



Welcome to the first issue of Volunteer News for 2016, keeping you updated on our latest news and providing you with more opportunities to get involved in volunteering with Parks and Wildlife.

Summer is in full swing, with plenty of good weather to get us all up and active and enjoying our national and marine parks.

As well as volunteering for Parks and Wildlife's volunteer projects, there are a number of other ways you can contribute to important projects over the next few months. Firstly, the 8th Great Cocky Count takes place at sunset on Sunday 3 April at a number of sites across WA, so wherever you are you can get involved. The Great Cocky Count is a long-term citizen science survey and the biggest single survey for black cockatoos in Western Australia. Register your interest via the [Birdlife Australia website](#).

Secondly, there is a PhD study looking at factors behind declining rates of boobooks across Australia. They need to receive boobook feathers, deceased specimens as well as reports of sightings of boobooks. More information on page 2.

In the coming months we will be introducing a few tweaks to our volunteer Health and Safety policies. This will mean slight changes to processes but they will ultimately lead to a safer working environment for all and better-informed volunteers and staff working with volunteers.

A new induction checklist is being introduced for all new volunteers to ensure they are fully informed before embarking on volunteering. The information will also be made available to all existing volunteers for reference.

We hope that it won't impact on operations too much but please bear with us as we implement it. We are looking forward to a safe and productive year across WA, working with volunteers across the range of Parks and Wildlife programs.

Have a great 2016.

Volunteer and Community Engagement Unit



Above: A mature male Carnaby cockatoo. Photo – Lee Hollingsworth

February 2016

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Department of Parks and Wildlife



Help for boobook study

Do you see boobooks? Mike Lohr is doing a PhD study on a number of factors that may be causing declines in southern boobooks across Australia. He asks:

"If you come across a deceased boobook or boobook feathers, please let me know. If it's reasonably fresh, place it in a plastic bag and keep it cool. Refrigerators are best but freezers are okay too. Give me a call and I will come pick it up as soon as possible. (He'd prefer sites within 3 hours drive of Perth, but others may be considered). Even if the carcass is not in good condition, it will still be an important contribution to the genetics portion of my study so don't hesitate to contact me.

I am also very interested in reports of boobooks seen during the day. These birds are very easy to capture and are often more relaxed when being handled. If you report one, I'll come out to the location right away! I'll take a small blood sample to test for toxoplasmosis and genetic analysis, take a few measurements and return them to their roost."

**Please contact Mike Lohr on mobile
0407 147 901 or via email m.lohr@ecu.edu.au**



Reward!

Participants who donate boobook specimens to this study receive a chocolate bar of their choice! Please specify your preference when contacting Mike.

Photo: Matt Swan/Parks and Wildlife

Campground host vacancies

Current openings

Goldfields Region

Goongarrie: June and July

Lake Mason: May, June, July and September

Credo: October

2016 will also be the first year with the new **Credo campground** open. We currently have one couple out at the new 16 camp sites during July but require hosts for other months. Demand will be monitored over the tourist season to gauge the level of resources needed.

For all Goldfields enquiries, contact David Pickles.
Phone: (08) 9080 5537 Email: david.pickles@dpaw.wa.gov.au

Pilbara Region

Karijini National Park has vacancies for two couples at **Dales Gorge campground** in April, which is the start of our busy season with the school holidays.

For Karijini enquiries contact ranger Steve Berris.
Phone: (08) 9189 8147 Email: steve.berris@dpaw.wa.gov.au



Photo – Michael Dawson

Donnelly District

Warren National Park (Draftys campground): February, March, April

Big Brook: February, March

Green's Island: February, March, April, May

For all Donnelly District enquiries contact ranger Tracey Robins. Phone: (08) 9776 1207 and Mobile: 0407 857 146
Email: tracey.robins@dpaw.wa.gov.au

Please note: campground host vacancies are only available to those volunteers currently registered as Parks and Wildlife campground hosts that have completed the necessary training and information workshops.

More information on the program, including a new video featuring campground hosts, can be found on the **Parks and Wildlife website**.

