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Issue 20 - Summer 2024

## Welcome to the 20th issue of *Ngari Capes Marine Park News*

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Image right: Cape Hamelin (credit: DBCA)

## Marine park update

*By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood*

Welcome to our latest edition of the Ngari Capes Marine Park newsletter.

Summer has officially arrived, bringing with it exciting news! The demersal ban has been lifted, plovers are nesting and we're gearing up for warm, sunny, glass-off days in the bays. Our coastal region is buzzing with the arrival of tourists, marking the unmistakable arrival of summer here at Ngari Capes Marine Park.

Our marine team is hard at work, ensuring the safety and enjoyment of our coastal areas. Collaborating with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and the Department of Transport (DoT), we've intensified compliance patrols both on the water and on land. Just in time for the season, we welcome back Marine Park Coordinator Fiona Graham, returning after a two-year secondment in Broome as the Senior Marine Ranger. Welcome back, Fiona!



**Top right:** Red-capped plover nest with egg and chick, Geographe Bay (credit: Eden Harris)

**Above left:** Hooded plover workshop (credit: Christine Taylor)

**Above right:** Hooded plover nest fencing demonstration (credit: Eden Harris)

In December, the team attended a hooded plover management workshop, focusing on nest and chick protection measures such as rope fencing, signage, and chick shelters. In November the marine team were delighted to be invited back to the annual Bay Ok Day event in Dunsborough, Say G'day to the Bay event in Gracetown, and the Bioblitz event in Margaret River. These events allowed us to engage with

primary school students, offering a broader understanding of marine creatures in their own backyard through touch pools and touch tables.



**Above left:** NCMP Bay Ok Day stall with touch pool and touch in Dunsborough (credit: Eden Harris)

**Above right:** Dive propulsion vehicle training at the Busselton Jetty (credit: Miecha Bradshaw)

Below the water's surface, our marine team dove into action, refreshing their skills with departmental dive officer Miecha Bradshaw. The team underwent an agility course with the latest dive propulsion vehicles (DPVs) at the stunning Busselton Jetty. Additionally, we assisted our neighboring Wellington district with swimming site inspections, adding an extra layer of adventure to our endeavors.

Here's to a fantastic summer filled with sun, sea, and exciting marine adventures! Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We look forward to seeing you on the water.



**Above:** Dive propulsion vehicle training at the Busselton Jetty (credit: Miecha Bradshaw)

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## Ensuring safety and fun at Wellington's recreation sites

*By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood*

Our marine team recently joined forces with our friendly neighbors from the Wellington district to conduct safety checks at a number of Collie River recreation sites. These checks are done every two years to ensure that the entrances and exits of these popular spots are hazard-free, guaranteeing a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone taking a dip.



**Above left:** Marine rangers Dave, Glen, and Eden at Rapids recreations site (credit: Nick Evans)

**Above right:** Marine rangers Glen and Dave with Operations Officer Nick Evans (credit: Eden Harris)

Dressed in wetsuits and 4WDing between the popular swimming spots, our team had a blast connecting with Nick Evans, the Operations Officer from Wellington District. The weather was fantastic, making the day even more enjoyable. In total the team visited six recreation sites, rounding out the day at the stunning Honeymoon Pool. This gem offers a range of activities, from swimming to bushwalking, canoeing or kayaking, and fishing. You'll find gas barbecues, picnic tables, and a large viewing platform overlooking the river. And guess what? The toilets in the nearby campground are wheelchair accessible.

Feeling adventurous these school holidays? Why not explore these fantastic swimming spots in Wellington National Park for yourself? For more details, check out the [Explore Parks](#) website.

Happy exploring!



**Above:** Marine rangers snorkelling one of the Collie River recreation sites (credit: Nick Evans)

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## Make sure you get on board

*By the Department of Transport*

The majority of skippers in WA have got on board with the new safety equipment requirements that became law on 1 September 2023.

Marine officers, who are out on the water every day checking vessels, report high levels of awareness of the changes and compliance, estimated at 80 per cent or higher.

Well done skippers for embracing the changes and in most cases carrying the right equipment to keep safe on the water.

For further information view the [Safety equipment changes](#) page on our website.



### **Do you have out-of-date EPIRBs or flares?**

Disposal of your items can be done at either Busselton or Dunsborough waste management facilities. Don't forget to contact AMSA to deregister your old EPIRB.

Further information may be viewed on the [flares](#) webpage.

### **Download Deckee for all the safety information you need.**

Do you know what safety equipment you need for the area you are navigating?

Deckee has all the answers including the speed limits and current warnings for the location.

Download the free app today for all you need to know to be safe on the water.

Make sure you add your vessel type to get the exact information for your craft wherever you are boating in WA.



