

Check out the latest news from your friendly *Nearer to Nature* team.
Exciting new format!

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Thursday, 2 April 2015

Hi Lisa

Welcome to the latest issue of *Nearer to Nature* South West News.

The South West *Nearer to Nature* team has been busy spreading the word about biodiversity conservation at some great community events, including Balingup Small Farm Field Day, Eaton Foreshore Festival, South West Science Spectacular at Ocean Forest Lutheran College, Scitech Science Awareness Festival at South Bunbury football oval and Mandurah Stretch Arts Festival. These were all great opportunities to engage with the community through our popular touch table and taxidermy display.

During 2014 we were involved in a range of special activities. Our school holiday *Western Shield* program at local libraries was very popular, as was our participation in Dunsborough Primary School's Quenda Day and Bay OK Day.

I trust that you had a relaxing summer holiday, returning fresh to the new school year. The team and I are looking forward to seeing regular and new visitors to the forest in 2015.

John Anderson, project officer *Nearer to Nature* South West, Parks and Wildlife

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Aboriginal cultural programs

Nearer to Nature enjoys sharing popular Indigenous experiences at the Wellington Discovery Forest. Last year, we began working with Troy Bennell from Ngalang Wongi Tours.

Local teachers may be familiar with Troy through his work at the Dolphin Discovery Centre and in local schools. Troy has a deep understanding of local Indigenous history and provides a broad insight into Noongar culture including art, dance, song and traditional bush knowledge. You can find out more at <https://www.facebook.com/ngalangwongiaboriginalculturaltours>.



We look forward to continuing a partnership with Troy in 2015 so contact us to arrange an Aboriginal cultural excursion for your class at the Discovery Forest.

Discover your local bushland

To get students nearer to nature, we encourage teachers to take advantage of our incursion programs. Whether you have an area of natural bush on the school grounds, or have a nature reserve nearby, we can offer our expertise to raise awareness of biodiversity and environmental sustainability with students of all ages.



Last August, the Years 4 – 7 students from Maiden's Park Primary School participated in a 90 minute version of the *Biodiversity's Base* excursion at a local park reserve. Students learnt about the important jobs done by invertebrates in the ecosystem,

looked for signs of activity in the bushland and searched a range of habitats to discover the amazing diversity of the underworld.

Wellington National Park - Davis block fire

In October, a prescribed burn took place in Davis block adjacent to the Wellington Discovery Forest (WDF). For safety reasons we postponed some excursions that week, and appreciated the understanding from teachers.

In early January, a bushfire started on the north-east boundary of the previously burnt area. It is clear to see how important prescribed burning is when you notice the reduced impact of the fire in the area where the prescribed burn took place.



Above: The January bushfire at David block caused significant scorching

The proximity of the prescribed burn and bushfire to the Discovery Forest is a great opportunity for students to observe different fire intensities, the consequences and how the forest responds.

Geography curriculum 2015

In response to updated senior school Western Australian curriculum for Geography, some of our excursions have been adapted to reflect new content, and new excursions developed to assist teachers in meeting fieldwork components of the curriculum.

- Living with Fire (Year 5)

Our primary school bushfire program has been running since 2013 and includes developing a classroom resource to assist teachers.

- Environmental change and management (Year 10, Unit 1)

Changing environmental worldviews have changed the way we consider and manage issues of sustainability and environmental change. Students are introduced to the concept of sustainable forest management and its social, economic and environmental considerations

- Sustainable forests (ATAR Units 2 & 3, General Units 1 & 4)



Timber is a versatile and widely used fibre-based commodity. In an increasingly interconnected world, decisions we make about production and distribution of this commodity can no longer be considered in isolation.

- Fire – A natural hazard (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 3)

Burnt areas adjacent to Wellington Discovery Forest make this an excellent venue to take a good look at the impacts of fire on our forests.

***Western Shield* school holiday program**

During the October school holidays, *Nearer to Nature* teamed up with Australind and Harvey public libraries to present school holiday programs to introduce children and parents to Parks and Wildlife's *Western Shield* wildlife recovery program.

Over a number of sessions, *Nearer to Nature* officer Julie-Anne Oliver kept the kids enthralled with a display of taxidermies, showing some of our native wildlife close up. The children enjoyed hands-on activities and found out what our rangers get up to when they are engaged in wildlife conservation work.



Accommodation options for 2015

Wellington Forest Cottages will be available for school bookings on weekdays. It is recommended to plan your school camp early to make sure you get the dates you prefer.

Wharnccliffe Mill continues to offer great rates for school groups and the location offers a range of activities in addition to our *Nearer to Nature* educational excursions, including an extension of the nature play area and a fantastic climbing rope installation. There are times when the facility is booked out exclusively to schools so if you wish to book an excursion here it is advisable to book early.



Online survey

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback via our new online excursion survey. Feedback allows us to improve and update programs. Hopefully you have found internet-based feedback easier and more convenient.

The winner of \$100 worth of Parks and Wildlife's *WA Naturally* publications is **Peter Byrne from Peter Moyes Anglican College**.

Book now for *Western Shield* trapping

Every year, we have two opportunities to carry out live marsupial trapping over four consecutive nights at the Wellington Discovery Forest under the *Western Shield* fauna recovery program.

This is a great opportunity for students to be involved in real-life scientific research. Students are introduced to *Western Shield* through a discussion about threats to our native fauna. They bait and set the traps in the late afternoon.

Early the following morning, after a brief discussion about fauna handling techniques and taking measurements, the students check the traps and assist with emptying, measuring and recording as required.

For 2015 our trapping weeks are:

Monday 11 May – Friday 15 May

Monday 14 September – Friday 18 September



We have some flexibility with dates if you book early, so please contact us if you would like to part of this program but the dates do not fit with your timetable.

New web presence

Over the summer, the *Nearer to Nature* web presence has been revamped and now includes the ability to search for excursions based on location, age group and

curriculum area.

The update contains information including current brochures, duty of care documents and updated teacher and student resources. An online booking system is being developed to meet the growing demands for online enquiries. You can now find us online at www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/n2n



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Parks and Wildlife website, including the Government of Western Australia logo and the 'PARKS AND WILDLIFE' logo. The navigation menu includes 'Home', 'About us', 'Parks', 'Plants & animals', 'Management', 'Get involved', 'News', and 'Shop'. Below the navigation bar, a breadcrumb trail reads 'You are here: Home / Get involved / Nearer to Nature'. The main content area features a banner with four circular icons representing different wildlife species (a koala, a kangaroo, a starfish, and a frog) and the text 'Nearer to Nature'. Below the banner, the section is titled 'Nature-based activities in and around Perth'. The text describes the program's goal to provide unique, enjoyable activities for the community, including excursions, incursions, and professional learning. It also mentions that activities are designed for schools, holiday periods, and the general public. A small photograph shows a group of people, including children and an adult, engaged in a nature-based activity outdoors.

Contacting Nearer to Nature

For any enquiries, and bookings for excursions or Professional Learning, please contact Julie-Anne Oliver, administrative assistant at Parks and Wildlife South West office:

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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.

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