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Issue 22 - Winter 2024

Welcome to the 22nd issue of *Ngari Capes Marine Park News*

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Image right: Wildlife Officer Mel Rowley and Ranger Alex Knowles onboard PV Leeuwin

Marine park update

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood

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

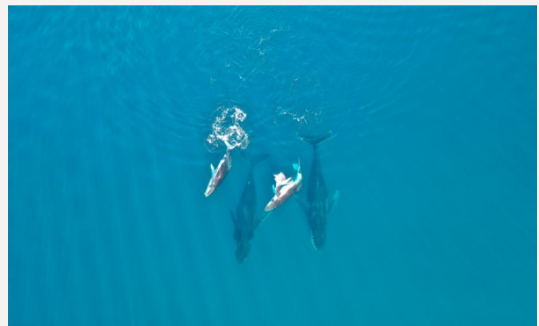
As the temperature dips and the skies turn a stormy grey, we're not just bracing for the cold weather but also gearing up for an exciting season ahead. Yes, it's that time of the year again—whale season is upon us. With the arrival of this season, we're presented with the unique spectacle of whales performing behaviours like pectoral slaps, tail lobbs, spy hopping, and the awe-inspiring breach.



The Ngari Capes Marine Park Whale Disentanglement team has been diligently refreshing their skills in preparation for this season. We're also thrilled to announce that our ranks have swelled with a number of newly qualified whale disentanglement responders.

In this edition, we get to learn more about the life and work of Ngari Capes Marine Park (NCMP) Research Scientist Tanika Shalders. Her dedication and passion for marine life are nothing short of inspiring, and we can't wait to share her story with you.

Moreover, we're honored to celebrate a significant milestone with the Tangaroa Blue Foundation—their 20th anniversary. Mark your calendars for the beach clean-up event from October 11th–14th.



Top right: Cape Naturaliste looking west (credit: DBCA Blackwood). **Above left:** Blue whale by Blair Ranford_SharkyAerials. **Above right:** Mother and calf humpback pairs by Blair Ranford_SharkyAerials.

Ngari Capes team sharpens skills for whale season

Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood

With the arrival of whale season, the members of the Ngari Capes Marine Park Whale Disentanglement team have been diligently refreshing their skills. Under the guidance of Senior Marine Operations Officer John Edwards, the team engaged in intensive training sessions throughout the final week of May.

Despite facing some challenging weather conditions, the team's adaptability shone through as they relocated a number of their training scenarios to the sheltered waters of Port Geographe Marina. This unexpected turn of events transformed into a public spectacle, with local residents witnessing the intricate training exercises right from their back verandahs.



Image top right: Photo from PV2 of the whale disentanglement scenario in Geographe Bay.

Image above left: Close-up of the point boat with fake whale tail towed behind PV Leeuwin.

Image above right: Whale disentanglement scenarios within the Port Geographe Marina.

Year after year, our team has faced a myriad of entanglements, each presenting its own set of challenges. Factors such as the location of the entanglement on the whale's body, whether tethers are present or absent, the size and condition of the whale, the time of day, and the weather conditions, make every entanglement case distinct. These situations are a stark reminder of why our readiness and training in whale rescue operations are crucial.

We remain deeply thankful for the expertise of John Edwards, whose annual contributions have been nothing short of extraordinary. His willingness to share his vast knowledge, experiences, and the lessons he has learned has been instrumental in enhancing our team's capabilities.



Above: Blackwood Large Whale Disentanglement team standing in front of disentanglement equipment trailer and point boat.

Flares expiring?

By the Department of Transport

If your hand flares are due to expire shortly, you now have the option of carrying an electronic visual distress signal (EVDS) instead.

Learn more about [Flares and EVDS](#) on the DoT website.

If you elect to use an EVDS, it's important to note that you must also carry a personal locator beacon or GPS-enabled EPIRB. This also applies for personal watercraft.



Introducing NCMP Scientist Tanika

By Tanika Shalders, Parks and Wildlife Service

I'm a marine ecologist and lover of temperate (cool water) reefs; think beautiful seaweeds, seadragons, blue groupers, Australian sea lions and more! I grew up near Fremantle (WA) and spent much of my early life swimming, driving boats and lifesaving at my local surf club.