[Free Boating and Fishing App - DECKEE](#)

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## **Hooded plover monitoring program, Cape to Cape region**

*By Parks and Wildlife Service, Christine Taylor*

Hooded plovers or 'hoodies' are small beach-nesting birds which nest on the beaches of the Ngari Capes Marine Park over the busy summer months. These charismatic birds are monitored by dedicated volunteers under DBCA's Cape to Cape hooded plover project who regularly report on the habits of the 15-20 pairs which breed along our coastline.

Each pair will hold a territory of 1–2kms of beach and their 'nests' are nothing more than a scrape in the sand above the high tide mark in which the birds lay 2–3 well-camouflaged eggs. Once hatched, the chicks or 'runners' will forage alongside their parents along the beach, their only defence being their camouflage, until they are able to fly at about five weeks of age. The nests and chicks are very vulnerable to disturbance as a walker, 4WD or even a dog could unknowingly trample eggs or cause the adult birds

to leave their young for long periods of time, endangering them to predation and exposure on the open beach.



**Above:** Flagged bird (credit: Tayla Cartagena)

The monitoring project has just been given additional support by Birdlife Australia's beach-nesting birds team who recently undertook a capture and banding expedition to WA thanks to funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program. With the help of DBCA staff and volunteers the team captured 16 of the local hoodie population and flagged them using blue leg bands with white letters to be able to identify individual birds during routine monitoring. This will help capture data on site fidelity, movement patterns and survival rates. This research will be used to inform local management efforts and species level conservation priorities. Birdlife also ran a land managers workshop attended by marine rangers and other DBCA staff to learn about best practice nest and chick protection measures including rope fencing, signage and the installation of chick shelters to help hoodies through their most vulnerable stages.



**Above:** Flagging hooded plovers (credit: Christine Taylor)



**Above left:** Hooded plover on eggs (credit: Kim Williams)

**Above right:** Hooded plovers, two with leg flags (credit: Grainne Maguire)

If you are lucky enough to see a hoodie, please give them some space. If you see any signage or roped off areas please pay attention and do not linger in these areas. Walk along the water's edge, rather than the upper beach or dunes, and keep dogs off the beach.

You can report sightings of flagged hooded plovers to [beachnestingbirds@birdlife.org.au](mailto:beachnestingbirds@birdlife.org.au).

If you would like to know more about the Cape to Cape hooded plover volunteer project please contact [christine.taylor@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:christine.taylor@dbca.wa.gov.au).

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## Greenlip abalone closure

*By the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)*

Busselton Jetty to Shoal Cape is now closed to recreational greenlip abalone fishing.

This closure has been put in place to protect greenlip abalone stocks that were impacted by a previous marine heatwave and above average water temperatures which have slowed down the recovery of stocks.

The area is also closed to commercial greenlip abalone fishing as part of the recovery strategy for this species.



You can still catch brownlip abalone between Busselton Jetty and Shoal Cape, where a recreational bag limit of five brownlip per fisher, per day, applies. Roe's abalone can also still be recreationally caught across the southern zone with a bag limit of 20 per fisher, per day.



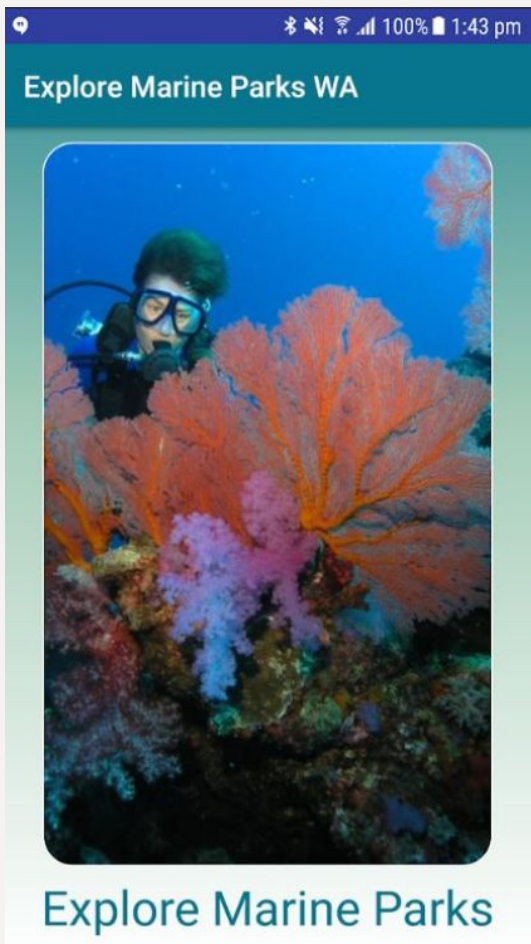
For more information or to download the abalone recreational fishing guide, visit the [abalone recreational fishing](#) page.



**Above:** Greenlip abalone (credit: Western Australian Fishing Industry Council)

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**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 snorkelers, 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.

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