

Western Australia



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Talking Tourism with the Department of Conservation and Land Management

FOREST SCIENCE LIBRARY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Attractions and facilities

CALM - WINNER IN TOURISM AWARDS

The Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk has been recognised for its high standard of quality after winning a prestigious Western Australian Tourism Award. The Tourism Awards honour excellence, where a submission demonstrates significant involvement and contribution to the tourism industry.

The Valley of the Giants won the award in the Significant Regional Attractions category, which was presented to CALM at a ceremony held on May 29.

The quality of CALM's *Wild About Western Australia* CD-ROM was also acknowledged, reaching the finals in the Media category of the Awards.

FOREST WALK '98

The Hills Forest will come alive on Sunday August 30, when people of all walks of life (no pun intended!) will converge on the activity centre to partake in a forest walk.

Forest Walk '98 gives visitors a chance to explore rarely seen areas behind Mundaring Weir, while enjoying the variety of jarrah, marri and wandoo forest, wonderful wildflowers and cascading waterfalls in the surrounds.

There will be a choice of two bush circuits, with forest information points along the way, to learn about wildflowers, animals, stream life, trees, fire, dieback and much more. The 'Marvellous Mammals' information point will provide an opportunity to see our rare native animals up close! The cost for entry is \$10 per vehicle which includes soup, damper and billy

tea, guides at each information point and Nyoongar activities.

Forest Walk '98 is just one of the many activities run by the Hills Forest. For further information about Forest Walk '98 or any of the bush activities in the 'Go Bush' activity program, contact the Hills Forest on (08) 9295 2244.

PROTECTING OUR WHALE SHARKS

Whale shark interaction off the north-west coast of WA is a small but rapidly growing nature-based tourism industry, now attracting 2,500 visitors to the area, which has more than doubled in the last five years.

CALM has recognised the need for further research and monitoring of the whale shark to determine any impacts as a result of this increasing tourism pressure.

The Minister for the Environment, Cheryl Edwardes, released a new strategy for whale shark interaction management to coincide with the annual return of these animals to Ningaloo Marine Park. This management program details the research needed to gain a better understanding of the species and to determine the possible links between environmental factors and whale shark numbers.

"The conservation of the whale sharks must remain paramount and this is why the Government is keen to work with industry in implementing the management strategies," said Mrs Edwardes.

CALM currently licences 14 operators for whale shark interaction tours, and the Department will increase this to 15 licences for a five year period from 1999. This is a necessary management strategy while there is limited information known about the impact of interaction with the whale shark.

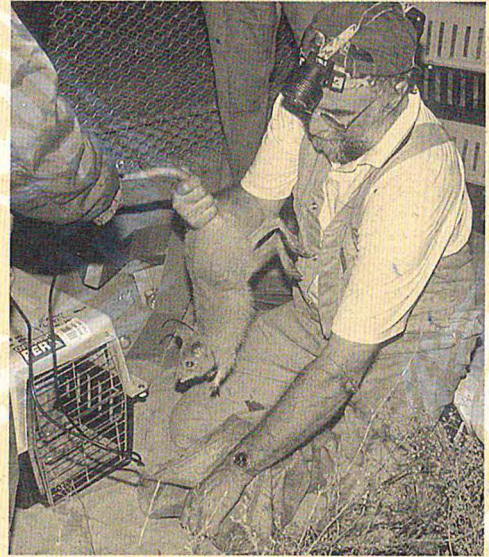
Licensed whale shark operators have taken the initiative to form an incorporated body known as the "Western Australian Whale Sharks Inc." This body has brought whale shark operators together to represent the industry as a whole. This approach can benefit operators for marketing and industry purposes and enable further recognition within the nature-based tourism industry.

Contact CALM's Exmouth office on (08) 9949 1676 or CALM's Marine Conservation Branch in Fremantle on (08) 9432 5100 for a copy of the Whale Shark Interaction Management report.

MALA ON THE MOVE TO DRYANDRA WOODLAND

The appeal of Dryandra Woodland as a nature-based tourism site was given a boost recently, with the re-establishment of a group of the last surviving mainland mala (rufous-hare wallabies). Twenty mala travelled from the Tanami Desert in the Northern Territory to Dryandra as part of CALM's *Western Shield* project.

