



PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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WELCOME to the Department of Parks and Wildlife's (DPaW's) new electronic newsletter, *Parks and Wildlife News*.

A Strategic Directions document that provides a focus for our activities can be viewed on our new website www.dpaw.wa.gov.au.

The document sets out the department's objectives for 2013–14 and the way in which DPaW will work with the community and other stakeholders to protect and manage Western Australia's most valuable natural assets, for the enjoyment and appreciation of all.

It is an exciting time for DPaW, with new terrestrial and marine parks planned, and the development of a modern Biodiversity Conservation Act to strengthen protection of WA's world-renowned biodiversity.

We look forward to sharing the achievements of staff and volunteers via *Parks and Wildlife News* when it is distributed on the first Tuesday of every month.

Happy reading!

Optimism for rock wallaby recovery

RECOVERY efforts for the threatened black-flanked rock wallaby have been boosted by the installation of a predator-proof fence around a key population near Kellerberrin.

The five-kilometre long, 1.8-metre high electric fence will help protect rock wallabies at the 176-hectare Nangeen Hill Nature Reserve following a drop in population numbers from 135 in 2007 to just five in May 2013.

Wheatbelt Region Conservation Officer Natasha Moore said predation by foxes was thought to be a key factor in the wallabies' decline, in addition to drought and weed invasion.

"Fox baiting has been conducted at the reserve for 30 years, and for a long time this worked well—the wallaby population increased dramatically," she said.

"But this growing population required more vegetation to feed on, and despite plenty of forage being available on the reserve in the areas surrounding the wallabies' preferred range of rocky outcrops, numbers began to drop again."

The rock wallabies were not prepared to access this food source for fear of foxes. This 'fear factor' meant that despite baiting, the threat of the mere presence of foxes was affecting the rock wallabies' chance of survival by limiting their foraging range.

The only viable option was to erect a predator-proof fence that would exclude foxes completely and end the range restrictions.

Seventeen rock wallabies have been introduced to kick start breeding numbers.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob, who announced the completion of the fence in July, said it had been built with \$75,000 funding from WWF-Australia and \$50,000 from DPaW.

"This joint effort is a prime example of how the State Government is working hand-in-hand with community-based organisations to deliver conservation outcomes for our state," he said.

"Through the efforts of DPaW, WWF-Australia, the Department of Agriculture and Food WA and the Shire of Kellerberrin, and with local community support, it is hoped we can not only protect the local black-flanked rock wallaby but also significantly strengthen populations."



(From left) Environment Minister Albert Jacob, Dermot O'Gorman from WWF-Australia, DPaW Conservation Officer Natasha Moore, local Nyungar Elder Winnie McHenry and DPaW Acting Director General Jim Sharp. Photo – Phil Lewis/DPaW/WWF-Australia

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Department of
Parks and Wildlife



Coastal rehabilitation project in full swing

AN IMPORTANT coastal rehabilitation project in the Ellensbrook-Prevelly area, which is being funded by a Coastwest grant, is well on its way to completion.

Since the 2011 Margaret River bushfire, the then Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) worked with community members and organisations to re-establish vegetation, address erosion and weed problems, and formalise access from the Cape to Cape Track to the popular Lefthanders surf break. Following 1 July, this work is continuing under the oversight of DPaW.

The area between Gracetown and Ellensbrook was extensively eroded after intense rainfall in 2012, leading to the construction of two Cape to Cape Track diversions to restore eroded areas and maintain track safety.

A 60-metre diversion was developed by the Friends of the Cape to Cape Track and the department to take the track away from the foredune system and one of the major erosion sites.

A second 400-metre diversion created by the Bunbury Regional Prison External Work Crew and the department excluded a steep limestone section of the track that was highly susceptible to erosion.

Further project works are continuing, including rehabilitation of the major erosion sites and construction of the Lefthanders Beach access steps.



A helicopter brings in materials for the coastal rehabilitation project at Ellensbrook and Prevelly.

