

Check out the latest news from your friendly Nearer to Nature team.

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## Issue no: 5

Monday, 15 February 2016

Hi Lisa Wright

Welcome to the latest issue of *Nearer to Nature News*, where you can find the latest nature-based education news and events in the Perth area and surrounds from Parks and Wildlife.

*Nearer to Nature* has a number of exciting developments planned this year to help engage students in the natural environment. The *Western Shield Action Pack* has been reinvigorated to be more student-friendly with lots of curriculum linked pre and post visit learning activities. The pack will be complemented by a *Jarrah Forest Food Web Resource Package* being developed in conjunction with SPICE at UWA. Both resources should be released early in the year.

*River Rangers* is expanding the number of schools that can register for the program. We are also offering more excursions based around the river and wetlands, see the 2016 brochure either in your school or online at <http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved/nearer-to-nature/schools> .

We will be trialling incorporating iPads into excursions. If you have insights on how best to utilise iPads in the bush let us know. We will also be encouraging more schools to use the Forest Heritage Centre at Dwellingup, a great site for schools south of the river.

Getting your students nearer to nature is both fun and highly educational. Give it a go. And I'll see you somewhere in Perth's great natural environment!

Mr C

Photo: Mr C and Halle, a Waroona Bush Ranger cadet, measure a Mardo in *Monitoring Marsupials*

**In this issue:**

- [Fire - a hot topic!](#)
- [New excursion! Discovering the Swan and Canning river system](#)
- [The season of Bunuru](#)
- [Chuditch - a native carnivore](#)
- [Dwellingup - a great place to get nearer to nature](#)

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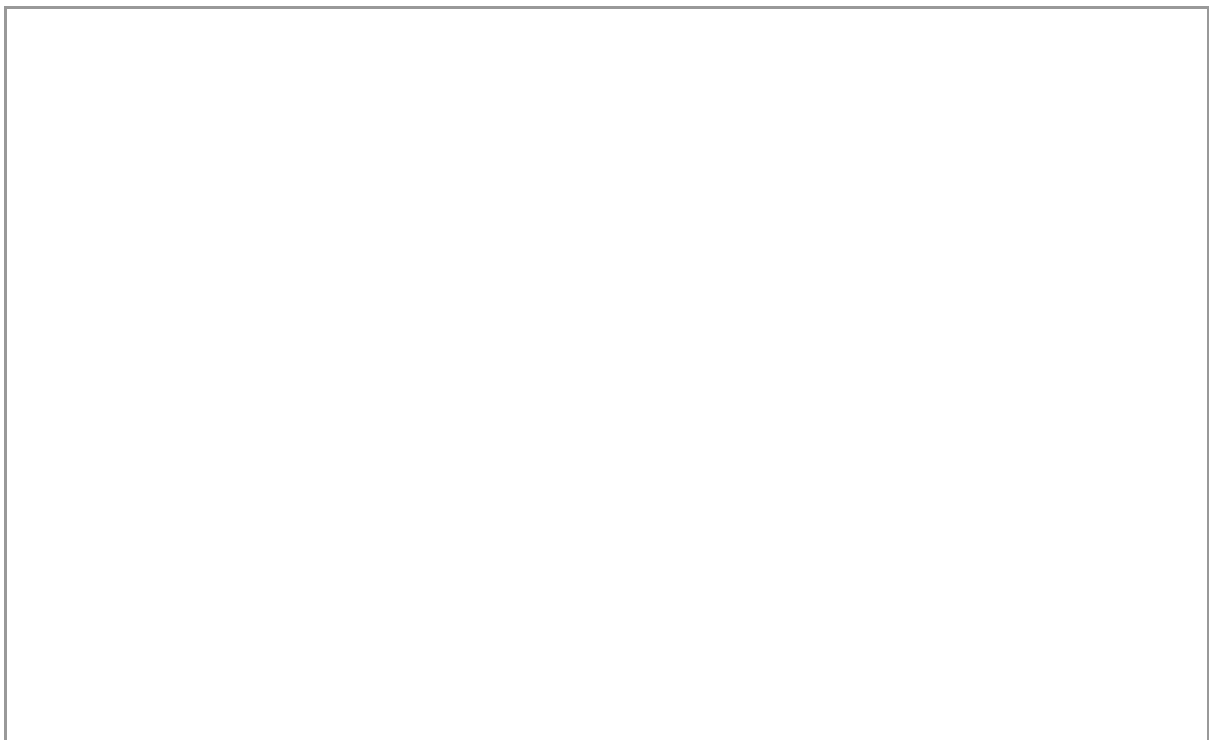
## Fire - a hot topic!

Bushfires are a natural part of our environment. We cannot remove fire from the environment but we can better manage fire through research, understanding, preparation and mitigation.

Bushfire and its management is a complex topic, which can be difficult to explain.

*Nearer to Nature* offers four excursions specifically relating to fire: *Living with Fire* for Yr 5-6; *Bushfire a geomorphological hazard* for Yr 8; and *Fire Geography* and *Fire Biology* for Yr 11 and 12. These excursions explore both fire in the natural environment and how fire impacts on humans.

