



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



NINGALOO COAST
WORLD HERITAGE

Welcome to *Ningaloo Coast News*

Autumn 2020

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Historic moment for Gnulli Native Title

Twenty-two years after the initial claim was lodged, the Baiyungu, Yinggarda and Thalanyji people have achieved their Native Title determination.

The Gnulli Native Title claim area covers 71,354 square kilometres of land and sea in the Yamatji Region including the shires of Exmouth, Carnarvon, Ashburton, Upper Gascoyne, Murchison and Shark Bay. The determination area spans over several pastoral leases, mining tenements, roads and reserves as well as portions of the Kennedy Range and Cape Range National Parks, Ningaloo Marine Park, Nynggulu Coastal Reserves, Lake MacLeod and waters of the Exmouth Gulf.

Traditional Owner Hazel Walgar expressed that it was a special day, uniting the traditional owners of the land who can now pass on that responsibility to future generations.

Parks and Wildlife Service Exmouth District Manager Arvid Hogstrom said the determination gives long-overdue recognition to the rights of the traditional owners of this area.

"It's a credit to the passion, dedication and belief of all involved, particularly Gwen Peck who has been a key driver in this process over the entire 22 years," he said.



Above: Gnulli Native Title Holders at the Determination in December 2019.

A new discovery along the Ningaloo Coast

A young male black-flanked rock-wallaby has been discovered near Coral Bay. This sighting significantly extends the known distribution area of this species.

'Delta' was first spotted by Indigenous Rangers one evening. Further investigation allowed staff to get a closer look and gain a tissue sample which confirmed he is of the same descendants as those found in Cape Range National Park over 60km away.

Surveys are being carried out to see if Delta has any friends nearby and to determine how related he is to his closest neighbours.

Did you know?

The North West Cape rock-wallabies are a significant population in the State and indeed Australia due to not only being secure but also are prospering in both distribution and number thanks to the control of feral goats, foxes and feral cats.



Above: Delta the black-flanked rock-wallaby.
Photo - Lucy Clausen/DBCA

Sharing knowledge on country

“My name is Hazel Walgar. I am a Baiyungu woman, my traditional country takes in the entire Ningaloo coastline. My connection to this country is through my grandmother Yingagurru, who belongs to the Nyingalara clan which is now known as Ningaloo.

“Many years ago, I was sitting on the verandah at Cardabia Station watching and listening to past elders talk about their vision for protecting our heritage sites, passing down knowledge, preserving our language and looking after and working on country.”

“Today we come together to fulfil our past elders' vision with the Joint Management Agreement between Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and Traditional Owners, working together creating opportunities for younger generations through employment, traineeships, learning about cultural values and connecting to country.”

Hazel joins the team as a cultural advisor for Parks and Wildlife Service, Exmouth District. Hazel's wealth of cultural knowledge is welcomed, she will work alongside Indigenous trainee rangers and all staff to guide the team on a joint management journey.



Above: Exmouth District Manager Arvid Hogstrom, Joint Management Officer Tom Nagle and Cultural Advisor Hazel Walgar.

“I’m proud to come on board with DBCA in the cultural advisor position to help with this journey together, I call it two-way learning, we sharing knowledge our way their way vice versa.”



Above: Hazel Walgar sharing knowledge on country.

Connecting local students to World Heritage

Last year, Parks and Wildlife Service launched the Ningaloo Coast Reusable Bag Initiative for Exmouth District High School primary students.

The aim was to connect with local students and raise awareness on the important role they, as individuals, play in preserving the biological diversity and natural beauty of the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area.

Students designed artwork representing what the World Heritage area meant to them. Winning designs were printed onto reusable bags which were then distributed to students with their stationery orders at the beginning of term. Students were inspired to think more deeply about their connection with the neighbouring natural environment and gain a sense of responsibility and stewardship for the World Heritage area.

The initiative was kindly supported by Exmouth District High School, Cape Conservation Group, the Shire of Exmouth, Exmouth IGA and Ningaloo Harvest, Exmouth Newpaper, and Creative Tones.

Pop in to Milyering Discovery Centre to see all finalist artworks.



Above: Lani and Olive with their winning designs.

Left: The girls' designs printed onto reusable bags.

Turtle trackers venture south along the Ningaloo Coast

The 2019-20 Ningaloo Turtle Program (NTP) team and Parks and Wildlife Service staff ventured further south along the Ningaloo Coast than usual to monitor turtle activity. Not only are Gnarraloo Bay and Janes Bay incredibly picturesque places, they are also important turtle nesting areas.

Having a reliable understanding of turtle activity along the entire Ningaloo Coast is incredibly valuable for conservation and management. Knowledge of where turtles are mating and laying eggs assists staff to implement measures to protect turtle nesting habitat that may be vulnerable to threats such as predation on eggs and hatchlings by feral animals, or nests being crushed by four-wheel-drive vehicles.

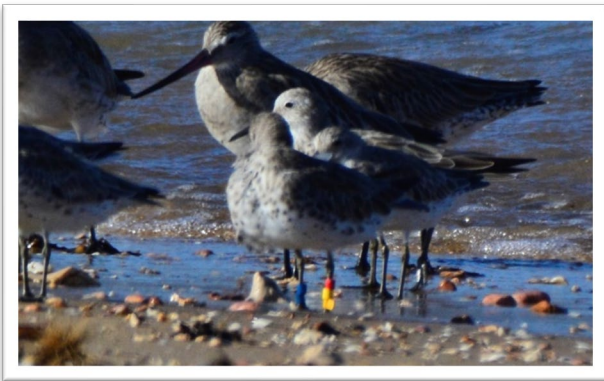
Both locations have proven to be hotspots for endangered loggerhead turtles. The data are currently being analysed and results will be made available on the NTP website later this year. NTP offers various volunteer opportunities during turtle nesting season. If you would like to become a NTP volunteer contact the Exmouth Office for more information or visit ningalooturtles.org.au



Above: A female loggerhead returning to the ocean. Turtle nesting at Gnarraloo Bay was comprehensively monitored by the Gnarraloo Turtle Conservation Program from 2008-09 to 2017-18.

Keep a lookout for banded shorebirds

A critically endangered great knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*) with leg bandings has been sighted recently in Exmouth Gulf. This individual was originally banded in September 2018 at Roebuck Bay, re-sighted May 2019 in China and Exmouth Gulf in January 2020.



Shorebird leg banding is a tagging method that helps researchers identify individual birds, track their migration routes and identify important stop-over sites during their migration journey.

Each summer shorebirds migrate to the shores of Exmouth Gulf to feed on the tidal flats and rest before starting their journey to their northern hemisphere breeding grounds.

Left: A critically endangered great knot with leg bandings recently sighted at the Bay of Rest, Exmouth Gulf. Photo – Grant Griffin

Camping along the Ningaloo Coast

Parks and Wildlife Service, in partnership with the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast Joint Management Body, are now managing coastal camping at Warroora and Ningaloo. **Online bookings are now essential!** To learn more about camping along the Ningaloo Coast and book a camp site visit exploreparcs.dbca.wa.gov.au/park/nyinggulu-ningaloo-coastal-reserves



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