

Coral coast parks update

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Marine Park Management:

- Replacement of all in-water sanctuary markers
- Coral monitoring survey (see article for more details)

Parks and Visitor Services:

- Jurabi Turtle Centre guided turtle interactions

Terrestrial Nature Conservation:

- Fox home range study in Cape Range National Park
- Bandicoot monitoring on Doole Island

The Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area

Arvid Hogstrom, Exmouth District Manager

The Ningaloo Coast has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, recognising it as one of the outstanding natural places in the world.

It was inscribed for its natural beauty and biological diversity, in particular the:

- striking natural landscapes of Cape Range and Ningaloo Reef
- high biological diversity of the reef
- opportunity for visitors to encounter one of the world's largest annual aggregations of whale sharks, as well as other marine mammals, turtles and manta rays
- unusual diversity of marine turtle species
- rare and diverse plants and animals of Cape Range, particularly the subterranean cave creatures.

World Heritage listing does not change day-to-day life in Exmouth, Coral Bay and Carnarvon. People can continue to enjoy the range of activities available such as fishing, camping, snorkelling, diving, hiking or exercising their dog in the World Heritage area, where these activities are currently allowed.

For more information on the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area, please contact DEC Exmouth Office or visit the DEC website: www.dec.wa.gov.au/ningaloo coast

Colourful corals update: monitoring corals post-bleaching event 2011

Heather Taylor, Marine Parks Coordinator

DEC regional and marine science staff have teamed up to collect data on coral health in Ningaloo Marine Park. This year, the group is particularly focusing on finding out the level of coral mortality associated with the bleaching event experienced along the entire Western Australian coast over summer 2010/11.

The team have collected images from photo-quadrats along transects at each of the 20 long-term sites.

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Camera trapping for conservation

Colourful corals update: monitoring corals post-bleaching event 2011

Humpback whale migration in full swing along North West Cape

Fire management on the North West Cape

A facelift for Bill's Bay

Camera trapping for conservation

Brooke Halkyard, Conservation Officer (Terrestrial)

The use of cameras has a long history in fields such as astronomy and medicine. In recent years, advances in camera technology have found their way into the conservation arena. A 'camera trap' is a device with a sensor that triggers a camera to take a photograph when an animal is present. The use of camera traps allows scientists and wildlife managers to observe the secret world of animals without causing them any disturbance.

DEC Exmouth has adopted camera trapping technology in its management of feral animals and monitoring of native fauna. Ultimately, the information obtained through remote photography will help us answer questions such as "what animal species occur in a certain area", "what are they doing", and "how many are there"?



The coral diversity at one of the Bundegi sites in January 2010.

DEC has a good understanding of the coral community structure at each of these locations prior to the event, and so measuring and analysing the differences will illustrate the effects of this event. It will also give managers a better understanding of the anthropogenic versus natural fluctuations of coral community structure and diversity into the future.

If you would like more information on this project, please contact Heather Taylor (heather.taylor@dec.wa.gov.au).

Humpback whale migration in full swing along North West Cape

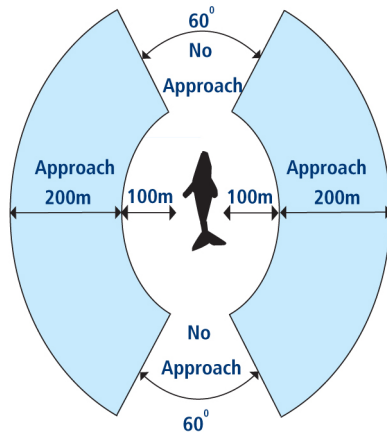
Heather Taylor, Marine Parks Coordinator

After feeding and fattening up in Antarctic waters, humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) migrate north each year to give birth in the warmer waters off the Kimberley coast. Mothers and calves then return back down the coast during September and October to rest (and play) in the Exmouth gulf during their journey back to Antarctic waters. So from now until the end of October, the North West Cape is a great place to view these majestic creatures.

Over the July school holiday period, DEC staff attended to two beached calves along the Ningaloo coast. Unfortunately the calves were both just days old, (at 4.3 metres and weighing over a tonne!) and at this age they both would not survive without their mothers. As the prognosis for the animal was not good, local DEC staff organised to have the animals euthanased as quickly as possible. The carcasses were removed from the beach to minimise the risk of increased shark activity, one was buried and the other towed out to sea.

If you are out on the water and see whales nearby, it is important to slow down and stay a safe distance away.

If you see a stranded or dead whale please contact your local DEC office immediately.



Guideline distances for whale interactions with vessels.



Prescribed burn in the Pilbara Region.

Fire management on the North West Cape

Matthew Prophet, Nature Conservation Coordinator

Fire management by DEC on the North West Cape is aimed at reducing the risk of destructive bushfire to life, property and biodiversity values on its tenure. The department aims to achieve this through the combating of bushfires and implementing controlled burns to reduce fuel loads. This year, controlled burns are planned within Cape Range National Park near the Milyering Visitor Centre, Shothole Canyon Road and Burkett Road adjacent to Giralala.

The Cape Range National Park and Shothole Canyon burns will create strategic buffers on the coastal plain, which will help prevent the spread of rampant bushfire along the North West Cape. Through the district's fire management plan, DEC aims to conduct a series of fuel reduction burns in the coming years to ensure a less even distribution of heavy fuel loads that would ultimately reduce the risks posed by bushfire.

A facelift for Bill's Bay

Roger Syme, Exmouth District Ranger

The Coral Bay foreshore is about to get a major facelift. DEC is currently organising to replace the existing timber shade shelters on the beach with a brand new contemporary design.

The original shelters were built in the mid-nineties by the Coral Bay Progress Association to address the lack of shade on the foreshore. After 15 years of good service to the beach community, they are showing signs of wear and tear.

After extensive consultation with the local community, DEC have chosen a larger, cantilevered design that is both unobtrusive and has a wave-like profile. This reflects the breezy 'seaside' atmosphere of Coral Bay.

The larger size of the new shelters will also provide more shade to accommodate larger groups of people, particularly families. Previous user surveys showed the average group size using the existing shelters were between four and seven people.

As the new structures have been designed for a northern seaside environment (that includes high winds, tidal submergence, and hot salty conditions), DEC are expecting a 20-year life out of the new shelters.



Existing shade shelters and proposed shade shelters on the Coral Bay foreshore.

If you would like to receive a copy of this newsletter electronically please email exmouth@dec.wa.gov.au with your contact details.

Department of Environment and Conservation
Exmouth District

22 Nimitz Street, Exmouth, WA, 6707

Phone: (08) 9947 8000

Email: exmouth@dec.wa.gov.au