

[HOME](#)[ABOUT CALM](#)[NEW PROJECTS](#)[LATEST NEWS](#)[BOOKSHOP](#)[FOREST FACTS](#)[NATIONAL PARKS](#)[TOURISM & RECREATION](#)[LANDSCAPE](#)[FOR SCHOOLS](#)[SCIENCE MATTERS](#)[PLANTS & ANIMALS](#)[SEARCH](#)[MAILBOX](#)[Home](#): [Latest News](#): [Media Releases](#): [Minister's Media Statement](#)**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

15/10/97

**Numbat Season at Dryandra Woodland**

“Numbat Season” has been declared open at Dryandra Woodland, 180 km south east of Perth.

Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes said the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) initiative followed requests from the public about the best times and places to see numbats in the wild.

The numbat, a small termite eating marsupial and WA's faunal emblem, was once widespread throughout much of southern Australia. The introduction of exotic predators such as the European fox greatly reduced its home range to only two areas in the whole of Australia - Dryandra Woodland and Perup Nature Reserve, east of Manjimup.

The Minister said the recovery of the numbat in Dryandra Woodland had been spectacular since CALM's baiting programs for foxes began in 1983.

The numbat was one of the few native mammals that were active during the day, resulting in an increasing number of people wanting to see this enchanting creature.

“Population numbers are at their highest this time of year, as young numbats start to become more independent and explore new territory for their own home range,” Mrs Edwardes said.

“The milder spring weather also encourages them to become active for a greater part of the day, resulting in increased numbat sightings.

“The open nature of the wandoo at Dryandra Woodland provides an ideal opportunity for viewing this unique Australian icon.”

Mrs Edwardes said CALM offered people the opportunity to gain first hand experience of the numbat and the other inhabitants of Dryandra Woodland through its 'Dryandra Woodland Ecology Course'. The next series of this popular course will be held on the weekend of 31 October to 2 November.

“The course allows people to try radio tracking, trapping and identifying native animals as well as participating in traditional Aboriginal cultural activities including fire making,” the Minister said.

The course is ideal for anyone with an interest in natural and cultural heritage and costs \$185 that includes all food, accommodation and course materials.

For people wishing to stay in the heart of the Dryandra Woodland, accommodation is available at the Lions Dryandra Woodland Village. These rustic ex-Forestry Department cottages are available to the public as holiday rentals. There are also a variety of accommodation venues such as farmstays, caravan parks and motels all within a 20 minute drive.

**Media contact:**

Ministerial - Diana Russell-Coote on (08) 9421 7777 or  
CALM - Tim Bowra on (08) 9881 1113

GOVERNMENT MEDIA OFFICE: 17th FLOOR, CAPITAL CENTRE  
107 ST GEORGE'S TERRACE, PERTH, WA, 6006 TEL: (08) 222 6896  
FAX: (08) 222 8439 TELEX: A400078

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