

Yarning Time

Issue 5, April 2016



Dr Stephen van Leeuwen
Chair
Aboriginal Employee Reference Group

Message from the AERG Chair

Welcome to the fourth issue of the *Yarning Time*.

The Aboriginal Heritage Unit (AHU) and the Aboriginal Employee Reference Group (AERG) have established *Yarning Time* to:

- provide an update on Aboriginal staff news
- inform all staff of the developments in Aboriginal affairs in the department
- share stories on the department's engagement with Aboriginal people.

We hope everyone has had a great start to the year and we look forward to the stories for the upcoming issues of *Yarning Time* in 2016.

Please have a read and enjoy.

Dr Stephen van Leeuwen

Bush tucker from the wet season in the Kimberley

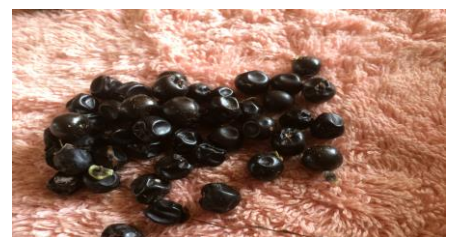
During the wet season in the Kimberley there are plenty of plants that provide a food source and medicinal properties.

The season starts around December and finishes about March.

Some of the plants available in the Kimberley during this time are the konkerberry, bush grape, green plum, bush yam and the river fig tree.



Konkerberry bush plant (marrbra).



Bush black plum plant (minjarra).
Photos – Bonnie Edwards

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Above: Cape Arid National Park.

Land management at Credo

In December 2015 Parks and Wildlife joined the Indigenous rangers from the local Goldfields Land and Sea Council for a week-long trip to conduct land management activities at the proposed Credo Conservation Park. The trip was part of the joint management working group activities.

The rangers included Trevor Donaldson Jnr, Chris Dimer and Neil Donaldson along with Parks and Wildlife's assistant operations officer Matt Wood. The crew were joined for the first two days by Goldfields regional manager Ian Kealley, regional leader for Parks and Visitor services David Pickles and Goldfields Land and Sea Council (GLSC) coordinator Darren Forster.



Above: Parks and Wildlife staff along with Indigenous rangers from the local community examining a rock hole for cleaning.

A number of visits were made to cultural sites to assess what works would be required.

This included rock hole cleaning as well as land management works including the removal of old pastoral infrastructure that included old water tanks and kilometres of poly pipe. They also visited Ularring Rock to define new roadworks for future recreation site redevelopment.

The work was carried out throughout the rest of the week. Everyone was very satisfied with the number of sites cleaned up. The rubbish was taken to the tip and the cultural sites were left looking great.

All involved camped out at the shearers' quarters' at Credo, where they were entertained in the evening by Darren from GLSC playing his guitar while sitting around the camp fire.

There are a lot more trips out to Credo scheduled for 2016 to document sites and conduct more land management and cultural site works.



Above: Rock hole cleaned out.



Above: Department staff and local rangers restoring breakaway rock holes.

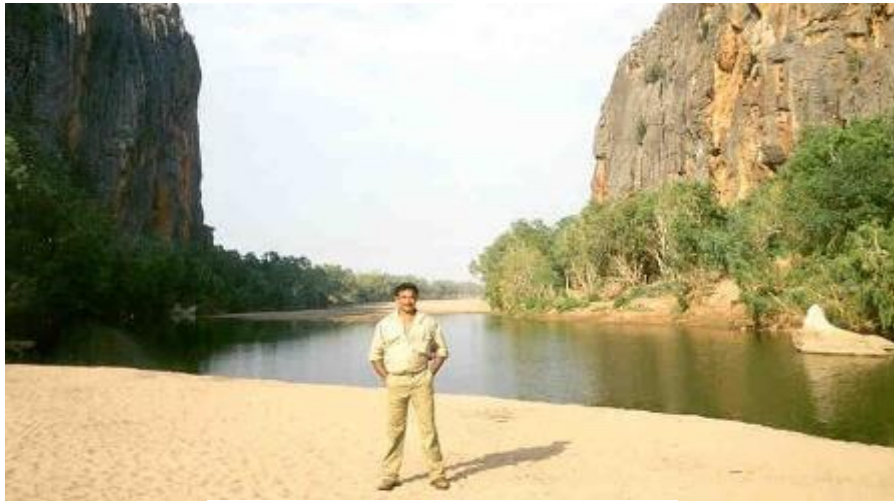
Broome-based Ranger Henry Corpus clocks up 30 years

Broome-based ranger Henry Corpus joined the department in the mid-1980s, and 30 years on, his passion for the job has not waned.

