



FOREST SCIENCE LIBRARY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The number of people visiting Western Australia's national parks is growing significantly each year. This trend is likely to continue as recognised in WA's Nature-based Tourism Strategy. Promotional campaigns such as the Brand WA campaign are specifically designed to recognise these developments. This growth is extremely positive for the State and for the tourism industry.

CALM manages a large proportion of the nature-based tourism product in Western Australia. As more and more visitors use our natural areas, they expect quality facilities and services. Yet, increased visitation places pressure on natural areas and increases the cost of management. In order to meet visitor expectations it is necessary for CALM to access additional resources.

Visitor fees and merchandising are some of the ways that CALM can generate resources for management. Fees for conservation areas are widely accepted throughout Australia. As part of this approach, the WA government recently approved an increase in park entry and camping fees.

Revenue from park fees is just 14 per cent (\$4.2 million each year) of the overall costs of managing CALM's estate. All fees are retained locally and used to manage the areas from where they are collected. Enhanced facilities have a direct benefit to local tourism and the local community. For instance the introduction of fees in the Pemberton region has resulted in the dramatic upgrading and improvements at Beedelup Falls and Gloucester Tree.

For regular visitors to WA's national parks, park passes allow multiple entries at discounted rates. Discounted fees also apply for senior card and aged pension card holders and certain groups can gain exemption including school groups.

Revenue generated from visitor fees plays an increasing role in managing WA's natural areas and makes a vital contribution to WA's nature based tourism industry. Visitor fees are an important way for CALM to maintain the quality of WA's nature based tourism product and in turn promote the development of tourism in WA.

Syd Shea

Syd Shea
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Attractions and facilities

STAR GAZING AT THE PERTH OBSERVATORY

The **Perth Observatory** has been operating for over 100 years and is the only fully operational State Observatory left in Australia. In addition to conducting international-standard research, it offers a wide range of tours and activities for the public. These include:

Night Tours (90 minutes). Visitors can use telescopes to view the Moon, visible planets and stars. Suitable for groups of up to 40 people. Note: This is an outdoor activity which is subject to the weather and is conducted on specific dates depending on the visibility of the moon.

Day Tours (90 minutes) Includes a guided tour of the Observatory's museum, telescopes, and a slide presentation. \$5 adults and \$3 children. Suitable for groups up to 80, minimum 10 people. Bookings essential.

Sunday Tours (90 minutes) Conducted at 3pm every Sunday (except Christmas and Easter) and similar to the day tour. Bookings are not required, although advice of large groups is appreciated. \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.

Astronomy Field Nights (approx. 2 hours) Observatory staff conduct star viewing with transportable telescopes at your site.

Contact the Observatory during business hours to discuss the best tour to suit your needs and rates by phone (08) 9293 8255 or fax on (08) 9293 8138.

TOE TAPPING UNDER THE STARS AT THE HILLS FOREST

A new fun-filled program, *Sights and Sounds of the Night*, began in February at **The Hills Forest Activity Centre** near Mundaring. Activities include bushscooting (The Hills Forest's version of bootscooting), dancing to bush bands, Dreamtime performances and listening to yarn spinners. Activities are held on Saturday evenings until late April in a beautiful rammed earth amphitheatre nestled in jarrah forest. Billy tea and damper are included in the cost. Prices range from \$12 adults, \$7 children and \$40 for families.

Night Shift, a guided night time walk, takes place every Wednesday throughout the year. Bring a torch and keep your eye out for native animals! Cost is \$8 adults, \$5 children and \$22 families. Phone 'The Forest' for a full program of activities on (08) 9295 2244. Activities can also be tailored to meet group needs.

WONDERFUL WALKING ON THE BIBBULMUN TRACK

A section of the new south coast extension of the **Bibbulmun Track** is now open for walkers in the Denmark area. It stretches for 11 km between Lights Beach, just east of William Bay and Ocean Beach Road south of Denmark. Starting at the Lights Beach car park, the walk traverses coastal heathland before winding upwards through majestic karri forest. It passes the sculpted granite outcrop of Monkey Rock and climbs to

the top of Mount Hallowell. From this granite-domed hill, walkers gain sweeping coastal views from Cape Hillier through William Bay, Wilson's Inlet right through to West Cape Howe. There is no map available yet for this track, but it is very well marked and emerges on Ocean Beach Road just north of the Ocean Beach Caravan Park. Contact the Bibbulmun Track Office for more information on 9334 0265.

AUTUMN IN THE KIMBERLEY

The arrival of Autumn in the Kimberley coincides with CALM's prescribed fire burning season. During April and May, CALM will be lighting prescribed fires in Kimberley national parks and reserves from the ground and from the air. Careful fire management at this time of the year helps to limit the extent of wildfires later in the season.

Wildfires that start mainly from lightning strikes and illegal lighting of fires in the dry season burn up huge areas of the Kimberley each year. By removing dry grasses and dead leaves, the spread of higher intensity fires is restricted. Prescribed burns tend to be low in intensity, patchy and limited. They are planned to protect property and life.

