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Talking Tourism with the Department of Conservation and Land Management

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Attractions and facilities

Walpole canopy walk nears completion

A new **Canopy Walk** at the Valley of the Giants, in Walpole-Nornalup National Park, will give visitors the unique experience of walking through the tree tops. The walk takes visitors through the canopy of spectacular giant tingle trees, 40 metres above the forest floor. The 600 metre walk loop will offer a rare insight into the beauty of the forest. For land lovers, the **Ancient Empire ground level boardwalk** has been established as part of the development program. CALM thanks the tourism industry for its patience while the walk was being built. Given the importance of the site both nationally and internationally, every care is being taken to ensure that the walks are of the highest standard. It is anticipated that the walk will be open for tours by early August. For further information please contact Christine Wrench on (098) 401 027.

WA Naturally - New shop front for CALM in Fremantle

CALM has opened **WA Naturally**, a new shop that will provide an increased level of information and service to individuals and the nature-based tourism industry. It will be open on the weekends and holidays, and most weekdays (it is closed on Tuesdays). People will be able to purchase CALM guide books, maps and other publications and obtain free information about national parks, marine parks and other CALM-managed destinations. Computer terminals have been set up so people can surf CALM's site on the Internet and use CALM's new CD-rom on nature-based tourism. CALM is also working with the Western Australian Tourism Commission to provide tourists and operators with a nature-based tourism service that will encompass the whole State. Tour operators should contact Matt Sapsworth on (09) 334 0331 if they would like their tour information included on the CD-rom.

New discovery centre at Penguin Island

Penguin Island has entered a new era with the recent opening of the **Penguin Experience Island Discovery Centre**. This new facility opened late in 1995 at a cost of \$320,000, and is set to become a major tourist attraction. Fairy penguin viewing is now guaranteed, as penguins that have been rescued and rehabilitated from injury are housed in an attractive enclosure that is similar to their natural environment. As they frolic in their pool, staff are on hand to give an insight into the biology and behaviour of these amazing creatures. The adjacent marine park has an abundant variety of sea birds and other marine animals including Australian sea lions. A new research and management centre has also been built on the island with \$120,000 funding from Western Mining.

Just 45 minutes from Perth, a visit to Penguin Island is an excellent half or full day tour from Perth. During spring, summer and autumn, Rockingham Sea Tours operate a regular ferry service to the island plus two and three hour tours which include visits to other islands in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park. The island closed for the penguin breeding season on June 4 to prevent disturbance while the birds lay eggs and raise their young, but will reopen on Saturday September 14. Penguin viewing will then be available seven days a week from 10am to 3.30pm and ferries and tours will operate regularly between 9am to 4pm. Rockingham Sea Tours offers a coach service from Perth to the ferry departure point at Rockingham. For further information about Penguin Island and the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park contact Peter Dans on (09) 432 5111 or call Rockingham Sea Tours on (09) 528 2004.

Forest Heritage Centre

A forest viewing platform has been developed closer to Perth as part of the new **Forest Heritage Centre** near Dwellingup, a little over one hours drive south-east of Perth. Dwellingup is a delightful settlement established last century as the centre of what was to become a booming timber industry. Nestled in a

valley and surrounded by regrowth forest, Dwellingup is the perfect location for the **Forest Heritage Centre**, built at a cost of \$1.2 million. It is a first-class facility for people to learn about the jarrah forest and how it is managed, and as a showcase for Western Australia's fine wood industry. Built in the shape of a giant jarrah bough, the complex nestles in its forested surroundings. Three leaf-shaped rammed-earth buildings extend from a welcoming stem-like foyer. The centre includes a display on the forest, which leads to a range of marked outdoor walks, including a reconstruction of a historic sleeper cutter's camp. There is also a gallery where visitors can purchase quality mementos of Western Australia; and a work area where visitors can see craftspeople from the Fine Wood Centre at work from an overhead viewing platform. The **Forest Heritage Centre** is open seven days per week, and guided tours can be arranged for groups. Nearby is the historic Marrinup prisoner of war camp, established in the 1940s, where visitors can see the foundations of the original buildings. For further information please contact Tony Lynn on (09) 538 1395.

Great forest tree drives

Tourists can now experience a new 48-kilometre Great Tree Drive through Shannon National Park. This drive takes in some of the most spectacular old growth karri forest in the south-west, as well as stunning examples of marri and jarrah forest, sedges, heathland and granite outcrops. The loop drive begins near the northern entrance to the park off South Western Highway and winds to the old townsite on the opposite side of the highway. Six picnic and information stops, two bush walks and the park radio circuit are signposted along the drive. The park radio broadcasts on 100FM with information on Shannon's natural features and its history, with stories told by some of the people who

used to live and work in the area. The roads for the drive are not sealed, but are in good condition, suitable for conventional vehicles and small coaches.

