



NINGALOO COAST

WORLD HERITAGE



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Spring News | 2017

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Planning for the Ningaloo Coast

Representatives from the Gnulli native title group and staff from DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service have undertaken several on-country field trips and planning workshops as part of ongoing planning for the Ningaloo Coast. The group recently spent time south of the bombing range along the Ningaloo Coast looking primarily at cultural landscapes. The area's recreational and natural values were also discussed, with consideration for ongoing sustainable management. For some of the traditional owners it had been many years between visits and provided a great opportunity to reconnect with the area.

The outcomes from the workshops and field trips will be released over the next few months and will contribute to the preparation of the draft joint management plan, available soon for public consultation. Submissions will be used to finalise the plan and guide management of the Ningaloo Coast in the future.

Right: Traditional owner Deborah Dodd – connecting with country.



Keep a lookout for beach-nesting birds!

The North West Cape and surrounding islands provide important habitat for a variety of resident shorebirds. Nesting on the open beach may not sound like the smartest idea to us, but for these shorebirds the beach is home.

Beach-nesting birds usually lay a clutch of 1–3 eggs in a shallow scrape in the sand rather than in a nest. The eggs are quite small and well-camouflaged and can be easily crushed by beach users accidentally stepping on them, or driving over them.

How you can help protect our beach-nesting birds:

- Look for birds sitting above the high tide mark and keep your activities at least 100m away from nests.
- In 4WD areas, stick to the tracks and drive on wet sand if possible.
- Dog owners, please keep your dog on a lead.



Above: Red-capped plover on eggs, Bay of Rest. Photo – Felicity Kelly/DBCA

Beach-nesting birds along the Exmouth Gulf face more pressure than those on islands and within Ningaloo Marine Park along the western side of the cape.

Red-capped plovers have recently been sighted with eggs and chicks above the high tide mark between Town Beach and the Bay of Rest. Please keep a lookout for beach-nesting birds and help protect them.

Wildflowers along the Ningaloo Coast

The Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area has an exceptionally high diversity of plants. Some are endemic to the area and therefore found nowhere else in the world. Here are some of our favourites this season.

Cape Range grevillea (*Grevillea varifolia* subsp. *varifolia*)

- A silvery leaved shrub with red flowers that hang on a spike.
- Endemic to the North West Cape.
- Flowers April to October.
- Can be seen around Neds Bore in Cape Range National Park.

Yardie morning glory (*Ipomoea yardiensis*)

- A blue-grey felty leaved shrub with large pink or purple flowers.
- Endemic to the North West Cape and named after Yardie Creek as it is only found on the western side of the North West Cape.
- Flowers May to July.
- Can be seen just past the Milyering Discovery Centre.

Umbrella stackhousia (*Stackhousia umbellata*)

- A small shrub with yellow flowers that grows through the spinifex.
- Endemic to the North West Cape.
- Flowers June to August.
- Can be seen along the second part of the Mandu Mandu Walk Trail.

Green birdflower (*Crotalaria cunninghamii*)

- A unique, green bird-shaped flower with velvety greyish oval-shaped leaves.
- Flowers March to December.
- Can be seen just as you enter Cape Range National Park.

A: Cape Range grevillea (*Grevillea varifolia*), **B:** Yardie morning glory (*Ipomoea yardiensis*) **C:** Umbrella stackhousia (*Stackhousia umbellata*) and **D:** Green birdflower (*Crotalaria cunninghamii*) are just some of the incredible native plants found within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area. Photos – A, B, C, John English and D, Lochman Transparencies.



Book online for all Cape Range National Park campgrounds

Due to the success of the department's Park Stay WA online booking website, visitors can now secure their camp site at Cape Range National Park in advance all year round.

Online bookings are now essential for all campgrounds within Cape Range National Park, excluding Boat Harbour and 1K camp.

Camp sites which have previously been allocated on a first-in-first-served basis during the off-peak period can now only be reserved

via the online booking system. Bookings can be made up to six months prior to your visit.

To make a camp site booking at Cape Range and for general campground information, please visit parkstay.dbca.wa.gov.au

Please note some campgrounds may not be available during the off-peak season due to general maintenance.



Dune rehabilitation at Five Fingers, Coral Bay

Five Finger Reef, south of Coral Bay, is a popular destination within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area for tourists wanting to access the coast. Over time, deviations from established 4WD tracks and over-inflated tyres have resulted in degradation of the fragile dune system along the coast.

