



# PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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## Major revamp for Kalbarri National Park

Environment Minister Albert Jacob met with Midwest Region staff recently at the opening of a \$7.7 million upgrade of the magnificent Kalbarri National Park—one of the State’s most popular parks.

Designed to boost tourism in the region, the upgrade is a major investment by the State Government’s Royalties for Regions program. It included a \$5.8 million upgrade of The Loop–Z Bend access road and new facilities at two popular visitor sites.

“Shade shelters, lookouts, walking trails, visitor information areas and sealed car parks have been added at The Loop and Inyaka Wookai Watju (West Loop lookout),” Mr Jacob said.

“Sealing of 12km of the old road, which was in poor condition and had to be closed after heavy rainfall during the peak holiday season, has vastly improved access and safety for tourists visiting the area.

“Thanks to the addition of 85 parking bays, more visitors can now enjoy The Loop site, home to the stunning Nature’s Window rock arch.

“At nearby Inyaka Wookai Watju, a new car park and walking trail now leads to a wonderful lookout spot.”

The Minister said the significant upgrade was part of the State Government’s \$21.05 million *Parks for People* initiative.

A draft management plan for Kalbarri National Park was released for public comment last month. For more information visit the *Parks and Wildlife* website.



Environment Minister Albert Jacob with Parks and Wildlife trainee Zacc Phillips, senior ranger Mike Paxman and district wildlife officer Garth Grimsley at Nature’s Window in Kalbarri National Park.

## Free entry to national parks

Visitors to Western Australia’s national parks will enjoy free entry to the 30 parks that usually charge fees over the WA Day long weekend.

The offer aims to encourage more families and tourists to reconnect with nature as part of the *Parks for People* initiative.

More than 18,000 Western Australians and tourists are expected to visit these parks over the three-day weekend.

To find out more about WA’s parks, visit [parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au). To explore the places you can camp, visit [parkstay.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://parkstay.dpaw.wa.gov.au).

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Department of Parks and Wildlife





Environment Minister Albert Jacob with Professor David Goodall, the department's oldest volunteer at 100 years old.

## Centenarian volunteer honoured

Volunteers assisting with conservation efforts across Western Australia were celebrated as part of National Volunteer Week, which ran from 12–18 May.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the number of volunteers dedicated to supporting the environment had risen significantly in recent months.

"Since the creation of the Department of Parks and Wildlife in July last year, an additional 1412 volunteers have registered. This is a record number for the department and a big increase on previous years," Mr Jacob said.

"Last year volunteers contributed 564,350 hours to assist with various activities at national and regional parks, the WA Herbarium, Perth Observatory, the outdoor education program Nearer to Nature and the Wildcare Helpline for sick or injured wildlife.

"Among them is 100-year-old David Goodall, the department's oldest volunteer, who is a member of the Yellagonga Regional Park Community Advisory Committee and has been very active in the northern suburbs."

The Minister said Professor Goodall was also a former member of the Yellagonga Catchment Group and City of Wanneroo Environmental Advisory Committee, as well as an Honorary Research Fellow at Edith Cowan University.

"His ongoing commitment to nature conservation over the years is to be applauded," he said.

"I extend my gratitude to all of the department's dedicated volunteers. Their skills, talents and initiative have led to significant achievements and their commitment to preserving and maintaining the WA environment is inspiring."

## Innovative upgrade for boat computer

A recent project by the department's Office for Information Management (OIM) has resulted in a prototype on-board computer for marine park vessels.

The computer, which was purpose-built for a Fremantle-based boat, has set a precedent for the roll-out of upgrades in other boats.

Senior technical support officer Stuart Harding-Colliss said the boat's previous computer was outdated and in need of an upgrade, as part of the department's migration to a standard operating environment for computers.

"The upgrade presented a challenge as space on board was quite limited, so I had to retrofit a computer with all new parts inside the existing framework," Stuart said.

"In addition, the technology had to facilitate the highly specialised work being done on the water."

Senior marine wildlife officer Doug Coughran said the on-board computer was the nerve centre for navigation, tracking and monitoring systems.

"The work done by Stuart and the team is essential in keeping marine officers operational and safe at sea," Doug said.

