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Ningaloo Coast News



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



In this issue



Feral cat movements in Cape Range

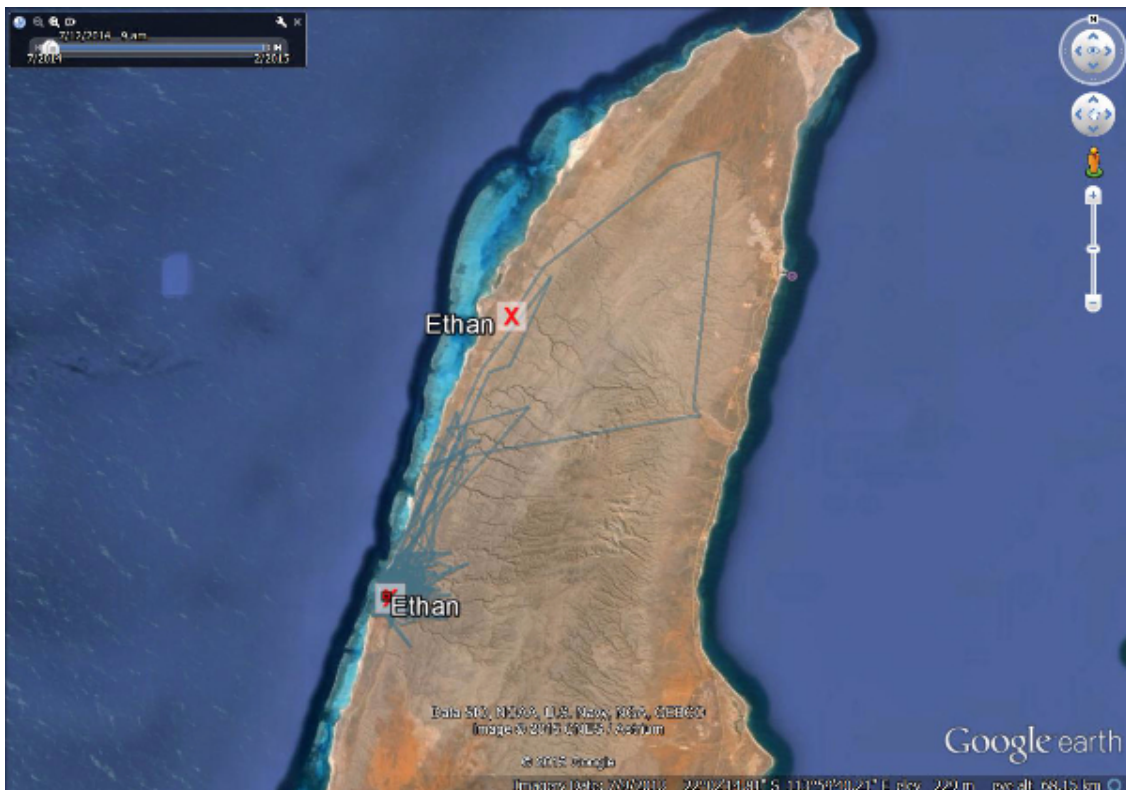
Last July, Parks and Wildlife staff fitted five feral cats and four foxes with satellite collars in Cape Range National Park as part of a research trial to determine the effectiveness of a new type of 1080 bait it had developed for cat control, *Eradicat*.

One of the cats survived after the baiting period and its collar provided satellite data of its movements over seven months. The cat spent most of its time on the coastal plain in Bloodwood Creek, near Mandu Mandu where it was captured. However it also made regular treks up to 12km north to the Tulki Gorge area.

The cat crossed Cape Range, covering a distance of approximately 18km and

spent a few days in the Shothole Canyon area, before heading north past Exmouth. It then spent a few more days in the area to the west of the Naval Base before heading south down the west side of the North West Cape. The cat's satellite collar stopped transmitting just south of Mangrove Bay and no further data was received about its whereabouts.

