



Wildflowers at Coalseam Conservation Park. Photo – Emma de Burgh/DBCA

**Welcome to the September 2018
 Volunteer Newsletter**

This time of year, Djilbar in the Noongar calendar, sees a mixture of wet days with increasing number of clear, cold nights and pleasant warmer days. It is the season of conception and is when we'll start to see ducklings and other young birds and animals around. This makes for a very busy time for the Wildcare Helpline but it's all natural and, in most cases, it's best not to get involved. However, if you think wildlife needs help, before you do anything, call the helpline on 9474 9055, look at the helpline pages on the website or download the app for advice.



Black swan and cygnets.
 Photo – Matt Swan/DBCA

September 2018



Department of Biodiversity,
 Conservation and Attractions



Inside this issue

CockyWatch citizen science project	2	Campground Host vacancies 2018	6
Planning cockatoo-friendly gardens	2	Myrtle rust - have you seen this pest?	6
Volunteer Survey 2018	3	Be a citizen scientist for echidnas	7
Volunteering on some of Western Australia's remote islands	4	New tool to help wildlife	7
Helpline networking	5	Volunteer reward badges 2018	8

CockyWatch citizen science project



CockyWatch is a new citizen science initiative that aims to find out more about the black cockatoos that call Australia's south-west home.

While WA's iconic and much-loved Carnaby's, Baudin's and red-tailed black cockatoos are threatened at a state and national level, there are currently no robust or scientifically-defensible estimates of population size for any of our south-west black cockatoo species.

It's difficult to work out how many are left as they range over such a large area, from north of Kalbarri to east of Esperance. However, better estimates are needed of how many black cockatoos there are to know how best to help them.

The information gathered through CockyWatch will help to find how

populations of black cockatoos change across different habitats and regions from year to year. In the long-term, the goal is to gather enough information to estimate minimum population sizes for all three species of black cockatoo across the south-west.

This survey is being run by BirdLife Australia and has been developed in partnership with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program and Royalties for Regions.

To participate in CockyWatch, please visit the website for detailed instructions:
www.birdlife.org.au/projects/southwest-black-cockatoo-recovery/cockywatch

Planning cockatoo-friendly gardens

You can help cockatoos and other native wildlife by planting native plants local to your area. Black cockatoos are more likely to recognise local plants as food, and native species will grow much better in your soils. Important native food plants in the Perth region include banksias, hakeas, marri and jarrah, which also offer food and night-time roosting places. Eucalyptus trees also provide nesting hollows in breeding areas, particularly in the Wheatbelt.

For more information on black cockatoo conservation, take a look at: pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities/threatened-animals/black-cockatoos

Above: Red-tail family. Photo – Keith Lightbody

VOLUNTEERING FOR NATURE

A snapshot of Parks and Wildlife Service Volunteers



84.5% satisfaction
with volunteer experience



86.3% recommend
to others as a place to volunteer



88.3% will continue
volunteering

Most important reasons for volunteering



90.0% Opportunities to contribute to environment and conservation



87.6% Enhancing support for protection of native flora and fauna



87.4% Pursuing an area of interest



87.4% Providing meaningful and enjoyable experiences



81.9% satisfaction
with their relationship with staff



75.7% satisfaction
with feedback from project coordinators
and staff



81.9% satisfaction
with their on-ground management or
supervision



82.0% satisfaction
with recognition received



“Meaningful volunteering work which allows me to contribute to the conservation of marine turtles and little penguins and give back to the community. The staff are like minded and positive, motivated, energetic people who inspire me and make my volunteering experience highly enjoyable. Thank you! A surprise recognition gift last year was so nice because it was unexpected.”

Volunteer Survey 2018

In March the department carried out a survey of its volunteers. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey, there were more than 1300 responses. The feedback received is useful to continue improving the volunteer program.

Overall the feedback received was positive. On average, most respondents (84.4 per cent) were very satisfied with their volunteer experience, while 86.3 per cent of respondents indicated that they would recommend DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service as a place to volunteer to a friend or colleague, and 88.3 per cent were likely to continue volunteering with the department.

