



In this issue

- South-west coast protected under new marine park
- Rediscovering parks at the Caravan and Camping Show
- Auzzie still flying high 56 games on
- ECN now monthly
- News in brief
 - Snakes seized in Goldfields
 - Tough new licence for Cockburn Cement

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South-west coast protected under new marine park



PREMIER Colin Barnett and Environment Minister Bill Marmion have announced the state government's decision to create the Ngari Capes Marine Park, which will cover about 124,000 hectares in the state's south-west.

The new marine park will extend from Geographe Bay near Busselton to Augusta, including the waters between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin. It will balance both recreational pursuits and protecting important marine life by classifying areas into different zones.

"The creation of this marine park will help conserve one of Western Australia's most remarkable marine areas," Mr Barnett said.

"It is also one of the state's most popular tourism destinations—the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park adjoining the marine park receives more than two million visits annually, and is the most popular national park in WA."

Mr Marmion said the establishment of the Ngari Capes Marine Park formed part of a statewide initiative to enhance conservation of WA's marine environments through the creation of six marine parks—four in the Kimberley, one in Dampier Archipelago and this one.

"The Ngari Capes Marine Park will support a range of recreational activities, including some of the best surfing in WA," Mr Marmion said.

"The vast majority of the park will be available for fishing, swimming, diving, snorkelling, boating, sailing, windsurfing, kite surfing, water-skiing and sea kayaking.

"Special areas of the park will be set aside for conservation as well as for specific uses such as surfing and shore-based activities, recognising their particular importance."

Mr Marmion said 15 sanctuary zones would be formed to protect breeding grounds for fish but 93 per cent of the coastline would still

remain open for recreational fishing.

Ngari Capes Marine Park will be formally created this year, using Royalties for Regions funding, once all the necessary statutory steps to reserve the park are completed.

For information on the creation of the Ngari Capes Marine Park visit www.dec.wa.gov.au.



Premier Colin Barnett, DEC Director General Keiran McNamara, Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park Ranger Gilbert Stokman and Environment Minister Bill Marmion.

Rediscovering parks at the Caravan and Camping Show

Showcasing the state's national parks and the Tree Top Walk at this year's Perth Caravan and Camping Show received an overwhelmingly positive response from visitors to the DEC display.

For five days more than 43,000 visitors attended the show at the Claremont Showgrounds, with a steady stream visiting DEC's display.

DEC Education Officer (Tourism and Recreation) Kevin Smith said the display aimed to encourage tourism to protected areas of Western Australia, provide information to park visitors and to promote DEC's online park information, park passes and the Tree Top Walk.

"It was an ideal opportunity to interact with the general public and to discuss their pre-visit information needs," Kevin said.

"Demonstrations of the DEC Campgrounds website and the new EveryTrail guides were very popular. Almost all visitors to the stand said they use the internet to plan their holidays and were actively looking for detailed information."

Joining forces with the Rediscover Parks team, the Tree Top Walk display complemented the department's presence at the show and highlighted one of the state's most celebrated attractions.



Tree Top Walk Business Manager Julie Ross said caravan tourism was doing well despite economic uncertainty, and caravan travellers were an important target audience for the business.

"Younger families are now turning more to caravan parks as a base for their holidays and are keen to explore the state's national parks, as the facilities are world-class," Julie said.

Julie said it was great to talk to the many people who visited the stand, many of whom had lots of fantastic memories of their trip to the Valley of the Giants and the Tree Top Walk.

"This year, more so than ever, there was a growing number of people who said they hadn't been to the Tree Top Walk or our national parks,

as they had recently arrived to work in the mining industry or support industries."

Kevin and Julie expressed their appreciation to DEC staff Rozanne Van Der Heijden, Lesley Barris, Amanda Squiers, Roxanne Pendreigh, Blake Edwick, Andrew Kemp, Bok Ho and Lorene Bennett who volunteered their time to assist with the display.

At the conclusion of the event, Vanessa Unwin of Perth won a Tree Top Walk hamper valued at \$250.

Above: Julie invites Leslie Briscoe, board member of Australia's South West, to draw the winner of the Tree Top Walk hamper.

News in brief

Snakes seized in Goldfields

Officers from DEC and Customs and Border Protection have seized three illegally kept snakes in two separate raids in the Goldfields region of Western Australia, including an exotic corn snake native to North America and two protected species native to WA.

A juvenile corn snake and a black-headed python were seized at one address, while a south west carpet python was discovered being illegally held at another residence.

DEC wildlife officer Matt Swan said black-headed and south west carpet pythons were protected fauna under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*.