Campground host workshop 2015

On 12–13 November 2015, around 150 new and experienced volunteer campground hosts attended the annual workshop held at the Keiran McNamara Conservation Science Centre in Kensington.

The workshop was opened by Peter Sharp, director of Parks and Visitor Services, and over the two days hosts enjoyed presentations from 15 rangers from around the State, spruiking their parks and campgrounds in attempts to out-do each other and recruit hosts for the upcoming season.

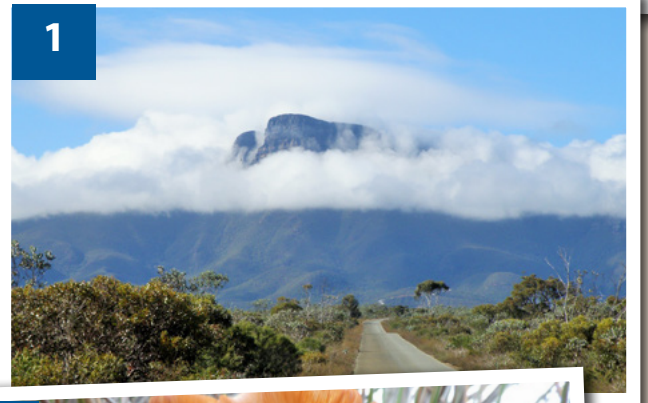
There were also a number of talks from Parks and Wildlife staff on topics including the *Parks for People Caravan and Camping* initiative, updates on the improvements at a number of campgrounds around the State and developments in this year's campaign to protect native species through predator control and native species translocations as part of the *Western Shield* program.

West Kimberley senior operations officer Dave Woods gave a talk on crocodile awareness, and wildlife officer Matt Swan spoke about illegal activities in national parks with a strong focus on taking of native herpetofauna (reptiles). Matt explained the increasingly complex ways that smugglers attempt to get reptiles out of the country and how the department tries to keep one step ahead, recruiting an army of eyes and ears in the form of the hosts along the way.

The workshop finished, as always, with the photograph competition. There were three categories this year: 1) a scene in a national park – won by Harry de Vries for the shot of Bluff Knoll; 2) native flora – won by Kelvin Cooper for the (as yet unidentified) fungi; 3) native fauna – won by Johan and Wilanda Bakker for the thorny devil.

The Volunteer and Community Engagement Unit would like to thank all the staff involved, especially to all the presenters who delivered engaging talks over the two days. Thanks, too, to all of our wonderful volunteer hosts – safe and happy travels for the upcoming season.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer campground host please visit the [Parks and Wildlife website](#)



Top: 2016 Campground host workshop participants
1. Bluff Knoll. Photo-Harry de Vries
2. Unidentified fungi. Photo-Kelvin Cooper
3. Thorny devil. Photo-Johan and Wilanda Bakker



Spotlight on volunteer group Friends of John Forrest National Park

Joe and Jan King were awarded Outstanding Service awards in December for their work in John Forrest National Park in the Perth Hills. The following is a brief insight to the work they carry out on a regular basis, along with the other Friends group members, and the dedication that led to their nomination.

The Friends of John Forrest National Park work to locate infestations of watsonia in difficult areas, often among thickets of prickly shrubs and steep, rocky ground. The group mostly use backpack herbicide sprayers and hand tools with assistance from Parks and Wildlife rangers for chainsaw work.

The group tackle a wide variety of weeds throughout the park, which out-compete native vegetation. Amongst others, they spray, pull and cut watsonia, gladioli (two species), snowflake, arum lily, agapanthus, bridal creeper, oxalis (two species), pimpernel, petty spurge, fleabane, sowthistle (two species), oatgrass, African lovegrass, briza grass and plantain.

The Priest Creek catchment area is located in the south-west corner of John Forrest National Park and is zoned for Special Conservation and High Priority Preservation and is an important feeding ground for Carnaby's cockatoos in May and June.

*Top: Val English, Jan King, Liz Middelberg. Photo – Catherine Levett
Above left: Joe at Clutterbuck Creek. Photo – Jay King
Left: Joe King with his axe.*



Spotlight on volunteer group

Friends of John Forrest National Park continued...



