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GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of **Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

NYINGGULU JOINT MANAGEMENT

Biyardi (warm & dry time) News | 2023

Nyinggulu seasons - Thanardinyunggujarri

Above: Gajalbu (emu) Photo – Matt Prophet/DBCA

Its **biyardi** (warm & dry time) along the **Nyinggulu** (Ningaloo) Coast. We notice the **gajalbu** (emu) walking in pairs, this tells us that they are mating. If it is too dry and food is scarce, **gajalbu** mating is put on hold. The male **gajalbu** needs food to build up his strength to care for eggs in the nest. When the **wimbil** (chicks) are born the male will continue to care for them. Baiyungu people don't hunt **gajalbu** during mating season.

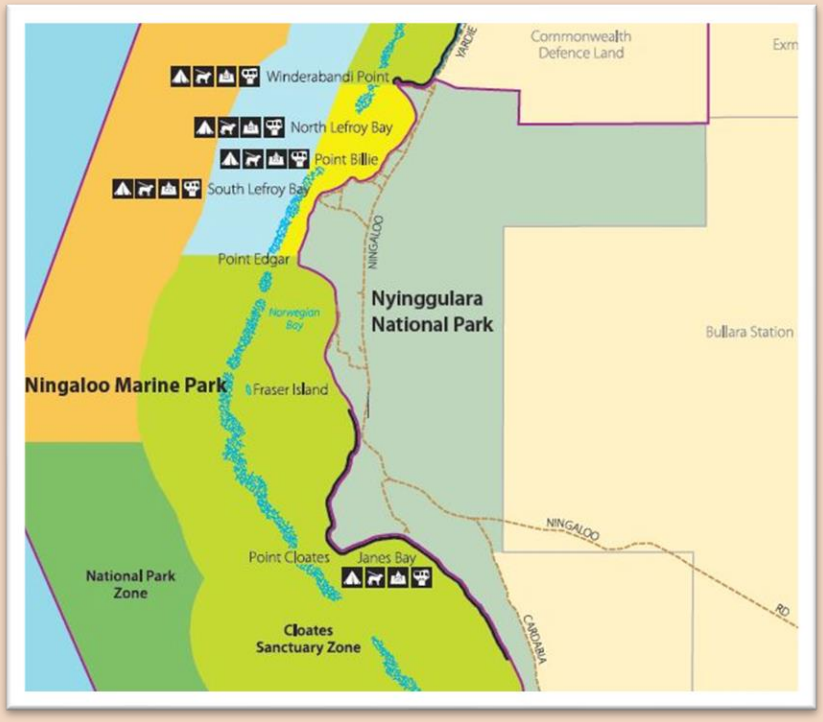
Hazel Walgar – Baiyungu Traditional Owner sharing knowledge on Country

Creation of Nyinggulara National Park

Covering an area of 27,094ha, Nyinggulara National Park lies adjacent to Ningaloo Marine Park and borders Commonwealth Defence land to the north and Bullara Station to the east. The creation of Nyinggulara National Park adds protection the southern extent of the Cape Range formation and is highly valued for environmental and cultural attributes.

To recognise Traditional Owners ongoing connections to place and Country, the A Class Reserve has been named Nyinggulara National Park, named after the only surviving clan group of the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast.

"Sadly, of the many clan groups in the area, Nyinggulara are the only survivors. The Nyinggulura clan are from the area around Point Cloates and belong to the Baiyungu language group. Clan groups are like suburbs in a city, or an estate owned and made up of family groups, each clan group has the right to talk for their Country. Today the Nyinggulara clan are the only remaining descendants of the Baiyungu people and are now the custodians of the entire Nyinggulu area." Hazel Walgar, Baiyungu Traditional Owner.



Traditional Owners from the Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation and the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions are working together in joint management of Nyinggulara National Park. The management of the area is guided by the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coastal Reserves joint management plan. [Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) coastal reserves joint management plan No. 101 (dpaw.wa.gov.au)]

