



# NINGALOO COAST

WORLD HERITAGE



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions



## Winter News | 2017

**In this issue** Ningaloo Coast to host whale shark conference | Big blues in the big blue | Doole Island – a refuge for the golden bandicoot | Access for all Ningaloo Coast onstage at the United Nations Oceans conference | Bird nesting season | Milyering Discovery Centre | Humpback whale trial 2017

### Ningaloo Coast to host whale shark conference

The World Heritage-listed Ningaloo Coast has been chosen as the location for the fifth International Whale Shark Conference in May 2019. Hosted by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' (DBCA) Parks and Wildlife Service, with support from the Australian Institute of Marine Science, whale shark conservation group ECOCEAN and CSIRO, the conference is an excellent opportunity to collaborate with the world's leading whale shark scientists while showcasing our renowned whale shark tourism industry. Congratulations Ningaloo!



### Big blues in the big blue

Yes, it's true – there are blue whales in Ningaloo Marine Park. Just when you thought you'd seen it all at the Ningaloo Coast, pygmy blue whales have been sighted! Throughout May, boaters and those aboard whale shark tour vessels were spoilt with several sightings, with the largest whale measuring up to 24m!

Pygmy blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda*) are a subspecies of the blue whale. They travel along the Ningaloo Coast every April and May on their way north to waters off Indonesia, before returning on their way south in October and November.

Left: A pygmy blue whale cruising along the Ningaloo Coast. Photo – Dani Rob

### Access for all

The Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area is for everyone to enjoy and DBCA's *Disability and Access Inclusion Plan* identifies key strategies to improve access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

Along the Ningaloo Coast, facilities providing universal access for visitors are available. Two of the redeveloped campgrounds in Cape Range National Park – Osprey Bay and Kurradjong – offer toilets for people with a disability and hard surface pathways leading to viewing areas overlooking the spectacular Ningaloo Reef. The newly-designated disability parking bays at Turquoise Bay and Milyering Discovery Centre have been well-received by visitors to the national park. To the north, Hunters Access carpark provides shade structures and decking platforms. Further along the coast, Coral Bay offers boardwalk access to the beach and shade shelters.

The Coral Bay information hut and the Milyering Discovery Centre both have beach wheelchairs for visitors, available to hire free of charge. This enables access to the ocean with the assistance of a carer. If you wish to book a beach wheelchair, contact the Milyering Discovery Centre on (08) 9949 2808. Or visit the Coral Bay information hut. For questions or concerns relating to universal access, contact the Exmouth office on (08) 9947 8000.



Above: Hunters Beach, Jurabi Coastal Park.





## Doole Island – a refuge for the golden bandicoot

Above: Aerial view of Doole Island.

In 2011, 92 threatened golden bandicoots (*Isoodon auratus barrowensis*) were translocated from Barrow Island Nature Reserve to Doole Island Nature Reserve in the Exmouth Gulf. The project was part of the *Barrow Island Threatened and Priority Species Translocation and Reintroduction Program*, funded by Chevron's Gorgon gas project.

Staff from DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service regularly monitor the bandicoot population on Doole Island and have recently discovered the animals have colonised the entire island. This is an indication that the habitat on Doole Island is more than adequate for the survival of the golden bandicoot, and an encouraging outcome for threatened species populations and management.

Doole Island was chosen as the translocation site because it is a protected nature reserve with similar habitat to Barrow Island. The island is also free from feral animals and has a DBCA management presence.

Islands in the Exmouth Gulf are helping to conserve a range of threatened species by providing habitat free from threats including feral cats, foxes, wild dogs, weeds and human activity. A management plan is being drafted for the islands and will be open for public comment this year.

Visit the DBCA website [dbca.wa.gov.au](http://dbca.wa.gov.au) or contact the department's Exmouth office on (08) 9947 8000 to find out when the draft plan will be available.



Above: Checking the health of a bandicoot on Doole Island.

## Ningaloo Coast onstage at the United Nations Oceans Conference

Exmouth District High School student Paris Menner and teacher Susie Bedford recently represented the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area at the United Nations Oceans Conference in New York.

Paris joined students from more than 10 UNESCO marine World Heritage sites to call on world leaders to sign a pledge protecting the ocean for future generations. Coinciding with World Oceans Day on 8 June, students travelled from some of the most remote places on Earth to highlight the global nature of threats posed to the ocean, and the need for collective action.

