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Term 3, 2025



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Nearer to Nature

South West News



In this issue:

- [National Science Week – Eco-explorers Family Science Showdown](#)
- [2024 wrap-up](#)
- [Makuru – Season of fertility](#)
- [Mangrove Cove – new boardwalk opened!](#)
- [Hidden Treasures of Mangrove Cove 2025](#)
- [Educator PD day](#)

Dear colleagues,

Well, it has been a busy start to the year. Suddenly 2025 is half gone and we are only just putting out our first newsletter for the year. Time flies!

Apart from our usual Year 11 fieldwork excursions, we squeezed in two Mangrove Cove events, a bunch of incursions, and found ourselves involved for several weeks in helping to manage a long running bushfire down in Karri country.

Once that was all put to bed, I had some long service leave up my sleeve and was lucky enough to join my sister and her family on a yachting expedition to warmer climes, enjoying nature that's somewhat different to the south-west forests which we call home.

We began on a race from Fremantle to Indonesia, fleeing the oncoming winter up the west coast, stopping at the Montebello Islands north of Exmouth and crossing the finish line in the stunning Komodo National Park. We dodged some dragons, helped the local community with some tree planting, and had the opportunity to dive at some spectacular sites.

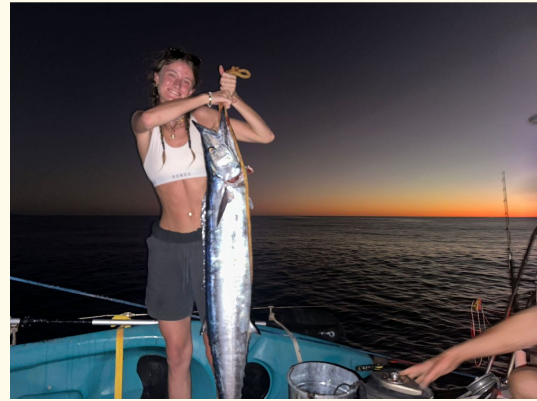
Then we headed west, visiting Christmas Island (most of which is a unique and fascinating national park) and finally reaching the Cocos Keeling Islands, which is every bit as beautiful as you would expect. It was with some regret that I waved goodbye to the boat, the coconuts and the fresh fish to hop on a plane back to winter—but kind of glad I am not one of those sailing into the weather for the return to Fremantle, and I am revitalized and ready for our upcoming spring Western Shield trapping season.

Regards,

John Anderson

Project Officer, Nearer to Nature South West





National Science Week – Eco-explorers Family Science Showdown

As part of upcoming National Science Week celebrations in August, Nearer to Nature South West and the Dolphin Discovery Centre are teaming up for an educational fun-filled family adventure—the Eco-Explorers: Family Science Showdown! This event, to be held on Saturday 16 August, will be packed with thrilling quizzes and challenging trivia, all centred around the wonders of the natural world. Participants will compete in teams, answering questions on diverse science topics, from nature to marine life.

This event is generously supported by the Inspiring Australia Initiative, which is supported by the Australian Government as part of National Science Week. Bookings to open shortly. Keep an eye on the [National Science Week event page](#).

JOIN



&



DOLPHIN
DISCOVERY
CENTRE

national science week



Saturday 16th August 2025

@ Dolphin Discovery Interpretive Centre

3 pm to 5 pm



book online
tickets are limited
all ages welcome



WIN prizes
for best dressed
individual and table!



An Australian Government Initiative



This National Science Week project is supported by the Australian Government.

2024 wrap-up

We had a very busy year, and our participant numbers reflect that:

- 178 events (excursions, incursions, community events and open days)
- 56 educational institutions and groups including primary and high schools, vacation OSH and childcare providers
- 4809 children and 981 adults engaged (not counting those that came through our stall at community events).

It is always great to see more of our schools and communities, children and adults alike, engaging with our natural environment.

Apart from excursions for schools, returning or new, at our Wellington Discovery Forest Centre and RAC Margaret River Nature Park locations, we travelled around the South West Region visiting schools, childcare centers, local libraries and vacation care providers. We ran a professional development day with a local childcare provider and were present with our activity trailer at three different community events.

