



PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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Western Shield action pack to teach about native species

Above Environment Minister Albert Jacob joins primary school students holding a 3m Pilbara olive python.

Above right Western Shield zoologist Michelle Drew shows students a woylie. Photos – Mitzi Vance/Parks and Wildlife



Young Western Australians can learn about threatened species and the conservation actions to help their recovery with the release of the expanded *Western Shield Action Pack*.

The updated educational resource was released by Environment Minister Albert Jacob at a *Nearer to Nature* incursion with Year 5 students from Peter Moyes Anglican Community School in Perth's north.

"The Liberal National Government has been working to control the threat of foxes and feral cats and protect some of our State's most vulnerable native animals," Mr Jacob said.

"The *Western Shield Action Pack* helps teachers to increase students' awareness of the threat of introduced predators to native wildlife and the ongoing work to minimise this."

The resource is designed for Years 4–6 and developed in line with curriculum learning area outcomes. Written by Parks and Wildlife officers Stephen Crane, Richard Olive and Fiona Harris, the resource includes teachers' notes, classroom activities, work sheets and information on what students can do to help WA's native wildlife.

The Minister said that education encouraged a greater awareness of the need to conserve the State's precious native wildlife in a vital and practical way.

To date, more than 108,000 students have directly participated in *Western Shield* school activities run by Parks and Wildlife.

The action pack is available for download at www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/westernshield.

Plan for WA's biggest marine park released

Public comment is being sought on Western Australia's largest marine park – the 1.8 million hectare proposed North Kimberley Marine Park.

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Department of Parks and Wildlife



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Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the proposed park would be the second largest State marine park in Australia behind the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park and seven times the size of Ningaloo Marine Park.

Mr Jacob said its creation would be a significant milestone towards conserving the unique northern environment, while providing jobs and management opportunities for traditional owners and supporting growth in environmentally sustainable tourism.

"While this expansion is significant in its own right, it is the multiple benefits that flow from the new park that is most important," he said.

"The creation of this park provides an exceptional conservation outcome as well as opportunities for growth in tourism."

The proposed park will increase the total area of the State's marine parks and reserves by more than 70 per cent.

With existing and proposed marine parks in the north Kimberley, these unspoilt coastlines and waters will form the Great Kimberley Marine Park and stretch from Horizontal Falls in the south, through Camden Sound and across to the Western Australian and Northern Territory border.

From page 1 King George River. Photo – Chris Nutt/Parks and Wildlife **Below** Hunter River, West Kimberley. Photo – Andrew Halford/Parks and Wildlife



"It will protect a complex variety of marine habitats including unique and globally significant coral reefs, mangrove systems, mudflats and remarkable coastlines as well as dolphin, dugong, turtle and sawfish populations," the Minister said.

"The park will be also rich in Aboriginal culture, with traditional owners having a strong cultural, spiritual and social connection to the area and continuing to practise customary activities."

The State Government's \$81.5 million *Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy* is the largest ever targeted investment in the Kimberley.

The draft management plan is available at www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/northkimberley and is open for public comment until 20 May 2016.

View the Minister's announcement video at www.dpaw.wa.gov.au.



Parks and Wildlife is seeking community information and support regarding the shooting on an endangered Baudin's black cockatoo early this month.

The cockatoo is currently recovering after being shot in Bridgetown. It was handed in to Parks and Wildlife with a number of pellet wounds and received treatment at Manjimup Veterinary Clinic and Perth Zoo before being transferred to the Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre.

Parks and Wildlife officer Brad Barton, the Chair of the Forest Black Cockatoo recovery team, said the incident was disturbing.

"It is illegal to shoot specially protected animals and this native bird is a threatened species," Brad said.

The department is investigating the shooting and seeking information from the public.

There are penalties of up to \$10,000 for shooting black cockatoos under the Wildlife Conservation Act, and up to \$250,000 for an individual and \$500,000 for a corporation under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Brad said Baudin's cockatoos move around the south-west as part of their seasonal migratory patterns and are often seen at this time of year in the Manjimup, Donnybrook and Bridgetown areas foraging for food.

Above left Recovering Baudin's cockatoo at Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre.

Photo – Emma O'Leary/Parks and Wildlife **Above right** People are being asked to photograph Carnaby's leg bands.

Photo – Rick Dawson/Parks and Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife is also encouraging community members to photograph banded Carnaby's cockatoos to help track the birds' movements and population survival over time.

The department has banded more than 1000 black cockatoos in the last decade, including nearly 900 Carnaby's nestlings as well as rehabilitated birds from all three WA black cockatoo species. People are being asked to take photos of banded birds and send them in to the department to help with research and monitoring.

DLSR cameras with large zoom lenses are best for photographing leg bands, but even small cameras with zooms can work.

Please send your photos and the location where they were taken to Parks and Wildlife via [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/parksandwildlifewa) private message, or by email to fauna@dpaw.wa.gov.au.