Early dry season burning has ecological benefits. Most Kimberley wildlife has evolved with periodic fires over many thousands of years so a diversity of burnt and unburnt habitats offers a favourable environment for these species. For further information about CALM's fire management practices in the Kimberley contact (08) 9168 0200.

CALM staff profile

KEEPING OUR HERITAGE ALIVE AT JOHN FORREST NATIONAL PARK

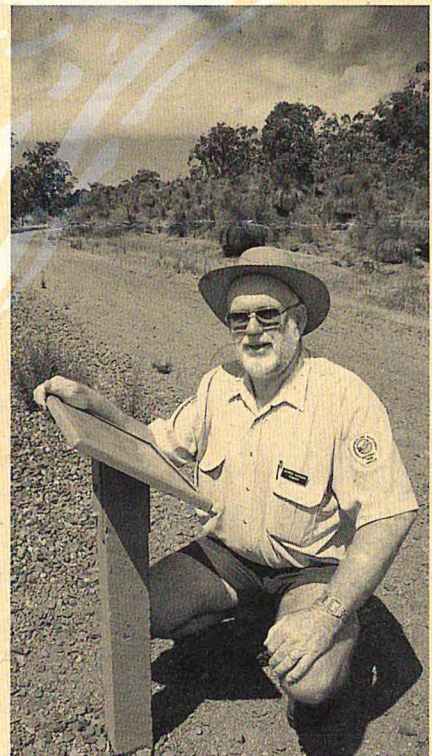
George Duxbury joined what was then the National Parks Authority in 1976, making him one of CALM's longest serving rangers. He has worked all over the state and is now Senior Ranger for Mundaring District, based at John Forrest National Park. George has a passion for local history and, since moving to John Forrest in 1988, has spent much of his spare time researching its history.

"John Forrest was the first national park declared in WA (in 1900) and one of the earliest in the world. The park contains WA's first rail link to Kalgoorlie, completed around 1898, and the only railway tunnel ever built in WA," George says.

"In 1917 this railway joined up with the Transcontinental, completing WA's first rail link to the eastern states. For nearly 70 years it was the main link from Perth over the Darling Range, and was integral to the life of the isolated settlement."

A Heritage Trail is now based on the old railway alignment and George estimates as many as 250,000 people walk or cycle the trail each year.

Photo - Senior Ranger George Duxbury



Around the regions

SOUTH COAST REGION

TWO PEOPLES BAY

The new Information Centre and car park at *Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve* near Albany is complete and will open by early May. The centre will highlight the area's high conservation values and colourful history, in addition to CALM's successful wildlife reintroduction work.

TORNDIRRUP NATIONAL PARK

A recent fire burnt through 550 ha of the park, but major features at *The Gap*, *Natural Bridge* and the *Blowholes* were unaffected. New work has recently improved the path at the Blowholes. The fire did, however, destroy some popular areas which had to be closed for restoration, but all are now reopen. For information on South Coast parks phone Terry Passmore on (08) 9842 4518.

CAPE LE GRAND NATIONAL PARK

Cape Le Grand National Park features attractive bays with pure white sandy beaches between rocky headlands. A coastal walk trail takes advantage of this outstanding coastal scenery. Upgrading of the scenic walk between *Lucky Bay* and *Thistle Cove* has commenced and a new bus parking area and turn-around is now in use at Lucky Bay. Special Ranger Tours of Cape Le Grand can be arranged by phoning Ranger-in-Charge Geoff Passmore on (08) 9075 9022. There is a charge for this service.

MID-WEST

Pinnacles Drive has recently been coated with bitumen and blue metal, giving a safe, all weather driving surface. CALM management and the Shire of Dandaragan would like to thank operators for their patience during these road works. Senior Ranger, Keith Hockey can be contacted on (08) 9652 7043

MONKEY MIA

It's a girl! A new calf born in December has been a special highlight for summer visitors. Kiya was born to Puck, one of the dolphins that regularly visits the beach. Her name was chosen from thousands of entries in a competition in *The West Australian*. Though tourist contact was initially restricted to avoid undue stress, Kiya is now able to interact in the same way as the Monkey Mia veterans. She is growing fast and learning to whistle and use her sonar.

PILBARA REGION

DAMPIER ARCHIPELAGO

The synchronised mass spawning of coral in the Dampier Archipelago occurred in late March. This

spectacular event coincides with the arrival of whale sharks, the largest fish in the world, along the Ningaloo Reef. Whale sharks gather at Ningaloo, near Exmouth, between March and June each year. To see them is a heart stopping experience and well worth a visit. Contact CALM Exmouth office on (08) 9949 1676 for more information.

KARIJINI NATIONAL PARK

Karijini National Park is coming to life again following serious wildfires late last year. Many snappy gums are covered with bright green shoots and tiny spinifex clumps are beginning to emerge on the stony slopes. Recent rainfall has greened creek systems and floodways. Look out for bustards, or bush turkeys, often seen in groups of six to eight. They favour these sites, consuming large numbers of grasshoppers, crickets and other insects.

The *Karijini Visitor Centre* reopens for the visitor season in April. Staffed by members of the Karijini Aboriginal Corporation, the centre will provide information on the park's natural heritage, wildlife and history. Souvenirs, CALM publications and locally crafted artefacts will be on sale.