"It is an offence to take these species from the wild or be in possession of them unlawfully, and it is also illegal to buy reptiles from anyone other than a licensed reptile dealer and to keep reptiles without a licence," he said.

Read more in the full media statement.

Tough new licence for Cockburn Cement

DEC has issued a new licence for Cockburn Cement's operations at Munster following consultation with the community and the company.

The new licence requires the company to install a baghouse filter on kiln 5 similar to the one recently installed and operating successfully on kiln 6. The licence sets lower limits and targets for kiln 6 and for kiln 5 once the baghouse is installed.

The new licence is subject to a 21-day appeals process. It is available on DEC's website at www.dec.wa.gov.au/cockburncement.





Auzzie still flying high 56 games on

Last Saturday marked the 56th time Auzzie the wedge-tailed eagle has flown above Patersons Stadium amid cheers from the 40,000-strong crowd below. Her handler, DEC wildlife rehabilitator and Western Australian Birds of Prey Centre founder Yvonne Sitko, said Auzzie has become a popular figure among football fans and bird-lovers in the past six years.

“Auzzie’s high-profile connection with the West Coast Eagles—flying over the stands at every home game—has been a great platform to raise understanding and awareness about native birds under threat,” Yvonne said.

“These majestic birds are still misunderstood by some people. This species is still destroyed in the mistaken belief that they are a major predator of stock, which is not the case. Some people are unaware at how important the wedge-tailed eagle is to an ecosystem and the balance they create within it.”

Yvonne said she takes Auzzie to functions and corporate boxes during quarter-time and half-time breaks at the football, where people have a chance to get up close.

“I think it’s very important to have such a great ambassador for the species and for birds of prey in general,” she said.

Yvonne said the phone number for DEC’s Wildcare Helpline is displayed on the big screen every time Auzzie makes her flight.

“It’s an ideal opportunity to promote such an essential service.”

The Wildcare Helpline helps members of the public who find sick, injured or orphaned native wildlife. Just this year, Yvonne has received 20 birds into her care as a result of calls to the helpline.

Yvonne became actively involved in wildlife rehabilitation in 2000 after a visit to Jurong Bird Park in Singapore, which inspired her to act on her lifelong fascination with birds of prey. In 2005 she established the Western Australian Birds of Prey Centre, an organisation that works to educate people about the importance of conserving the natural habitat for birds of prey.

One of the key ways the centre does this is through their popular flying displays at Whiteman Park, which showcase a number of non-releasable birds demonstrating their natural behaviours.

“The flying displays can be seen during the April school holidays for a limited time only,” Yvonne said.

“My aim is to provide education through entertainment, and I think the displays—as well as Auzzie’s association with the West Coast Eagles—are a fantastic way of achieving this.”

For more information about Yvonne’s flying displays these holidays, visit www.wabirdsofprey.com or phone 0438 388 383. Places fill up quickly so please book ahead.

The Wildcare Helpline can be called on 9474 9055.



Top: Yvonne with Auzzie at Patersons Stadium.

Below: Back by popular demand, the birds of prey flying displays at Whiteman Park will be running these school holidays.



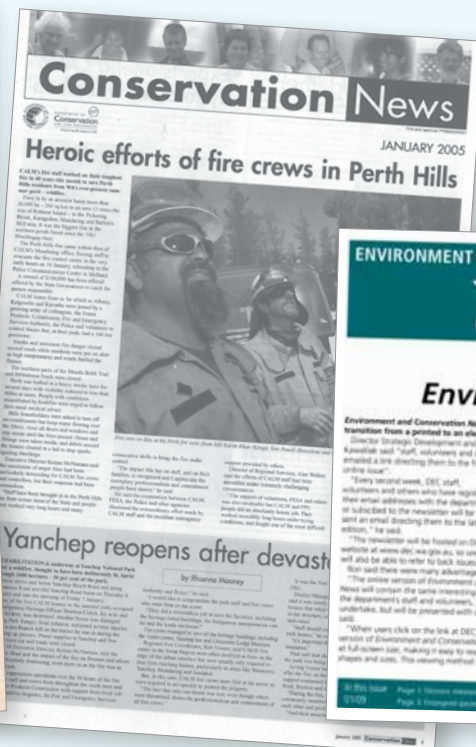
ECN now monthly

After some 27 years with a range of appearances and names, Environment and Conservation News (ECN) is again changing—to a briefer format and with monthly distribution.

The change is necessary because of budget constraints on DEC's Corporate Communications Branch.

The ECN team would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the many editions of the newsletter. At this stage there is no further requirement for submissions.

Archived editions of ECN can be viewed on the DEC website.



Top right: Communications Project Officer Karla Forrest preparing an edition of ECN.

Below: Environment and Conservation News in its previous formats.

