

Lisa Wright

From: Parks and Wildlife Service <eden.baxter@dbca.wa.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 27 January 2021 4:18 PM
To: Library
Subject: Ngari Capes Newsletter



Issue 8 - Summer 2021

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

In this issue:

- [Introducing Ngari Capes Research Scientist Ben French](#)
- [Scuba Diving in Ngari Capes Marine Park](#)
- [Rock Hopper Penguin relocated](#)
- [Locals encouraged to report illegal fishing to Fishwatch](#)
- [Intertidal reef surveys](#)
- [Say G'Day to the Bay Day - Cowaramup](#)



- [Do you know about marine park sanctuary zones?](#)

Above: Torpedo Rocks, Yallingup

Introducing Ngari Capes Research Scientist Ben French



Ben French BRUV deployment, photo by Eden Baxter

I grew up in urban south-east London but my grandparents lived on the south coast near Eastbourne. Trips to the beach near my grandparents place and my dad, grandad and great-grandad's passion for sailing developed my interest in the ocean from as early as I can remember. I moved to Plymouth in England's south-west to complete an oceanography degree, but great surfing and diving in that area played a big role in my choice of University! I volunteered on coral survey projects in Fiji, worked as a divemaster in Thailand and then ended up

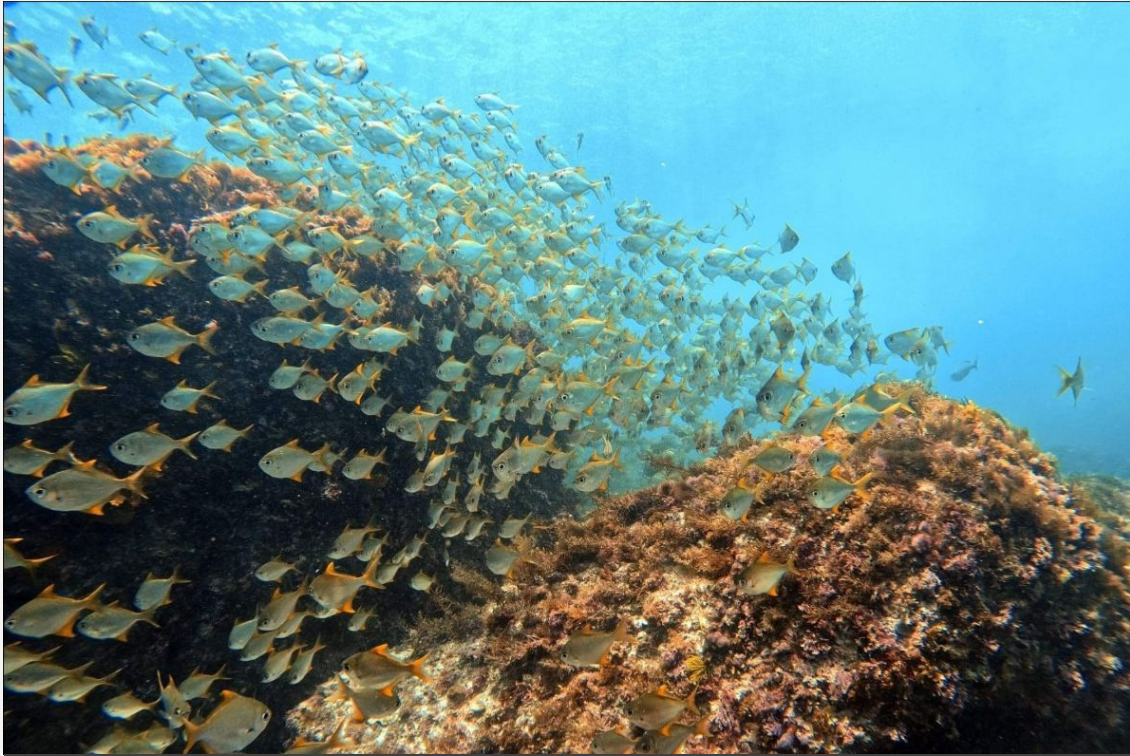
doing a Marine Biology masters at the Marine Biological Association of UK, back in Plymouth. I worked as a benthic ecologist for about a year in England before being awarded a PhD scholarship at Murdoch University here in Perth where my thesis focused on reef ecology in WA's south. I spent another four years working as a consultant scientist in WA working on a range of marine monitoring programs throughout Australasia and have now been a research scientist with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions for four years. The job has a great degree of variety which makes it very interesting and allows me to spend time working in arguably Australia's greatest coastal regions.