Dolphin population status in the Pilbara

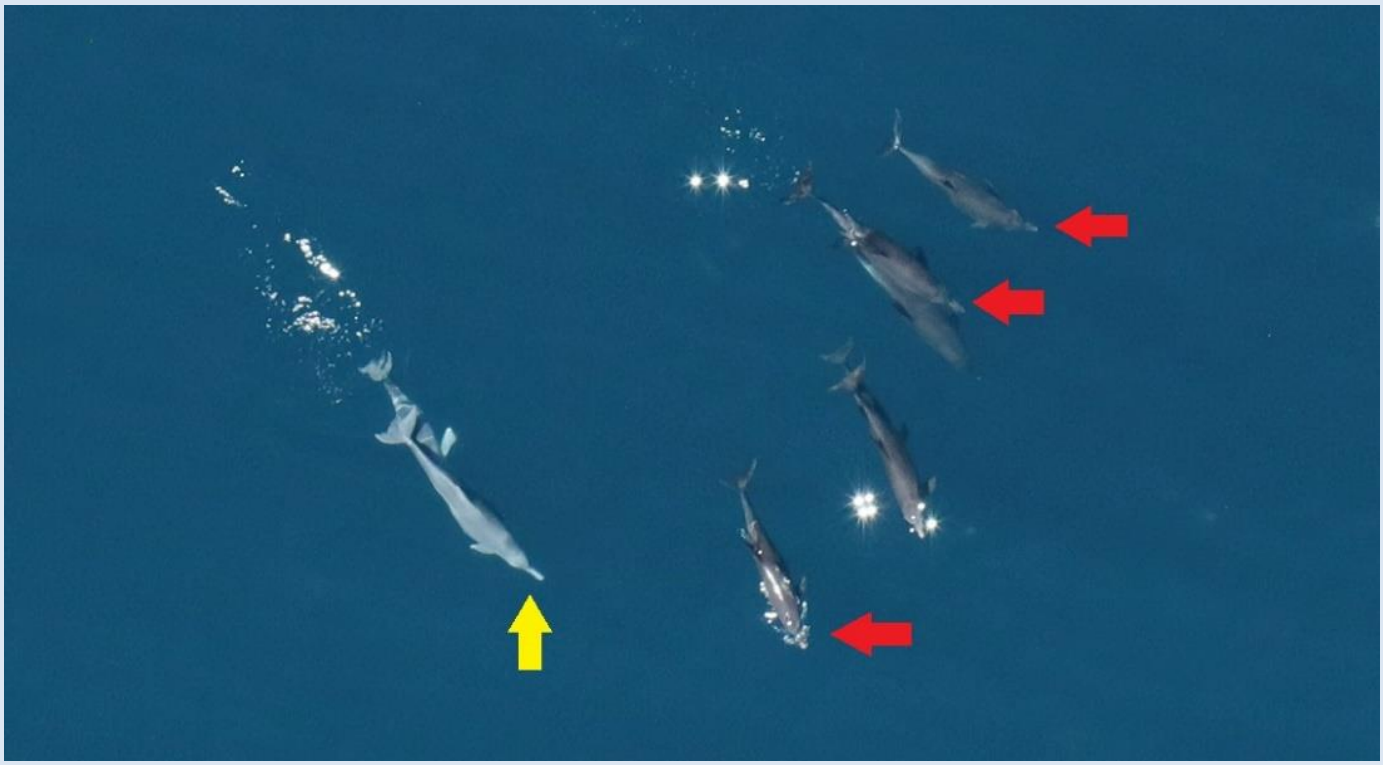
The Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions Marine Science Program has recently estimated the population size for Australian humpback dolphins (*Sousa sahulensis*) and the Indo-Pacific Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus)* at a regional scale for the first time.

Between 2015 and 2017, annual aerial surveys were carried out across the Pilbara Coastal Region, with the survey team clocking over 150 hours in the air. Sightings made by onboard observers were confirmed by photos taken from cameras mounted on the plane wing. Around 400,000 high-quality images of approximately 1cm pixel resolution, telling the two dolphin species apart, were reviewed.

The surveys found population estimates were in the low thousands for both species, with fewer Australian humpback dolphins than Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins. The Australian humpback dolphin has been nominated for listing as threatened and vulnerable to extinction under the *Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Dolphin densities were greatest in nearshore waters, with hotspots in Exmouth Gulf, the Dampier Archipelago, and Great Sandy Islands. These results provide a base for a spatial risk assessment to better understand the overlap between pressures and important dolphin habitats in the highly industrialised Pilbara Region.

Raudino HC, Bouchet PJ, Douglas C, Douglas R and Waples K (2023) Aerial abundance estimates for two sympatric dolphin species at a regional scale using distance sampling and density surface modelling. Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution. 10:1086686. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fevo.2022.1086686/full

Raudino, H.C., Cleguer, C., Hamel, M., Swaine, M., and Waples, K. (2022) Species identification of morphologically similar tropical dolphins and estimating group size using aerial imagery in coastal waters. Mammalian Biology 102, 829-839 https://doi.org/10.1007/s42991-021-00214-2



Above: Taken from Raudino et al 2023, Australian humpback dolphins left (yellow arrow), Bottlenose dolphins right (red arrows). Difference in rostrum length and body colouration are key aspects to species identification. Photo - DBCA

Native or invasive?

The Dongara daisy (*Verbesina encelioides*) is an invasive weed species that has recently been detected along the Ningaloo Coast. Growing in sandy soils, alluvial flats and roadsides, the yellow flowers can be seen from October to April.

Invasive weed species like the Dongara daisy pose a significant threat to native plant species by outcompeting them for light and space and also to native herpetofauna by altering their micro-climate which in turn can affect the wider landscape.

