

Community Involvement Newsletter

Department of Parks and Wildlife

Welcome to the new look, May 2015 issue of the Community Involvement Unit (CIU) newsletter. Inside you'll see that the last few months have been busy, with the Unit out and about at Whiteman Park's EnviroFest and Canning River Regional Park, plus we had a special visitor to Parks and Wildlife HQ. More inside...

May 11–17 is National Volunteer Week across Australia. It is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, and provides an opportunity to highlight the role of volunteers in our community.



This year's theme is "Give Happy Live Happy" – to reflect research that proves volunteers are mentally and physically healthier.

Studies have shown that people who volunteer feel healthier, have improved mood and lower stress levels.

For these reasons we believe that every week is volunteer week and we thank you for choosing to volunteer your time helping the Department of Parks and Wildlife work towards its environmental, conservation and recreation goals, for the benefit of all visitors to and residents of WA.

If you're keen to do more, take a look at [current opportunities](#) on the Parks and Wildlife website or check out the new 'Find a Conservation Group' app – details on page 6.

Hours / Timesheets / Rewards

As we approach the end of the financial year (30 June), please check with your project supervisor that they are submitting your timesheets of your contribution to us.

We understand it can be an onerous task, not just for you but also for your supervisor, but it is vital for us to be able to report on your valuable input.

We collate the hours to issue volunteer rewards but importantly, we are able to recognise your efforts when we compile our annual reports and distribute the information across the department. If you have any questions regarding hours or timesheets please contact us.

We hope you enjoy the new look newsletter – if you have any comments, suggestions or contributions for future issues, [get in touch](#).



Yellow Admiral (*Vanessa itea*)

Few Western Australia butterflies are as boldly or dramatically marked as the yellow admiral. The markings seem so appropriately to reflect the 'passionate' behaviour of this fast-flying, migratory species

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Department of
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The Saving of Danielle the Dunnart

submitted by Peter Vickridge

Whilst visiting the Blackwood District's Brockman Highway Information Rest Stop, Daniel - a Perth resident, discovered eight immature animals that could have been baby mice or rats or possibly native animals. With two already deceased, Daniel decided to rescue the remaining six just in case they were natives.

He took them to Geovet in Nannup, by which time they were down to four survivors. Vet nurse Ann sought identification assistance from local Parks and Wildlife registered volunteer wildlife rehabilitator Nancy. They identified that the dentition (teeth arrangement) and general appearance indicated they were not rodents but were indeed marsupials. However, they were not able to identify the species so Ann and Nancy contacted Kirup volunteer wildlife rehabilitators Peter and Carol.

By the time they had been raced to Kirup two more had passed away due to extreme malnourishment and dehydration. Peter had similar difficulties in identification, so sent two of the deceased animals off with Carol to the Parks and Wildlife Bunbury Regional Headquarters to find wildlife and nature conservation staff help to identify them. Using reference books, they were able to identify the mystery animals as [grey-bellied dunnarts](#) (*Sminthopsis griseoventer*).

Of the remaining two animals, despite Peter and Carol's best endeavours with rehydration and feeding, another one passed away mid-feed 24 hours later. However, the last named Danielle (after her rescuer), proved to be a real fighter. Peter and Carol went through nights of sleep deprivation, but Danielle fed well on a milk substitute and then rapidly moved on to a yummy solid diet of insects, spiders and meal worms together with feed supplements. Amazingly, given her condition when she came into care, Danielle survived all the way through rehabilitation to release time.



Danielle the dunnart, pausing briefly before scurrying off after release.
Photo © Nancy Tang

On a chosen evening a number of weeks later Peter, Carol and Nancy returned with Danielle to the Brockman Highway Information Rest Stop, fed her and selected a spot that gave good ground cover for her first night back in the wild. It was some time before Danielle emerged from her open cage, pausing briefly before scurrying off at high speed. We hope she appreciated the blood donations that Nancy, Carol and Peter made to the local mosquito population whilst waiting for her departure.

Although the survival rate of one out of eight may not be the most desirable outcome, Danielle's survival shows what care and cooperation between members of the public, veterinary staff, Parks and Wildlife volunteers and staff can achieve!