Eventually, I discovered a passion for SCUBA diving and fell in love with the Great Southern Reef. It's a beautiful marine ecosystem parked right on our doorstep, yet it's often overlooked compared to its coral reef counterparts.



I have a Bachelor of Science from Curtin University where I graduated with Honours. I studied how ocean warming and marine heatwaves impact fish communities across southwestern Australia during this time. After my undergraduate studies, I worked as a research assistant, consultant, and technician at various organisations across WA, including UWA and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Over this time, I was fortunate to work in many beautiful places, including the Rowley Shoals, Dampier, Lizard Island (QLD), and Indonesia. Then in 2023, I completed a PhD with Southern Cross University and New South Wales Fisheries Coffs Harbour, focusing on marine climate change ecology in temperate southeastern Australia.

Over the years I have come to value science that can be applied to tangible outcomes. These positive impacts can be measured in a variety of ways, including improved conservation and management of marine environments to increased benefits for people who rely on these ecosystems for culture, livelihoods, and health. While I have an expansive love of marine science, temperate ecosystems are my real passion! So, I am stoked to be back at DBCA working as a Research Scientist in the Ngari Capes Marine Park. This corner of WA is so unique, with beautiful coastlines and *in my opinion* the most beautiful beaches in the world.



Image top right: Tanika by Maarten De Brauwer SCU

Above: Tanika seagrass sampling in Geographe Bay (Photo: Ankje Frouws ECU)

Whale season has arrived!

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood

The annual northern migration of our gentle giants has started. The first community reports in May signalled the beginning of this journey around Flinders Bay, marking the start of a remarkable period for whale enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

Thousands of these magnificent creatures embark on their epic voyage from the frigid Antarctic waters to the nurturing warmth of the tropical seas, where they will calve and nurture their young. This natural marvel offers us a unique opportunity to witness the beauty and grace of whale families in their natural habitat.

The Ngari Capes Marine Team would like to take this moment to remind everyone to prioritize the safety and well-being of our marine friends. Maintaining a respectful distance and adhering to the established separation guidelines is crucial. These measures are in place to protect both humans and whales, ensuring a harmonious experience.

Please be mindful that fines may be imposed for any violations of these guidelines. We hope this whale-watching season is a safe and memorable experience for everyone involved.

Should you encounter an entangled whale or any marine mammal in distress, please do not attempt a rescue yourself. Instead, immediately contact the Wildcare Helpline at 9474 9055 or reach out to your local Parks and Wildlife Service office. Your prompt action can make a significant difference.

Happy whale watching!

Whale Watching in Ngari Capes Marine Park

100m
NO VESSELS

300m separation

60° **NO APPROACH**

60° **NO WAITING**

100m separation

GO SLOW
PROCEED WITH CAUTION
BE MINDFUL OF VESSEL NOISE

People are not permitted to swim with whales unless on a licensed tour.

GIVE WHALES ROOM TO MOVE
Give whales space to behave naturally. Avoid chasing, crowding or blocking whales.

GO SLOW FOR THOSE BELOW
Reduce your speed and maintain a lookout.

BE COURTEOUS to other whale watchers.

For more information, please call:
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Parks and Wildlife Service – Blackwood District
Ph (08) 9752 5555



Touching, disturbing, interfering with the natural movement of, or breaching separation distances for whales in Western Australia is prohibited under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Penalties of up to \$500,000 may apply.



Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



PHOTO: JIMMY FIFE

Above: Whale watching separation guidelines for Ngari Capes Marine Park.



Above: Humpback whales in Geographe Bay by Blair Ranford

Celebrate with us at the 20th Anniversary WA Beach Clean-up

By Tangaroa Blue Foundation

From October 11th to 14th, volunteers from around WA will join Tangaroa Blue Foundation to clean-up the WA coastline! Every year, community groups, organisations, supporters, schools, and individuals come together at the WA Beach Clean-up, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. In this special year, we want to make the clean-up the biggest and best yet.

Over the last 19 years, the WA Beach Clean-up has helped remove 45 tonnes of marine debris from our precious coastline; that's more than the average weight of an adult humpback whale! Not only do we clean-up marine debris, but we also record it on the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMD I) database. By recording where, how much and what sort of debris we find, we collect evidence that can later be used to help create plans to reduce the waste at its source, before it ever reaches the ocean.