If you see the Dongara daisy or other invasive weed species while out and enjoying the Ningaloo Coast you can help by taking a photo and recording your GPS location and reporting the sighting to the Exmouth Parks and Wildlife Office at exmouth@dbca.wa.gov.au

Above: Donagra daisy (*Verbesina encelioides*). Photo – Lucy Clausen/DBCA

Sharing culture in World Heritage management

Baiyungu Traditional Owner Hazel Walgar and World Heritage Program Manager (Ningaloo Coast) Tegan Gourlay, recently travelled to Canberra to attend the 2022 World Heritage Forum. Facilitated by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCWEW), DBCA showcased sharing cultural heritage in World Heritage management for the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to acknowledge the cultural significance of the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast and the importance of Nyinggulu Coastal Reserves for the protection and conservation of cultural heritage, in addition to providing greater protection for World Heritage, landscape and biodiversity values along the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast" shared Tegan Gourlay.

Acknowledging Traditional Owners jointly managing Country in partnership with DBCA to protect and manage World Heritage and cultural heritage values along the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast was highlighted throughout the presentation and through engagement opportunities with World Heritage property managers Australia-wide.

"For Traditional Owners, we now have the opportunity to share traditional knowledge to care for Country. This is important for traditional owners and the protection of World Heritage values and our culture, to go on this journey together with the younger generation of traditional owners following in the footsteps of elders past," Baiyungu Traditional Owner Hazel Walgar.

Above: World Heritage Program Manager Tegan Gourlay and Baiyungu Traditional Owner Hazel Walgar at the 2022 World Heritage Conference, Canberra. Photo - DCCEEW

Reserve infrastructure upgrades

Parks and Wildlife Service Ranger team have been working hard over summer implementing works across the Nyinggulu Coastal Reserves in preparation for another busy tourist season.

Waste management infrastructure upgrades, campground maintenance, site formalisation, signage installation, fencing and track consolidation and rehabilitation were some of the works carried out to assist management and improve the conservation and recreational values of the reserves.

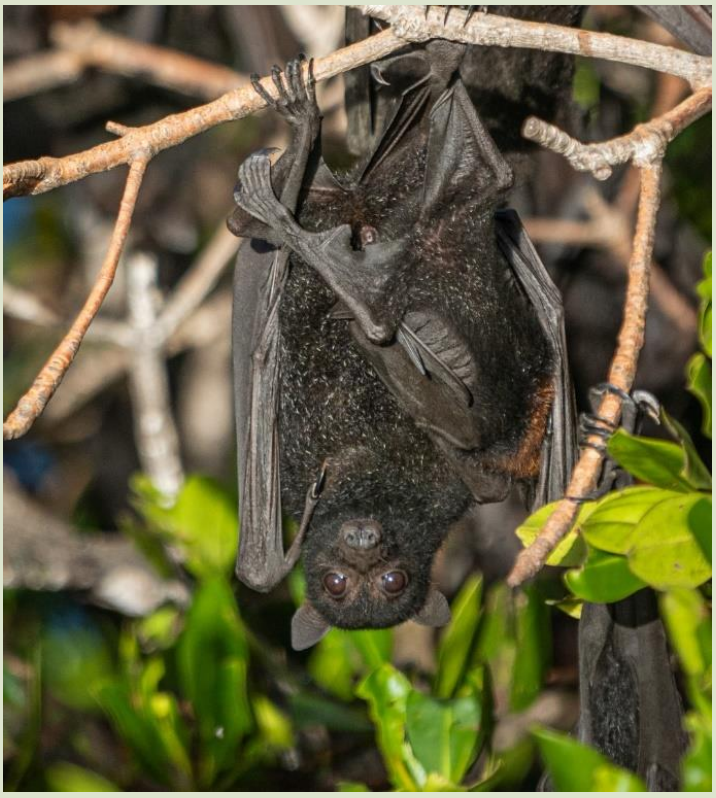
Above: Campsite maintenance at Maggies Campground, Nyinggulu Coastal Reserve. Photo - DBCA

Creature feature!

Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area supports an array of species and one group that is often overlooked are the flying mammals – bats! Both microbats and megabats (flying foxes) can be found on the Cape Range Peninsula at different times of the year.

The little red flying fox (*Pteropus scapulious*) and black flying fox (*Pteropus alecto*) eat nectar, leaf material and fruits from native plants. Megabats form 'camps' where they roost in trees during the day. Both species cohabitate in a seasonal camp at Yardie Creek during the summer months. This camp can carry over 400 individuals, with bats generally arriving in November and departing by May.

Flying foxes assist in pollen and seed dispersal across the landscape as they travel up to 40km in a night, a considerable distance for an animal their size. Threats to bats include loss of roosting and foraging habitat.



Above: A megabat (flying fox) at camp in Yardie Creek.
Photo – Joel Johnsson

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