WILDCARE helpline

FOR SICK, INJURED OR ORPHANED NATIVE WILDLIFE

(08) 9474 9055

dpaw.wa.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/wildcare-helpline

Hoo, Hoo, Who Do You See?

Sometimes coming to work may seem repetitious, uneventful and full of mindless traffic chaos. Imagine coming to work to a sight to put a smile on your face for the rest of the day.

That's what happened on a recent Friday morning. Visitors to Parks and Wildlife at Kensington chanced upon a boobook owl, after his presence in a tree near the front car park was given away by the commotion caused by being harassed by the local birdlife. The adult male boobook now had strangers peering and taking photos.

Boobooks are the smallest Australian owl, and they are renowned for their acrobatic skill in catching their prey of small mammals, frogs, birds and invertebrates such as moths.

The [Wildcare Helpline](#) occasionally receives calls from members of the public about owls in verandas and other structures, or being harassed by magpies, ravens and smaller birds during the day; this is normal behaviour. However, their biggest threat is habitat destruction and with fewer trees available they are sometimes found in more conspicuous places, closer to people.

They nest in hollow trees and roost during the day, waiting for dusk to come before flying off to hunt. At any time you can be very close to them without knowing as it is common for them to perch on open branches or in tree tops – sometimes you just need to look up!



Hoo, hoo, who do you see peeking out of the tree?
Photos © Steve Csaba (above) and © Doug Coughran (below)



Community Involvement Unit Visit Canning River Regional Park



Jo collecting Hakea seeds



CRRP volunteer Richard getting ready for watering



All article photos © CRRP

Canning River Regional Park (CRRP) volunteers currently manage six main sites along the south-eastern banks of the [Canning River](#).

2015 marks the CRRP volunteer group's 25th anniversary, and recently the Community Involvement Unit (CIU) visited the CRRP volunteers to take a look at some of the wonderful work achieved by the group.

They were met by Jo Stone and Pam Agar. Jo's work in the area spans 25 years and covers all aspects of bush rehabilitation/regeneration, flora, fauna, soils and seed propagation as well as a keen interest in anything that impacts on the park. Pam has been secretary for the group for almost 10 years and the current group members number 31.

The lower flood-plain level of Litoria Flats – the Sedge Site – has been monitored and mapped for plant regeneration over the past 8 years and the group continues to remove dry material each summer to lessen the chance of another major fire like that which all but wiped out the area in February 2011.

The upper level of Litoria Flats (Litoria Bank) has been planted over the past two winters. Some of the 1600 plants were selected as a future food source for endangered Carnaby's black-cockatoos. The past year's work has focussed on extending the planted section of the bank, adding understorey plants and on-going weeding. Plants are watered weekly over their first summer, giving them a greater chance of survival. Each week 125 x 3L water bottles need to be filled from Jo's rainwater tank or from bins filled by City of Canning during dry periods, before volunteers hand water each of the plants.

The southern end of this site abuts a stream which the group cleared and re-planted many years ago. It had more weeding recently when the group spent a work day removing a large non-native cotton palm and numerous small Japanese pepper trees. Two possum nest boxes were also installed on the work day.

Further upstream there are several more of the group's project sites, which together provide a significant corridor for use by wildlife as well as protection of local flora. There is also a billabong which provides a summer refuge for waterbirds and bush birds. This and the Morning Glory Site, further downstream, require regular weeding of wild aster, fumaria and fleabane.

Beyond the billabong are the Nicholson Road Floodplain Restoration and Urban Forest Sites which all had further weeding by the group during the past year. In November the group were pleased to record 13 different bird species, including splendid fairy-wrens, using the lower levels of Urban Forest.

This group of volunteers continue to make a significant positive impact on the area. They are a dedicated, passionate group who care deeply about the area.

For more information on volunteering for the group please contact [Pam](#) or the [Community Involvement Unit](#).

Community Involvement Unit at EnviroFest

Sunday 29 March saw the Community Involvement Unit's Lee, Lorene and Sonia, along with [Community Bushland Coordinator Julia Cullity](#) set up a stall at [Whiteman Park](#) as part of EnviroFest 2015.

EnviroFest is Whiteman Park's flagship environmental event that showcases a range of environmental concepts, issues and products for everyone.