Scuba Diving in Ngari Capes Marine Park

Article from: Aaron Goodhew from *SouthWest Divers*

The Ngari Capes Marine Park has seen some great opportunities for scuba diving over the last few months. With the water warming up and visibility improving many of the local sites have delivered great dives.

Canal Rocks has proved to be one of the more popular spots for shore diving, due to its size the area provides several dive sites in the one location. The sites there cater to all skill levels, the inner wall/bay area along with honeycomb reef offering relatively protected water and depths of up to 10m. Despite it being shallow it hosts a huge variety of marine life. The last few months have given regular sightings of large Bull Rays and Southern Eagle Rays. Night diving in the bay has been very rewarding giving consistent interactions with Weedy Sea Dragons sometimes in only 4m of water! For the more advanced diver the outer wall at Canal Rocks with depths of up to 20m has been spectacular with most days giving visibility in excess of 20m. Interactions with large pelagic fish have been common, Samson fish and Yellowtail Kingfish are often seen cruising the wall along with the occasional Bronze Whaler.



The photo was above taken by Aaron Goodhew at Canal Rocks.

Offshore at the Indicators to the North of canal rocks the spectacular diving has continued. This site is a rock pinnacle that rises up from 25m and breaks the surface. The visibility has been amazing, there is a wide array of colourful corals that seem to cover every surface and a huge variety of marine life from the tiniest of nudibranchs right up to large rays and Wobbegong Sharks. This location has also been giving reliable sightings of Leafy Sea Dragons.



The photo was above taken by Aaron Goodhew of a Leafy Sea Dragon at the Indicators.

On the inside of Geographe Bay there has also been some fantastic diving opportunities. The wreck of the HMAS Swan has been very popular with visiting divers from Perth and beyond. The wreck was purposely scuttled in 1997 to create an artificial reef and dive site. The wreck is 113m long and sits upright in 31m of water. This world class dive site hosts a huge selection of marine life. Large schools of Batfish have been seen circling the crows nest along with groups of Samson fish. Down around the base of the wreck closer to the sand there has been regular sightings of the resident Wobbegong sharks. Groups of snapper, Mulloway and Porcupine fish are also often seen around the lower stern area of the wreck. Whilst the visibility hasn't been as good as the western side of Cape Naturaliste it is improving as the season continues.

Probably the most widely photographed and famous fish in the Ngari Capes Marine Park has been a solitary Frogfish at the Busselton Jetty. 'Freddie' as named by the local Southwest Divers group was first spotted back in October and since then has been reliably seen by divers on almost every dive. The yellow and red Frogfish has been a real drawcard for the travelling divers coming to the region. As the season progresses we are sure there will be many

more great photo opportunities and amazing marine interactions within the Capes Region.



The photo above was taken by Lewis Burnett (Instagram: huntingforparadise) of Freddie the frogfish at Busselton Jetty,

Rock Hopper Penguin relocated



The Northern Rock Hopper Penguin at Gnarabup Beach

In mid-January, marine park rangers received reports of a Northern Rock Hopper Penguin that had come ashore at a popular Gnarabup beach. This penguin had come ashore seeking refuge while completing its three-week moulting period. During this moulting period, Rock Hopper penguins will remain out of the water, making them vulnerable to injury and predation from dogs and foxes. Little did this penguin know that it has actually chosen a popular dog beach. Due to this risk, the penguin was relocated by marine rangers Eden and Dave to an island close by where it would not be disturbed by any dogs.



Marine Ranger David Lierich doing all the heavy lifting.



Marine Ranger Eden Baxter releasing the penguin in the shade.

The department would like to thank the members of the public that reported this penguin to our marine rangers.

People can report sick, injured, orphaned or displaced wildlife to the Wildcare Helpline on 9474 9055.