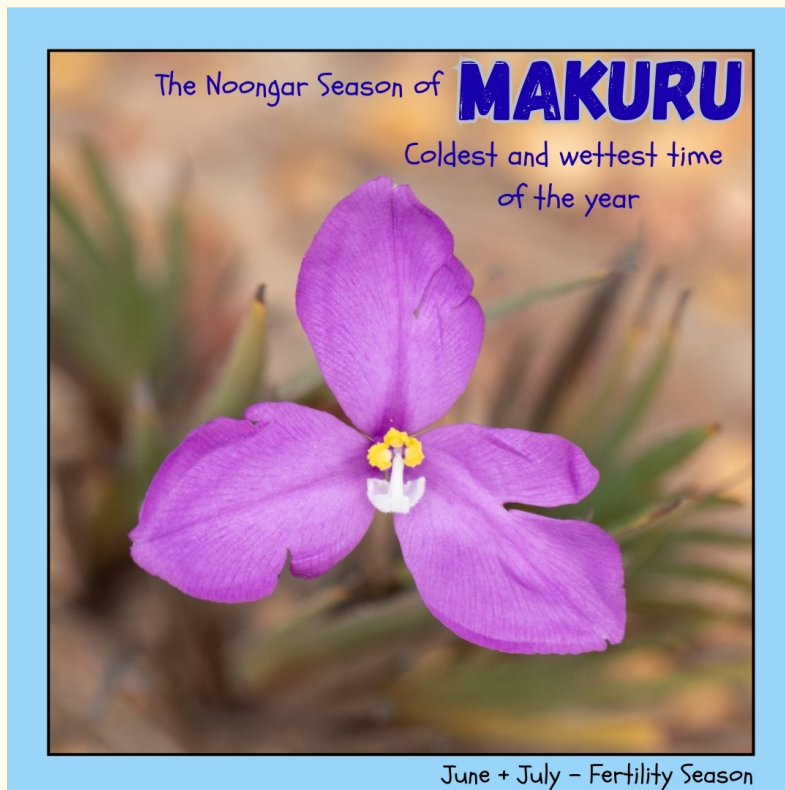


Above: A busy year completed by Nearer to Nature South West.

Makuru – Season of fertility

We are now in the Nyoongar season Makuru (June-July) when the south western part of Australia experiences the coldest and wettest weather of the year. The seasonal filling of waterways sees animal movement—especially water birds such as mali (black swan)—that return to inland lakes that dried up during the hotter months. You may also notice birds pairing up in preparation for the breeding season that will follow. Look out for wardongs (Australian ravens) flying in pairs, a sign of a natural cycle in progress.

Flowers are another sign of the season—during Makuru you are likely to see the blueberry lily (*Dianella revoluta*) and purple flag (*Patersonia occidentalis*).



Above: Purple flags (*Patersonia occidentalis*) come into flower during Makuru.

Mangrove Cove – new boardwalk opened!

After months of hard work by the department, Monday 3 February 2025 saw the fence come down and the Mangrove Cove boardwalk reopened, with the official opening on Friday 4 July. The new 190m boardwalk features interpretive signage and an open platform that will be perfect for getting a closer look at the macroinvertebrates that inhabit the waters of this system, unique to the south-west.

The new boardwalk and recently resurfaced pathways are wonderful additions to the facilities present, including the purpose-built education pavilion, lookout tower, and all-abilities playground. The Mangrove Cove area is another fantastic site where we can offer excursions in 2025. Programs on offer include Features of Creatures, Habitat Heroes, Life Amongst the Mangroves and Bushfire Battles. We can also customise activities to suit your needs.

To complement these facilities, a free eBook guide has also been developed for the Kalbar Regional Park. The enhanced eBook uses photos, audiovisual content, and interactive timelines to explore the park's natural and cultural values, serving as both a visitor guide and an educational resource to inspire connection with the land and its heritage. We look forward to sharing this with our students as we explore this unique part of the Kalbar Regional Park.

[Download the eBook for free](#) today.



Hidden Treasures of Mangrove Cove 2025

Our Mangrove Cove facility hosted around 330 Year 2-4 students from local primary schools over two days for the Hidden Treasures of Mangrove Cove open learning days.

Organisers from the Parks and Wildlife's Nearer to Nature and Kalgulup Regional Parks teams were joined by other south-west environmental educators in providing an exciting, packed program for students.

The free event was supported by the City of Bunbury's Habitat Bunbury grant funding program, which aims to achieve positive environmental outcomes through meaningful learning experiences for students.

Events like this are only possible with the support of the City of Bunbury, Parks and Wildlife Service and local environmental educators who made it such a successful event.

In particular, thanks go to City of Bunbury, Dolphin Discovery Centre, GKB Impact Rangers, Birdlife Bunbury, Aqwest, Captain Coastcare & Dune Dude, S/W Reptile Rescue and Education, Ngalang Wongi Aboriginal Cultural Tours, Geo Bay Wildlife Rescue and Green Teach South West.



Educator PD day

Recently, the Nearer to Nature SW team and the GKB Impact Rangers hosted teachers from the School of Alternative Learning Settings offices of Bunbury, Geraldton, West Perth and Joondalup.

The teachers were treated to an inspiring presentation and introduction to Noongar culture by the ranger team before heading out on a bushwalk to explore the jarrah forest, swapping knowledge and stories of culture and education as they went. The afternoon saw plenty of yarnning and learning whilst experiencing tool making using balga resin, and string making using reeds found down by the creekline.

The Wellington Discovery Forest was a lovely location to come together for this professional development opportunity, and all involved came away feeling energised and inspired to continue their engagement with the younger generations.

If you would like to undertake a similar experience for your next professional development day, please get in touch.



Contacting Nearer to Nature in the South West region

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

Online bookings: parksandwildlife.rezdy.com/catalog/458491/n2n-schools-south-west-region

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NearerToNatureWA>

Phone: 9725 4300

Email: N2NSW@dbca.wa.gov.au

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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