



PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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Top from left: Professor Stephen Hopper AC, Aboriginal heritage officer Jayden Miller, Director General Jim Sharp, Dr Robert Isaacs OAM, Acting Director of Parks and Visitor Services Colin Ingram **Bottom from left:** Janet Holmes à Court AC, Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO, Professor Lyn Beazley AO, Claire Savage, Pat Barblett AM, Carol Buckley MVO.
Photo – Government House

Governor proposes parks foundation

Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO, Governor of Western Australia, recently launched an exciting initiative to encourage greater support for the State's national parks and reserves.

Her Excellency hosted 100 invited guests from the community, corporate sector and peak organisations at Government House in August to share her enthusiasm for WA's spectacular natural environment and her desire for wider community engagement with parks.

She proposed the establishment of an independent parks foundation or 'friends of' association, noting that Western Australia is the only State not to have its own body advocating for and supporting its outstanding parks and their many values.

"I'm proud of the national parks we have established to protect our plants, animals and outstanding natural features and the enjoyment opportunities they offer, including a healthy outdoor lifestyle," Her Excellency said.

"We are all responsible for the care and stewardship of our national parks and conservation areas."

Her Excellency urged guests to become involved in, visit and enjoy WA's unique natural heritage.

Other speakers at the event included Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp, biodiversity Professor Stephen Hopper AC, businesswoman Janet Holmes à Court AC and Parks and Wildlife Aboriginal heritage officer Jayden Miller.

Mr Sharp said the proposed foundation was an important venture, which had the potential to benefit national and marine parks and conservation reserves the department manages on behalf of the public.

"While a lot of work is being done to protect the State's world-renowned native plants and animals and make visitor experiences in our parks memorable, more support will help ensure these parks are conserved and their uniqueness appreciated well into the future," he said.

View the video at www.ourwaparks.com.au.

Published by the Department of Parks and Wildlife's Public Information and Corporate Affairs Branch

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Department of Parks and Wildlife





Minister opens Logue Brook

Environment Minister Albert Jacob has officially opened Logue Brook campground, 130km south of Perth.

"This is a wonderful campground because it is close to Perth, affordable and easy to access. Set in jarrah forest on the shores of Lake Brockman, you can go waterskiing, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, camping, picnicking and bike riding," Mr Jacob said.

Logue Brook features five camping loops with 126 new camp sites to accommodate about 540 campers, plus 2.5km of internal roads, nine toilet blocks, five barbecue shelters and picnic tables, and fire rings at each camp site.

The \$3 million project is part of the Liberal National Government's \$21.05 million *Parks for People* initiative, aimed at encouraging more people to experience the State's many spectacular natural areas and provide affordable holidays for families.

Top: Environment Minister Albert Jacob with traditional owner Lesley Ugle and Member for Murray-Wellington Murray Cowper MLA.

Top right: The Minister tests out the mountain bike pump track at Logue Brook campground.

Right: The Minister with traditional owners Vince and Lesley Ugle. Photos – Jennifer Eliot/Parks and Wildlife



Above left: The blue markings on the cockatoo's tails will help identify them out in the field. Photo – Karen Smith/Parks and Wildlife



Above right: Forest red-tailed black cockatoos are released at Murdoch University. Photo – Rick Dawson/Parks and Wildlife

Successful lift-off for threatened cockatoos

Nine Baudin's cockatoos have been given another chance at life after being successfully rehabilitated and released with tracking devices to help researchers unravel some of the mysteries surrounding the vulnerable species.

Parks and Wildlife is working closely with researchers at Murdoch University and Perth Zoo as part of the innovative program to track the birds' flying, eating and roosting habits.

Senior wildlife officer Rick Dawson said Baudin's cockatoos were primarily forest dwellers and their range was consistent with marri tree distribution.

"Up until now it has been very challenging to monitor flock movements and this tracking program might help increase our knowledge of this species," he said.

Murdoch University Associate Professor Kris Warren said the project provided an exciting opportunity to understand the migratory patterns of the birds and the key threats facing the species.

"Very little is known about Baudin's cockatoos and this study will help identify the critical habitat used for breeding and feeding across the species' distribution in the State's south-west," she said.

