



PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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Exciting wallaby find in Kalbarri National Park

Rare black-flanked rock wallabies have been sighted at Kalbarri National Park, after being considered extinct in the area since the mid-1990s.

A rock climber photographed and filmed two of the wallabies in a gorge in the Promenade area of the park in August. The elusive species has not been seen in the park for 20 years despite extensive searches.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said it was amazing they had now been discovered.

"The nearest known population is more than 450km away in the Wheatbelt, and there are some scattered populations much further north in the Pilbara, so we know these two wallabies must have been from the original population in the vicinity of the park," he said.

Parks and Wildlife staff have set up traps and cameras in the area where the animals were spotted and are carrying out further surveys to determine whether there are any more wallabies in the park.

The department had been planning a reintroduction of the species using animals from the Wheatbelt populations, which will still go ahead if an assessment shows it is necessary to improve the genetic diversity of the Kalbarri wallaby population.

The Minister said goats were considered to be a major factor in the original decline of rock wallabies in Kalbarri National Park.

"Goats have not only competed with the wallabies for food, but also pushed them out of protected gorge areas, leaving them vulnerable to predation by foxes and cats," he said.

"The Department of Parks and Wildlife has undertaken aerial goat culling in the park since 2006, and has

controlled goats to the extent that wallaby numbers will now be able to build up again."

Under *Western Shield*, the State Government has also been baiting for foxes and feral cats in the park since 1996.

Any further possible sightings of the wallabies in the gorge can be reported to the Kalbarri National Park headquarters on 9937 1140.



Top: The rock wallabies spotted in the park after being considered extinct in the area since the 1990s. Photo – Remi Vignals
Above: Parks and Wildlife zoologists Juanita Renwick (at trap) and Nicole Willers (with monitoring camera) prepare traps. Photo – Anthony Desmond/Parks and Wildlife

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Department of Parks and Wildlife



New campground unveiled near Margaret River

The recent opening of a new and improved family-friendly campground near Margaret River has added to the increasing number of affordable camping options available in the south-west.

Conto campground, in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, has undergone a \$1.1 million makeover and now includes 29 new camp sites, each with a fire ring and picnic table, bringing the total number of camp sites to 116.

Funded by *Royalties for Regions* under the *Parks for People* initiative, the campground provides improved facilities for holiday-makers including new barbecue shelters and double-cubicle toilets, as well as upgraded roads, signage and paths.

At the opening, Environment Minister Albert Jacob said Leeuwin-Naturaliste was the most visited national park in WA because of its accessible location in the south-west, spectacular scenery and variety of recreational activities on offer.

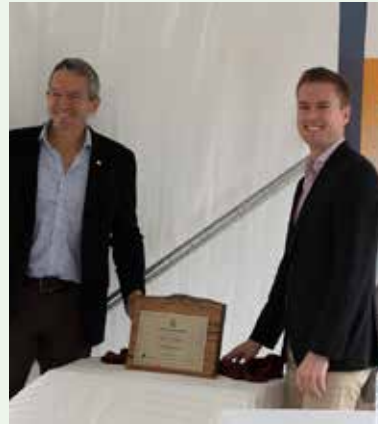
“People come to Leeuwin-Naturaliste to swim, snorkel, surf, fish, go caving and bushwalking, take scenic drives and simply connect with nature,” he said.

Conto campground was jointly opened with Regional Development Minister Terry Redman.

Mr Redman said the *Royalties for Regions* investment into improving facilities in national parks was helping boost visitors to regional WA.

Conto joins Logue Brook, Gnaala Mia

at Dryandra Woodland, Lane Poole Reserve, Coalseam Conservation Park, and Cape Range and D’Entrecasteaux national parks as the latest campground projects to be completed under the *Parks for People* initiative.



Top: Regional Development Minister Terry Redman and Environment Minister Albert Jacob unveil a plaque to mark the opening of the new campground. Photo – Peter Nicholas/Parks and Wildlife

Above: One of the 29 new camp sites featuring its own fire ring and picnic table. Photo – Ryan Scott/Parks and Wildlife

Fire manager returns from Grand Canyon exchange

Moora District fire coordinator Isaac Hatch has returned from a five-week trip to Grand Canyon National Park under a new exchange program between Parks and Wildlife and the United States National Parks Service.

The program will see one staff member from each agency travel across the globe each year to work with their international counterparts and learn about their approach to fire management.