The mala have joined other successfully re-established endangered mammals such as western barred bandicoots, banded hare-wallabies and boodies in a purpose-built 20-hectare enclosure. This enclosure provides a safe haven for these mammals to adapt to their new environment and breed before being reintroduced into the broader



The mala heads to Dryandra

Dryandra region and other *Western Shield* sites in the South-West. It is planned to release bilbies at Dryandra later this year.

Dryandra is running a 'Wonders of the Woodland' activity program, which includes spotlighting to see woylies, brush-tailed possums and tawny frogmouths in their natural habitat. For further information, contact Clare Anthony at CALM's Narrogin District office on (08) 9881 1113.

Around the Regions

SOUTH-WEST

Another Milestone for Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk

The Valley of the GIANTS Tree Top Walk has been visited by more than 300,000 people since its opening in August 1996. Visitor numbers to this popular tourism icon have remained constant during this time, showing a continuing interest by visitors and operators alike.

Evening spotlighting is offered in the Valley, and is proving to be a great success. Sightings of brushtail possums, banjo frogs, brush-tailed phascogales, boobook owls, quacking frogs and native bush rats have provided much delight and excitement to visitors. The increased number of sightings is largely attributed to the fox baiting program being undertaken in the area as part of *Western Shield*, resulting in the return of many native animals. CALM is planning to release woylies, ringtail possums and chuditch down the track. The release of these mammals will reintroduce species to the tingle forest that have not been seen in the Valley for many years.

Tour operators interested in conducting night tours, or visitors interested in a spotlighting tour at the Tree Top Walk, should contact the Manager, Rod Hillman, on (08) 9840 8200 for further details. The Tree Top Walk is open every day except Christmas Day, 9.00am to 4.15pm and 8.00am to 5.15pm during Western Australian Christmas school holidays.

SOUTH COAST

Winter Walking in Stirling Range National Park

The Stirling Range is one of the few places in Western Australia where snow falls, providing a spectacular backdrop of snowy peaks. Although heavy snow falls are a rare occurrence, a light dusting of snow can often be seen during the months of winter or spring. Due to the unpredictable nature of the weather at this time of year, caution must be taken when visiting Stirling Range National Park.

Many of the upland walks have been improved over the past year, such as trails to Bluff Knoll, Mount Trio, Toolbrunup, Mount Hassell and Talyuberlup.

The Bluff Knoll walk is the highest within the park, and can take up to four hours to complete the return walk. These walks provide an opportunity to explore the natural beauty of the park, including the 1,500 species of flora, many of which are unique to the area. For up-to-date weather reports and walking track recommendations, contact the Stirling Range National Park on (08) 9827 9230 or CALM's Albany office on (08) 9842 4500.

MIDWEST

Kalbarri National Park

Kalbarri National Park offers breathtaking views across the multicoloured limestone and sandstone cliffs which line the coast. Visitors can now enjoy this scenery using the sturdy viewing areas which have been installed at Castle Cove and Natural Bridge recreation sites, approximately 12 km south of Kalbarri.

Viewing platforms within the park are constantly being upgraded or installed to increase visitor safety and maximise viewing potential. A viewing platform at the Z-Bend site overlooking the Murchison River Gorge will be installed within the coming months.

Monkey Mia

At Monkey Mia, Kiya, the newest of the regular dolphins, is thriving, entertaining onlookers with her playful antics, and the dolphins continue to delight visitors with several visits on most days.

Beachfront kayaks and 'sea thrus' (small glass bottomed boats) are available for hire to explore Shark Bay Marine Park. Visitors can choose between a half to one hour paddle or a longer guided tour. Boat cruise services have proved to be a popular tourist venture, with two services now operating. Resident researchers at Monkey Mia offer evening talks and slide shows about marine life research being undertaken in the region. These presentations are held in the Visitor Centre and are free.

The Monkey Mia Dolphin Resort Naturalist, Roger Symes, leaves the Resort in May, with CALM's thanks and best wishes.

For more details about activities and services, please contact the Visitor Centre on (08) 9948 1366.

KIMBERLEY

Activities Galore in the East Kimberley

CALM staff are providing guided walks and slide nights in **Mirima National Park**, just outside

Kununurra. Bird watching sessions will be conducted at Marlgu Billabong in **Parrys Lagoon Nature Reserve** and at the **Kununurra Arboretum** until August. For details of these activities, contact the Kununurra Tourist Bureau on (08) 9168 1177 or the CALM office in Kununurra on (08) 9168 0200.