Murdoch University research team member Dr Jill Shepard said they are using University of Amsterdam Bird Tracking System GPS trackers that contain an accelerometer and enable unprecedented collection of ecological data.

"The GPS technology is particularly exciting as we will be able to gain an understanding of fine-scale movement by the birds, including when they are flying, eating or roosting," she said.

Numbered and coloured leg bands on each cockatoo are also helping researchers to monitor and identify the birds in the wild.

Last week, six rehabilitated forest red-tailed black cockatoos were released at Murdoch University under the same program.



WA firefighters lend a hand overseas

Top left: Tony Mennen and Ryan Butler on Puntzi Ridge, British Columbia.

Top right: Frank Bailey with crews from Ontario.

Above: Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis with the eight Parks and Wildlife and DFES firefighters who left for the United States on 22 August: Simon Martin, Alf Lorkiewicz, David Meehan, Michel Stewart, Andrew Thompson, Rob Blok, Greg Feeney and Steve Ward.

Twenty Western Australian firefighters have contributed to international firefighting efforts throughout July and August, with 12 officers recently returning from Canada and another eight currently in the United States.

Parks and Wildlife operations officer Frank Bailey was deployed to the Larne complex of fires in north-west Alberta, Canada, as a divisional commander for a ground operations division.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," he said.

"The highlight for me was being able to help others in need. By the time we arrived, Canadian crews were extremely tired. They had been fighting numerous fires around the country for three months, so being able to relieve them was really rewarding.

"It was also a great experience to work with people from Mexico, Ontario, Newfoundland and New Brunswick."

Conservation employee career development coordinator Lincoln Marissen said the three-week trip

to Canada had been an interesting and challenging opportunity.

"The Australian contingent swung into action as an incident management team, and even though many of us had never met it was reassuring to know we could work together effectively in a high-level bushfire such as this, since you never know when you might be working together at a fire on home soil," he said.

Lincoln worked as an airbase manager and air attack supervisor, which involved coordinating 14 helicopters for fire suppression, crew transportation and logistical support.

"The biggest challenge for me was the remoteness and reliance on aviation. Getting access to the fires was difficult by road, so a lot of the work was done by helicopters," he said.

On Saturday 22 August four Parks and Wildlife firefighters and four Department of Fire and Emergency Services firefighters left for the United States to help battle blazes in California, Oregon

and Washington State. They joined DFES assistant commissioner Chris Arnol who left for the US days prior.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said that so far this year fires in the US had burnt more than 2.9 million hectares.

"The impact on communities has been devastating, and it's fortunate that we are able to help as part of an international effort to help contain these fires," Mr Jacob said.

Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis, who saw the US contingent off from Perth Airport, said there were dozens of uncontained bushfires burning across the US.

"Our Western Australian firefighters are highly skilled and experienced in fighting forest fires from the air and on the ground, which will be invaluable in helping our US counterparts," he said.



Above: Spiral-fruited wattle.

Right: Moora District staff who helped plan and undertake the burn (left to right): Deanna Rasmussen, Emma Clingan, Steven Buitenhuis, Isaac Hatch, Gary Pekel, Jess Henriques, Pauline Phillips and Lauren Strumpher. Photos – Leonie Monks/ Parks and Wildlife

Saving a critically endangered wattle using fire

A wide range of Parks and Wildlife professional expertise was on display when Moora District fire officers joined research scientist Leonie Monks to conduct a prescribed burn to help regenerate a critically endangered species of Western Australian wattle.

It is hoped the prescribed burning will cause dormant seeds of the spiral-fruited wattle, which boasts golden flowers in June and July and grows in a dense mat up to 4.5m in diameter, to germinate and grow new plants.

Leonie said before a translocation program for the spiral-fruited wattle began in 1998, just 51 plants were known to exist in the wild.

“Parks and Wildlife has now established three new populations of spiral-fruited wattle, with a combined total of 830 seedlings, in two nature reserves about 200km north of Perth,” she said.

“For the translocations to be considered successful, the plants have to reproduce and create a stable, viable population. Fire is a key factor in breaking seed dormancy of wattles.”

That’s where Parks and Wildlife’s expertise in prescribed burning came to the fore.