Isaac was chosen for the first US trip after receiving an Excellence Award in the department’s 2015 *Fire Reward and Recognition Program* for his strong leadership skills and dedication to fire management.

“I was lucky to have the opportunity to work in and explore the massive Grand Canyon National Park,” Isaac said.

“The NPS’s fire emergency process is very similar to ours, with structured incident management teams ready to swing into action. However, a key difference is that sometimes they will choose not to suppress a bushfire, but to let it run its course as part of a natural process, provided it’s safe to do so.

“Due to the remoteness and hilly terrain, a lot of their firefighting is done on foot, with crews walking many kilometres carrying equipment.

“The NPS also manages the nearby South Rim Canyon Village, a village of about 3000 people who work for the NPS or operate facilities within the World Heritage-listed park.”

A keen adventurer, Isaac spent his free time hiking through the park, which covers more than 480,000ha and receives about 4.5 million visits per year.

Parks and Wildlife will host an NPS employee in January 2016.



Above: Fire coordinator Isaac Hatch inspects the boundary of a managed fire in Kaibab National Forest, which borders the Grand Canyon.

WA parks a hit with interstate tourists

Parks and Wildlife recently received this letter from visitors Peter and Marg Speed:

Hello

We wanted to pass on some feedback from our recent trip to WA, and ask you to forward it to the appropriate area on our behalf.

Over the past three months we have travelled WA (as far north as Exmouth this trip) and have visited and stayed at a number of national and conservation parks. Apart from the obvious special and natural beauty of each of them, we have been really impressed by the facilities and development of areas we have visited.

We have loved each and every one of them, including but not limited to the superb developments and amenities at:

- Osprey campground at Cape Range. The walkway overlooking water, privacy of sites, community seating.*
- Fitzgerald River National Park. Shower room at Four Mile Beach, the area depiction on the walkway, the information boards giving history and insight to the area.*
- Logue Brook Dam ... the coded gate, sensible, secure ... keeping both unwanted/unpaid visitors out. Great. Cape le Grand ... the rock fishing anchors and safety/security advice.*

We could go on and on ... but we won't instead we will give you our thoughts on what we see as one of your key assets.

It's your people, out and about or in your offices. Warm, welcoming and always prepared to share knowledge and help travellers any way they can. The passion and pride they have in the environment, their jobs and Parks and Wildlife is wonderful. Sally and Pete (who we had the pleasure of meeting/observing/learning from during a photo shoot at Cape Range) are top of our list. It was on their recommendation that we visited both Logue Brook and Fitzgerald parks. Although our time was limited at both these parks as we were at the end of our trip, we have factored both in for more time next time.

Rangers at various parks who (while doing their job) were always prepared to share knowledge, suggest options, give advice. Your volunteer camp hosts. Friendly and welcoming. All are a credit to themselves and your department.

Our holiday is now over and we are a little sad to leave WA ... there's so much more to see and do, but all good things must come to an end ... suffice to say we will be back!

Thanks for doing your job well ... we appreciate it.

Cheers

Peter and Marg Speed



*Peter and Marg in Cape Range National Park.
Photo – Jennifer Eliot/Parks and Wildlife*

Support for *Western Shield* continues

Long-time sponsor of *Western Shield*, Alcoa, has continued to show its support for the wildlife recovery program, investing \$140,000 in 2015–16 to protect native animals in jarrah forest north of Mundaring through to Collie.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said Alcoa had been a big supporter of *Western Shield* for nearly 20 years and the company's continued sponsorship was very important.

"Through fox baiting, some threatened species are showing promising signs

in the northern jarrah forest as a result of recovery action by Parks and Wildlife," he said.

"A recent four-day monitoring project in the Perth Hills involved trapping and spotlighting small mammals within the medium weight range, typically vulnerable to fox predation, and this has shown extremely positive results.

"The team captured and recorded a range of species including brushtail possum; quenda; and in particular the chuditch, which showed a persistent

healthy population with 65 animals caught, many of them breeding females."

Under *Western Shield*, the Government is integrating feral cat control with fox baiting through operational trials of the feral cat bait *Eradicat*® in targeted areas of the State. The program is generously supported by Alcoa, Tronox and Western Areas Ltd.