We were there to highlight the Department's volunteer program and had some volunteers on hand to help spread the word. Also, in a world-first we had the Wildcare Helpline in operation live from the event. Despite a number of tricky calls, including an entangled fur seal (later freed), the Helpline operators coped brilliantly with being out of their normal environment.

Despite the sun and competition from a couple of other events, including the cricket world cup final, we had a lot of steady interest from visitors and hopefully recruited a few more volunteers.

Special thanks go to Helpline volunteers Debie, Shanaaz, Junita, Dinah, Sherrin, Wendy, Kylie and Lesley for their help on the day.



Lee, Julia and Lorene



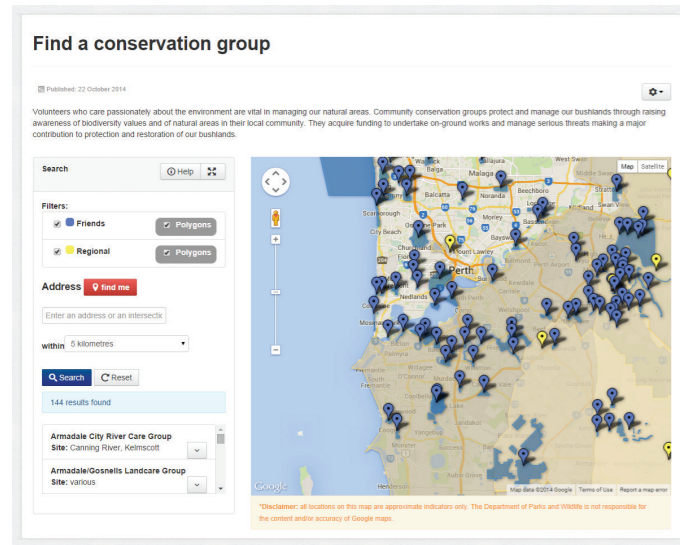
Debie in action staffing the Wildcare Helpline



All article photos © Kevin Smith

New Web & Smartphone Apps and a Tweet or Two

New Web App Links Volunteers with Conservation Groups



People keen to volunteer for the environment and looking for a conservation group in their area can now do so quickly and easily with the 'Find a Conservation Group' web app.

The app uses Google maps to find groups in a given area and will work on a computer, tablet or smart phone. Users can zoom, scroll and click on the map or use the address search function to find a group, get in touch and get involved in local action for bushland and natural areas.

The map covers Perth and surrounds, and incorporates Lancelin through to Harvey and inland past the Perth Hills and currently has 150 groups. Together these groups are working to help manage over 32,000ha of bushlands, wetlands and natural areas. We know there are many other groups out there. If you would like to get your group on the map, please contact Urban Nature (P: 9442 0320).

We created the app to help link people to each other and to their bushland. Conservation groups are always looking for new members. We hope the app will help those keen to volunteer to make contact with their local groups and also provide another way for groups to let others know what they are doing.

Visit us at dpaw.wa.gov.au/find-a-conservation-group

Smartphone App : Emergency+

Save the app that could save your life.

Emergency + is a national app developed by Australia's emergency services and their Government and industry partners, helping people to call the right number at the right time, anywhere in Australia.

The app uses your mobile phone's GPS functionality so callers can provide emergency call-takers with their location information as determined by their smart phone. Emergency+ also includes SES and Police Assistance Line numbers as options, so non-emergency calls are made to the most appropriate number.

Download for free from [iTunes](#) or [Google Play](#) (search for Emergency+).



Podcast : Tweet of the Day



Discover birds from around the world through their songs and calls.

Each Tweet of the Day begins with a different call or song from bird species, followed by a short story of fascinating ornithology inspired by the sound. Tweet of the Day is narrated by a host of wildlife presenters including Sir David Attenborough and Michael Palin.

You can download episodes from the BBC website, or subscribe to the podcast to have each episode automatically delivered to your enabled device.

Subscribe and download via [iTunes](#) or the [BBC website](#).

Feeding wildlife



Watching wildlife is rewarding and many people visit parks or other areas offering food to encourage prolonged or closer contact. While it is usually done with good intent, there are many reasons why feeding wildlife is discouraged.