The well received Ranger slide shows are being held again in **Purnululu National Park**. The slide shows are free of charge and provide a great way for visitors to learn more about Purnululu. Show times are advertised in the park, otherwise contact CALM's Kununurra office.

PILBARA

Karijini National Park

A new car park and picnic area has been established at the Weano recreation site. The car park provides more parking space and better turning circles for larger vehicles. Traffic flow around the site is one way. The picnic area has tables for day use. A designated area has been set aside for camping adjacent to the car park. To assist in the management of this area, CALM staff would appreciate if all rubbish could be taken out of the park for disposal.

Driving in the wet

Roads to and within the Pilbara national parks are mostly gravel. Drivers are asked to take care during wet periods, as road surfaces can be slippery and unstable. After substantial rain, there may be road closures, in which event alternative routes are mostly available. Please contact local shire offices, tourist information centres or CALM's Pilbara office in Karratha on (08) 9143 1488 for road conditions.

In Short

NEW LIFE ON PENGUIN ISLAND

Penguin Island is closed for the winter breeding period of the little penguins. There are about 1000 penguins on the island (although this number can vary from season to season) which makes for a very busy mating arena. This time of year is crucial for penguin breeding and requires minimal human disturbance.

The island will reopen around mid-September, when a public presence will not have an adverse impact on the penguin chicks. For information on tours around the Shoalwater Marine Park contact Penguin & Seal Island Cruises on (08) 9528 2004.

'SURFING' FOR TRAVEL IDEAS

There are now more than 200 CALM-licensed tour operators listed on CALM's Internet site, *NatureBase*. Users of this site can access a diverse range of tour operators, their activities offered and contact details. An operator's home page can also be accessed directly from NatureBase. The NatureBase address is <http://www.calm.wa.gov.au>

For any additions or changes to the tour operator details provided on this page, contact Matt Sapsworth on (08) 9334 0119.

THE BIBBULMUN TRACK ON VIDEO

CALM and the Friends of the Bibbulmun Track have produced two videos about the Track. "The Magic of the Long Distance Dream" is an 11 minute promotional video introducing viewers to the Track at \$19.95, while "Getting on Track" gives more detail, providing information and helpful tips to plan for a walk and costs \$24.95. Both videos are available from CALM's Como offices at front counter reception or contact the Bibbulmun Track Project on (08) 9334 0265 to be sent a copy.

CALM staff profile

INTERPRETING OUR HERITAGE

Gil Field, CALM's Senior Interpretation Officer, joined the Department in 1986, after working with conservation agencies in three Australian states and also in Argentina.

Over the past 20 years, he has produced a plethora of interpretive media including signs, displays, visitor centres, slide shows, videos, videodisc, CD-ROM, brochures, posters, booklets, guided activities, activity programs and tours. Much of Gil's time is currently spent producing practical manuals and devising training programs such as the "*Visitor Interpretation Manual. Guidelines, Standards and Practices for Managing Recreation and Tourism*" and "*Running Activity Programs*", which is being revised to better suit the tourism industry.

A four day Designing Interpretive Activities Workshop is conducted by Gil, with CALM staff Lotte Lent and Karen Shaddock. It is designed for nature-based tourism guides and others to interpret our natural and cultural heritage. The Workshop meets National Tourism Industry competency standards and is recognised by the Australian Travel and Tourism Review Panel.

This workshop is generally run once or twice each year, with the next one being held from June 29 to July 3 at the University of Notre Dame (UND) in Fremantle. The \$275 cost includes a workbook and a tour to The Hills Forest. Contact



Diane at UND on (08) 9239 5690 or fax (08) 9239 5696 if you are interested in attending.

"*Best Recipes for Interpreting Our Heritage. Activities for Ecotour Guides and Others*" will be published in June. Activities within this booklet have been designed by Gil and participants in the workshops. For any of these products, contact Denise Griffith in CALM's Visitor Interpretation Section on (08) 9334 0564.

Gil can be contacted in CALM's Visitor Interpretation Section on (08) 9334 0580 or email gilf@calm.wa.gov.au

YOU WERE WONDERING?

Touring Western Australia is a newsletter produced by CALM to keep the tourism industry informed about developments which affect the industry. If you have a query regarding any of CALM's tourism policies, activities or developments, 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 kateh@calm.wa.gov.au