Above: Alcoa Director of Environment and Sustainability Tim McCauliffe, nature conservation officer Rebecca Kay with a brushtail possum, Member for Swan Hills Frank Alban MLA and Director General Jim Sharp. Photo – Heather Quinlan/Parks and Wildlife

Kimberley islands book launched

A new book outlining the biological values of the unique Kimberley islands was launched this week by Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp.

Biodiversity values on selected Kimberley islands was compiled by Parks and Wildlife principal research scientist Lesley Gibson and the Western Australian Museum, in partnership with Balangarra, Uunguu, Dambimangari, Mayala and Bardi-Jawi traditional owners.

The book is a collection of scientific papers based on island surveys conducted between 2007 and 2010.

Mr Sharp said it would be used to assist in conservation management planning under the *Kimberley Conservation and Science Strategy*.

"The exceptionally beautiful islands of the Kimberley lie within one of the world's last great wilderness areas," he said.

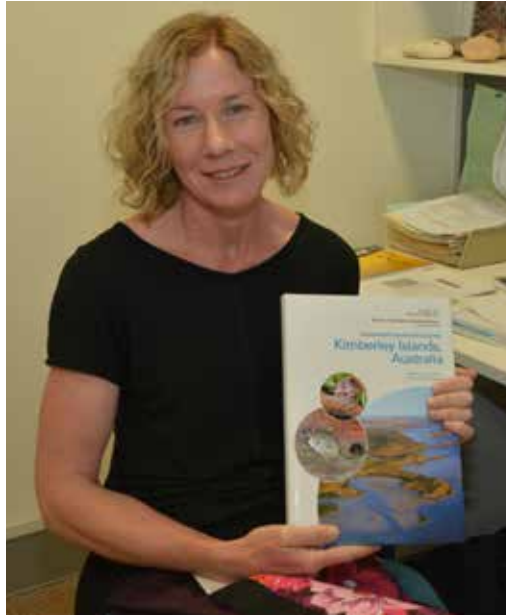
"There are more than 2500 mapped islands along this stunning coastline and they support numerous threatened species."

With a few exceptions, the islands have remained almost free of invasive species and are less altered by fire than the adjacent mainland. This region has seen increasing human activity in recent years, bringing a range of potential risks to the natural values of the islands.

The book documents the plant and animal species on 24 islands and focuses on species believed to be at risk from threats such as the cane toad.

Mr Sharp said seven of the papers in the book described island patterns for each of the plant or animal groups that were surveyed while another describes Aboriginal connections, values and knowledge of the Kimberley islands.

Above: Principal research scientist and the book's co-editor Lesley Gibson said it was a real team effort.
Photo – Karla Graham/Parks and Wildlife



Eric Singleton wetland construction complete

Earthworks at Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary in Bayswater are complete and the planting of 170,000 native plants has commenced as part of the \$3 million nutrient stripping wetland project.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said restoring the sanctuary was critical in reducing harmful phosphorus and nitrogen loads entering the river from Bayswater Brook.

Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary is the second wetland the Liberal-National Government has invested in during the past 15 months to reduce the amount of nutrients flowing into the Swan

and Canning rivers. The \$4.05 million Ellen Brook wetland was completed in March 2014 and will be commissioned this year.

"The sanctuary will prevent almost 40 tonnes of sediment and rubbish, 1.3 tonnes of nitrogen and 200 kilograms of phosphorus from entering the Swan River every year," Mr Jacob said.

Water from Bayswater Brook will be diverted into the Eric Singleton wetland where it will pass through a pollutant trap that removes rubbish, sand and other large material. The water will then flow through alternating deep

and shallow vegetated wetland areas where natural processes will improve water quality.

The Minister said the wetland would be fully operational next year once the plants had grown to a height to allow the wetland to be filled.

"Once revegetation of the new wetland is complete, we expect to see an increase in the number of animals and biodiversity at the site," he said.

Mr Jacob thanked the City of Bayswater for its environmental vision and financial commitment to this important wetland project.

New app showcases rare plants of the Pilbara



A new app to help environmental managers and scientists identify rare Pilbara plants was launched today at the department's Keiran McNamara Conservation Science Centre.

The Rare and Priority Plants of the Pilbara app provides descriptions, distribution maps, images and a simple identification guide for 167 rare and little-known plant species.

The free app was developed by Parks and Wildlife in collaboration with RioTinto and provides targeted research relevant to both organisations and their contractors.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the information in the app would help the Government, industry and the community make better decisions about conservation planning.