This particular movement pattern highlights the ability of feral cats to cover vast distances in relatively short periods of time. This information will assist managers in the planning of feral cat eradication programs and shows why broad scale control efforts are important in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area. For further information please contact Matt Prophet on (08) 9947 8055.



Feral cat movements in the North West Cape. The X indicates the point where the satellite collar stopped transmitting.

The jellyfish of Ningaloo Reef

With their often bright colours and amazing growth forms, jellyfish are one of the most spectacular animals in our oceans. However, they also have a bad reputation for occasionally inflicting painful stings. In recent years, large blooms of jellyfish have been spotted in the Ningaloo region but we know little about why the blooms occur and what effect they have on the marine ecosystem.

Brooke Ingram, an Honours student at Griffith University in Queensland, is teaming up with Parks and Wildlife to spend the next five months studying the jellyfish in the waters of Ningaloo. Brooke aims to identify types of jellyfish found within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area and their role in the food web.

Did you know...a group of jellyfish is called a smack?

Brooke will be joining local tourism operator, Ocean Eco Adventures, to sample jellyfish during their whale shark viewing trips. You might also see Brooke dragging a net along the beaches of the Ningaloo coast to identify species of jellyfish occurring close to shore.

At the end of Brooke's project we will have a much better idea about which species are present, where and when they occur and how they fit into the marine food web at Ningaloo.

For further information on the project please contact Brooke Ingram on brooke.ingram2@griffithuni.edu.au or Kylie Pitt k.pitt@griffithuni.edu.au.

Thanks to Associate Professor Kylie Pitt, from Griffith University for her contribution to this article.



Photo courtesy Cindy White, with Ocean EcoAdventures

Overnight sea kayak trail for Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area

Ten day-use kayak moorings established in 2013 have proved extremely popular in the Ningaloo Marine Park. The kayak moorings provide access to some spectacular snorkelling sites and are located near Tantabiddi Boat Ramp, Osprey Bay, Bundegi and Coral Bay.

Given the popularity of kayaking within the marine park, Parks and Wildlife is currently developing an exciting overnight camping kayak trail catering for all levels of kayak enthusiasts. The trail will incorporate existing camping facilities in Cape Range National Park with provisions made for kayak access only camping sites.

Consultation with commercial tour operators and other stakeholders is helping plan the trail. While initially the trail will run from Yardie Creek to Tantabiddi, in the

long term we aim to include Coral Bay and possibly other sections further south within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area. It is envisaged that Stage 1 of the overnight kayak trail will be formally developed in 2015-16. For further information please contact Jutta Wildforster on (08) 9947 8022 or Jutta.Wildforster@dpaw.wa.gov.au.