In June this year, with funding assistance from the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, a prescribed burn was carried out by Moora

District fire staff on one of the translocated populations of the spiral-fruited wattle.

Leonie said rain fell about a week after the prescribed burn and the site was being monitored regularly.

“Now it is a waiting game to see whether the fire has done the job of regenerating this population,” she said.



Record time given by valuable volunteers

It’s said that those that can, do... and those that can do more, volunteer! Parks and Wildlife is fortunate to have a band of passionate and hard-working volunteers that help the department in all sorts of important and useful ways.

In a fantastic effort, 4636 volunteers contributed 614,745 hours to conservation and recreation projects across WA in 2014–15. This is a 21 per cent increase from the previous year. Over the same period, the department recruited 1751 new volunteers.

Community Involvement Unit coordinator Lee Hollingsworth said the dramatic increase could be attributed to a number of factors,

including the use of efficient volunteer management software to record volunteer efforts, and regular communication between the department and volunteers promoting new opportunities.

“There were 22 new volunteer projects registered in 2014–15, with more than 250 individual projects across nine regions and 16 districts now recorded,” he said.

New projects included Pilbara Islands Nature Reserve Wheatstone Project, Perth Trail Series across parks in the Darling Range, Donnelly weed management program and the rehabilitation of peat wetland in the Walpole Wilderness.

“Thanks go to the volunteers for contributing to our biggest year yet in terms of time given,” Lee said.

“Their efforts, as well as those of the Parks and Wildlife staff who supervise them, show that there is enormous support for the department’s work.”

And what do these diligent volunteers get for their efforts? Well, of course all volunteers are able to earn rewards such as park passes, but in the words of Volunteer of the Year 2014 Monica Iseppi, “to be useful for the parks, for the community and for the environment in general is rewarding in itself.”



Above: Canning River Regional Park volunteers. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

WA native plant list hits 10,000

Western Australia has created a new national record with the number of known native plant species now passing the 10,000 mark.

The recently named *Angianthus globuliformis*, a tiny and rare native daisy that was discovered during a salinity survey in the Wheatbelt, was the lucky 10,000th species to be added to the Herbarium's plant census.

There was also another significant plant milestone reached, with 17 new types of spider orchids discovered between Geraldton and east of Esperance, highlighting the enormous variety of plant species known to exist in the south-west region.

The newly named spider orchids are all from the genus *Caladenia* and include 11 separate species and six subspecies, taking the total number of identified spider orchids in WA to 158.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the State had one of the world's highest rates of discovery of

new plant species with an average of more than 50 a year.

"There is an incredible diversity of plant species in WA and if our State was a country, we would rank as the 20th richest in the world for the number of identified plant species," Mr Jacob said.

"Nationally, WA has the highest number of native species followed by Queensland with 8545.

"Knowing what plants we have, where they grow, and their role in the environment is crucial for conservation and sustainable development."

The WA Herbarium is responsible for documenting and listing all known plants, algae and fungi in the State.

New species are discovered through botanical surveys and specimens brought to the Herbarium, and also from careful study of the more than 750,000 specimens in its collection.

Below left: *Angianthus globuliformis* – the 10,000th species to be named. Photo – Mike Lyons/Parks and Wildlife

Below right: Clumped spider orchid. Photo – Andrew Brown/Parks and Wildlife



Turtle monitoring expedition full of challenges

Above: A turtle makes its way across the partially inundated beach at Cape Domett. **Below right:** Technical officer Corrine Severin recording information about nesting success. Photos – Ryan Douglas/Parks and Wildlife

Every year in August regional staff from Kununurra and Kensington-based Marine Science Program staff mount an expedition to a remote beach at Cape Domett, 110km from Kununurra in the far north-east Kimberley to monitor flatback turtle nesting.

This year, between 6 and 19 August, two field teams spent about a week each counting turtles, tracks, nests, hatchlings and gathering other data.

The teams were led by nature conservation regional leader Ben Corey, Marine Science Program technical officers Corrine Severin and Ryan Douglas, and assisted by Parks and Wildlife Miriung Gajerrong rangers and traditional landowners.

"We counted 403 turtles coming up to nest on the beach over 14 nights," Corrine said.

In the process the teams walked an estimated 4–10km every day on soft sand.