There is also lots of information about fire on the Parks and Wildlife website <http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/fire>.





***Trees lining Lake Navarino at the recent bushfire near Waroona***

Hands-on activities assist students to understand the complexities of fire. During some excursions students get to check out a fire fighting truck!

For more details see: <http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved/nearer-to-nature/schools/excursions>

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## **New excursion! Discovering the Swan and Canning river system**

Did you know that there is a large-scale restoration and construction project currently underway at the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary? This exciting project located on the edge of the Swan River in the City of Bayswater will create a sustainable bird habitat, increase biodiversity and improve the health of the Swan River.

This project is a perfect location to take students for a field excursion to explore and investigate environmental change and management. *Nearer to Nature* is now offering river-based excursions as part of the program where impacts associated with human activities are identified, the site is explored and ideas on how we can better protect our river system are discussed.

There are numerous locations around the river that exhibit impacts associated with human use and evidence of the management strategies.



***River excursion: Linley Brown leads River Ranger cadets on an excursion at Bayswater***

Contact the *Nearer to Nature* team on 9295 6149 to discuss river site locations and book your excursion.

*Nearer to Nature* have a range of excursions suited to Year 4 and above, go to <http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved/nearer-to-nature/schools/excursions> to find out more.

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## **The season of Bunuru**

For the Noongar people of south-western WA, around February and March marks Bunuru, 'the second summer', with hot and dry north and easterly winds.

Inland there was little water so groups moved to the cooler coast and estuaries, enjoying the abundance of fish and shellfish. Stone fish traps were constructed in shallows and tidal areas. Spiky rush was pushed ahead of a line of wading hunters to surround the fish and force them into shallow water where they can be easily clubbed or speared. A munger (wicker fence) would also be built across streams, creating a shallow race where the fish could be scooped from the water by hand.

Bunuru is also a time of the white flowers with lots of white flowering gums in full bloom,

including jarrah and marri.

When visiting the jarrah forest in Bunuru you'll see the striking cones of the female *Zamia* (Jeeriji to Noongars); the huge cones emerge from the centre of the plant with their bright red seeds.

*Information from Sharing the Dreaming App*



***Jeeriji, Zamia, the red seeds mature in Bunuru***

*Nearer to Nature* offers a range of excursions and incursions exploring the connection between Aboriginal culture and country. For more details see: <http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved/nearer-to-nature/schools/excursions>

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## Chuditch - a native carnivore

When camping deep in the forest, in the quiet of night, you may here rustling in the undergrowth. It may be a possum, but it may also be a chuditch. Formerly chuditch were found as far east as western New South Wales and the north-west of Victoria, now their range has become restricted to south-west WA.

Chuditch (also known as Western Quoll) are predominately carnivores with the main food item being large invertebrates – spiders, crickets and scorpions. They spend the

night foraging in the undergrowth and occasionally up in trees searching for food. Being a carnivore doesn't mean they are aggressive, they are generally curious quiet animals. Despite the spots they are hard to see in the forest environment.

In 2015, two chuditch were caught on the new *Monitoring Marsupials* transect at Dwellingup. A great result which had local Parks and Wildlife staff excited.

The *Monitoring Marsupials* program gives Year 11 and 12 students the chance to catch live animals under licence. This amazing experience is available in strictly limited numbers at Perth Hills, Perth Observatory and Dwellingup.



***Chuditch***

*Monitoring Marsupials* combines an excursion and an overnight stay it is a memorable experience for both students and teachers. Contact 9295 6149 or check out <http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved/nearer-to-nature/schools>

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## **Dwellingup - a great place to get nearer to nature**

The Forest Heritage Centre in Dwellingup hosts many *Nearer to Nature* school excursions. This includes our most popular cultural and environmental programs such

as *Mooditch binar*, *Incredible invertebrates*, *Back from the brink* and *Monitoring marsupials*.

Dwellingup is a great destination for school camps and outdoor education activities. If your school is visiting the area for a camp, why not include one of our environmental or cultural programs to add to the experience?

All programs are designed for day trips from the southern side of the city and run from 10am – 2 pm. However, the running times can be adjusted to fit in with your camp schedule. You can even stay overnight on-site at the *Jarrah Forest Lodge* and do several programs over two days.

We now offer a combined tour of the Alcoa Huntly mine in the morning with a session exploring the forest ecosystem in the afternoon - part of the new excursion *Forests, resources and the future*. Alcoa provides a \$5 subsidy for bus costs per student for this excursion.



***Dwellingup canopy walk***

As a special offer all bookings for Forest Heritage Centre receive a 10 per cent discount. Contact 9295 6149 or email [n2n@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:n2n@dpaw.wa.gov.au) for more details.



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If you would like to contact us, provide feedback or are experiencing problems opening stories please email the Nearer to Nature Team at [n2n@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:n2n@dpaw.wa.gov.au).

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