



# Community Involvement Unit newsletter November 2013

November is a busy month with training workshops for the Campground Host program and the DPaW Volunteer of the Year event towards the end of the month.

For the Wildcare Helpline program the warmer weather brings the breeding season, providing lots of swooping magpies and baby birds as well as snakes on the move (see page 6 for advice). Calls are increasing and it's not hard to see where last year's 10,000 calls came from.

As we accelerate towards the Christmas period can I urge you all to take a well-earned break from paid work or volunteering activities and spend quality time with family and friends, but most importantly find time for yourself.

Rest and recuperation is important to charge personal batteries and renew energy to allow us to cope with whatever 2014 brings.

Too often we remain caught up in everyday projects and as volunteers we have a dangerous predisposition to give more of our time to help, to rescue and generally save the world!!

My quick message is to say **NO** more often and focus more on self and immediate family.

On the DPaW news front, we are currently using up old stock of shirts or other uniform (with DEC branding as opposed to DPaW).

We will be moving towards light and airy sleeveless vests with DPaW markings, designed to wear over any existing shirt or, in wet / cold weather, over a protective jacket. Delivery is expected in early 2014.

At DPaw locations where no public campground is available we are considering creating the volunteer position of "Park Host / Guide".

These volunteers will provide advice at parks regarding local walks, points of interest and generally assist Rangers and other DPaW staff adding value for all visitors.

For more information on this role, or to offer comment, please contact me on 9334 0468.

Look out in your inbox soon for a survey from us seeking your feedback on volunteer programs in DPaW. It's an opportunity for you to let us know your experiences – good, bad, or indifferent – along with any constructive comment on how we can improve our services to you.

**THANK YOU** once again for the many hours, expertise, wisdom, patience, and personal resources which you all provide to DPaW volunteer projects.

Hugh  
Community Involvement Unit Coordinator

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## Campground host program and workshop

Campground hosts are people who volunteer their time in national parks around the state to carry out a variety of roles associated with park and visitor management.

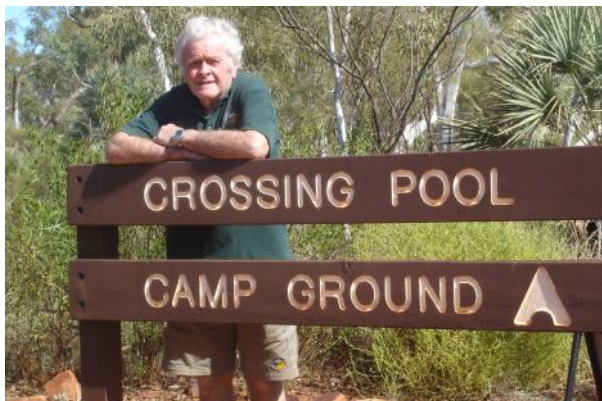
They have a sense of adventure and enjoy the outdoors but most valuable of all, they love meeting people sharing their experience and knowledge. They are the public face of DPaW in the state-wide national parks.

There are currently over 400 active registered campground hosts, covering over 50 campsites across WA. Hosts carry out a variety of tasks that help to keep campers happy and the campground ticking over.



Hosts Steve and Kerry with happy campers at Ned's Camp, Cape Range NP  
© S&K Bryant

Under the guise of 'work', these volunteers have the pleasure of spending time in some of WA's most beautiful spots meeting many fascinating people and helping travellers form memories that will last a lifetime.



Host Jim at Crossing Pool campground, Millstream Chichester NP  
© F&J Wilson

As volunteers, the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) values campground hosts highly – they add a special extra touch which enriches visitors' experience of camping in WA's national parks.

Hosts are trained in First Aid and Fire Awareness before they set off and their presence allows the Park Rangers the freedom to do their important work, safe in the knowledge that the campgrounds will be kept safe and clean.

In the first week of November DPaW are hosting the annual Campground Host training workshop for around 130 new and old hosts.

As well as the essential training, the hosts get the opportunity to listen to park rangers to decide where they'd like to host next year. They also get to meet up and share stories with other hosts.