Parks and Wildlife Service staff and traditional owners have been busy planning and implementing site protection and dune rehabilitation works to facilitate sustainable visitation to the Five Fingers area. This includes:

- Directional signage to guide visitors to their destination in the safest and most sustainable way.
- Key management messages to keep visitors on primary tracks and allow the coast to rehabilitate over time.
- Installing site protection fencing to manage access in sensitive areas and assist rehabilitation.
- Placing biodegradable coir mesh matting over eroded dunes to assist trapping sand, seed and moisture in windy environments and allow germination of native plant species.

Similar low-key conservation works are planned for the broader Ningaloo Coast with the establishment of the proposed Ningaloo Coast Reserve. This reserve will be jointly managed with the Gnulli native title group. For more information visit dbca.wa.gov.au/management/ningaloo-coast



Top: Natural coconut fibre coir mesh matting installed at Five Fingers, Coral Bay, traps sand, seed and moisture. **Above:** Coir mesh matting allows for germination of native plant species.



Seasonal beach driving closure – Batemans Bay

Majun is the Baiyungu Aboriginal language name given to marine turtles. Majun, in particular green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), are extremely important to the Baiyungu culture and traditional owners have been working with Parks and Wildlife Service to implement seasonal protection measures for them.

With turtle nesting underway along the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area, a section of beach at Batemans Bay, from just north of Mauds Landing to just south of Oyster Bridge, is closed to vehicles until 30 April. This area is an important rookery for loggerhead and green turtles and is closed seasonally to protect turtle nests and hatchlings. Signage has been installed to notify beachgoers.

The seasonal closure reduces the impacts of 4WD vehicles, including sand compaction on top of turtle nests preventing hatchlings from emerging, and vehicle tyre tracks which hatchlings become caught in while making their way from the nest to the water.

Above: Senior operations officer Todd Quartermaine and traditional owner Hazel Walgar install beach closure signage at Batemans Bay.

Exmouth Gulf Islands – have your say!



Recent bird surveys on the Exmouth Gulf Islands have revealed some rare bird species not often sighted on the mainland. Surveys conducted by DBCA Parks and Wildlife Service staff, with support from Birdlife Australia and volunteers, reinforced why the islands are known as a key biodiversity area for migratory birds.

The critically endangered eastern curlew was sighted on Simpson and Doole islands, while the golf ball-sized red-necked stint was sighted on Brown Island. The stint was displaying a yellow leg flag, indicating it had travelled more than 1000km from Broome, where it was tagged, to Exmouth. It is likely the stint had only just returned from breeding grounds over 10,000km away.

The surveys will help guide a draft management plan for islands between the Exmouth Gulf and Cape Preston. The plan aims to develop habitat protection strategies to cope with projected increase in human use. A draft management plan is being prepared for these islands and will be open for public comment later this year. If you would like more information please email exmouth@dbca.wa.gov.au with your name and contact details.

Left: Critically endangered eastern curlew. Photo – Nigel Jackett

What's on the moggies' menu

To better understand the impact that feral cats are having on WA wildlife, staff from Parks and Wildlife Service are undertaking dietary analysis of feral cats caught along the Ningaloo Coast. The results indicate they seem to prefer native species. When captured, one cat had evidence of consuming six different species of reptile, as well as a native sandy inland mouse. Feral cats are also targeting endangered species, including green turtle hatchlings and juvenile black-flanked rock wallabies.

Please report sightings of feral cats using the free *Feral Cat Scan* app. See feralcatscan.org.au/feralcatscan/default for more information.



Above: Western fat-tailed gecko (*Diplodactylus bilybarra*) found in the stomach of a feral cat on the Ningaloo Coast.

Marine Parks WA app

Discover WA's marine parks with the new *Marine Parks WA* app, available for both iPhone and Android phones. The app provides comprehensive information on each of WA's 17 marine parks including Ningaloo Reef. The app includes 72 marine wildlife species and a 'where am I?' function which allows park users to see which marine park zone they are in. The app is easy to use and works even when offline or out of mobile phone range!

- Search for marine parks by map or list.
- Find out which activities are allowed in each park zone.
- Explore interesting visitor sites and attractions in each park.
- Discover which marine wildlife species are present in each park.
- Link to the latest fishing rules including bag limits, minimum sizes and licenses.
- Find directions to drive to each park.
- Contact park directly from the app.



Mesa campground upgrade

Mesa campground is closed for redevelopment. Civil works including camp site and road resurfacing will complement the modern toilet block recently constructed. The project will see the number of spacious sites increase from 14 to 23 and include improved pedestrian and vehicle traffic flow. Mesa will reopen in early 2018.

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