Henry's career began as a nursery hand in Broome where he spent time working with crocodiles and in construction, and today he is a ranger at King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park and Windjana Gorge National Park.

"When I started on the job, I never thought I would still be here 30 years later," he said.

"It has been an amazing experience with plenty of highlights including the opportunity to see and work all over the Kimberley at different national parks and croc wrangling – that was fantastic."



Above: Henry at Windjana Gorge.

Henry recognises his long service with the department has made him a role model in the local community and he is pleased to be in a position to encourage the next generation of Aboriginal rangers.

He is the department's third longest serving Aboriginal employee.

"I guess now I am a role model for the young rangers," he said.

"It's something I'm very proud of."

Senior operations officer Dave Woods said Henry's 30 years with the department in the Kimberley Region was a great achievement and something for him to be proud of.

"Indigenous trainee rangers within the department look up to Henry and see him as an example of what can be achieved through determination and commitment," Dave said.

"Although there has been plenty of challenges along the way, Henry has persevered and earned the rewards that hard work brings."

Learning and Development welcomes Daniel Balint

Kimberley resident Daniel Balint has recently joined Parks and Wildlife within the Learning and Development Section as acting coordinator for the department's Mentored Aboriginal Traineeship Employment Scheme (MATES).

Daniel began his career in tourism establishing an award-winning Kimberley expedition four-wheel-drive tour company that specialised in flora, fauna and history. The extended tours which pioneered partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses were subsequently inducted into the Australian Tourism Hall of Fame.

More recently, Daniel has been employed in marine operations as an expedition leader, vessel master and marine mammal specialist on expedition ships traversing the Kimberley coast, Papua New Guinea, Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands with National Geographic Expeditions.

Before joining Parks and Wildlife, Daniel was employed with the Kimberley Training Institute in Broome, lecturing in tourism and maritime studies.

In recognition of his specialised local knowledge, Daniel was selected to lead successful historical and biological expeditions in the Kimberley, including the notable discovery of the famous buccaneer William Dampier's 17th century Australian landing sites, and the discovery of the 'Diamond' Dakota DC3 aircraft shot down by Japanese bombers in 1942.

Daniel has extensive experience in operations and management in both terrestrial and maritime spheres with these significantly increasing the capacity of the MATES program within the Kimberley region.

Story thanks to the People Services Branch Newsletter.



Above: Daniel Balint.

River Journeys of the Derbal Yerrigan Beeliar

Earlier this month Parks and Wildlife launched the opening of a new series of interpretation facilities and trail guides recently installed along the City of Melville's foreshore.

On 2 March 2016 Environment Minister Albert Jacob officially opened the 'River Journeys' interpretation facilities. The three River Journey facilities at Bicton Baths, Point Walter and Heathcote help visitors connect with the natural and cultural values of the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) and the Djarlgarro Beeliar (Canning River).

The facilities highlight significant cultural stories from the Whadjuk traditional owners, as well as the natural history of the area.

The River Journeys project aims to enhance the visitor experience of the Swan Canning Riverpark through the use of digital sound, art and interpretive signage. Each site features wooden deck structures that link into existing pathways, and include seating and important information about the river in both Noongar and English languages.



Above: Environment Minister Albert Jacob, Whadjuk Elder Marie Taylor and the City of Melville Mayor Russell Aubrey at the opening of the Point Walter interpretation facility. Photo – Jennifer Eliot/Parks and Wildlife

The River Journeys project has also developed two virtual trail guides that connect the new interpretation facilities. Trail guides are online trip planners that provide detailed maps, trail descriptions, audio digital media and identify points of interest.

The first trail guide runs along the limestone cliffs of Blackwall Reach Reserve and is named *Jenna Biddi Yorga*, which translates to 'women's feet walking on a path' in Noongar. This 1km trail focuses on the relationship the Whadjuk people have to this area of the river, being traditionally a place for women and children.

The other trail runs from Fremantle Traffic Bridge to Canning Bridge, named *Melville Water Riverpark Trail*. This is a 16km trail that showcases the natural, historical and cultural heritage of the Riverpark. While the trail guides are not marked by directional signage, they are hosted on the Geotourist app and Trails WA app.

Riverpark project officer Ben Ansell said the involvement of Aboriginal traditional owners was central to the project.

“An advisory panel consisting of Whadjuk Noongar community members was established to provide input and advice on important themes, stories and key locations. Four elders were also recorded sharing culturally significant stories specific to each site,” he said.

The River Journeys project is part of a larger Riverpark trail vision that will see similar developments along the Swan and Canning rivers, including a fourth interpretation facility at the Brentwood foreshore, which is due for completion by June 2016.