SOUTHERN FOREST REGION

GLOUCESTER TREE SITE CLOSURE

Gloucester Tree will soon have a new, user friendly car park able to accommodate up to 5 coaches and 40 light vehicles. The redesign of the parking system will improve traffic flow, and a realignment onto Burma Road will reduce congestion. The redevelopment will occur between early March and April 1998. During this time, Gloucester Tree will be closed to the public for safety reasons. The site will reopen prior to the Easter school holidays. CALM apologises for any inconvenience this may cause but hopes the improvements will benefit all park visitors. The nearby Bicentennial and Diamond Trees are still open. For further information contact David Meehan at Pemberton on (08) 9776 1207.

TREE TOP WALK OPENING TIMES

Extended summer opening hours for the Tree Top Walk at the Valley of the Giants will change over the 1998/99 summer period. Normal opening hours at the Valley are 9am to 5pm. Extended hours, 8am to 6pm, will start with the WA Christmas school holidays on December 11th and finish when school goes back on January 27th 1999. If this change causes difficulties for any operators, please contact Rod Hillman on (08) 98408 200 and he will arrange for it to be open for them.

Hot off the Press

Three new pocket-sized field guides have been published recently by CALM. **Beachcomber's Guide to South-West Beaches** explores some of the interesting plants and animals found washed up on beaches from Geraldton to Albany including sea urchins, sponges and shells of different types; even baby loggerhead turtles!

At only \$5.95, **Discovering the Valley of the Giants and Walpole-Nornalup National Park** is a great souvenir of the famous Tree Top Walk. The book delves into the area's history and describes how the Tree Top Walk was built. It outlines a number of walk trails, scenic drives and recreational activities and includes information on the park's unique plants and animals. The book is an excellent guide to exploring the park beyond the well-known Valley of the Giants.

Australian Birds of Prey is the latest of CALM's Bush Books, describing the characteristics of hawks, falcons, kites, harriers, buzzards and eagles. Birds of prey have long captured the imagination of people, and have been depicted as symbols of power, vision, speed and audacity. An identification guide helps readers distinguish between different birds of prey.

CALM's popular field guide **Wild Places, Quiet Places** is to be rewritten. First published in 1988, it has sold around 30,000 copies but is now outdated. The new publication will include new facilities and parks under CALM management. Tourism operators with suggestions for destinations that should be included can contact Carolyn Thomson-Dans on (08) 9389 8644.

A new guide, **Bushwalks of the South-West**, describes 49 bushwalks between Mandurah and Esperance. Each walk has a mud map and an outline of interesting features. All walks are graded according to difficulty and the book includes a guide to safe bushwalking. **Bush Walks of the South-West** is available from major bookshops and CALM offices for \$14.95. It is available to tourism operators for their own reference at a 20 per cent discount (\$11.95) and copies can be purchased in bulk at wholesale rates for resale to customers. Please contact Estelle de San Miguel on (08) 9334 0296.

Further information about CALM's extensive publications list can be obtained by contacting (08) 9334 0333.

In short

SUMMER FUN AT THE VALLEY OF THE GIANTS

Holiday makers at the Valley between Christmas and Australia Day were treated to a feast of activities as part of the **Valley of the GIANTS Summer Activities Program**. The Valley acted as a wholesaler for local operators, promoting an activities program throughout the South-West. A range of free and fee-paying activities were offered including night-time spotlighting from the Tree Top Walk, paddling the Walpole River and a Frankland River cruise. Activities were conducted by local guides and experts.

The program was a trial to gauge the response from local industry, visitors and the community. This has been positive, with operators already discussing new activities for next year. Local operators commented that the program encouraged visitors to extend their stay. Following the success of this program, the Valley is seeking partners to operate new activities. Operators are encouraged to contact the Manager, Rod Hillman (08) 9840 8200 to discuss this further.

Inside CALM

Jennifer Brice has left CALM to take up a new role in Albany. Some of Jennifer's previous tasks will be managed by **Jenny Nichol**. Jenny has been working on a project basis for CALM since mid-1997. In that time she has acquired a sound knowledge of CALM's tourism product. Jenny has a wide range of marketing and promotions skills gained in sports and events marketing positions in Victoria and WA.

David Kirkland, formerly of the Pilbara Tourism Association, has been contracted by CALM to develop a marketing strategy for CALM's tourism product. The strategy, which will build on the outcomes of last year's Marketing and Business Planning Workshop, is expected to provide a statewide marketing framework for CALM's tourism product. The strategy will be produced in consultation with CALM's regional, recreation and tourism staff, the WATC and the tourism industry and is expected to be completed in June.

YOU WERE WONDERING?

Touring Western Australia is a newsletter produced by CALM to keep the tourism industry informed about developments which affect the tourism industry. If people in the industry have a query regarding any of CALM's tourism policies, we would be pleased to answer these in future editions of the newsletter. Enquiries can be sent to *Touring Western Australia* fax: (08) 9334 0253 or email jennifern@calm.wa.gov.au