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Spring 2016

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In this issue:



Joint effort on prescribed burning

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Corporation recently joined forces with volunteers from the Shire of Exmouth Bushfire Brigade to undertake prescribed burning activities around Exmouth.



Prescribed burning is important to build strategic buffers to help protect the local community from damaging summer bushfires. The ability to conduct prescribed burning activities relies heavily on having the right weather conditions. Recent wet weather provided appropriate soil moisture levels to reduce the intensity of fire behaviour and maintain control of the burn.

It was fantastic to see the collaborative effort from the different agencies making the most of the favourable conditions.

Parks and Wildlife also had an opportunity to carry out prescribed burn activities within Cape Range National Park. This included more than 180ha around Osprey Bay and Pilgramunna, to help protect these popular recreation sites in the event of a bushfire.

Prescribed burns are carried out to help protect people and property and the environment from large bushfires and also to enhance biodiversity, with much of Australia's native vegetation being dependant on fire for regeneration.

Consequences when a bushfire strikes

3-year-old fuel	6-year-old fuel	20-year-old fuel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small flames and slow moving; low intensity at the head of the fire (less than 500 kilowatts per metre*) • Quickly and safely suppressed • Low environmental damage • Most trees unscorched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High flames and fast moving; high intensity at the head of the fire (5000-10,000 kilowatts per metre*) • Difficult and dangerous to suppress • Moderate environmental damage • Most trees scorched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very high flames and very fast moving; very high intensity at the head of the fire (more than 20,000 kilowatts per metre*) • Very dangerous and often impossible to suppress • High environmental damage • Most trees defoliated

Improved visitor access to our beaches

Parks and Wildlife and the Shire of Exmouth have been improving visitor access to day-use areas in the jointly-managed Jurabi Coastal Reserve in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area.

path to the site.

Upgrades are also underway at Hunters Beach access car park. The newly re-structured car park will accommodate a minimum of 34 standard vehicle bays, six long vehicle bays and two bus bays. Two new shade shelters and a new access road to improve traffic flow are also planned in the short-term. Long-term proposed projects include walk paths and a new toilet located in the western corner.



New fencing and resurfaced paths at Jansz Beach.

Pilbara Islands Survey – have your say!

Parks and Wildlife and Murdoch University are interested in collecting information from visitors to the Pilbara islands.

A survey has been developed focusing on Exmouth Gulf to the vicinity of Cape Preston asking where people like to visit, and why. The information collected will help decide how the Pilbara islands should be managed for the future.

To have your say, participate in the short, anonymous online survey. It will only take a few minutes to complete and is open to everyone with an interest in the islands; not just those who have visited previously. **The survey is open until 9 October 2016.**



Locker Island.

Public reserves for conservation and recreation

In July 2015, a narrow stretch of land adjacent to Ningaloo Marine Park was excluded from pastoral leases to create public reserves for conservation and recreation. The reserves will guarantee public access to the coast into the future so that people can continue to enjoy wilderness camping. They will also allow the coast to be managed in a way that is integrated with Ningaloo Marine Park.

The State Government is seeking to negotiate an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Gnulli native title claimants to create the reserves. It is intended that the reserves will be jointly managed by Parks and Wildlife with traditional owners.

Recently Parks and Wildlife staff and members of the Gnulli native title group undertook preliminary field work to initiate planning for the proposed reserves.

A review of independent visitor research has been undertaken to summarise information collected about what visitors value, the experiences they are seeking and the type of facilities they want.

More visitor surveys will be carried out to verify these findings and this information will inform the joint management plan for the proposed reserve.

Consultation with traditional owners, adjacent pastoral landholders, visitors to the coast and the general public will continue through the planning process. The draft management plan will be released for public comment, anticipated in the first half

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For more information including frequently asked questions visit www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/ningaloo-coast.



Undertaking preliminary field work at Ningaloo.

Float syndrome bad news for turtles

Three juvenile green turtles were recently handed into the Parks and Wildlife Exmouth office and the Wildlife CARE group showing signs of float syndrome.

The condition occurs when an air pocket has built up inside the turtle, which can be from a variety of causes including plastic ingestion and infections stemming from boat strikes. It prevents turtles from swimming to depth and feeding. Eventually they become very weak and emaciated.

Green, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles are threatened and protected species and all nest and forage along the Ningaloo Coast.

The Exmouth veterinarian team, led by Megan Petersen, regularly collaborate with Parks and Wildlife to provide diagnosis and rehabilitation of native fauna. Megan has recently sought advice from Australia Zoo vets in Queensland regarding the treatment of turtles.

If you come across sick or injured wildlife please call 0437 118 180 or the Parks and Wildlife Exmouth office (08) 9947 8000.

If you are a resident of Exmouth and are interested in participating in turtle

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commence late October 2016. Please contact the Ningaloo Turtle Program coordinator for more details on (08) 9947 8045.



Juvenile green turtles being treated for float syndrome and carapace repairs.

Understanding humpbacks of Ningaloo

In a first for Western Australia, visitors to Ningaloo Marine Park have the opportunity to swim with humpback whales. The exciting new ecotourism experience is being trialled between August and November in the marine park with licenced tour operators only.

A key part of the trial is to learn as much as possible about humpback whales to inform management decisions for the conservation, safety and enjoyment of whales and people alike. Parks and Wildlife has been working with a team of independent researchers from Murdoch, Curtin and Tasmania universities to collect data on the animals.

Teams have been identifying critical habitat for humpbacks from the air, particularly with mothers and newborn calves. Teams on the water have been studying the behaviour of the whales as they interact with swimmers and are conducting a visitor survey to find out what people love about the experience and how to make it better.

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Humpback whale. Photo – Axel Passeck

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