



Issue 1 – Autumn 2019

Welcome to the first issue of *Ngari Capes Marine Park News*

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Hopping in for a visit

Several northern rockhopper penguins have spent time along the beaches of Ngari Capes Marine Park over the past few months.

These penguins have distinctive yellow plumes extending from the yellow line above their eyes. They come ashore to moult their feathers, and during this moulting period the penguins are not waterproof and therefore can't swim.

The penguins can remain on the beach for approximately three weeks, leaving them exposed to four-wheel-drives, feral animals and dogs. If you come across any rockhopper penguins, please contact the Busselton Parks and Wildlife Service office on (08) 9752 5555.



Look out for new sanctuary buoys

Have you been out in Ngari Capes Marine Park (NCMP) lately? If so, you may have noticed new sanctuary zones buoys.



These buoys line the **sanctuary zones** of the marine park, specifically in Geographe Bay and Flinders Bay.

Marine sanctuary zones are a **no-take area**, meaning fishing of any kind is not permitted.

Snorkelling, diving, motorised vessel use, surfing, kayaking, windsurfing and wildlife viewing is permitted.

Wyadup whale prompts closure

From June to July humpback whales leave their feeding grounds in the Southern Ocean and start to migrate north to the warm breeding grounds on the Kimberly coast. Then between September and November the long journey back begins, as they travel back down the west coast.

Unfortunately, the marine park has seen a number of whales unable to complete their long migrations.

On 22 August 2018, DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service received reports that a humpback whale carcass had washed ashore at Wyadup.

Currently the whale carcass is decomposing as there is no safe option for the removal of the carcass.

Beach closures remain in place from the northern end of Injidup Beach to the unnamed headland at Canal Rocks.



If you come across any stranded marine life, please call the Wildcare Helpline on **(08) 9474 9055**

or the Busselton Parks and Wildlife Service office on **(08) 9752 5555**.

Whale carcasses at Guillotines

Guillotines Beach had two whales wash ashore in October 2018 and February 2019.

A sperm whale carcass was reported near Guillotines surf break in late October. Within a few days, staff had attached a satellite tracker to the whale in order to help marine rangers track the movements of the carcass, as it moved up the coast with the tide and swell. Over the following days, the carcass broke down rapidly, aided by the sharp reef flats and constant swell.

By late November, the carcass was located a few hundred metres from the Gallows car park, just under 2km away from where it was originally spotted.

The following day, contractors succeeded in removing the carcass from the beach with a pozi-trak.

During mid-February DBCA received reports of a humpback whale carcass at Guillotines Beach.

Unfortunately, there is no safe option for the removal of this carcass. Aided by swell and tide action the carcass is currently decomposing within a rock crevice.

Beach closures remain in place for Whaleback Beach, Guillotines and Gallows. Please contact the Busselton Parks and Wildlife Service office if you need clarification on these closures.



Contractors remove a sperm whale carcass that washed ashore near Gallows car park.

Capturing footage for research

In mid-February 2019, DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) deployed a series of BRUVS (Baited Remote Underwater Video Stations) within NCMP.

BRUVS are large-free standing rectangular structures that contain two cameras and camera canisters, bait arm, rope and float.

Once deployed these structures sink to the bottom with the help of lead weights.

At the sea floor each BRUV is left for one hour to capture footage of fish diversity, abundance and behaviour.

In total 175 hours of footage was captured from 175 sites.

DBCA staff would like to thank DPIRD for the use of their vessel *PV Hamelin* and the knowledge that Rod O'Halloran and Kevin Johnson brought to this expedition.



DBCA and DPIRD staff aboard the *PV Hamelin*.

Surveys underway with UTAS

In late November 2018, three marine scientists from the University of Tasmania (UTAS) collaborated with DBCA staff to conduct in-water surveys of Ngari Capes Marine Park (NCMP). The divers recorded algae diversity and biomass together with counts on invertebrates and fish diversity and biomass.

These surveys have been conducted over the past three years within NCMP. This data will be useful to determine the long-term health of the marine park and quantify the impact sanctuary zones will have on the marine environment.



Marine researchers German, Ben and Nev from UTAS) with DBCA Parks and Wildlife Service staff Ben and Dave.

Fun for all at Bay OK Day

Ngari Capes Marine Park rangers were pleased take part in this year's **Dunsborough Bay OK Day** and **Cowaramup Say G'day to the Bay Day**.

These annual events aim to educate primary school students on how to better care for and look after the marine environment. This year NCMP had a touch table, touch pool and a sustainable fishing game.

NCMP rangers said it was a wonderful experience and are looking forward to next year's events!

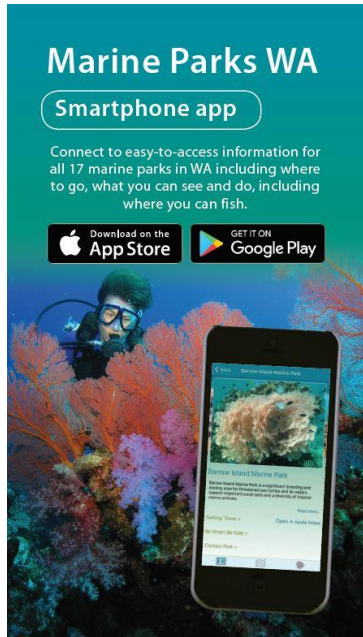


Marine park rangers keep the kids well-educated and entertained. Photos - Shannon Stent

Do you know about the Marine Parks WA App?

Exploring WA's 17 marine parks is easy with this handy little app.

It contains comprehensive information about each marine park and the activities you can enjoy in each zone.



This app allows all the data to be downloaded to your phone, meaning you can have access to park information when out of mobile range.

For visitors and locals to NCMP, this Marine Parks WA App will make your experience on the water easier.

[iTunes App Store](#)

[Google Play Store](#)

Seagrass surveys carried out

In early February, DBCA divers assisted Edith Cowan University Professor Kathryn McMahon to monitor eight seagrass meadow sites within Geographe Bay.

The divers recorded seagrass shoot density, epiphyte coverage and overall health.

These surveys are part of an ongoing study that help determine if drain water, run-off or river water entering the bay is having an impact on seagrass.

Preliminary results from this year's seagrass survey efforts show positive signs for Busselton seagrass health.



Professor Kathryn McMahon records details about seagrass health.



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