Above Liz and Jan spraying watsonia. Photo: Jan King
Right Liz Middelberg, Catherine Levett and Joe King.

Weed control around Priest Creek involves using screwdrivers and secateurs for hand weeding, pruning flower heads and leaves, or digging up numerous watsonia corms (bulbs), and isolated plants or juveniles. Parks and Wildlife ranger John Rullo assists with woody weed removal with the chainsaw.

In one month alone, the group contributed more than 332 hours of weed control, which frequently involves bending over steep banks to fold the leaves back up onto the riverbank to prevent the spray going into the water, and wading in or across the creek to effectively reach the watsonia. Along a 2km circuit it is estimated about 400 corms were pulled up, by three people, in two hours!

The work over the past five years of the regular volunteers – Cathy and Bruce Levett, Liz Middelberg, Jan and Joe King and Val English – has resulted in native vegetation recovery across the area.

Without this group of dedicated volunteers the weeds would be too much for department to deal with and we are extremely grateful for all their hard work.

If you are interested in getting involved with the group and contributing to the conservation of John Forrest National Park, please contact Joe and Jan King on 0409 299 861 or email joejanking1@bigpond.com.

If you would like to highlight your volunteer work or the work of your group please forward articles and photos to community.involvement@dpaw.wa.gov.au – we'd love to feature you in a future newsletter.





Premier's Award win for partnership

The successful partnership of Parks and Wildlife, Department of Education, Rio Tinto and Conservation Volunteers Australia was highlighted at the 2015 Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management in October. The team took out the Managing the Environment category for the Rio Tinto Earth Assist program.

The category recognises projects that preserve WA's natural beauty and the environment for future generations, while balancing the need for development with the responsible and efficient use of resources. The nomination was for 'Small hands making a big difference: cross-sector collaboration in conservation (Rio Tinto Earth Assist program)'.

Acting Director General Margaret Byrne accepted the award and said the department greatly values its partnerships, and this one is special as it engages and inspires our young people and empowers teachers.

Launched in 2009, **Rio Tinto Earth Assist** is a statewide conservation and environmental education program, enabling teachers and students to step out of their classrooms to actively participate in priority conservation and research projects.

The program is delivered jointly by Parks and Wildlife, Department of Education, Rio Tinto and Conservation Volunteers Australia, with teachers and students working alongside the department's marine

officers, wildlife officers, rangers, volunteers and other staff on big and small-scale conservation projects in national parks and reserves.

"Since its launch, Rio Tinto Earth Assist has directly supported more than **90** schools, filling over **10,000** student placements, and contributed more than **50,000** volunteer hours on priority conservation projects."

This program involves primary and secondary students including disengaged youth, students with special needs and those in remote communities, and young people interested in developing pathways towards a career in environmental management.

Above - Premiers Award ceremony L-R Laurie Ball/Rio Tinto, Luisa Wing/CVA, Lee Hollingsworth/Parks and Wildlife, Colin Ingram/Parks and Wildlife, Kellie Parker/Rio Tinto, Premier Colin Barnett, Margaret Byrne/Parks and Wildlife, Sharyn O'Neil/Department of Education

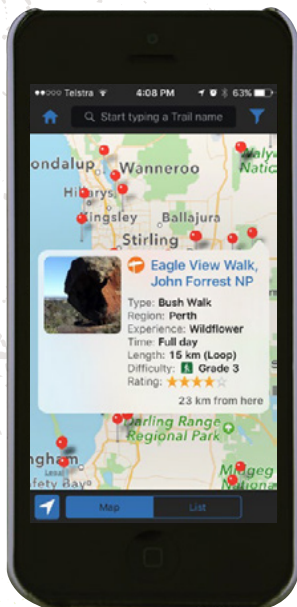




Trails WA new app

Whether you walk, ride, paddle or drive, there's a new trail experience waiting for you at the touch of a button!

FIND TRAILS ACROSS WA!



FILTER SEARCHES BY:

- LOCATION
- TRAIL TYPE
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY
- TIME NEEDED
- WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY
- DOG FRIENDLY
- WA'S TOP TRAILS

Each trail description is packed with information such as

- how long it will take,
- directions to the start,
- best time to try,
- facilities on site
- road access and more!

