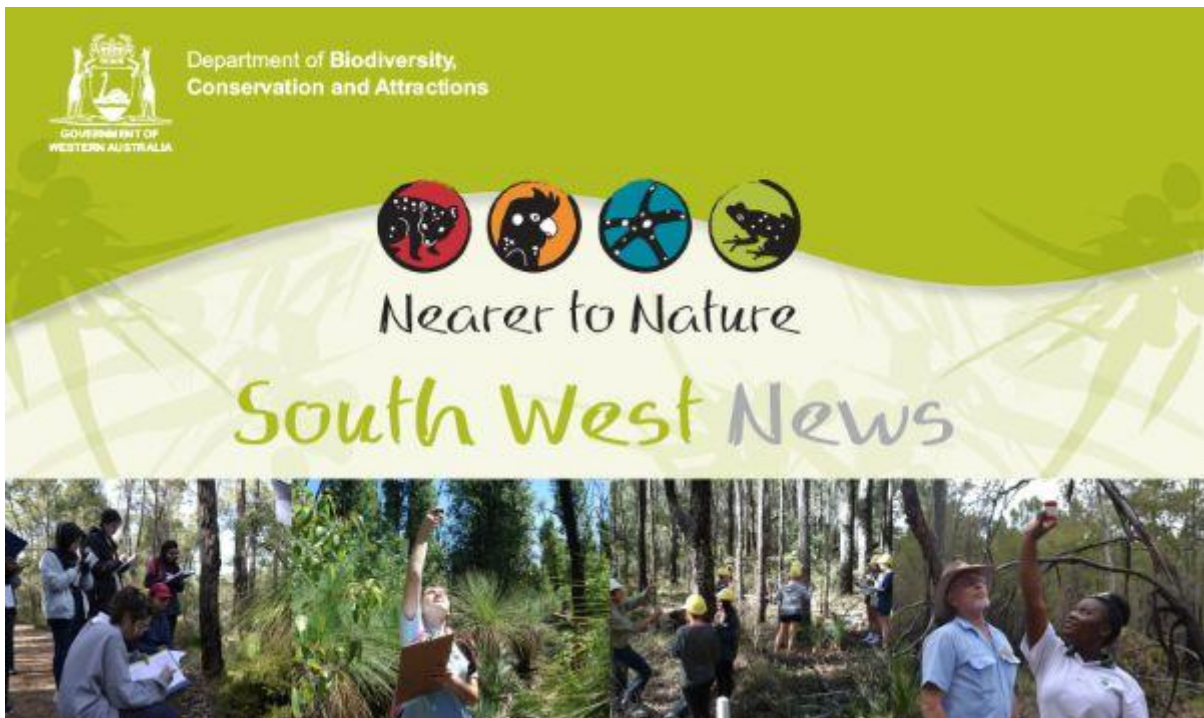


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Term 3, 2021



Dear colleagues

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

Here at *Nearer to Nature* we have been busy doing what we love best – passing on our knowledge of the amazing south-western forests. It is traditionally a very busy time with school camps and upper school fieldwork to be completed. It was nice to get back to some kind of normality after the disruptions of last year.

As we settle into winter it can get cold in the bush, but it is also a wonderful time. The rains bring out an abundance of weird and wonderful fungi and you can sense the forest taking a big drink. Mookaroo (first rains) were early and plentiful this year. With the rain continuing steadily, the coming months should see some spectacular wildflowers.

We encourage schools once again to engage in forest learning with *Nearer to Nature*. The natural environment is a stimulating and safe area for children of all ages and our curriculum-linked excursions always provide an engaging day to remember for teachers and students alike.

Regards

John Anderson  
*Nearer to Nature South West*

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## Djilba: season of conception

August and September herald the Noongar

Traditionally, the main food sources included

beginning of spring. In both calendars, it is a time of growth and renewal. Rivers and waterholes are full, the days are getting longer and it is one of the best times to be in the forest.

This is the start of the massive flowering explosion that happens in the south-west. This starts with the yellow flowering plants such as the acacias and buttercups. Just to name a few, you will see bright masses of mindalleny (prickley moses) and kujong (golden wreath wattle or *Acacia saligna*) blossom in the jarrah forest and coastal areas, while mungart (jam wattle) is prolific further inland. You will also see creams combined with some vivid and striking blues and further south the deep purple of the native wisteria will shortly follow.

yonga (kangaroo), the waitj (emu) and the koomal (possum).

It is a transitional time of the year, with some very cold and clear days combining with warmer, rainy and windy days mixing with the occasional sunny day or two. At this time of year you might also get all of them in one day, so if you plan to explore our beautiful Noongar boodja (Noongar country) over the next couple of months – whether it's a weekend family camping trip, a *Nearer to Nature* school excursion or simply a bushwalk after work – pack accordingly!



**Above:** Characteristic flowers of the acacias. Photo - Ilena G (via [Flickr](#) under a Creative Commons licence [CC BY-SA 2.0](#))

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## Koolbardi: living with magpies

their young family.

