

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

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Wednesday, 2 August 2017

Hi Lisa

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

We have had a busy start to the year, enjoyed catching up with many of our repeat teachers again and meeting some new teachers and groups from schools who are discovering the benefits of the *Nearer to Nature* experience.

The City of Bunbury are offering environmental education grants which can assist with getting your kids out into the bush as well as involved in some hands on conservation activities. More information about these grants can be found in this newsletter.

In partnership news, we will once again be undertaking educational activities regarding ringtail possums in primary schools in the Margaret River region in conjunction with Nature Conservation Margaret River. We are also currently exploring partnerships with Geocatch and the Department of Water and Environment Regulation to develop educational resources and activities around the Ramsar-listed Vasse-Wonnerup wetlands. We welcome hearing from teachers who are interested in this project to provide input and express interest.

We look forward to seeing you in the forest this winter and spring.

John Anderson

Project officer

Nearer to Nature South West

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

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State Government changes

You may notice that our department name has changed. On 1 July the Department of Parks and Wildlife merged with the Zoological Parks Authority, the Rottneest Island Authority and the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority to form the new Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

By working with the educational staff from the Zoo, Kings Park and Rottneest Island we hope to expand and enrich our educational offerings.

Please note the change of website and email addresses at the bottom of this newsletter.



Camp Nature Play weekends

In June Camp Nature Play at Wharnccliffe Mill, provided two fun and educational missions for the families attending. Camp Nature Play is a fantastic weekend getaway for families with young kids.

The camp challenges children with 10 different active outdoor 'missions' to complete over the weekend to earn stamps in their activity passport. The two great missions, Curious Creek Critters and Camouflage Creatures of Mud Mountain, were well received in June.

More information about the camps can be found at www.natureplaywa.org.au



Building mud mountains is great fun but also teaches about the tricks animals use to hide themselves from predators.

[Translate ▼](#)

Helping the western ringtail possum

The western ringtail possum is an iconic threatened species. Loss of habitat, primarily due to land clearing for urbanisation since European settlement, and introduced predators, in particular cats, are the main threats. Those fortunate enough to live near the western ringtail possum habitat range are often surprised to find they are an endangered species since they are always ready to make a home in a cosy ceiling space or feast on a range of domestic and native plants.

Over the last two years *Nearer to Nature* has worked with the Cape to Cape Catchments Group (recently rebadged as Nature Conservation Margaret River Region) to raise awareness of these iconic animals with a range of primary school incursions in the Margaret River region. Once again this year Tracy Muir will be involved to identify threats, look for signs and understand what they can do to help conserve the western ringtail possum.



Habitat Bunbury grants

The City of Bunbury is offering *Habitat Bunbury* grants to schools in the Greater Bunbury area to participate in environmental projects and education. In early June, Year Three classes from St Joseph's Primary School in Bunbury used part of their grant to travel to Wellington Discovery Forest to participate in *Nearer to Nature's Incredible Invertebrates* program.

Both classes have been studying the lifeform, lifestyle and lifecycle of invertebrates as a part of their science program and were very excited to get out into the forest to see what they would discover. Students were fascinated by what they found in the forest under logs, and from shaking trees. One group even found a scorpion. The students learnt about biodiversity, which they will draw on in a revegetation project close to their school.



For more information on these grants and how to apply for them please visit bunbury.wa.gov.au/Pages/Habitat-Bunbury.aspx

Above: Students from St Josephs Primary School use their 'pooters' to collect small invertebrates shaken from the tree canopy

Potters Gorge upgrade

Potters Gorge campground was completed in 2016 in the Wellington National Park. Located on the shore of Wellington Dam, Potters Gorge now features 55 individual camp sites with individual fire pits and a number of new shared toilet and kitchen facilities. There is also a large group camping area with its own toilet block and kitchen area.

overnight camps and is a short drive to the Wellington Discovery Forest. *Nearer to Nature* can also deliver customised programs at the site on request.



Contacting Nearer to Nature

For any enquiries and bookings for excursions or Personal Learning, please contact *Nearer to Nature* South West at Parks and Wildlife Service's South West Regional Office:

Phone: 9725 4300

Fax: 9725 4351

Email: swecoed@dbca.wa.gov.au

For the development of programs and educational liaison please contact John Anderson, Project Officer at Parks and Wildlife Service's South West Regional 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 swecoed@dbca.wa.gov.au

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