However, there is always room for improvement and we will be looking at addressing a few of the issues raised in the survey.

The full report is available on the [website](#).



Volunteering on some of Western Australia's remote islands

Stepping ashore remote white sandy beaches, watching humpback whales cruise by on their annual migration and sitting back on deck as the sun sets into the ocean is all in a day's work for the volunteers who assisted on the Pilbara Inshore Islands project.

Over the past five years, 10 volunteers contributing almost 600 hours have assisted Exmouth District staff gain a better understanding of the natural heritage and social values of inshore islands in the Pilbara region. This increased knowledge has led to informed management decisions and the development of the *Draft Pilbara Inshore Island Nature Reserves management plan*.

The Pilbara inshore islands are highly valued as they provide habitat for threatened and migratory species that is relatively free from disturbance. More than 50 islands were visited across the project area. The specialist knowledge the volunteers brought to the project was valuable in mapping migratory shorebird high tide roosts, identifying preferred nesting islands for seabirds, mapping vegetation association and assisting in fauna trapping surveys.

Top: Volunteer Nic Dunlop conducting Seabird counts on Stewart Island. Above right: Volunteer Laurinda Timmins assisting flora surveys on Doole Island. Photos – DBCA

Helpline networking



The Wildcare Helpline received a call in June about a sea eagle that was believed to be entangled with fishing line, nesting in the Norfolk pines near Cottesloe beach.

The helpline then contacted wildlife rehabilitation group WA Seabird Rescue (WASR.org.au), who sent out a volunteer with a camera to ascertain the extent of the entanglement.

Reporting back a few hours later the volunteer came with good news. Rather than being entangled and in trouble, the bird was in fact an osprey busily collecting materials for a nest. A great outcome.

As the pictures show, from a distance, the sticks and seaweed carried in the osprey's feet could easily be mistaken for an entanglement.

Photos – WA Seabird Rescue

OSPREY FACTS:

Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) are fish-eating hawks found along coastlines and other waterways around the world. The nest is usually constructed at the top of a large tree, a utility pole or other tall structure, not far from water.



If you have concerns about sick or injured wildlife call the Wildcare Helpline on (08) 9474 9055 for advice and assistance. The helpline has access to a large number of wildlife rehabilitators and vets across WA who can help. There is now also a free smartphone app so that you can always have wildlife advice and contacts in your pocket. Download now by searching 'Wildcare Helpline' on your **Apple** or **Android** device.

For more wildlife advice and information on becoming a volunteer for the Wildcare Helpline visit the website dbca.wa.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/wildcare-helpline



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Campground Host vacancies 2018

The following Campground Host vacancies are available in the coming months. Please note that **only volunteers currently registered as campground hosts can apply for these roles. For more information about becoming a volunteer campground host visit the website.**

South Coast

Cape Arid National Park

Thomas River – January and February 2019

Contact: Senior Ranger Johlene

Mobile: 0427 436 831

Email: johlene.shalders@dbca.wa.gov.au

Cape Le Grand National Park - Esperance,

Lucky Bay Campground – October, November, December 2018 then April, May 2019

Le Grand Beach Campground – May 2019

Contact: Senior Ranger Cameron Hennessy

Mobile: 0427 766 067

Email: cameron.hennessy@dbca.wa.gov.au

Donnelly District

Shannon National Park Campground – September onwards – seeking hosts for a minimum of a month but happy to have people for longer.

Big Brook Arboretum Campground from October through to end of April.

Drafty's (in beautiful Warren National Park) for October, January through to end of April

Contact: Ranger Tracey Robins

Telephone: (08) 9776 1207

Email: tracey.robins@dbca.wa.gov.au



Lucky Bay Campground. Photo – DBCA

Myrtle rust

Have you seen this pest?

Myrtle rust is an airborne disease that attacks and kills plants belonging to the Myrtaceae family.

Plants such as eucalypts, bottlebrushes, paperbarks and peppermint trees are vulnerable to the fungus, which produces bright yellow and orange clumps of powdery spores.

It has not been detected in Western Australia or South Australia yet, but is present in every other state and territory. We need your help to keep it out of WA as attempts to eradicate the fungus in infested areas have shown to be impossible.