Paris and Susie's conference trip was supported through a community initiative involving DBCA, the Ningaloo Outlook Project and Mrs Mac's Shed. We are looking forward to assisting Paris and Susie as they share their experiences and further promote the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area within the Exmouth community.

Have you pledged your commitment to protect the ocean?

*"Join the call and together, lets work to preserve the ocean for future generations".*

[whc.unesco.org/en/myoceanpledge](http://whc.unesco.org/en/myoceanpledge)



Above: Children from UNESCO World Heritage marine sites on stage at the United Nations to pledge to protect the ocean for future generations.

## Bird nesting season

We are coming into nesting season for many of our native bird species. These include doves, honeyeaters, mudlarks, owls, quails, plovers, kestrels and ducks, which often nest in vegetation and structures around Exmouth.

If you come across a baby bird, here are some tips to consider before deciding whether to rescue it:

- If the young bird has feathers and is moving about, it is most likely a fledgling which is still being fed by its parents. If the fledgling appears to be in danger but is unhurt, then move it to a nearby low branch and if you can, observe it from a distance for at least two hours to see if the parents are nearby.
- If the bird seems only partially or barely feathered and it is on the ground, look for a nearby nest or listen for a nearby parent. If you cannot find the nest, you could make an artificial one (e.g. ice cream container and twigs/leaves) and find a shaded spot for the nest in a nearby tree. If you can, observe it from a distance for at least two hours.
- If no parent bird is observed for more than two hours, (or the baby bird is at risk) then gently pick it up with a towel, place it in a secure dark box and contact Wildlife CARE Exmouth on 0437 118 180.

Still unsure? Seek advice from Parks and Wildlife Service Exmouth on (08) 9947 8000.



Top: Baby mudlarks and quail (above) rehabilitated by CARE are frequently seen around Exmouth. Please be aware mudlarks can be territorial around breeding season.



# Milyering Discovery Centre

An interactive touchscreen set in a realistic model of a humpback whale tail (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) has recently been installed at the Milyering Discovery Centre in Cape Range National Park. The touchscreen provides layers of information about majestic humpback whales, which pass through the Ningaloo Coast between July and September on their annual migration.



Milyering also has a new terrestrial display highlighting some of the magnificent birdlife and animals found within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area. The display includes a range of taxidermy specimens including a juvenile spotted harrier (*Circus assimilis*), tawny frogmouth (*Podarus strigoides*), nankeen kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*), banded stilt (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*), perente (*Varanus giganteus*), thorny devil (*Moloch horridus*) and black flying fox (*Pteropus Alecto*).

The display also incorporates two shark teeth from the prehistoric megalodon (*Carcharocles megalodon*). The teeth have been preserved as fossils in the Pilgramunna limestone laid down on the ocean floor millions of years ago. The ocean floor subsequently pushed up through the ocean's surface, forming the Cape Range anticline, the mountain range we see today.

Be sure to drop into the Milyering Discovery Centre to view the new displays. If you have any questions feel free to have a chat with our friendly staff.



Above left: Banded stilt taxidermy specimen.  
Above: The new humpback whale interactive touchscreen.

## Humpback whale trial 2017



Above: If you see this flag being displayed by a tour boat, please give it a wide berth.

The humpback whale interaction trial will go ahead for a second year! Commercial tour operators have a specific licence which allows tour participants to attempt an in-water interaction with humpback whales in Ningaloo Marine Park.

Remember, you cannot swim with whales from your own boat. For safety reasons, only those participating in a licensed tour can swim with whales. If you see the HW flag being displayed by a tour boat, it is attempting to interact with a humpback whale, so please give it a wide berth.

### Did you know?

The prehistoric megalodon shark grew to a staggering 18m long and had around 276 teeth, spanning five rows, within its jaws!

To receive a copy of this newsletter electronically please subscribe via [dbca.wa.gov.au/news/newsletters](http://dbca.wa.gov.au/news/newsletters)

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service – Exmouth District  
20 Nimitz Street, Exmouth, WA, 6707 Phone: (08) 9947 8000 Email: [exmouth@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:exmouth@dbca.wa.gov.au)