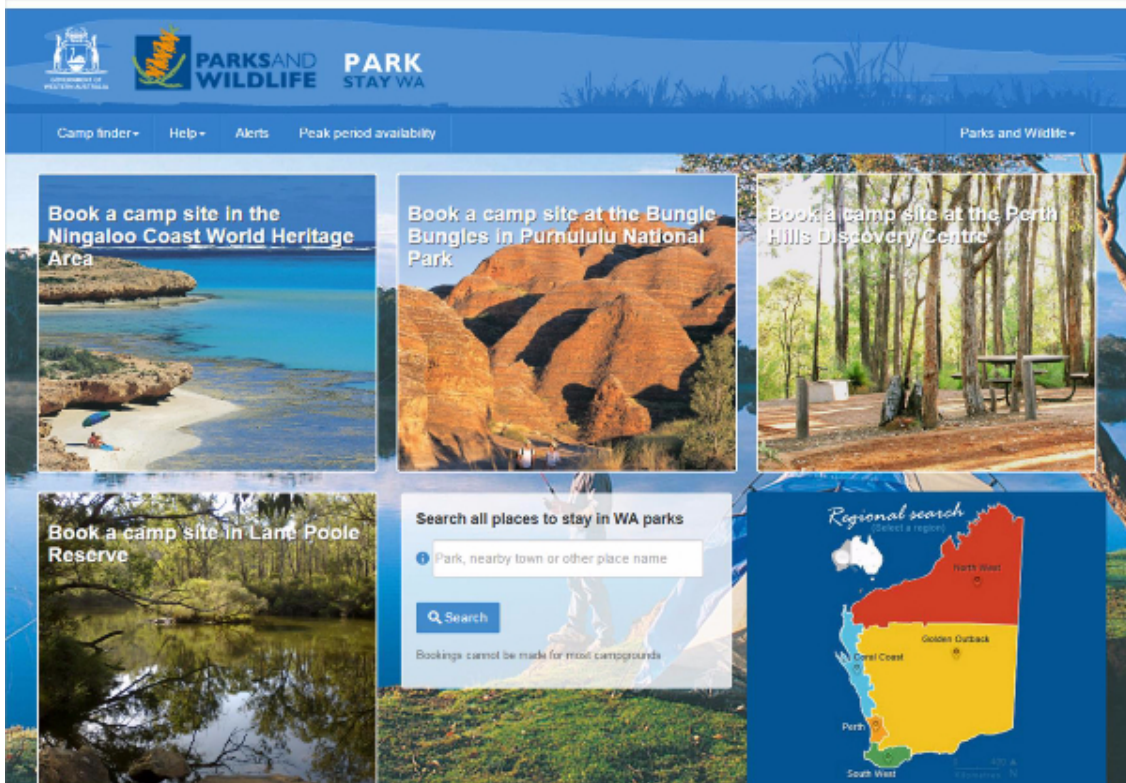


Kayakers enjoying Ningaloo Reef. Photo - Capricorn Sea Kayaks.

Campground bookings at Cape Range

Visitation to Cape Range National Park over the past 15 years has increased from around 150,000 visits per year to a staggering 245,000 visits in 2014-15. Due to high visitor demand, Parks and Wildlife have developed an online booking system for a number of campgrounds within Cape Range National Park. These include Tulki, North Kurralong, Kurralong, Yardie Creek and the newly upgraded Osprey Bay campground.

Visit parkstay.dpaw.wa.gov.au where you can find out details about each campground and secure a site before you arrive. There are still a number of campgrounds in the park that are allocated on a daily basis, however these are highly sought after with limited availability during the busy tourist season. For further information please contact Milyering Discovery Centre on (08) 9949 2808.



parkstay.dpaw.wa.gov.au

Whale Shark Festival 21 -24 May 2015

This year's Whale Shark Festival saw Talanjeer Oval jam packed with activities and entertainment on Saturday 23 May. Parks and Wildlife staff spent the day chatting to the community in our Whale Shark Information Marquee.

More than 500 people popped in to brush up on their knowledge of the magnificent whale shark and many other wonderful creatures that are found within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area. Our marine parks vessel Cetea was on show for all to see.

There were quizzes and giveaways throughout the day. Our whale shark mascot Ningalulu proved popular with the kids, dancing the day away with some great whale shark dance moves. Thanks to all who visited on the day.



Parks and Wildlife marquee at the 2014 Whale Shark Festival

Beachcombing at its best

The destructive winds of Cyclone Olwyn brought some much unexpected flotsam to Ningaloo Marine Park. At least six large water tanks travelled tens of kilometres overland before coming to rest in the shallows of the marine park.

Parks and Wildlife staff along with Coral Bay community members used their ingenuity to remove the water tanks from the beaches and lagoon south of Coral Bay and Warroora station. Unable to use power tools, staff had to resort to the old fashioned way of using handsaws to cut up the tanks into small enough pieces to be transported by boat and later truck.

One of the tanks even made it all the way out into Pelican Sanctuary Zone, approximately 200m offshore. Equipped with snorkelling gear and a handsaw, staff jumped into the ocean to tackle this particular water tank that was resting on the sandy seafloor.

All but one of the water tanks have been removed, returning the shallow waters of Ningaloo Marine Park to its former pristine condition. The last tank will be removed by staff when there is an opportunity with favourable tides and weather.



One of the tanks that made its way into the Ningaloo Marine Park

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