Inappropriate foods, such as bread, can be detrimental to health and cause nutritional defects. Bread is nothing like a normal diet for wildlife and large quantities stops them from eating a natural, balanced diet. White bread especially has little nutritional value. Birds may love it, but they will fill up on it instead of food that is beneficial to them.

Uneaten food can also cause algal blooms in waterways and allow bacteria to breed while attracting rats and other pests, increasing the risk of disease. Unnatural feeding practices can also lead to increased incidents of aggression and can provide a central point for outbreaks of diseases, some of which can pass to humans.



So, what should we be doing instead?

We don't want to put you off interacting with wildlife but by giving it some thought and making simple changes it can be done sensibly. For example, simply change what's on offer for healthier, natural food such as chopped grapes, oats, seeds, mealworms, chopped veggies or even bought duck pellets. Avoid bread, chips, biscuits and other sugary foods.

Most importantly, apply portion control – don't overfeed, and try to vary where you feed each time. This reduces the chance of food waste build up and avoids wildlife becoming dependent on humans for food.

What about at home?

Wildlife can be encouraged to live in or visit gardens by providing areas of suitable natural habitat and natural food sources. Encouraging wildlife like this is also an ideal way to enthuse children about wildlife and teach them the relationship between plants and animals.

By growing a variety of plants, which offer cover and/or provide nectar, flowers, fruit or attract insects, you can expect to see a variety of species. The best plants to choose are WA natives which are adapted to our climate and have also evolved alongside our wildlife.

Besides plants, one of the simplest things to help wildlife is to offer a supply of clean water. A good bird bath has a simple, sturdy construction, but is light enough to make it easy to clean and refill.

However, siting of the bath is very important - birds will only use it if they feel safe. Make sure they have clear visibility as they bathe, with shrubs or trees nearby to provide cover if alarmed, with perches to use while they preen. Be careful though, that cats cannot use the cover to stalk bathing birds.

For information on making your garden or local environment fauna-friendly, including information on nest boxes, visit the [Perth Zoo website](#).

If you find wildlife that is sick or injured contact the [Wildcare Helpline](#) on 08 9474 9055.



Campground Host Vacancies

In the Swan Coastal District:

[Yalgorup National Park](#) has vacancies for May, July, August, September, October and November. Please email [Ben Byrne](#) or call him on 9303 7738.

[Penguin Island](#) has vacancies in September and October. Please email [Murray Banks](#) if you can help.

In the Kimberley Region:

[Windjana Gorge](#) has a vacancy in May, [Silent Grove campground](#) has vacancies in June and August and [Geikie Gorge](#) has an opportunity in October. Please email [Dave Woods](#) or call him on (08) 9195 5500.

In the South Coast Region:

[Moingup Springs](#) in Stirling Range National Park has vacancies from May through to end of August, then November through to end of January 2016. Email [John Abbott](#) or call him on (08) 9827 9230, if you can help.

In the Warren Region:

Donnelly District is seeking hosts for [Shannon](#) and [Big Brook](#) from September through the next season (September through to next April).

They are also seeking hosts for [Drafty's campground](#) from the end of December until the end of April, and would consider placing hosts there through September and October if there is interest. Please email [Tracey Robins](#) if you are interested in any of these opportunities.

In the Mid West Region:

[Coalseam Conservation Park](#) is looking for hosts this coming wildflower season, covering 2 months from mid-August to mid-October. Please email [Julia Sercombe](#) or [Nick Detchon](#) or call the Geraldton office on (08) 9964 0901.

In Shark Bay, [Peron Homestead](#) has vacancies in June, September, October and November. As we go to print [Bottle Bay campground](#) has no bookings so you can host here any time you fancy! Please email [Chris McMonagle](#) if you are interested in any of these opportunities.

Please note: campground host vacancies are only available to those volunteers currently registered as Parks and Wildlife Campground Hosts that have completed the necessary training and information workshops.

More information on Campground hosting can be found on the [Parks and Wildlife website](#).

The Community Involvement Unit provides community members within WA with opportunities to support, be involved in, and contribute to, the work of the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

The Unit supports 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 of suggestions, please contact us.

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