The Friends of the Cape to Cape Track, together with staff from DPaW, will also plant native vegetation along sections of the track to stabilise the soil, reduce run-off and minimise the impact of heavy rainfall and future erosion. Pre-built sections of steps will be airlifted into place by helicopter, and sand entrapment fences will be built on-site.

The department would like to thank the many groups who are making outstanding contributions to the coastal rehabilitation project, including the Margaret River Surf

Riders Association, Cape to Cape Catchments, Friends of the Cape to Cape Track Inc, Bunbury Regional Prison External Work Crew, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Margaret River Montessori School, Helena College and Duncraig Senior High School.

The department also acknowledges the valuable input from Coastwest, the South West Catchments Council, the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River and technical experts throughout the process.

News in brief

MORE TO LOVE FOR PARK VISITORS

A series of recent upgrades to recreation sites in national parks and reserves around the state has provided visitors with a host of well-equipped spots for camping and caravanning.

The Baden Powell campground at Lane Poole Reserve in Dwellingup has benefited from a \$2.1 million upgrade, which includes 42 new camp sites and two larger group camping areas, significantly boosting capacity at the picturesque reserve.

The new campground is now open to the public. Many Lane Poole Reserve camp sites can be pre-booked at <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/campgrounds/>.

For more information see the full media statement.

There are also new visitor facilities at Peak Charles National Park, which lies 174 kilometres north-west of Esperance, following an investment by the State Government. Visitors to the park now have access to nine designated camp sites of varying sizes including space for bigger groups, caravans and other large vehicles. Other improvements include new shade shelters, toilets and park furniture.

Peak Charles towers 500 metres above the surrounding plains and, as one of the largest areas of intact Mediterranean-climate woodland on Earth, is visible for more than 50 kilometres in all directions.

For more information see the full media statement.

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Graduation and Awards Ceremony 2013

THE department held its annual Graduation and Awards Ceremony at the Western Australian Conservation Science Centre in Kensington on 6 June 2013.

Forty-nine graduates from various training programs were recognised at the ceremony, including staff from the Graduate Development Program, Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme (MATES), Regulatory Training, Pathways Program, Frontline Management Program and the School-based Trainee Program.

Awards were also presented to winners of the department's Scholarship Programs for Science, Leadership, Women, and Career Development and Study Assistance.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob joined in the celebration, and in his speech highlighted the value of the department's training programs and the importance of empowering generations of Western Australians with essential skills to ensure the state's environment is preserved and protected for years to come.

A new-look Graduate Development Program commenced in 2012, offering intensive and targeted training to recent university graduates from a range of disciplines. After completing a 12-month program three assistant operations officers, an employee relations officer, environmental officer, customer service officer, land administration officer, technical officer, GIS analyst and two Parks and Visitor



Acting Director General Jim Sharp (far left) and Environment Minister Albert Jacob (far right) with Graduate Development Program graduates (back row, from left) Tammy-Ann Cole, Melissa Faassen, Deanna Rasmussen, David Lindner, Blair Pellegrino and Nicola Mincham, (front row, from left) Megan Rowland, Chloe Sellars (Program Coordinator) and Lynette Marshall. Graduate Development Program graduates Blake Edwick, Alison Crowther and Kelly Rayner were absent.

Services project officers graduated from this program.

Melissa Faassen received the top honour when she was awarded the Keynes Memorial Award for the most outstanding graduate of the year, an award inaugurated in 1959.

"I feel honoured to have won an award that is part of such a long tradition within the department," she said.

The runner-up graduate David Lindner was also recognised for his commitment to the program, receiving the Director General's Merit Award.

Five trainees from the MATES program—now in its 11th year—were also recognised at the ceremony. Among them was Aboriginal Trainee of the Year Curtis Robinson, who completed his Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management.

Fellow trainee Eugene Park received the Kwabalitch Award in recognition of his tenacity, perseverance and dedication to his traineeship.