So you can be prepared with whatever you need for your adventure.

The Trails WA app is a companion to the Trails WA website, which can be viewed at www.trailswa.com.au

The app was developed in partnership between Trails WA and the Department of Parks and Wildlife with support from the Department of Sport and Recreation and the State Government's Royalties for Regions program.



Department of Parks and Wildlife
Department of Regional Development
Department of Sport and Recreation



ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS



Volunteer of the Year winners Kay and Bruce Withnell with Environment Minister Albert Jacob.
Photo – Guildford Photographics/Parks and Wildlife

Volunteer of the Year awards 2015

Down-to-earth and enthusiastic are just two ways to describe Bruce and Kay Withnell, this year's Volunteer of the Year award winners.

Campground hosts Bruce and Kay were recognised by Environment Minister Albert Jacob at a Parks and Wildlife ceremony for their roles as full-time volunteer caretakers of the homestead at Matuwa (Lorna Glen) in the Goldfields and the 600,000ha Matuwa and Kurrara Kurrara (Earaheedy) Indigenous Protected Area.

The husband-and-wife team have helped respond to two bushfires, welcomed and managed visitors, liaised with neighbours, worked with the Wiluna Martu Traditional Owners and rangers, monitored and maintained the native animal enclosure and fencing, and maintained the homestead and other infrastructure.

Bruce said their first stint at Matuwa was only meant to last 12 months, but a love for the role led them to stay on for three years.

"Kay and I love the solitude and the variety of jobs, and the country itself is magnificent," he said.

Kay said volunteering with Parks and Wildlife had been a fantastic experience.

"We're the same as any volunteer – not in it for awards or recognition. We just get so much out of doing things for

others, and also for the animals and the environment," she said.

Another 31 dedicated volunteers were recognised at the ceremony with Outstanding Service Awards, Long Service Awards and, for the first time, Highly Commended Awards (see below).



Above The Yanchep volunteer team with Environment Minister Albert Jacob and Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp.
Photo – Guildford Photographics/Parks and Wildlife.

Volunteer of the Year awards 2015 continued...

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said these awards recognise the people who generously volunteer their time and skills to contribute to important environmental programs around the State.

More than 4600 volunteers contributed more than 610,000 hours to Parks and Wildlife projects in 2014–15, a record amount. "This is an outstanding contribution to the conservation work being carried out in WA," Minister Jacob said.

"They are all to be congratulated for their invaluable service to the community."

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Volunteer of the Year Award

Bruce and Kay Withnell

Outstanding Service Awards

Joe and Jan King
Sheryl Wilson
Robert Broadway
Frank Morris
Kerry Davies
Jennie Hunt
Will Smithwick
Kevin Reid
Kelvin and Barbara Cooper
Patrick Tremlett
Yanchep Adopt a Spot team
(Dave Grieg, Dave Little,
Ceridwyn Morgan-Roberts
and Walt Logue)

Long Service Awards

Eunice Daubert
Faye Deery
Robyn Dennis
Shirley Fisher
Gilbert Marsh
Stuart Payne
Helen Riley
Dale Stein
David Taggart
Johanna Ter Wiel

Highly Commended

Gayle Kealley
Cliff Burns
John Murphy
Alan Barker
Tom Sharman

Watch the video
from the awards



Volunteer and Community Engagement Unit provides community members within WA with opportunities to support, be involved in, and contribute to, the work of the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

The unit supports volunteers as an integral component of the Western Australian community. Volunteering enriches the community through the delivery of environmental, social, economic and health benefits to individuals, local groups and communities, the State and the nation.

If you have an event or story you would like to feature in future editions of the newsletter, or have any comments or suggestions, please contact us. All photos credited to Parks and Wildlife unless otherwise stated.

Volunteer and Community Engagement Unit

Department of Parks and Wildlife
Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

Ph: (08) 9334 0279 Fax: (08) 9334 0221
Email: community.involvement@dpaw.wa.gov.au
dpaw.wa.gov.au

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