

Community Involvement Unit newsletter



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future



Community Involvement Unit

November 2012

Summer 2012 edition

Firstly – a big welcome to our new volunteers that have recently joined the DEC community since the last issue.

The number of volunteers and projects continues to grow which means lots more good work is being done for the environment and conservation across WA.

Since the start of this financial year in July we have just reached the end of the first quarter.

Despite the changes to the collection of timesheets (from annual to quarterly) we had a good response and can already see that a lot of volunteer work is being completed.

Those of you that returned timesheets and have accumulated enough hours will soon be receiving your rewards.

The first quarter is now closed and we're looking forward to the next so please don't forget to get your timesheets into us as soon

as possible after the 31st December.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact the Community Involvement Unit – details on the back page.

The 30th of November sees the Volunteer of the Year awards held at DEC HQ at Kensington – we'll report on that in the next edition in February.

We've received a number of very worthy nominations so it's going to be a tough decision for the judges.

Recent research has shown that volunteering is so good for you, it should be prescribed by doctors.

It has been proven that it promotes happiness, health and longevity – but you already knew that.

If you needed anything to convince friends or family to get involved in volunteering, then that's a good start.

2012 was a busy year for the unit and we are looking forward to a bigger and better 2013.

Thank you all for your time and dedication to your various projects.

Have a great Christmas and we'll see you in the New Year.

From all at the

Community Involvement Unit
Hugh, Lorene, Lee, Sonia, Brooke
and Josey



Inside this issue:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Campground hosts | 2 |
| 4WD clubs clean up | 3 |
| Wildlife releases | 4 |
| Helpline advice | 5 - 6 |
| Volunteers and equipment needed | 9 |

Also:

- Bushfire and wildlife advice
- Volunteer boat training offer
- Fairbridge Village
- Social media information
- Contact the CIU

Campground host updates

The 2012 camp hosting season is in full swing in the Cape Range National Park. Hosts are assisting district staff to manage 8 of the 13 campgrounds located in the park.

The Exmouth team has worked hard to improve campground facilities and has upgraded many campgrounds including Kurrajong camp, Tulki camp, Yardie Creek camp, North Mandu camp and Ned's camp.

Improvements have included defined railed campsites, leveled ground, site expansions and the construction of group meeting areas allowing campers to come together for social activities.

Hosts continue to contribute positively to the visitor experience of Cape Range by maintaining exceptionally clean facilities, managing daily camp site allocations, sharing friendly stories and just being the happy face of the park.

On average the volunteer program contributes more than 55,000 volun-

teer hours to the Cape Range National Park alone each year.

The Exmouth team is focused on bringing all of the team together and has promoted social activities including regular host BBQ's.

These social activities allow staff and hosts to get to know each other and allow short informal sessions explaining district programs and the sharing of day to day activities.

The team has definitely benefited from getting together more often and sharing information as a group.

Happy hosts make for happy campers!

Phil Arthur

National Park Ranger
Cape Range National Park



Happy campers and hosts enjoying a sundowner at Osprey Bay, Cape Range National Park

Photo © Colin Dixon

Campground Host vacancies

Upcoming vacancies for volunteer campground hosts include:

Peron Homestead in **Francois Peron national park** at Shark Bay — for **December 2012** through to **March 2013** (inclusive). Contact:

Chris McMonagle,
Ranger, Shark Bay District
Phone: (08) 9948 1208 or email:
chris.mcmonagle@dec.wa.gov.au

At **Millstream-Chichester NP** there are vacancies up **until Christmas** — at Miliyanha, Stargazers and Crossing Pool. Contact:

Steve Breedveld, acting Senior Ranger
Phone:(08) 9184 5144 or email:
stephen.breedveld@dec.wa.gov.au

Stokes Inlet, **Stokes national park** have a vacancy for the whole of **January 2013**. Contact:
Dave Thornburg, Senior Ranger
Phone: (08) 9076 8541 or email:
dave.thornburg@dec.wa.gov.au

In the south west, **Fernhook Falls and Crystal Springs** have vacancies for **January 2013 and again in April and May** over the school holiday period. Contact Ranger Chris Goodsell on:
(08) 9840 0400 or email:
Chris.Goodsell@dec.wa.gov.au

Cape Arid - vacancies over **November and December**. Contact senior ranger Johlene Shalders:
Phone: (08) 9075 0055 or email:
Johlene.shalders@dec.wa.gov.au

Lucky Bay campsite at **Cape Le Grand Beach campsite**, within Cape Le Grand National Park (Esperance District) - vacancies for the month of **December**. Contact senior ranger Cameron Hennessey phone (08) 9075 9072 or email:

Cameron.hennessey@dec.wa.gov.au

For information on the campsites visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/campgrounds/



View over Millstream NP - Photo: © B. Russell

Four Wheel Drive clubs clean-up!