We need your help! We're looking for volunteers to register a clean-up site. Registering for your clean-up as part of the WA event will give you access to clean-up kits and an event promotion toolkit. We'll also add your clean-up to our interactive map.

Join us in celebrating 20 years of community collaboration and help out at the 2024 WABCU event!



WA BEACH CLEAN-UP

2024

11 - 14 OCTOBER

Join us at the 20th annual WA Beach Clean-up to celebrate two decades of protecting the ocean from marine debris!
Find out more at tangaroablue.org/WABCU





Above: DBCA joined forces with Tangaroa Blue Foundation and Keep Australia Beautiful WA at Circus Beach, South Coast for the 2023 WA Beach Clean-up

Further information

What is Tangaroa Blue?

Tangaroa Blue Foundation is an Australia-wide not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the removal and prevention of marine debris, which is one of the most significant environmental issues worldwide.

What is the AMDI database?

The Australian Marine Debris Initiative is a network of communities, schools, industries, government agencies, and individuals focused on reducing the amount of marine debris washing into our oceans. The AMDI database was created in 2004 so the network could record detailed evidence of the marine debris they were finding in a standardised way. Over the last two decades, we've used data from the AMDI database to create source reduction plans, provide evidence at government inquiries and contribute to peer-reviewed scientific papers. Recording this data gives us the power to create change and to stop debris at its source, before it ever reaches the ocean.

www.tangaroablue.org/wabcu

Instagram - @tangaroablue

Facebook - @tangaroa.blue

Contact: wabcu@tangaroablue.org (comms@tangaroablue.org)

Keeping connected and up to date

Understanding the designated zones and their respective activities is crucial for a safe and enjoyable visit to Ngari Capes Marine Park. Since 2018, these zones have been in place to facilitate various recreational and commercial activities while prioritising conservation efforts. Catering to fishers, scuba divers, snorkelers, surfers, and kayakers, the zones promote sustainability and establish sanctuary areas for undisturbed appreciation of the marine environment.

To stay informed and connected, utilise resources such as the Deckee app, Marine Parks app (available for Apple devices), and the FishCatch WA app, alongside engaging with Recfishwest for insights tailored to recreational fishing. These apps provide comprehensive information on marine park regulations, enhancing visitor experiences while promoting responsible enjoyment of Western Australia's coastal treasures.



Marine Parks WA App (Apple only):

Discover Western Australia's diverse marine parks, including the Commonwealth's national marine parks, spanning Camden Sound to Walpole. This app provides comprehensive details on each park and 72 marine wildlife species. With a 'where am I?' feature, users can access zone-specific activity information, including fishing, offline.

Get the App: <https://apps.apple.com/au/app/marine-parks-wa/id1138213788>



FishCatch WA app:

Recreational fishers in Western Australia, exploring the waters from Kalbarri to Augusta, are invited to utilise the innovative FishCatchWA™ tool to document their demersal scalefish catches voluntarily. Efficiently log your demersal catches and access valuable insights while actively contributing to scientific research. Seamlessly access the FishCatchWA™ tool through the ServiceWA app or download it now for immediate use.

App for Apple: <https://apps.apple.com/au/app/servicewa/id1599181775>

App for

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.gov.wa.digital.service.mobile.servicewa.citizen&hl=en&gl=US>

Recfishwest App:

Access all WA fishing rules, fish ID, GPS marine park info, and safety locations offline! High-quality illustrations and details on hundreds of species available on this free app. Stay updated on fishing seasons, bag limits, and easily identify catches with Recfishwest's three-step fish ID.