Hosts helping rangers on a drive around © B Dawson

For more information on the Campground Host program visit the DPaW website:

<http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved/volunteering-opportunities/100-campground-hosting>

Or if you just fancy a bit of camping, find a campsite in a DPaW National Park here:

<http://parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au/>

Look out for a host next time you're in a national park and go over and say g'day!

# DPaW social media

DPaW Parks now have a number of social media channels for sharing information, pictures and video clips.

Explore Parks WA is the Facebook page for all things related to DPaW national parks across the state.

'Like' the page here to get involved — [www.facebook.com/decparkswa](http://www.facebook.com/decparkswa)



There's also the Explore Parks Twitter feed.

Follow here: [@ExploreParksWA](https://twitter.com/ExploreParksWA) - if you're that way inclined...



Lucky Bay © DPaW



Splendid fairy wren © Carol Strang

Lastly, the Explore Parks Flickr group where you can upload pictures of WA's national parks' wildlife, plants and scenery.

As a volunteer you probably see things that many other visitors may not so you are in a great position to capture photos. These are a few examples.

Join the group, take a look at others and start sharing your photos here:

[www.flickr.com/groups/decparks/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/decparks/)



Stirling Range NP © Carol Strang

## Volunteering with the Munda Biddi Trail

Exciting news! After more than ten years in the making we now have over 1,000 kilometres of trail to cycle.

The Munda Biddi Trail stretches from Mundaring in the Perth Hills and meanders through scenic river valleys and the magnificent eucalypt forests of Western Australia's south-west before reaching Albany on the south coast.



Riders test a newly installed kit bridge near Manjimup © MBTF

This latest Western Australia icon claims the title of being the longest continuous off-road cycle trail in the world. With funding from Royalities for Regions allowing us to complete the trail, the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) now has the challenge of maintaining this iconic infrastructure.

The Munda Biddi Trail Foundation (MBTF) are currently looking for volunteers in two different roles.

The first group are **maintenance volunteers**, needed to inspect and report on the condition of the trail, in addition to some light maintenance including pruning and general cleaning up to keep the trail safe for all riders to enjoy.

There is still an opportunity for you to adopt your very own section of trail with approximately thirty sections up for grabs, many in the forests of the beautiful south-west. Opportunities currently exist in the Northcliffe-Walpole and around Donnybrook.

If you are interested in this role, please contact Leanne Robb on 9334 0550 or email her at [Leanne.robb@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:Leanne.robb@dpaw.wa.gov.au) (Monday to Wednesday only).



Essential kit: the maintenance program's tool trailer © MBTF

MBTF are also **seeking 16 volunteers** to staff the **new Trail Hub office**, situated across the road from Sculpture Park, Mundaring. The office will allow cyclists to find out information about the Trail, plan their journey, buy maps and other merchandise and rent bikes.

Although experience of cycling and general knowledge of the trail is highly desirable, it is not essential as training will be given to all volunteers on the Munda Biddi Trail, basic map reading skills and general office procedures (bike hire, making sales etc). Volunteers would need to available one day a month (either a Saturday or Sunday) from 9.45am to 5pm or more regularly if you choose.



Volunteers hard at work clearing up the Munda Biddi Trail © MBTF

**For this role only**, please email:

[foundation@mundabiddi.org.au](mailto:foundation@mundabiddi.org.au)

For more information on the Munda Biddi Trail visit [www.mundabiddi.org.au](http://www.mundabiddi.org.au)

## Smartphone and tablet apps



**Climate Watch** — developed by Earthwatch with the Bureau of Meteorology and the University of Melbourne.

ClimateWatch is the best way to record the seasonal behaviour you see in plants and animals. It is a citizen science data collection app that helps scientists understand how Australia's environment is responding to climate change.

Search iTunes or the Google Play store for the FREE iPhone or Android app, where you can record your observations in real time and anywhere, even if you have poor mobile signal.

Through GPS, date and time stamps you can accurately record while bushwalking, at the beach or in the local park. The information is then collected and used to help understanding of our environment.