Locals encouraged to report illegal fishing to Fishwatch

As the weather heats up so too does the amount of illegal fishing in the Capes. While the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (Fisheries) staff are busy conducting patrols, locals are encouraged to assist by reporting suspicious fishing activity to the Fishwatch 24-hour phone line: 1800 815 507

If you have seen something involving fish or fishing which doesn't look quite

right, the FishWatch phone line provides a quick and easy way to report it.

Illegal fishing could include someone netting in the river, exceeding their bag or possession limits, taking undersize fish, fishing in a closed area, having more fishing gear in the water than they should, or selling or attempting to sell recreationally caught fish.

Before you call make a note of:

- **How** many people you saw.
- **Who** they were. Did you hear/know any of their names?
- **What** they were doing.
- **Where** it happened; the nearest known landmark or intersection of the closest road may help to pinpoint the location of the activity.
- **What** type of equipment you saw being used; the type of cars or boats, registration numbers, and descriptions.
- **When** it happened - time and date. Is it something that is happening right now, while you are making a report, or was it something you observed previously?

Any information you provide about illegal fishing activity could be valuable and is sent immediately to a local fisheries officer.

Article from: Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)



Intertidal reef surveys

DBCA staff have recently begun a new collaboration with Dr Jane Prince at UWA to quantify the condition of the 'Intertidal Reef KPI' as part of NCMP ongoing monitoring. Jane is the WA expert on intertidal ecology and has been studying the subject for over 30 years having first conducted surveys in the Capes region over 20 years ago. Dr Prince provides a wealth of knowledge and taxonomic identification skills, and the program provides an excellent opportunity for DBCA research and operational staff alike to learn more. Intertidal ecology in south-western Australia is particularly interesting as unlike regions with large tides, the small (<1m) tidal ranges mean that reef platforms can often be exposed or inundated for irregular periods of time, depending on a combination of tidal cycles, wave action and atmospheric pressure. This means that organisms on the reef platform can be exposed to extreme heating and drying before being submerged again, unlike more typical intertidal systems that are submerged and exposed several times a day. This makes our reefs particularly susceptible to extreme heating events that are becoming ever more regular and also provides us with a challenge of attempting to pick the right tide/wave/weather combination required to actually survey the reefs effectively. The team were able to successfully survey all the limestone reef platforms and some of the granite locations too and hope to continue the program on a biennial basis.



Dave and Laurent at the intertidal zone, photo by Matilda Murley



Intertidal Sampling, Photo by Matilda Murley

Say G'Day to the Bay Day - Cowaramup



Photo: Touch table by Jadye Stent

Ngari Capes Marine Park rangers were delighted to be welcomed back to the annual Say G'Day to the Bay Day in Cowaramup. This year the marine park rangers ran a variety of activities for the students of Cowaramup Primary School. A disentanglement scenario activity saw the older students work together in a team, discussing strategies to untangle a variety of marine creatures such as shark, whale, dolphin and turtle. The younger students enjoyed sitting around a touch pool getting their hands in the water to hold and touch invertebrates found within Cowaramup Bay. This included a few sea stars, limpets, shells, snails, slugs, crabs and urchins. The final activity was a touch table, where the students learnt about the different things you might be lucky enough to find while walking along the beach.



Photo: Disentanglement scenarios by Jadye Stent

Do you know about marine park sanctuary zones?



Before visiting any marine park, it's important to always 'know your zones' and find out what you can do in each zone. Since April 2020 the Ngari Capes Marine Park zones have been enforced.

These zones cater for a wide range of user groups from fishers, scuba divers and snorkellers to surfers and kayakers. While allowing sustainable recreational and commercial activities, zoning also provides for conservation by establishing sanctuary zones for undisturbed nature study and passive enjoyment of the natural environment.

The map below is a great guide, however, if you require more information about the zones and what activities are permitted, for marine parks around the Capes or anywhere off the WA coast please download the Marine Parks WA App or call the Parks and Wildlife Service Busselton office on 9752 5555.

[Get the app on iTunes](#)

[Get the app on Android](#)

Above Map of Ngari Capes Marine Park showing zones plus National Park Zones in adjacent Australian Marine Parks.



Copyright © 2021 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you opted in at our website, or signed up via a form.

Our mailing address is:

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

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).