

# Ningaloo Coast news

Spring 2012

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## District Manager's update

Welcome to *Ningaloo Coast news*. This newsletter is one of the many ways the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) is working to improve communications with the community about events in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area.

While the newsletter provides only a brief summary, all our staff—including new World Heritage Program Manager Chelsea Godson—will be out and about catching up with stakeholder and community groups. This is a central part of our work to consult and develop partnerships to manage and promote the World Heritage area.

We encourage you to contact us if you would like further detail on the topics covered in this newsletter, or other happenings in the area. We also urge you to advise DEC of any issues to be addressed or anything of interest you observe in the area, such as exciting natural events. It was only through the eyes of the community that we heard, for example, of a unique whale shark aggregation. You may see an unusual bird nesting, stranded and entangled whales, injured wildlife or the presence of feral animals, and we're keen to hear about it. We depend on everyone to help us care for this unique place.

## World Heritage wonder

The turtle breeding and nesting season starts in October. During this incredible time, you may see congregations of mating turtles along the shoreline. Female turtles will often drag themselves onto the beaches of the Northwest Cape to have a break from the agitating males waiting in the shallows. Please respect the resting turtles and do not disturb or attempt to guide them back to sea as they need time to recover and build up energy before re-entering the water.

**Turtle nesting season begins in October.**

## In this issue

- World Heritage work
- Snake alert
- World Heritage wonder
- Shark and bird monitoring – can you help?
- Infrastructure upgrades
- Feral animal impacts and control
- Yardie Creek boat tour operators

## World Heritage work

The Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area is finally seeing some on-ground work to promote the World Heritage natural values of the area to the local and global community. World Heritage Program Manager Chelsea Godson started mid-July and is working on some key World Heritage projects:

- Establishment of the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee – see below.
- Promotional initiatives including an upgrade of the Milyering Visitor Centre; World Heritage interpretation at the lighthouse (in partnership with Exmouth Shire); a World Heritage activity in the DEC school holiday program; and development of a Ningaloo Coast World Heritage logo, style guide (for use by all stakeholders), website, social media presence, 'gateway' signage at major points within the World Heritage area, and other signage. Stakeholders will be consulted on these projects to ensure they complement existing initiatives.
- Meetings with key stakeholder groups and the community.

**For information about the World Heritage area, or if you have enquires, please contact Chelsea Godson on 9947 8014 or email [chelsea.godson@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:chelsea.godson@dec.wa.gov.au).**



Did you know this is the international World Heritage symbol?

## Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee Call for expressions of interest

Expressions of interest are invited for a chair and committee members for the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee. The role of the committee will be to:

- provide advice to the federal and state environment ministers on the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the World Heritage area
- develop and provide input into initiatives and opportunities for the promotion and presentation of the World Heritage area values to local, national and international communities
- contribute to enhancing the stewardship and connection of the community to the World Heritage area.

For more information and to obtain an expression of interest form contact Chelsea (details above). Expressions of interest close at **5pm Monday 12 November** and can be made either by the individual, or on behalf of another person with that person's consent.

## Shark and bird monitoring – can you help?

The Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area is internationally recognised for its collaborative scientific monitoring and volunteer programs. Shark and bird monitoring programs with DEC, scientists and volunteers will occur over the coming months to collect information to help manage these key species.



Blacktip reef shark aggregation.

**Shark monitoring** – Skeleton Bay, near Coral Bay, is an important reef shark aggregation site. Studies have shown that during the warmer months (September to March) four main species aggregate at the site – the blacktip reef shark, whitetip reef shark, grey reef shark and sicklefin lemon shark. These aggregations are for sharks to mate and give birth, and are important nursery areas for shark pups.

DEC is calling for volunteers to help monitor reef sharks at Skeleton Bay—from a safe land base! **If you're interested, please contact Marine Ranger David Lierich on 9947 8000.**

**Bird monitoring** – The Ningaloo Coast and Exmouth Gulf are internationally important shore bird nesting sites for species such as the grey-tailed tattler, pied oystercatcher and eastern curlew, a vulnerable species. In October and November, ornithologists from Birds Australia will join DEC and volunteers to start a shore bird monitoring program involving coastal flights, land patrols to Mangrove Bay, Point Maud and Bundegi, and sea patrols to the Gulf Islands and eastern Gulf. School and open community workshops will be held as part of this program.

**If you're interested in participating in bird monitoring and bird monitoring workshops, please contact Kim Onton at Birds Australia on [shorebirds.wa@birdlife.org.au](mailto:shorebirds.wa@birdlife.org.au).**

## Feral animal impacts and control

The Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area is internationally recognised for its important wildlife such as nesting sea turtles, black-flanked rock wallabies and birds. Feral cats, foxes and wild dogs have a significant impact on these species.



A damaged fairy tern egg.

In September, a colony of vulnerable fairy terns was seen nesting at Bundegi Beach (part of the World Heritage area). Sadly, their nests and eggs were destroyed by foxes and dogs. Foxes also prey heavily on threatened species such as black-flanked rock wallabies and turtles. Predation causes up to 70 per cent mortality of turtle nests on beaches in the World Heritage area. Feral cats also prey on birds, reptiles and mammals, and have driven many to extinction in arid areas of WA.

To address these issues, DEC has started a feral animal control program in partnership with stakeholders through federal government *Caring for our Country* funding. The program will use a range of techniques to control feral animals and reduce their impact on the World Heritage area. Monitoring of black-flanked rock wallabies and turtles as part of this program will assess the effectiveness of feral controls and how these species are coping with the threat of fox predation.

**Fox control at important turtle nesting beaches will begin in November. Please be aware of 1080 signage to keep your dogs safe. Contact Derek Sandow on 9947 8043 for more information.**

## Yardie Creek boat tour operators – Cape Range National Park

### Call for expressions of interest

For further information please see [www.dec.wa.gov.au/tourismEOI](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/tourismEOI).



Yardie Creek boat tour.



Above – New camp sites. Right – New toilet block at Kurrajong camp site.

## Infrastructure upgrades

DEC has an ongoing program to improve infrastructure and visitor information services in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area. Current projects include the continued upgrade of the Kurrajong camp site in Cape Range National Park, with capacity increased by 25 sites (with five of these for group camping, including commercial tour operators) and a new toilet block. Over the coming six months, additional facilities will be installed including

viewing platforms for campers to enjoy the sunset while minimising damage to the fragile dune system.

In addition, an upgrade of the Milyering Visitor Centre in Cape Range National Park will start in November through *Caring for our Country* funding. Works include modifications to the retail centre and new information displays about the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area.

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

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