"During a situation such as a whale entanglement, we can attach a tracking device to the whale and monitor it using specialised software until conditions are safe to disentangle it."

Chief information officer Femina Metcalfe said the work Stuart had done was a good example of the essential functions OIM provides to support the department's frontline operations.

"These services include information management, information and communication technology, and radio communications," she said.



Senior marine wildlife officer Doug Coughran and senior technical support officer Stuart Harding-Colliss with the boat's new computer.



# Rehabilitated animals released back into wild

Two separate native animal releases have highlighted the importance of community groups and volunteers in conserving wildlife.

Early last week, 20 rehabilitated Carnaby's cockatoos were released into the wild at Kensington and The Vines, in the Swan Valley.

Parks and Wildlife officers and volunteers from the Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre in Martin and Native Animal Rescue in Malaga released the endangered birds.

Wildlife officer Karen Smith said the cockatoos had spent about a year at the rehabilitation centres recovering

from injuries caused by vehicle strikes and other trauma, which had prevented them from flying.

"Each bird was assessed prior to release and we are confident they will make a smooth transition back into the wild," Karen said.

"It was exciting to see these iconic birds take flight and hopefully re-join existing wild flocks."

Meanwhile, two lucky sea turtles were released back into their home waters in the Indian Ocean after being rehabilitated.

The juvenile loggerhead turtles were found in poor condition on Rockingham beaches in August last year.

The rescued sea turtles, named Jack and Sam by rehabilitators at the Naragebup Rockingham Regional Environment Centre, were nursed back to health in collaboration with Parks and Wildlife and veterinarians from Perth Zoo.

Regional wildlife officer Cameron Craigie said members of Rockingham's Palm Beach Rotary Club kindly offered to return Jack and Sam to the waters of the north-west during a trip to Coral Bay.

"We are pleased Jack and Sam have recovered from their ordeal and thank Palm Beach Rotary Club for its assistance with their release," Cameron said.



Volunteers release the Carnaby's cockatoos at The Vines.



Greg James and Alan Guthrie from Palm Beach Rotary Club with the turtles released at Coral Bay recently.



Tracking Hamish.

The department runs a release and tracking program for a number of rehabilitated sea turtles, coordinated jointly by the Marine Science Branch, Nature Protection Branch and Exmouth District. One of the great success stories is Hamish, a post-hatchling loggerhead turtle who was found stranded at Hillarys, north of Perth. After being rehabilitated by WA Fisheries and the Aquarium of Western Australia, he was released by Parks and Wildlife staff off the coast of Exmouth late last year. Over the past six months his movements have taken him well into the Indian Ocean, about 3000km off the Western Australian coast. Hamish's path can be viewed online at [www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org).

# Wildlife officers seize cane toads in Perth

**Nine Kununurra cane toads were found earlier this week in a consignment of mango plants at a freight company's Perth depot.**

Parks and Wildlife officers retrieved seven live and two dead cane toads from a Toll Express truck, along with six northern green tree frogs and two other as yet unidentified native frogs.

Wildlife officer Teagan Johnston said it was the largest number of cane toads to reach Perth in a single incident.

"There were male and female toads hidden within the plants and if they had escaped from the truck and found a water source, it

is possible they may have begun breeding," Teagan said.

She said the vigilance of the freight company was to be commended.

"We were contacted by Toll staff once suspected toads were discovered, and the truck was sealed until Parks and Wildlife officers arrived and conducted a thorough search," she said.

The toads will be euthanased.

Invasive and toxic to many native animals and people, cane toads have established breeding populations in the east Kimberley.

Teagan urged people travelling south from places where the invasive pests are known to live to check their vehicles and equipment carefully for so-called 'hitchhiker' toads.

"They can hide in small spaces so inspect your vehicles, luggage, pallets, camping gear and caravans," she said.

Parks and Wildlife encourages people not to kill suspected cane toads, as they could be harmless native frogs.

They should isolate the animal and report the sighting to the Parks and Wildlife cane toad hotline immediately on 1800 44 WILD (9453).



*The cane toads found in a consignment of mango plants.*

# Parks and Wildlife removes whale head from metro beach

**Parks and Wildlife officers have successfully removed the 3m head of a sperm whale carcass found on a beach in Sorrento in Perth's northern suburbs.**

Senior marine ranger Vaughn Chapple said heavy machinery had been used to remove the head, which weighed around five tonnes and was in an area that was difficult to access.