Alexander (AJ) Scott was awarded the Aboriginal Trainee Supervisor of the Year Award.

The award ceremony also recognised four staff from the Pathways Program, 23 from the Regulatory Training Program, one from the Frontline Management Program, three from the School-based Trainee Program, and 12 from the Scholarship Program.



Acting Director General Jim Sharp (far left) and Environment Minister Albert Jacob (far right) with (back row, from left) MATES trainee Eugene Park, Manager Registered Training Organisation Amanda Nabi, MATES trainee Curtis Robinson, (front row, from left) Pathways Program graduate Barry Fontana and MATES trainee Peter Lavern.

News in brief

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As part of an initiative to attract more tourists to the World Heritage-listed site, \$1.9 million worth of improvements have been made at Purnululu National Park in the East Kimberley.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the Bungle Bungle Range within Purnululu remained an iconic tourist location in WA, adding that it was not only important that the unique biodiversity of the national park was protected but also that the range remained a top visitor destination well into the future.

Upgrades include increasing the power supply to the park, improving car parks and walk trails, and redesigning and installing new interpretive signage.

For more information see the full media statement.

Letter to the department

2 July 2013

To the Director General

I have directed this letter to you since I am not sure who is directly in charge of the national parks including the campgrounds and rangers and hope you will redirect as required.

I have been motivated to write to you after experiencing a very pleasant encounter with your ranger at the Windjana campground on our last camping holiday.

We spent two and a half weeks travelling and camping in the Kimberleys (from 12 June to 28 June 2013) and made use of your facilities at Silent Grove, Mitchell River, King Edward River and Windjana

Gorge. In general all the camp sites were well maintained with clean toilet facilities and friendly and helpful rangers and camp hosts all at a very reasonable cost. A credit to your department.

At our overnight stop in Windjana campground the ranger, when doing her afternoon rounds, offered to identify the status of the roads on our way home since there had been heavy falls of rain in the Pilbara region. Next morning she provided me with an update on the roads and also offered to contract the RFDS since my wife was suffering from a severe skin rash and had not been able to sleep.

My wife accompanied her to the ranger station and was treated via contact with

the RFDS (this is also a wonderful service and we have become financial donors).

However I consider that your ranger (I believe her name is Kelly Helm) went well beyond the requirements of the job and therefore thought it appropriate that this is brought to your attention.

I commend your department on the wonderful job it is presently doing and hope this letter will encourage you to maintain the high standard in the campgrounds and also the high calibre of the rangers appointed to manage the parks.

Yours sincerely
Bill and Kitty Rotteveel

New radio transmitters help firefighting efforts

COMMUNITIES in the south-west towns of Nannup and Augusta now have better access to emergency bushfire information following an upgrade to ABC Local Radio transmitters.

Previously, residents in these areas received programs from the ABC Goldfields studio due to constraints related to terrain and ABC transmission pathways. From 1 August the communities began receiving programs from the ABC South West studios in Bunbury.

DPaW Fire Management Services Branch Manager Murray Carter welcomed the ABC's upgrade.

"Radio will continue to provide an important medium for disseminating vital emergency management information in rural WA," he said.

"These enhancements to the ABC radio network will provide increased expediency and benefit in this regard."

ABC South West's Regional Content Manager Tom Coull said ABC Local Radio was thrilled to be in a position to improve its service to the region.

"We know from consultation that radio audiences in Nannup and Augusta are hungry for local radio content that is relevant to them. This is particularly crucial during events such as bushfires when ABC Local Radio's emergency broadcasts are relied on for vital information," he said.

More information on the transmitter upgrades and ABC South West program information can be found at www.abc.net.au/southwestwa.

For advice during a bushfire, listen to your local radio bulletins, visit www.dpaw.wa.gov.au or www.dfes.wa.gov.au, or call 1300 657 209.



Windjana Gorge National Park. Photo – Tourism WA