Track Care WA (TCWA) and clubs allied to the Four Wheel Drive Association of WA (4WDWA) recently helped to clean up two popular four wheel drive areas close to Perth.

On the coast, TCWA worked with staff from Swan Coastal District, the Wilbinga Shacks 4X4 Crew and several other clubs to clean up Wilbinga an area on the coast between Two Rocks and Guilderton.

Due to the continuous illegal dumping of rubbish and litter, it was long overdue for another clean-up.

On Sunday September 9, more than 70 volunteers in 50 4WD vehicles with 12 trailers proceeded to spring clean the tracks within the area. Significantly, one third less rubbish was removed this time compared to previous clean-up events, proving that the work by volunteers was finally making a difference to the area.



The Shire of Gingin generously assisted by removing rubbish collected on the day at no cost.

In the hills, TCWA and the 4WD clubs worked with staff from Perth Hills District, DEC's Recreation and Trails Unit and the Water Corporation to clean up an area referred to as the 'Powerline Track'.

As the name suggests it follows the power line which shadows the Great Eastern and Southern Highways from Mundaring Weir Road to York.

This track runs for 24 km providing a variety of challenges for 4WD enthusi-

asts. Again, due to illegal dumping and general littering it was desperately in need of attention and a clean-up.

4WDWA and TCWA put out the call to all the 4WD clubs and the response was overwhelming. On Sunday September 23, 14 different clubs and 119 volunteers in 81 4WD vehicles with various trailers attended picking up refuse along the entire length of the track.

The rubbish collected filled three, 10 cubic metre bins. The Shire of Mundaring supported the effort by waiving the tipping fees and offering ranger support; the Water Corporation assisted and also provided refreshments for all volunteers. Keep Australia Beautiful Council (KABC) generously provided a limitless supply of sturdy rubbish bags for collecting.

After both events everyone enjoyed a cool drink and barbeque which was provided by DEC.



Above: photos of the large amount of rubbish picked up, and some of the volunteers at work

Shawn Debono, PVS Coordinator Swan Coastal District and Paul Udinga, Senior Ranger Perth Hills District said they were amazed and impressed by the number of volunteers who came out to help, demonstrating that the 4WD community are serious about working with DEC and keen to be involved in natural area management with a view to sustainable access.

DEC and the CIU would also like to thank TCWA, the 4WDWA and the volunteers for putting in a huge effort.



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Written by: Terry Goodlich
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Recreation and Trails Unit
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Kaarakin Cockatoo Release

In July, 16 forest red-tail black cockatoos were released at Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre in Martin, WA.

Thanks to the efforts the dedicated volunteers, it was the biggest ever release of red-tails in WA.

The birds had all been rehabilitated after being shot or hit by cars, and cared for continuously until they were fit and healthy enough to be fend for themselves.

It was a 'soft' release, with a supplementary food station provided nearby, with the amount of food available each day gradually reduced, helping the birds integrate into the wild.

Congratulations to all involved!

For more information on Kaarakin's work, take a look at their new website - www.blackcockatoorecovery.com



Photo: Kaarakin volunteers releasing the cockatoos © DEC

New life for Australia's rarest reptile

By Tanya Marwood

It was a sunny winter's day when 30 young captive-bred Western Swamp Tortoises (Australia's rarest reptile) were released at Twin Swamps Nature Reserve on July 28, 2012.

Gerald Kuchling (Chief research scientist on the WST Recovery Team) along with staff from Perth Zoo and DEC, plus many members of the community conservation group Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise, gathered to wish the little animals, which ranged in age from 2 to 7 years, the best of luck in their new life.



Above: Tortoise swimming © FOWST

A film crew from Austria was in attendance, no doubt lured by Gerald's international reputation in conservation circles.

This may well be the last such release in this reserve and possibly the last publicly attended release in the region, as all reserves are now either fully stocked or the terrain is

too difficult to grant public access (e.g. Moore River National Park site).

Those who had never before attended a release found it an exciting and moving experience and it was especially good to see many children involved.

For more information on the work of the Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise visit:

www.westernswamptortoise.com



Above: Getting ready for release © FOWST

Wildcare Helpline bushfire advice

When bushfires occur the Wildcare Helpline and rehabilitation centres are often inundated with calls from the public needing assistance with injured wildlife. It is encouraging to know that people care so much about our wildlife.

