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Critter spreads litter message online



A SMALL Western Australian crab is getting his claws out to join the social media sphere, and he has a big message to spread about anti-littering.

Keep Australia Beautiful (WA) has launched a Facebook and Twitter account with a twist, with last year's winner of the Trash My Ad competition, a little crab from Ningaloo Reef called Kevin, getting a profile all of his own.

Keep Australia Beautiful (WA) chair Mel Hay said Kevin was a fun, playful and insightful crab who would engage a wide audience, particularly young people.

"Kevin is an 18-year-old crab from Ningaloo Reef who has come to Perth to move into a share house in Scarborough and go to uni. He likes Kung Fu, action movies, skateboarding, making

friends and 'keepin' it beautiful', but he hates litter," he said.

"Friends who follow Kevin on Facebook and Twitter will learn about his new life in the city as he tries to fit in and get involved with other young people in Perth by sharing stories, photos and ideas with an environmental focus.

"People will be able to follow his travels, listen and respond to his stories and in doing so, it is hoped they can become a little more educated about anti-littering and start to change some of their behaviours."

Mr Hay said increased use of social media among young people meant many of the traditional promotional messages and mediums

were less likely to impact on young people and influence behaviour.

"From 2009 to 2011, Trash My Ad was Keep Australia Beautiful's engagement tool to connect with youth," he said.

"In 2012, we are trying something new as we recognise that young people spend a lot of time online.

"We want to meet young people in the online space, and we are hoping Kevin will be the one who engages them."

Kevin the crab can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Kevin.the.crab and Twitter at @kevinthecrab.

"We want to meet young people in the online space, and we are hoping Kevin will be the one who engages them."



There was no time to be crabby with volunteers Madeline Wyre and Tamiyah DeFrancesch at the Mitchell Freeway Clean up on 20 May.

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Triggerplant discovery triggers interest in the Midwest

A SCIENTIST at the Western Australian Herbarium was captivated to discover a small triggerplant near Eneabba.

The little wildebeest (*Stylidium cornuatum*) is one of eight tiny triggerplant species newly recognised by Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) senior research scientist Juliet Wege.

"I stumbled across this new species in swampy bushland back in 2008 while I was on the hunt for a different plant," she said.

"I was immediately struck by how its upper petals resemble the horns of wildebeest."

Dr Wege has also named and described the glistening triggerplant (*Stylidium scintillans*), a species unearthed during botanical surveys in the Midwest.

Karara Mining Ltd, the Australian Biological Resources Study and DEC provided financial support for Dr Wege's taxonomic research.

"The scientific description of the glistening triggerplant has been an important step towards ensuring its conservation," said Dr Wege.

"It is vital that we have a better knowledge of potentially threatened species in the Midwest, for both conservation and resource development planning."

Dr Wege has spent several years studying other miniature triggerplants and honing her eye for detail.

Her research has also involved painstakingly sorting through hundreds of tiny pressed plant collections at the Western Australian Herbarium, many of which were incorrectly identified.

"Herbarium records provide baseline biodiversity information, helping us to understand what species we have, where they grow, when they flower, and how common they are," she said.

"Sorting the collection and fixing the errors was a vital part of the project because many of these species are rare or poorly known."

Triggerplants are named for their touch-sensitive column concealed by petals, which flicks over and deposits or collects pollen when triggered by insects landing on the flower.



Dr Wege says that her research will enhance survey efforts by making these species much easier to identify. She hopes it will lead to a renewed interest in a small but important element of Western Australia's biodiversity.

For more information, contact DEC's Western Australian Herbarium on 9334 0500.



News in brief

Rescue effort for critically endangered flora

THREATENED flora species in danger of extinction will be planted across the state during May as part of an annual Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) project to collect rare seeds and plant them in the wild.

This year seedlings are being planted near Cataby, Jurien Bay, Three Springs, Albany, Kojonup and Narrogin. Monitoring of previously planted seedlings will be continued across the south-west of Western Australia.

DEC research scientist Leonie Monks said 15 critically endangered plant species were being targeted as part of the translocation project.

"We aim to establish viable and self-sustaining populations of threatened plant species in the wild so that we can eventually remove them from threatened species lists. From previous research we know we need to plant in excess of 200 seedlings in order to produce a self-sustaining population," she said.

More information is available in the full [media statement](#).

Above left: Scientist Juliet Wege kneels to photograph tiny triggerplants.

Above right: The little wildebeest is named for its unusual shape.

Left: The stunning glistening triggerplant.



Local volunteers watch over nesting turtles



IN the Pilbara township of Wickham a small yet dedicated group of volunteers has been keeping a close eye on the annual nesting of marine turtles occurring on their local beaches.

The West Pilbara Turtle Program (WPTP) has operated for seven years with funding from Rio Tinto and assistance from the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and local residents who donate their time and effort to the cause.

DEC marine conservation officer Marissa Speirs said the community

group mainly monitored turtles during the nesting and hatching season, between October and April.

"This year we saw turtle nesting activity on two beaches within Rio Tinto's lease and the Wickham back beaches," she said.

"Volunteers were regularly visiting these beaches to identify the species of turtle coming ashore to nest and determine if they nested successfully.

"This season, volunteers recorded a total of 139 successful nests, which were all laid by flatback turtles.

"In the past the occasional green or hawksbill turtle has also been recorded."

WPTP coordinator Michelle Ludbrook said she was pleased that locals were becoming more aware of turtle nesting on Wickham's beaches.

"The word is slowly spreading and people are starting to realise that turtles nest on their back doorstep," Ms Ludbrook said.

"We have a responsibility to ensure that turtles continue to nest here, and monitoring turtle tracks through the WPTP is one way people can help.

"Working with local volunteers was a rewarding experience. It was great to see peoples' positive reactions to seeing their first turtle or hatchling."

Rio Tinto port manager Cape Lambert operations Michael Bailey said Rio Tinto was committed to sustainable environmental partnerships that engaged the community and provided positive outcomes for the region.

"Our ongoing partnership with DEC on the West Pilbara Turtle Program has been one that locals including Rio Tinto employees really connect with," Mr Bailey said.

"The long-term partnership works to ensure the longevity of turtles on our beaches and ensures we monitor population numbers, nesting habits and hatchling numbers."



A flatback adult on the beach.



Volunteers monitoring turtle nesting activity.

Cane toad hotline goes **WILD**

The cane toad hotline is now ringing to a different tune after switching to a new number.

The Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC) volunteer Wildcare Helpline can assist with enquiries about suspected cane toad sightings.

DEC State Cane Toad Initiative program coordinator Corrin Everitt said the new hotline number, 1800 44 WILD (9453), is staffed by volunteers, seven days a week.

"The volunteers are available to provide advice and guidance to anyone believing they may have seen an invasive pest in WA, in areas where they're not commonly seen," she said.



"Previously, anyone who had a cane toad enquiry was directed to the Pest and Disease Information Services line at the WA Department of Agriculture and Food.

"Operating under a new central number will improve efficiency and avoid double handling of information between different organisations."

More information is available on the DEC [website](#).