Left: Whadjuk Elder Marie Taylor performing a smoking ceremony as part of the official opening of the River Journeys facilities. Photo – Jennifer Eliot/Parks and Wildlife

Right: Sunset at the Bicton Baths interpretation facility. This area is known as Kwoppa Kapa which translates to ‘beautiful water’. Photo – Ben Ansell/Parks and Wildlife



Left: The Jenna Bidji Yorga trail runs through the limestone cliff tops of Blackwall Reach Reserve, otherwise known as Jennalup – ‘the place of feet’. Photo – Ben Ansell/Parks and Wildlife

Kimberley rangers help out in the south-west

Parks and Wildlife brought in staff from all over WA to carry out a wide range of roles as part of the response to the Waroona bushfire in January. Eight Aboriginal rangers from the Kimberley Region arrived to carry out various roles. The first four to arrive (pictured) carried out the crucial role of night shift runners. This included running meals out to firefighters on the ground and other general duties. The second group were on fire line duties, working hard to mop up the fire.



Above: Aboriginal staff from the Kimberley Region helping out at the Waroona bushfire. (L-R) Curtis Robinson (Broome), Keith Boombi (Kununurra), Eugene Park (Kununurra) and Tristan Jessell (Kununurra).
Photo – Lauren Emmerson/Parks and Wildlife

Dryandra Woodland numbat release

In December 2015, five Noongar elders (representing the Bennell, Abraham and Kickett families) participated in the release of numbats into the Dryandra Woodland Nature Reserve as part of the *Western Shield* wildlife recovery program.

The elders described this as a 'special experience'. It was a significant milestone for the department's Wheatbelt Region to see elders actively involved in the business of Parks and Wildlife.

Elder Merv Abraham gave a Welcome to Country on behalf of the Noongar people to the 75 people in attendance, including the Threatened Species Commissioner Gregory Andrews and Parks and Wildlife's Director of Forest and Ecosystem Management Geoff Stoneman.



Above: Elder Merv Abraham giving a Welcome to Country at the numbat release in Dryandra.



Above: Aboriginal Noongar Elder Basil Kickett releasing a numbat back into Dryandra Woodland.

National Reconciliation Week 2016 (Our History, Our Story, Our Future)

This year's National Reconciliation Week theme is 'Our History, Our Story, Our Future'. The theme's aim is to ask all Australians to reflect on our national identity, and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights in our nation's story.



Above: National Reconciliation Week theme for 2016. Photo – Reconciliation Australia

Last year the department held five events around the State, with Kensington holding a launch to celebrate the roll-out of the acknowledgement signs around the state. The event included a Welcome to Country by Whadjuk Elder Theresa Walley and an address by Director General Jim Sharp to reveal the signs that would be placed on all major Parks and Wildlife buildings around the State acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which the buildings reside.

This year we hope to see more events being held by the department State-wide. If you are having trouble on what sort of events to hold here are some ideas:

- community morning tea or lunch
- AFL Indigenous Round barbecue (Sir Doug Nicholls round)
- morning tea, perhaps featuring some tasty bush tucker goodies
- flag-raising ceremony
- catch up with or put on a display stall for your local community
- video screening
- ceremony featuring traditional dance or music.

Karim Khan and Rhonda Murphy will be contacting all RAP representatives to discuss ideas for events.

NRW is a chance for all of us to take some fresh action to spark a change on our workplaces, schools and communities – no matter how big or small.

For more ideas please see the Reconciliation Australia page: www.reconciliation.org.au/

Screening of *Walking Together – Belonging to Country*

The Aboriginal Heritage Unit recently hosted a lunchtime video screening of *Walking Together – Belonging to Country*, as part of the department's Cultural Learning Program.

Dr Francesca Robertson and Noongar Elder Dr Noel Nannup from Edith Cowan University gave a presentation on the development of the documentary and answered questions.

The documentary celebrates the remarkable similarities between Noongar and Western scientific understandings of the formation of Noongar land. The film used explanatory animation to take viewers through the 300 million-year journey

It featured Dr Nannup and Professor Stephen Hopper sharing knowledge of ancient and modern biota and land use as they walked by the magnificent Swan River from its source to the ocean.

It was well received by the 40 people from across the agency who attended.



Left: Dr Noel Nannup and Dr Francesca Robertson take questions from Parks and Wildlife staff after the screening.



Right: Dr Francesca Robertson talking about the film.

National Indigenous Tourism Conference

Parks and Wildlife presented to almost 70 people during a national Aboriginal tourism conference earlier this month in Bunbury, aimed at encouraging traditional owners to conduct cultural events and tours in national parks and reserves.