Many calls are from people wanting to assist with the rescue of injured wildlife in a direct way and while these offers are appreciated at times of crisis, it is best for the any wildlife found that it is cared for by registered rehabilitators.



Photo: Shedding bluetongue © E Jackson

To find your nearest vet or registered rehabilitator call the **Wildcare Helpline** on **9474 9055**

It is important for people who live in areas where fires have been to keep these things in mind to help wildlife in the aftermath:

- **Do not** attempt to enter any fire areas until authorised to do so by fire control officers.
- Keep pets indoors and under control wherever possible.
- Leave bowls of water out for animals escaping the fires – but do not leave food out for wildlife in national parks
- Keep a cardboard box and towel in the boot of your car in case you find an injured animal – if you rescue an animal that has been burnt, wrap it loosely, place it in a cardboard box and keep it in a dark, quiet and warm place
- Make water available
- **Do not** try to feed the animal
- Call the Wildcare Helpline for advice, or take it to a local vet or wildlife rehabilitation centre for assistance as soon as possible if you know where your nearest one is.

The Wildcare Helpline is a 24 hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week telephone referral service.

The helpline is operated by volunteers on behalf of DEC and is based at DEC's operational headquarters at Kensington.



Photo: Recovering joey in makeshift pouch © DEC

WILDCARE helpline

FOR SICK, INJURED OR ORPHANED NATIVE WILDLIFE



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(08) 9474 9055

Wildcare Helpline reptile advice

The warmer weather brings with it a new season of breeding in most animals and also means that snakes and other reptiles begin to come out of hibernation, so you're more likely to come across them more often.

Reptiles are normally secretive and timid animals, and generally will only attack when threatened or surprised i.e. when trodden on.

As top predators, snakes are good indicators of a healthy environment, so if you happen to see a snake in your yard, it means there's a healthy balance in the local food chain.

They like to feel protected and hidden and will hide in a variety of places including under sheets of wood or tin, old lino, concrete slabs, plastic, roof tiles on the ground, piles of bricks, pipes, fire wood and stones, inside sheds, in the cavities of walls, in aviaries and compost heaps – anywhere that is dark and / or warm and provides food.

To discourage snakes and reptiles from your property:

- Remove potential hiding places from your yard, such as those mentioned above
- Block off possible entrances and access to underneath sheds
- Prune lower branches of shrubs to remove cover and allowing you to see under them
- Thin out any ground-covering plants to allow you to see when a snake maybe moving through
- Surround compost heaps with 10mm steel mesh, and turn regularly - better still, use a sealed, tumbling barrel-type – compost heaps are ideal shelter and egg-laying areas for reptiles
- Fit rubber weather seals under doors (including screen doors) to deny access to adult snakes. Snakes can squeeze through surprisingly small gaps
- Block exterior wall vents by covering with 10mm steel mesh or fly wire, and fill any holes in brickwork
- Place 10mm steel mesh or fly wire around aviaries and keep it maintained – if mice can get in, so could a snake!

These methods are intended as a guide only. We cannot guarantee that snakes won't visit, but by taking some simple precautions you can reduce the attractiveness of your property to reptiles and reduce the chance of them returning. If in doubt, or if you have a snake that you need removing, please contact the Wildcare Helpline to be referred to a one of our volunteer reptile removers in your area.



Photo © Richard Whitfield

WILDCARE helpline

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Volunteer Boat Training

Perth Boat School provides **free** training to all volunteers in all organisations where they might need boat training.

This is both for Recreational Skippers Tickets, as well as Commercial Coxswains Restricted, which some volunteers need.

This can mean a substantial saving and as they train most volunteers on location at their local centre, this saves in travelling to Perth too.

They have a standing offer to many organisations such as Swan River Trust, Dolphin Watch, River Guardians, DEC, Sea Rescue, SES and others



Anyone that needs to do small boat training can do so via the automated booking system on the website (www.PerthBoatSchool.com.au) and anyone that needs to communicate with the school can email Mike direct (mike@perthboatschool.com.au)

Thanks to Mike and congratulations to all at Perth Boat School in receiving the Stirling Business "2012 Community Spirit Award".

Fairbridge Village and DEC

Fairbridge is a major youth charity in Western Australia and the only charity in Australia that owns a whole nationally heritage-listed town site, located off the South West Highway, Pinjarra WA.