When entering WA from interstate or overseas ensure vehicles, equipment, shoes and clothing are thoroughly cleaned. Don't forget to clean hats, camera cases, backpacks and gaiters as well.

If you think you see the fungus, do not take a sample or touch it as the spores can easily spread. Please take photos of the plant, details about the location and immediately contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 or email info@agric.wa.gov.au.



Photo – Geoff Pegg



Photo – Louise Morin

Be a citizen scientist for echidnas

The Echidna Conservation Science Initiative team want to learn more about echidnas so they can work towards their conservation. Where are they? What are they doing? Are they healthy?

If you spot a wild echidna make sure to take photos or videos of them and collect their scats – with your help they can start filling in the gaps about wild echidnas in Australia.

To make it easy for you, Echidna CSI have developed a free app available on [Apple](#) or [Android](#) devices. So, the next time you see an echidna (or its poo), take out your phone, open the app and take a photo of it. The app will pinpoint your GPS location and you're done – simple as that! You've helped to better understand these beautiful echidnas. The app will also guide you on how to collect, store and send scats to them.

For more detailed information on the project and how to get involved, visit: grutznerlab.weebly.com/echidna-csi.html

This is how many scats they have received so far from each state and territory:
SA - 82, NSW - 25, VIC - 21, QLD - 3, WA - 2, TAS - 0, NT - 0

Keep sending them through, let's see if we can make WA top of the echidna scat table. **You can follow Echidna CSI on Facebook here:** facebook.com/EchidnaCSI/



WASR President Dr Halina Burmeij. Photo – WASR

New tool to help wildlife

Western Australian Seabird Rescue (WASR) have acquired a net launcher, the MagNet, which has revolutionised their ability to capture injured or distressed timid birds like Australasian darters and cormorants.

Australasian darters are notorious for getting their beaks entangled in fishing line, string and other fibrous materials. The tip of the beak has fine serrations (teeth) that help them hold their prey, but it also means they are often unable to free themselves of any fibrous material. If the entanglement is tight the bird quickly dies of thirst, if it's looser they may slowly starve to death. Darters can't be lured with food so conventional methods such as leg snares or hand-held nets are not usually successful.

The net launcher uses a small CO2 cylinder to propel a net up to six metres away. Even timid species like darters and ravens will generally tolerate a careful approach to within this distance provided it is done slowly and calmly and without directly staring at the bird. At the last moment the rescuer faces the bird and launches the net.

In the past, WASR had only managed to rescue one or two darters a year in the Perth area. However, in the three months since obtaining the net they have rescued eight darters, two magpies, a duck and a raven with an almost 100 per cent success rate for attempted rescues.

For more information on this device email Dr Halina Burmeij president@wasr.org.au

For more information on WASR's work visit wasr.org.au



The *Banksia verticillata* pin badge. Photo – DBCA

Volunteer reward badges 2018

The feature badge for this year's volunteer rewards is the granite banksia (*Banksia verticillata*).

This badge is the sixth in a series depicting threatened Western Australian plants and animals, with a strictly limited number issued annually to volunteers who achieve the significant contribution of 150 hours or more.

The granite banksia is ranked as critically endangered in Western Australia under International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) 2001 due to a population size reduction of 80 per cent. This species is found in two disjunct areas, one near Walpole and the other near Albany.

DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to ensuring that threatened flora is conserved, and volunteer programs are critical in helping to monitor these and other threatened species.

Read the recovery plan for *Banksia verticillata* here: pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/images/documents/plants-animals/threatened-species/recovery_plans/banksia_verticillata_new.pdf

The Volunteers and Community Unit provides community members within WA with opportunities to support, be involved in, and contribute to, the work of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Parks and Wildlife Service.

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 Service unless otherwise stated.

Volunteer and Community Involvement Unit Parks and Wildlife Service

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

Ph: (08) 9219 8279 Fax: (08) 9219 8221

Email: community@dbca.wa.gov.au
dbca.wa.gov.au

Follow **Parks and Wildlife Service** on:
[@waparkswildlife](https://www.facebook.com/waparkswildlife)



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