"While the beach walking was tiring, the work was very rewarding and it's a beautiful spot," Corrine said.

The only access to the site is by boat and facilities are non-existent, which meant, thanks to the presence of large estuarine crocodiles, the only option for a wash was a saltwater bucket shower well away from the sea.

As part of the research element of the trip, eggs were collected to enable further research into the effects of heat on turtle eggs, to be conducted in collaboration with The University of Western Australia.

The field trips to Cape Domett are part of a Kimberley Region long-term monitoring project and the data

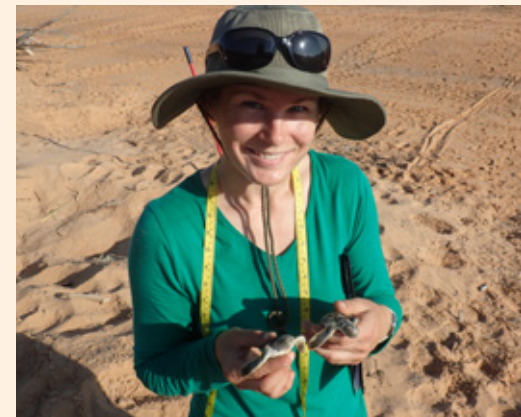
gathered assists with the goals of the Western Australian Marine Science Institute marine turtle project and the North West Shelf Flatback Turtle Conservation Program.

Principal scientist Scott Whiting said the winter rookery at Cape Domett was one of Australia's largest flatback rookeries in Australia.

"This project not only provides critical information for future marine management in the area but also provides an important reference site for the summer breeding flatbacks of the North West Shelf," he said.

"We really appreciate the work done by the Kununurra regional staff in ensuring this important work continues."

Five satellite transmitters were also attached to adult turtles to determine their home range and migratory routes. (See www.seaturtle.org to track the turtles.)



Reducing bushfire risk at Matuwa



Above: Back row: Milton Anderson, Raymond (Carbi) Carbine, Scott Johnstone, Cindy Miller, Georg Wandrag, Michael Raykos, Ashley Walsh. Front row: Chris Phoebe, Mo Pawero. Absent: Jennifer Jackson. Photo – Matthew Wood/Parks and Wildlife
Right: The burnt and unburnt patches will provide protection for wildlife while reducing the severity of potential bushfires. Photo – Jennifer Jackson/Parks and Wildlife

Careful consideration and planning was used to undertake the first ever prescribed burn inside the 1100ha predator-proof compound at Matuwa (Lorna Glen former pastoral lease) in the Goldfields.

Goldfields Region staff were joined by Wiluna Martu rangers, two members of the department's Fire Management Development Program, and a Central Desert Native Title Services Land and Culture employee.

The compound was identified as vulnerable to being burnt out in a single event after two lightning strikes sparked a bushfire in the compound in January 2015. Though the 6.4ha bushfire was quickly extinguished, the department was keen to ensure future bushfire risks were reduced.

Goldfields fire operations officer Michael Raykos said regional staff worked with Science and Conservation Division on planning the prescribed burn.

"The burn initially planned to target 31 sites, up to 1ha in size, randomly selected in the spinifex vegetation. Of the 31 sites planned, 26 were burnt, creating a mosaic of small patch burns, which will be expanded over coming years," he said.

"Due to the fauna management and cultural sensitivities associated with the compound and many ongoing research projects, crews were not able to use machinery or vehicles off the designated tracks, which

meant carrying hand tools up to 800m cross-country to create burn boundaries prior to ignition."

Once mineral earth breaks were created by rake hoes, crews ignited the designated patches, removing more than 70 per cent of available fuel within their boundaries.

The Wiluna Martu rangers shared their knowledge of tracking, and the team took care to track animals in the planned burn areas prior to ignition. Animals sighted throughout the week included boodies, a mala and numerous reptiles and birds.



Nature Protection recognised for their work



Above: Flora licensing officers Kelly Griffiths and Sarah Francis with wildlife officer Karen Smith and senior wildlife officer Doug Coughran.
Centre: Director Science and Conservation Division Margaret Byrne with wildlife officer Matt Swan.
Above right: Director General Jim Sharp with Nature Protection manager Kevin Morrison. Photos – Karla Graham/Parks and Wildlife

Nature Protection Branch's newly refurbished office at Parks and Wildlife's Kensington headquarters was christened recently with a morning tea attended by Director General Jim Sharp, Directors, building and accommodation manager Mark Brabazon and support staff, as well as the Wildlife Licensing Section.