"Having this critical information and knowledge readily available at one's fingertips is extremely useful to further support conservation and future development in the Pilbara," he said.

The free app is available on [Apple](#) and [Android](#) smartphones and tablets.

Left: Western Australian Herbarium Curator Kevin Thiele with Environment Minister Albert Jacob, Rio Tinto General Manager Environmental Approvals James Davidson and Director General Jim Sharp. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

Fighting fit for fire season

Staff across WA have had a busy training schedule to get fire-ready ahead of the south-west bushfire season.

Senior fire development and education officer David Rawet said he expected more than 800 Parks and Wildlife employees to have completed the training by 30 September.

"Training for all staff – regardless of their role – involves theory, practical drills, medical clearance and fitness testing, with frontline firefighters taking on an even-more comprehensive fitness and skills training program," David said.

"We make sure everyone is comfortable with the operation of radios, map reading, understands bushfire

behaviour, and knows what to do in the event of a burnover."

Training has also been delivered to staff involved in fire management from the Forest Products Commission and the Department of Water.

In 2014–15, Parks and Wildlife staff attended and monitored an estimated 825 bushfires across the State, which burnt an area of more than 2.5million hectares.

Right: Forest Products Commission senior forester Jon Brand and Parks and Wildlife learning management system coordinator Leticia Lorkiewicz go through their radio drill.
Photo – Karla Graham/Parks and Wildlife



Willetton SHS wins *Don't Dump That Fish* competition

A school video competition promoting awareness about dumping exotic fish species in rivers has been won by Willetton Senior High School.

The winning video, acted out by a group of Year 8 students, depicts a television news story with a cross from the studio to the Swan River and an interview with a scientist about the impact of dumping feral fish in rivers.

Fisheries Minister Ken Baston presented the students with a certificate as they participated in their prize of a cruise along the Swan River.

The competition, an initiative of Parks and Wildlife, is part of the Department of Fisheries' *Don't*

Dump That Fish campaign.

Parks and Wildlife education officer Linley Brown said 72 entries from 20 schools were submitted.

"The video competition has been a great way to engage young people to raise awareness about the effects of dumping exotic fish in our rivers," she said.

Parks and Wildlife senior environmental officer Jeff Cosgrove said the Swan Canning Catchment was home to six endemic freshwater fish species, two of which were rare.

"It is important that we protect our native fish populations from the introduction and spread of exotic fish species," he said.



"The deliberate dumping of pet freshwater fish can quickly establish feral populations, which out-compete native fish for resources, damage natural habitats and have the potential to spread disease."

Check out the [video](#).



Above: Willetton Senior High School Gifted and Talented Education Program Coordinator Darren Hamley, Principal Chris Booth, Fisheries Minister Ken Baston and Swan River Trust Chairman Hamish Beck congratulate the winning students.

Photo – Jeff Cosgrove/Parks and Wildlife

New facilities built at Fortescue Falls

Parks and Wildlife Swan Region joined forces with Pilbara's region staff to install new steps, platforms and handrails at Fortescue Falls in Karijini National Park, significantly improving access to the popular tourist attraction.

Part of the redevelopment of the Fortescue Falls walk trail, the works involved the realignment of the trail's middle section and some 'hard yakka' by Swan Region staff, according to Pilbara-based senior operations officer Geoff Passmore.

"One of the main objectives of the project was to provide a safe walk on a moderate gradient offering a range of stunning views," Geoff said.

"It was important for the construction materials to be durable and visually attractive, so we used raw steel to blend in with the environment and the iron-rich gorge walls."

Some of the metal structures were prefabricated by Swan Region staff in their Jarrahdale workshop, as part of the Parks and Wildlife *Remote Regions* program, before the Perth-based work crew was sent to the Pilbara to finalise construction onsite.

"This occurred in July and took four weeks," Geoff said.

"It presented an extreme physical challenge for the crew, who had to carry in materials and use welders, grinders and other hot works."

The upgrade project is likely to be completed in May 2016.



Above: Visitors enjoy Fortescue Falls from the new trail infrastructure. Photos – Parks and Wildlife

News in brief

Annual reports now available

The 2014–15 annual reports for Parks and Wildlife and the Swan River Trust have been released.

This is the final report for the Swan River Trust, which amalgamated with Parks and Wildlife on 1 July 2015.