Animal spotting at Perup

Night time animal spotting will be a highlight of a stay at a unique accommodation complex nearing completion at the Perup Forest Ecology Centre. Located 45 kilometres east of Boyup Brook, the **Perup Wilderness Lodge** is located in State forest surrounded by the Perup Nature Reserve, the largest jarrah forest nature reserve in Western Australia. Visitors to the centre can expect to see at least four, and possibly up to six different endangered mammal species, including the numbat, chuditch, tammar wallaby, ringtail possum, or southern brown bandicoot, as well as many other animals such as woylies. For a small fee, CALM rangers will be available to accompany tour groups on wildlife spotting adventures and bushwalks. Tour leaders can also be trained by CALM rangers in night spotting techniques.

Guests will be accommodated in low energy, rammed-earth buildings powered by solar energy, and which utilise minimal waste technology. The buildings can cater for ten guests on a single room occupancy or 20 on a twin share basis with shared facilities. The wilderness lodge is available on a self-catering basis and has a professionally equipped kitchen and dining room. The accommodation will be open for business from September 1996. Tour groups are welcome on a first-in basis for the remainder of the year. Access to the lodge, however, will be limited to a select number of operators from 1997. A call for expressions of interest in using the centre will be advertised in November 1996. Further information on the Perup Forest Ecology Centre can be obtained by contacting Cliff Winfield on (097) 717 944.

In Short

- A Visitor Information Centre is in the planning stage in the proposed **Two People's Bay National Park**.
- A walk trail has been established at Mt Bruce in **Karijini National Park**. This is a self-guided walk. Trail brochures are available by telephoning (091) 43 1488 or (09) 334 0333.
- A boardwalk to protect stromatolites has been constructed at **Shark Bay** and new information signs erected to assist visitors appreciate these ancient life forms.

Snippets

A draft management plan for the **Leschenault Peninsula** was released on 19 June. Comments on the plan are invited for two months after its release.

The closing date for submissions on the draft management plan for **Karijini National Park** is 12 July.

Copies of both plans can be obtained by telephoning (09) 334 0333.

Around the Regions

Pilbara

- The recent rains in the north of the State will ensure a bumper wildflower season this year. The best flower viewing time is expected to be July/August.
- Tour operators travelling north out of Karijini National Park will encounter heavy machinery on the Yampire Gorge Road every evening from about 4.30pm until about the end of October. Care should be taken, as the road is narrow and winding.

Nambung National Park

- Major works which will improve the Pinnacles access road are underway and should be completed by the end of 1996. The road will be bituminised as far as Hangover Bay and the gravel road will be resheeted from Hangover Bay into the Pinnacles. We appreciate your patience while this upgrading occurs.
- A recent wildfire has burnt out most of the Wanagarren Nature Reserve at the southern end of Nambung National Park. The bushland is expected to recover with the onset of winter rains.
- Operators who visit Nambung National Park are reminded to keep to speed limits and take care on park roads. This will lead to a safer and more enjoyable trip and help prevent degradation of roadside areas.
- For further information on Nambung contact Keith Hockey on (096) 527 043.

Yanchep National Park

- Park facilities are constantly being improved. If you have not been to Yanchep National Park in recent times, a visit is highly recommended. A star attraction is the new koala compound. Visitors can now enter the compound to view the koalas at close range, and for a small fee, be photographed holding one of these special creatures. Other activities include popular cave tours, and Gloucester Museum, which features a collection of memorabilia and information relating to the park and the local area.
- Improvements to roads will continue throughout 1996.
- For further information on Yanchep National Park contact Ron Shimmon on (09) 561 1004.

Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park

- The first two sections of the 150 km **Cape to Cape Walk Trail** have been completed. Section one,

between Cape Naturaliste and Wyadup (a few kilometres south of Canal Rocks), is about 20 km long. A trail guide is available from CALM offices in the region or by telephoning (09) 334 0333. Section five between Hamelin Bay and Cape Leeuwin is about 23 km. A trail guide will be available in the near future. Each walk includes shorter optional walks and loops and offers a wonderful opportunity for visitors to enjoy the dramatic coastline of the area. The remaining three sections will be completed within two years. When finished, the Cape to Cape walk will be one of the most spectacular walks in Western Australia.