App for Apple: <https://apps.apple.com/au/app/recfishwest/id1103630115>

App for

Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.redi.rfw.production&hl=en_AU&gl=US&pli=1



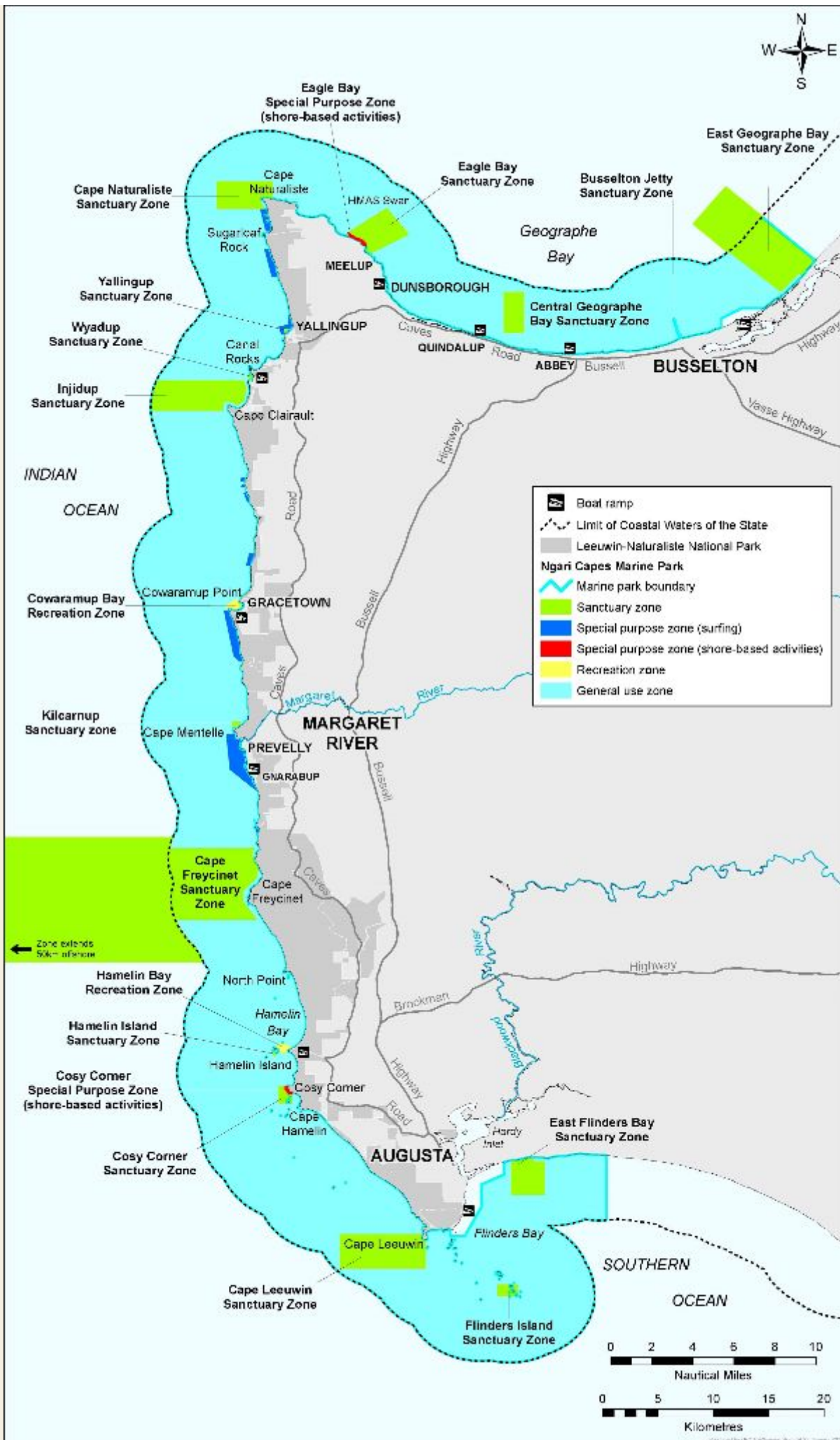
Deckee Boating App:

DECKEE is a comprehensive boating assistant with features like on-water location sharing, automated logbooks, marine weather, safety alerts, and more, ensuring confident navigation for users. It offers automatic on-water detection, global member visibility, risk forecasting, activity logging, local knowledge heatmaps, interactive chart info, and worldwide vessel tracking, catering to both novice and experienced boaters.


App for Apple: <https://apps.apple.com/au/app/deckee-boating/id1402262696>

App for Android:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.deckee.app&hl=en_AU&gl=US



Above: Map of Ngari Capes Marine Park showing zones plus national park zones in adjacent Australian marine parks.



**Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions**

**PARKS AND
WILDLIFE
SERVICE**

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