Fairbridge runs a myriad of programs and services for young people and has partnership agreements with dozens of youth organisations, and now has support from DEC.

Fairbridge works with children with disabilities, young people at risk or with drug problems, the unemployed, young people in our justice system, young people who are struggling with life, indigenous young people and refugees, through to gifted young people.

Fairbridge helps them to reach their full potential and bring about long term positive sustainable change in their lives.

Fairbridge are able to provide accommodation in cottages, host weddings and conferences including all catering, provide adventure breaks and host festivals or other events for small or large organisations.

They are also open to the public for day trips, with an art gallery, museum, café, swimming pool, hiking trails and gas barbecues on site.

The surrounding woodlands also support populations of Red-tail and Baudin's black cockatoos, amongst many other bird and mammal species.

They also offer a number of accredited training courses such as outdoor recreation and First Aid.

By visiting Fairbridge or using their services you are helping to fulfill their mission to create opportunities for young people.

As a new DEC and Fairbridge affiliation has been formed, we are pleased to be able to offer all volunteer park pass holders a 10% discount on services offered by Fairbridge - (accommodation subject to availability - discounts apply to community facilities not on training courses).

Please contact Fairbridge to discuss rates and their full range of services.

For more information and contact details please visit the Fairbridge website - www.fairbridge.asn.au



The chapel at Fairbridge

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Where?

120 Gilchrist Rd
Lesmurdie
WA 6076

Time

10am-12pm

Price

Adult: \$15
Child: \$10
Seniors: \$12
Family: \$40 (2A & 2C)

Bookings

Call (08) 9291 3900 or e-mail info@kanyanawildlife.org.au

Open the door to an unforgettable experience!

www.kanyanawildlife.org.au

Volunteers needed to join the Kanyana Education Team

Kanyana Wildlife is a non-profit organisation located at Lesmurdie that cares for sick, orphaned, injured and displaced wildlife. They are looking for volunteers that would like to work in their education or training section. Retired or part time teachers and students would be ideal and you must have a love of working with animals.

If you live in the Perth Hills and are interested in becoming a guide for their Discovery Centre day tours as well as nocturnal tours to show our animals "in action", they are very keen to hear from you.

Kanyana also make visits to schools and public events to introduce our wildlife. Training is provided on site for this role.

If you think you might be interested please contact Kanyana on 9291 3900 or email them on info@kanyanawildlife.org.au.

A vibrant network of volunteers happy to care for our natural environment

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT UNIT

Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre
WA 6983

Phone: 08 9334 0279
Fax: 08 9334 0221
E-mail:
community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au



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The CIU provides community members in WA with opportunities to support, be involved in, and contribute to, the work of DEC.

The CIU supports DEC volunteers as an integral component of the Western Australian community. Volunteering enriches the community through the delivery of environmental, social, economic and health benefits to individuals, local groups and communities, the state and the nation.

If you have an event or story you would like to feature in future editions of the newsletter, or have any comments or suggestions please contact the Community Involvement Unit via:

Community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au

or call (08) 9334 0582

You can now find DEC Parks on social media. Follow for updates on volunteering and other information on DEC national parks -



www.facebook.com/decparkswa



[@DECParksWA](https://twitter.com/DECParksWA)



www.flickr.com/groups/decparks/

For information on DEC volunteer programs, visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/category/16/183/341/

DEC Conservation Library volunteers needed

Are you computer friendly and like books, papers, maps, photos, slides and photocopies?

Would you be interested in helping the Librarians at the Conservation Library, in the Western Australian Conservation Science Centre, Kensington bring some order to the array of information that has not yet been added to the Catalogue?

If so, they would love to have you help their team!

Please contact Lisa or Debby at DEC-ConsLibEnquiry@dec.wa.gov.au or 9219 9058, and have a chat about what you feel you can help them with.

Research equipment needed

We have had a request from Donna Simmons, am a Natural Resource Management Officer for the Shires of Trayning and Nungarin.

She is planning on running a course for people attending to learn methods of surveying the reptiles at the Eyre Bird Observatory.

While a few reptiles have been sighted in the area, there has been no formal record of the species living in this reserve, and this is a great opportunity to learn more about the biodiversity there.

To properly run the course Donna needs equipment including buckets for pit-fall traps, aluminium fly-wire as a drift fence and funnel traps.

This is the basic equipment however, if it were possible it would be great to have other equipment too such as camera traps, which could be permanently set up in the observatory for multiple fauna monitoring.

If you can help Donna with this or for more information on the project please contact Donna directly via:

donssimmons@me.com