Jim used the morning tea to recognise the valuable work the department's wildlife officers do.

"We've got a very dedicated team who work to protect WA's native animals, from assisting with wildlife rehabilitation, to conducting whale disentanglements and investigating unlawful wildlife activities," he said.

Branch manager Kevin Morrison said the event was a good opportunity to say thank you for the renovation.

"It's a massive improvement on our original office. It's a fantastic space to work in now, with natural light, modern facilities and a great view," he said.

Kevin invited staff from throughout the department to visit, see the renovations and take the opportunity to engage with their activities.

He also thanked branch staff for their patience and willingness to relocate during the works.

Mapping bushfire potential

Meteorologists, climatologists, fire officers and land managers have come together at Parks and Wildlife's Kensington headquarters to map the potential for fire activity in the coming southern Australian bushfire season.

Principal research scientist Lachie McCaw said the annual seasonal outlook workshop would help land managers make resource planning and prescribed burning decisions.

"The theme of the workshop is very much about using scientific knowledge to support decision making," he said.

"A range of broad climate factors were assessed, including soil moisture and rainfall, as well as fuel load and vegetation type. The coming season is characterised by the combination of above normal sea temperatures in the Indian Ocean and a strong El-Nino affecting eastern Australia. This is an unusual pattern not seen in recent decades."

A summary of findings from the workshop will be produced and released in September via the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC.

The workshop was convened by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council and Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, and attended by Parks and Wildlife, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and the department's land management counterparts in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria.



Above: Parks and Wildlife principal research scientist Lachie McCaw, Department of Fire and Emergency Services environmental protection branch manager Jackson Parker, Bureau of Meteorology severe weather manager Bradley Santos. Photo - Karla Graham/Parks and Wildlife

Tourism opportunity in Millstream Chichester

The State Government is offering an exciting opportunity for investors to develop new ecotourism ventures within Millstream Chichester National Park.

Tourism Minister Kim Hames said the opportunity was part of the *Naturebank* program, which aims to prepare sites in conservation areas for the development of quality, environmentally sensitive tourism accommodation and experiences.

"There are two very different sites, Narrina Gorge and Ashburton, that could be developed to provide ecotourism accommodation or experiences such as guided walks and cultural activities," Dr Hames said.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said this was the sixth site to be released as part of the *Naturebank* program.

[For more information, check out the full media statement.](#)

Kalbarri National Park 10-year plan released

A 10-year management plan for Kalbarri National Park, one of Western Australia's most visited and environmentally diverse areas, has been released.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the park's spectacular landscapes received more than 300,000 visits a year.

"Kalbarri National Park is home to more than 1000 species of native plants – the third-highest number recorded in a WA national park – unique geological features and 75 species of reptiles," he said.

The Minister said the new management plan would guide recreation, tourism and the protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage in Kalbarri National Park for the next decade.

"The plan includes key performance indicators for managing flora and fauna, threatened species, fire, weeds, pest animals and the protection of cultural and historic heritage," he said.

[Read the plan at www.dpaw.wa.gov.au.](http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au)

Whale rescue training held

Regional staff based in Albany are ready to respond to whale entanglements after attending a specialised training course recently.

Senior wildlife officer Doug Coughran said participants included nature conservation and fire management specialists.

"It's important that we have staff in a number of locations appropriately trained in the use of specialised equipment and techniques for whale disentanglements, enabling regional staff to manage challenging situations safely," Doug said.

There are now trained teams in Busselton, Bunbury, Perth, Jurien Bay, Geraldton, Exmouth, Karratha, Broome and Albany.

Right: Back row: Deon Utber, Peter Collins, Grantly Morton, Tammy Leonard, Tim Button, Mark True, Tim Wellstead, Anthony Desmond (Geraldton). Front row: Sarah Comer, Greg Freebury, Charlene Dekker, Alison Benson, Doug Coughran (trainer/assessor). Photo – Parks and Wildlife