Magpies swoop to protect eggs and young from potential predators during the nesting season. They rely largely on intimidation to deter human intruders by flying low and fast, often clacking their bill as they pass overhead. The sound of their wings whistling past and the movement of air can be alarming, but it is usually just a bluff. Only a few magpies see people as a threat and most will not swoop you.

There are things you can do to keep yourself safe:

- Avoid areas where magpies are known to swoop for six to eight weeks until the chicks learn to fly and the problem ceases. They usually only defend a small area of up to 100m radius around their nest.
- Watch magpies while you are in their territory and adopt a confident stance as this can have a strong deterrent effect. If they know they're being watched they are less likely to swoop.
- Wear a hat and sunglasses or hold a school bag or umbrella over your head.
- If you are riding a bicycle or horse, it is best to dismount. For reasons best known to magpies, bicycles irritate magpies the most. One of the major causes of accidents following a magpie swoop is falling from a bicycle (or horse). 'Spiking up' your helmet with a few cable ties also helps to scare magpies away.
- Magpies are less likely to swoop if you walk in a group. Team up with others if you walk through a nesting area.
- Harassment by humans causes some magpies to start swooping. Please do not chase magpies or throw things at them and don't fight back. Magpies have good memories so being aggressive towards a magpie will only make it more defensive next time.

Remember that the magpies are just trying to protect their young. Learning to live alongside wildlife is an important step towards building a better living environment and observing and listening to magpies can be an enjoyable experience. Taking a bird or nest from the wild is illegal without a permit and while such actions may temporarily stop attacks, it is better to leave them in peace.



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## Meet Ryley and Jonnie

Some of you may have met Ryley Clarke and Jonnie Cobbie. Ryley and Jonnie are two of our very capable Indigenous rangers with the Regional Parks group.

Over the past two years they have helped us with Mangrove Cove events and have helped run school programs around the Bunbury area, particularly when a Noongar perspective is required.

For NAIDOC Week this year Ryley and Jonnie provided a day of engaging cultural activities to the students at Harvey Primary School.

Ryley took the younger students for a look at some traditional bush tucker and medicines, while Jonnie demonstrated tools to the older students, finishing up on the school oval for a bit of boomerang throwing.

We look forward to continuing to work with them in bringing our important cultural and environmental knowledge to students of the south-west.



Left: Ryley with Harvey Primary School students. The children were surprised by how much there was to find in the bush.



Right: Jonnie teaches students about tools.

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## Treasures of Mangrove Cove

Over the past two years, students from several primary schools in Bunbury have enjoyed a day of engaging and interactive cultural and environmental activities at Mangrove Cove on Koombana Drive. The area is managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service Regional Parks team and includes a purpose-built education pavilion overlooking the ecologically important mangroves of Leschenault Inlet. This year site works, including the construction of a toilet block and a nature playground, means that we have not been able to host these popular events, however Treasures will be running again next year.

In the meantime, we continue to offer many other fabulous nature based excursions for all age groups throughout the year at Wellington Discovery Forest, RAC Margaret River Nature Park and other venues around the south-west so there is no need for your students to miss out. Get in touch to organise a memorable day's outdoor learning for your class.



Discover Deadly brought some sssslippery treasures to Mangrove Cove last year.

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## Who are the critters in your neighborhood?

The Wellington Forest Education centre has another wonderful asset to showcase to everyone when they attend the centre for an excursion.

With an impressive collection of nearly 60 taxidermy native animals, Julz and I have created mini habitats to showcase the animals in as natural a setting as possible.

As most of our native marsupials are nocturnal and very secretive, this display is a wonderful opportunity to get up close and inspect these amazing creatures eye to eye.

You can test your general knowledge and identification skills by having a go at the display quiz which helps you navigate your way from the Indian ocean to the Darling Scarp.

The display is also open to the public on selected days during school holiday periods. For opening times, please see events posted for the Wellington National

Park: [exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au/whats-on](https://exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au/whats-on)



The display room at Wellington Discovery Forest brings our native fauna to life (and some feral animals too).

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## More chances for Western Shield trapping at Wellington Discovery Forest

Previously our licensing conditions have required us to conduct our educational marsupial monitoring program at the Wellington Discovery Forest in two blocks over four nights in May and September.

We have recently modified our trapping licence to allow trapping on eight individual nights throughout the year which will hopefully provide the flexibility to make this great hands-on program more accessible for schools.

The program is suitable for Year 5 to 12 students and it is a great activity to combine with an overnight camp at the Wellington Forest Cottages or Potter's Gorge. It would also be ideal for *Bush Ranger* groups. Early bookings are advised.



Mardo (*Antechinus flavipes*) are common visitors to traps at Wellington Discovery Forest.

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### **Contacting *Nearer to Nature* in the South West Region**

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

**Phone:** 9725 4300

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For the **development of programs and educational liaison** please contact John Anderson, Project Officer at the Parks and Wildlife Service South West Regional Office.

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