, not only by the department, but also by his colleagues around the public sector. For his part, Ron says he has no intention of slowing down. Referring to times ahead not as 'retirement' but 'refirement', Ron and his wife Jill will enjoy some travel in North Africa and France before settling down to a balance of home life in Fremantle and roaming the bush as 'grey nomads'.



## Explore WA's natural wonders with new DEC book

### A NEW DEC publication showcases Western Australia's breathtaking diversity of national, marine and regional parks.

*Exploring Western Australia's natural wonders: national, marine and regional parks* covers 62 of the state's top parks and reserves.

DEC Corporate Communications Manager Madeleine Clews said the full-colour, 327-page region-by-region guide provided readers with information about the parks' history, natural attractions and ways to explore.

"The evocative text and stunning photography highlight the diversity of parks DEC manages across our great state," Madeleine said.

"From the towering trees of the south-west and the coral gardens of our marine parks, to the ancient gorges of the Kimberley and the wildflowers of the Midwest, our parks are well worth discovering.

"The book not only showcases the breathtaking landscapes, but also serves as a practical guide, with maps, park fact boxes and a section on activities ranging from whale watching and wildflowers to camping and volunteering."

*Exploring Western Australia's natural wonders: national, marine and regional parks* has a RRP of \$39.95 and can be purchased through WA Naturally Publications by phoning (08) 9334 0437 or shopping online at [www.dec.wa.gov.au/shop](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/shop).

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