### Features:

- \* Easy to use interface
- \* Ability to record your sightings even with poor mobile signal
- \* Your location, date and time are recorded with each sighting
- \* Take a photo and submit with your record
- \* Species information - what to record, where, when and why
- \* Species images to help you identify plants and animals
- \* Bird, frog and mammal calls to help you identify animals
- \* View your account details and sightings



If you use any other Apps which may be of use or interest to other volunteers, let us know and we'll feature them!



**MyEnvironment**—developed by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

MyEnvironment is a free app that lists environmental assets and heritage sites in your suburb or surrounds.

Anyone with an iPhone, iPad or iPod touch can download MyEnvironment for free and use it to search for information about heritage sites, wetlands, national parks and protected plants and animals in any Australian location.

MyEnvironment relies on datasets held by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. It displays descriptions, maps and photographs of:

- **Heritage sites:**
  - world heritage, Commonwealth heritage and national heritage
  - historic shipwrecks (State, Territory and Commonwealth protected shipwrecks)
- **Protected areas** - national parks and reserves both on land and at sea
- **Threatened ecological communities** - native habitats that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)
- **Protected species** - plants and animals that are listed as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable or conservation dependent under the EPBC Act
- **Invasive species** - animal pests
- **Weeds** - invasive plants
- **Wetlands**



## WILDCARE helpline snake 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. Most snake bites occur when people try to confront them.

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

Above: Homer, the Stimson python, Courtesy of Maroo Wildlife  
Photo © John Palmer

- 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. 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 them and reduce the chance of them returning.

Unless you are certain, always consider a snake as dangerous! 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.

# WILDCARE helpline

FOR SICK, INJURED OR ORPHANED NATIVE WILDLIFE



**(08) 9474 9055**

## Community Involvement Unit

Locked Bag 104  
Bentley Delivery Centre  
WA 6983

Phone: 08 9334 0279  
Fax: 08 9334 0221  
E-mail:

[community.involvement@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:community.involvement@dpaw.wa.gov.au)

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[www.flickr.com/groups/decparks/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/decparks/)

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

The CIU supports DPaW 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 us via:

[Community.involvement@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:Community.involvement@dpaw.wa.gov.au)

or call (08) 9334 0582

For information on volunteering for DPaW, visit:

[www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved/volunteering-opportunities](http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved/volunteering-opportunities)

## Tuart woodland bouncing back in Rockingham

A new generation of Tuart seedlings is getting a head start in Rockingham Lakes Regional Park thanks to an innovative ashbed reseeding technique.

The collaborative project involves Murdoch University, the City of Rockingham, [Friends of Paganoni Swamp Bushland](#) and the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

Coordinator Dr Katinka Ruthrof from Murdoch's Centre of Excellence for Climate Change, Woodland and Forest Health said it was thrilling to see her research into Tuart regeneration having a tangible outcome.

"On average, we've had 40 seedlings germinate in each ashbed, which is a fantastic outcome and very encouraging for restoration of this regionally significant Tuart woodland," Dr Ruthrof said.

"Dixon Road Conservation Park has been hard hit in recent years, with a severe and sudden

dieback event coinciding with extreme drought and heat in 2011, and then a fire in January 2013, which burnt hectares of woodland.

"Because of the dieback event, there was no fruit, and therefore no seeds to be released, so our only option for regeneration of the Tuarts was active intervention."

Together with the City of Mandurah, the Peel Harvey Catchment Council and local volunteer groups, Dr Ruthrof first organised a program in which volunteers collected Tuart seeds.

In April, these seeds were sown into the naturally occurring ashbeds left by the fire and raked lightly to protect them from ants, a major Tuart seed predator.

"Research has shown that ashbeds are sites where high temperatures are reached during a fire, which releases nutrients from the soil and increases water infiltration," Dr Ruthrof said.



Above: Ross Johnston, Bushland Maintainer, with Leonie Stubbs, Friends of Paganoni Swamp coordinator

"This allows us to use the natural features of the land and thus have a low impact environmentally."

Dr Ruthrof said the group were regularly revisiting and monitoring the seedlings and would continue to do so to determine if this regeneration method could be used elsewhere when prescribed or unplanned burning takes place in Tuart woodlands and forests.