- A new **whale observation platform** and shelter with information boards is now open at Cape Naturaliste. The platform offers 200° panoramic views of the coast and is an excellent whale viewing spot. An observation deck has also been built overlooking **Bunker Bay** in the northern section of the park, and also at **Injidup**, south of Canal Rocks. Both are proving popular spots for sunset viewing.
- **Hamelin Bay** is receiving a facelift: the boat ramp has been redecked, and new facilities including a boat car park, toilets, information panels and a car park for day visitors should be completed by Christmas.

Blackwood Valley

- Toilets have been installed at **Hut Pool** on the Blackwood River, which is reached via the Great North Crossing Road. These will be a great bonus to canoeists using the area and day visitors.

Margaret River Area

- Boardwalks over 80 metres of wet areas have been built along the **10 Mile Brook walk/cycle trail**, giving visitors year round access between Margaret River and the 10 Mile Brook picnic site.
- Facilities at **Wharnclyff Mill** near Margaret River have been revamped. Catering for groups of up to 80, the mill offers basic camping facilities with the added bonus of hot showers, electric barbecues and space to move in an area that is heavily forested. The mill is an excellent base for exploring the Margaret River area by bicycle; it is close to the 10 Mile Brook walk/cycle trail, and a cycle trail to Gracetown.
- For further information about the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, the Blackwood Valley or Margaret River area contact Neil Taylor on (097) 521 677.

Stirling Range National Park

- ◆ Funding has been approved to resite and upgrade the footpath to Mt Trio. The new track will be open in spring.

Torndirrup National Park

- ◆ CALM will commence improvements to the footpath system at the Gap within the next few weeks. The path will be upgraded and widened to improve safety and make it more accessible to all visitors, including elderly people.

West Cape Howe National Park

- ◆ Final plans are in place for rangers and the Hang Gliding Association of WA to erect two take-off platforms at the Shelley Beach Lookout. Wooden platforms will be constructed at ground level to assist with take-off and to reduce erosion. A completion date has not yet been determined.
- ◆ The long hot summer has caused 4WD tracks in the Park to break up, and rubber belting will be laid over the next few months to improve conditions. Caution is required.
- ◆ For further information on the Stirling Range, Torndirrup or West Cape Howe National Parks please contact Martin Lloyd on (098) 417 133.

Hot off the Press

Bush Books - Pocket guides to WA's natural wonders

CALM has recently launched **Bush Books**, full colour pocket guides on WA's plants, animals and special features. The first ten books in the series have been completed. Visitors to the South-West will enjoy *Birds in the Backyard*; *Mammals of the South-West*; *Whales and Dolphins of Western Australia*; and *Common Trees of the South-West Forests*; *Common Birds of the South-West Forests*; *Common Wildflowers of the South-West Forests*. Visitors to the north of the State will be fascinated with the information in *Hazardous Animals of North-Western Australia*; *Mammals of North-Western Australia*; *Whales and Dolphins of Western Australia*; *Common Plants of the Kimberley*; and *Birds of the Kimberley*. New titles will continue to be added and in time, most regions in the State will have their own set. Although several excellent field guides to WA's plants and animals are available, the majority of them are too technical for the layperson, and are often large and expensive. **Bush Books** have been designed to be easily read and represent excellent value at only \$5.95 each. They make ideal reference material for tour operators. Each book relates to a defined geographical region and they make great reading for passengers on tours that visit the areas in question, or with a nature-based focus. **Bush Books** are available at most leading book stores.

Broome and Beyond

With worldwide tourism interest focused on Broome and surrounds, it is appropriate that a lavish 256 page book on the area's landscapes, natural history, and plants and their traditional Aboriginal uses, has recently been produced. With more than 700 colour photographs, **Broome and Beyond** is the ultimate guide to the natural environment of Broome and its immediate region. Its detailed coverage of the area makes it a must for operators visiting this special part of WA. **Broome and Beyond** is designed, printed and published in Western Australia. It is available for \$39.95 from leading book stores or by completing the enclosed order form.

CALM has produced an extensive range of publications including *Dive & Snorkel Sites in Western Australia* (43 self-guided dives off WA's coast), *Wildflower Country* (guide to the Mid-West), *Discovering Penguin Island and the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park* and many more. For further information on CALM's publications please phone (09) 334 0481.

Don't forget **LANDSCOPE**, CALM's award-winning quarterly magazine which specialises in stories on Western Australia's natural features. This informative publication is available for an annual subscription of \$20. Subscription forms are available by contacting (09) 334 0481.

Touring Western Australia is produced by the Park Policy and Tourism Branch of the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management.
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