The 2016 Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference, hosted by the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Committee Inc (WAITOC), was a good opportunity for the department to provide information to stakeholders about its *Culture in the Parks* initiative.

The initiative, which forms part of the department's *Reconciliation Action Plan*, seeks to provide employment and economic independence opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Heritage Unit manager Rhonda Murphy said supporting cultural tourism was just one way the department recognised the unique role and expertise Aboriginal people have as traditional landowners.

"We want to see Aboriginal culture shared and celebrated and what better place to do that than on country in national parks and reserves," she said.

"Parks and Wildlife is interested in working with and supporting businesses to develop high-quality cultural experiences, whether it be vehicle tours or safaris, guided walks, educational sessions, music events, festivals or dances.

A range of Parks and Wildlife staff attended the conference, joined by Balangarra and Willinggin traditional owners from the Kimberley. Business owner Claire Prendergast from Wharncliffe Mill and Wardandi business operator Josh Whiteland gave an insight into their shared partnership in providing accommodation and Aboriginal cultural immersion tours.

Rhonda said a number of potential operators had expressed interest in developing commercial opportunities in different parts of the State.

"Being involved with the conference also strengthened the partnership the department has with WAITOC to work together to support Aboriginal tourism operators in the future," she said.



Images from the National Indigenous Tourism Conference



Above: Rhonda Murphy presenting.



Above: Jayden Miller & Belinda Cox at the NITC.



Above: Cassidy Charles, Dave Woods (senior operations officer – West Kimberley) with Warren Greatorex (CEO Willinggin Aboriginal Corporation) and Troy Bidd.



Above: Kenny Ninyette and Karim Khan sitting in front of the mia-mia they displayed for the NITC.



Above: Peter Henderson and Tracy Shea with Geri Hayden from Gnaala Karla Boodja Land Enterprise and Tahn Donovan, Chairperson for WAITOC.

Customary activities update

As stated in the last *Yarning Time* the AHU met with Peter Henderson (regional leader for Parks and Visitor Services in the South West Region) to assist in the development of the region's Aboriginal engagement strategy. Coordinating training for staff in the region on the customary activities provisions was identified as a priority.

Forty South West Region staff participated in South West Native Title and Customary Activities workshops recently held in Busselton and Collie. The workshops, conducted by Rhonda Murphy (Aboriginal Heritage Unit), Karim Khan (Aboriginal Heritage Unit) and Simon Choo (Senior Project Officer Parks and Visitor Services) provided operational and reception staff with an understanding of the CALM Act changes that allow joint management and customary activities, as well as the South West Native Title Settlement.

There was plenty of discussion about the application of the customary activity regulations, Policy 86 and Guideline 22, especially the procedures for Local Area Arrangements and Written Permissions.

As staff worked through a number of scenarios, their understanding of the policy intent and how to apply it grew. 'Assisting, facilitating, enabling' were key principles to keep in mind when determining how to resolve the situations presented in the scenarios.



Above: Collie District staff discussing the customary activities scenarios.

Simon gave an enlightening presentation about the outcomes of the South West Native Title Settlement, its importance to Noongar people and the opportunities for Parks and Wildlife to engage and work with traditional owners in managing country.

In 2016 the South West Region and AHU are planning another workshop for the staff that were unable to attend last year's sessions. The aim is for all staff to gain a greater appreciation of the changes and opportunities customary activity, joint management and the South West Native Title Settlement will bring.

The Aboriginal Heritage Unit and Simon are available to provide this training to all departmental staff.

Please contact Karim on 9724 6167 or email karim.khan@dpaw.wa.gov.au for more information.

Cultural awareness training update

The Aboriginal cultural awareness training had a great start to 2016, with the first training delivered at Kensington to a cross-section of staff from the department.

Learning and Development and the Aboriginal Heritage Unit have developed a training calendar for the year.

The team will travel to the regions starting with Swan where the training will be delivered at Dwellingup and Mundaring in May. In June there will be two sessions held in Bunbury for the South west region and for the Warren region it is planned to deliver in Manjimup and Walpole

The Goldfields and Pilbara regions have request training for Kalgoorlie and Karratha in the second half of the year.

Contributors

- Jayden Miller
- Chris Stewart
- Belinda Cox
- Marissah Kruger
- Mathew Carter
- David Pickles
- Rhonda Murphy
- Ben Ansell
- Karim Khan
- Peter Henderson
- Amanda Nabi
- Vincent Edwards

Thanks!
for your
Support!!

This newsletter is produced quarterly. Please contact Rhonda Murphy if you would like to contribute to the **Next edition in June 2016:**

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