"It was a complex and challenging operation due to the location as the whale head had to be moved by excavator up a 15m long 40 degree embankment," he said.

"It took five hours to remove the whale head from the beach, which is generally a third of the size of the entire whale's body."

Vaughn said each marine incident along Western Australia's coast presented different logistical challenges.

"The success of this operation is due to the collaborative efforts of the City of Joondalup, Surf Life Saving WA and Capital Recycling, which has provided the heavy machinery, along with the cooperation of the community," he said.

The sperm whale head has now been disposed of at an approved refuse site.

Sperm whales are the largest of the toothed whales and can grow to more than 18m long and weigh up to 90 tonnes.



*An excavator lifts the whale head from a beach at Sorrento.*

# Clean-up after flood in Cape Range

Staff and volunteers at Cape Range National Park in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area were part of a massive clean-up effort last month following flooding caused by ex-tropical cyclone Jack.

Exmouth district manager Arvid Hogstrom said the flooding caused extensive damage to roads, campgrounds, recreational sites, park infrastructure and the Milyering Discovery Centre.

"This was a very rare and unexpected event, with at least 250mm of rain recorded within a 24-hour period," he said.

"During the heavy rainfall, camp sites at the northern end of the park suffered significant damage and campers were forced to

relocate and move to higher ground."

Director General Jim Sharp commended district staff and campground volunteers for their dedication and professionalism during and after the incident.

"All employees, ranging from park rangers, marine officers and administration staff, were involved in the initial three-day clean-up and public response, which saw many of them using shovels and brooms and other equipment to remove mud and debris," he said.

He also thanked the volunteer campground hosts based in the park who were instrumental in ensuring the safety of campers.



Island reserves officer Carolyn Williams helps retrieve a water trailer that had been washed away in the floodwater.

Arvid said six staff from Frankland District made the trip north to help with the ongoing clean-up, bringing vehicles and equipment.

"These staff are currently based in Cape Range National Park and

are providing fantastic support, including rebuilding camp sites, clearing debris, and where possible, salvaging recreational assets washed away by the floodwaters," he said.

## Native species feature on fundraising quilt

The Country Women's Association's (CWA) Kalamunda Branch has produced a handmade quilt featuring some of the State's threatened plant and animal species.

Inspired by the Parks and Wildlife book *Western Australia's Threatened Flora* (available at [shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au)), the themed quilt will be raffled to raise money for charity and community groups.

Senior botanist Anthea Jones said the department's Species and Communities Branch facilitated copyright permission for photographs to be incorporated into the quilt design.

The raffle will be drawn on 23 July 2014 at the CWA State Conference.



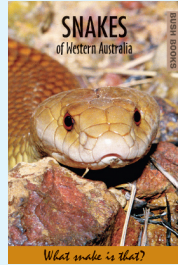
CWA members Connie Russell, Pam Edwards and Catherine Crowley with Regional and Fire Management Services Director Peter Dans.

## News in brief

### WA *Naturally* publishes first eBook

The department's WA *Naturally* publishing brand has celebrated the release of its first title in eBook format.

The popular field guide *Snakes of Western Australia* was recently revised and made available for purchase on iTunes, with Android and Kindle versions soon to follow.



The top-selling Bush Book contains information and photos of a selection of snakes commonly found in the State.

More Bush Book titles will be made available as eBooks in the future.

Visit [shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au) to browse all of the WA *Naturally* range.

### Photo competition open

To celebrate the *Parks for People* initiative—which aims to improve and expand camping and visitor experiences in parks throughout the State—the *Sunday Times* and *PerthNow* have been running a photographic competition to encourage people to visit natural areas and capture their experiences through photographs.

Two winners have been selected each week with a range of holiday packages as prizes. These include flights, accommodation and activities in national parks from Purnululu in the north to Cape Range in the World Heritage Area of Ningaloo to the south-west forest regions.

Photos are being published in the *Sunday Times*, *PerthNow*, the Parks and Wildlife website and social media. You can check out the site and see photos at [perthnow.com.au/news/photos](http://perthnow.com.au/news/photos).