View the [Parks and Wildlife](#) and [Swan River Trust](#) reports.

Funding to grow mountain biking in WA

New funding for mountain biking in Western Australia will drive the expansion of one of the world's fastest growing recreational activities.

Earlier this month, Sport and Recreation Minister Mia Davies announced \$450,000 would be allocated to the *Western Australian Mountain Bike Strategy* over three years.

"This funding will go to WestCycle – the State's peak cycling body – and the WA Mountain Bike Association to deliver recommendations from the strategy, released in May," she said.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said mountain biking was a healthy, family-friendly activity that had important flow-on economic, social and tourism benefits.

[Read the full media statement.](#)

Discounted park passes RAC members

Parks and Wildlife and RAC have joined forces to give RAC members a 50 per cent discount on the most popular park passes.

Director General Jim Sharp said the partnership aimed to encourage Western Australians to get outdoors and enjoy nature.

"The State's stunning 13 marine parks and 100 national parks are world-renowned for their distinct biodiversity and scenic landscapes," he said.

RAC Executive General Manager Advocacy and Members Pat Walker said the partnership was founded on the organisations' common interest in encouraging all Western Australians to travel, holiday and enjoy living in WA.

RAC members can visit www.rac.com.au/membership/rac-online-shop to make use of the offer.

A journey of colour: WA wildflowers in bloom

With nearly 10,000 species of flowering native plants, and new species being described all the time, Western Australia's south-west is an internationally renowned botanical hotspot. From late-June to November this area attracts international travellers who specifically come to see our unique flora. And new species are still being discovered.

So when and where are the best places to go to experience these rich botanical treasures?

Awash with colour

From late-June the State's Midwest region starts to come alive with colour. Head up to the Shark Bay area and you can expect to get an 'outback' or 'station country experience' with open Acacia scrublands, Eremophilas, everlastings and mulla mulla. As you get closer to Kalbarri, a variety of sand-plain species appear including Ashby's banksia, sceptre banksia and coppercups.

Coalseam National Park south-east of Geraldton provides the station country experience without having to go remote. Here you'll find Acacia woodlands with masses of everlasting like pompom head in early spring.

Lesueur National Park is one of WA's premier floral destinations. It provides a variety of habitats to visit with patches of woodland, lateritic hills and kwongan heathlands. On the lateritic hills you can expect to see species such as spider coneflower or the unusual *Daviesia epiphyllum* with its flattened blue-grey stem from which large bright red pea flowers emerge.

Perth's doorstep

Some of the more spectacular displays of wildflowers can actually be found on Perth's doorstep. One place worth a visit is John Forrest National Park during September to October. The granite outcrops are always fascinating to explore and it is a good spot for 'belly botany' – getting down to see an astonishing array of tiny herbs like triggerplants, sundews and daisies on show.

In early summer the spectacular Morrison featherflower comes into full bloom. The best places to see this species is just north of Perth at Moore River National Park or Boonanarring Nature Reserve; good patches can even be seen in Whiteman Park.

Further afield

The south-west tip from Margaret River to Walpole gives the botanical enthusiast a broad range of habitats to explore. The Capes and Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park have great examples of coastal flora, with species such as *Pimelea ferruginea*, coral vine and thick-leaved fan-flower.

Further around the coast, Torndirrup National Park has a range of coastal limestone species as well as

an interesting granite outcrop flora. Close by are the Porongurup and Stirling Range national parks, which contain numerous endemic species. The Stirling's Darwinias are probably the park's most iconic species.

The south coast jewel in the crown would have to be Fitzgerald River National Park. A declared World Network Biosphere Reserve, the park has more than 1500 species of flora, many of which are unique to the area. While September has a fantastic display of wildflowers, the season extends well into October–November. The iconic plant for the park has to be the royal hakea.

So, whether you're planning a day out in Perth's surrounds, a trip further afield, venturing along the

coast or into the outback, pick the right time of year and you'll be treated to magnificent wildflower displays. You might even come across something that hasn't yet been described.

This is a truncated version of identification botanist Rob Davis's article 'A journey of colour' in the Spring 2015 issue of LANDSCOPE magazine, which is available from shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au.

Below Left: Royal hakea, Fitzgerald River National Park. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

Below: Common mountain bell, which can be found in Stirling Range National Park. Photo – Babs and Bert Wells/Parks and Wildlife