People are also being encouraged to register for the annual Great Cocky Count. The long-term citizen science survey of black cockatoos in WA is being held on Sunday 3 April and involves volunteers monitoring known roost sites and counting black cockatoos as they come in to their evening roosts. To participate please register by Sunday 20 March at www.birdlife.org.au/projects/southwest-black-cockatoo-recovery/great-cocky-count-swbc.



Community grants to bolster river health

Above Alcoa Managing Director Michael Parker, Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp, Friends of Bennett Brook's Bronwyn Edney, Friends of Lake Claremont's Claire Brittain, Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group's Catherine O'Neill and Environment Minister Albert Jacob at the SALP award ceremony. Photo – Perth NRM

Almost \$400,000 will be shared between 24 community groups to fund projects focused on improving water quality in local rivers and wetlands in the Swan Canning catchment.

The funds will be provided through the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program, a partnership between Parks and Wildlife, Alcoa Australia and Perth NRM. This year the program will help community groups deliver 41 projects aimed at reducing harmful nutrients and contaminants.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program was a strong collaboration between the State Government, local government, environmental groups and industry.

"Since it was established in 1999, the landcare program has supported 1251 on-ground projects," Mr Jacob said.

"These initiatives have focused on revegetating priority waterways, bushland restoration, dieback management, creating native animal habitat, weed control and the management of pests."

Healthy Catchments Program manager Kim Sylva said the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program helped local landcare groups make a real difference.

"The State has invested more than \$4 million into projects through this program since it began 17 years ago," Kim said.

"Alcoa has contributed more than \$3.7 million and when you add in local government's input and volunteer hours, it pushes the total value of the program's to more than \$16.5 million."

On average, more than 10,000 volunteer hours are invested into the program's projects per year.

South-west communities impacted by more fires

Parks and Wildlife responded to three bushfires that threatened communities in the Shire of Harvey in early February, just weeks after one of the largest and most intensive bushfires in WA's history devastated the town of Yarloop.

A large bushfire in the Uduc area west of Harvey was contained after three days, burning more than 1100ha. A deliberately lit fire near Harvey Quindanning Road in Kent forest block burnt 50ha, while a reignition of the major Waroona/Yarloop fire that started in January burnt through almost 400ha.

Hundreds of firefighters from Parks and Wildlife, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and volunteer bushfire brigades responded to the three fires, with support from the Shire of Harvey, WA Police, Western Power, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and the local community.

Some tracks, trails, campgrounds and recreation sites affected by the fires in January and February remain closed, with recovery actions continuing.



Right A gang truck at the Uduc fire. Photo – Caroline Brocx/Parks and Wildlife



Above left Helitac at Uduc fire. **Above right** Fire near Collie. Photos – Caroline Brocx/Parks and Wildlife

Nominations open for fire awards

Nominations are open for Parks and Wildlife's 2016 Fire Management Reward and Recognition Program.

The annual awards formally acknowledge staff members who demonstrate best practice in their fire management role.

People in operational roles such as conservation employees and incident management team members are eligible, as well as people in behind-

the-scenes support roles and senior fire practitioners.

The program is not limited to the current bushfire season and may recognise people or teams from previous incidents, or activities spanning many years. People who have been previously nominated may also be renominated.

Nominations close on Monday 4 April 2016. Contact Bel on 9219 9923 for more information.

Goanna versus snake

This highly venomous tiger snake didn't stand a chance when a hungry southern heath monitor came looking for something to feed on. Captured by Frankland District flora officer Janine Liddelow, this shot was taken on a forest track north-east of Walpole.

The southern heath monitor can be found in the State's far south-west and across to South Australia and Victoria. Growing up to 1m, it has a diet of birds, reptiles, small mammals, eggs and carrion (dead animal flesh) and actively hunts for prey.

Wildlife officer Matt Swan said it was not uncommon to find southern heath monitors feeding on tiger snakes.

"They will eat pretty much anything they find, and tiger snakes occupy a similar habitat to them," Matt said.

"They are both high-order predators and in this case there would have been a significant struggle between the two of them.

"It goes to show the intelligence of the monitor that it is able to catch and kill a tiger snake (and not get bitten). My guess would be that this particular individual has a 'taste for tiger snakes' and has done this before on many occasions."

The incredible photo reached more than 131,000 people on the department's [Facebook page](#), and was featured in international media.

Photo – Janine Liddelow/Parks and Wildlife



Western ground parrots found on south coast

Parks and Wildlife staff were delighted when a recent survey at Cape Arid National Park revealed evidence of critically endangered western ground parrots.

Bushfires in October and November 2015 burnt out much of the secretive parrots' known habitat.

Regional ecologist Sarah Comer, who chairs the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team and works with the field project team, said good numbers of calls were heard during the listening survey of an unburnt area east of Thomas River.

"We also flushed out a few birds and had some sightings in a third unburnt pocket, which is very encouraging," Sarah said.

"We have deployed some automated recording units to pick up the birds' calls in other areas of unburnt heath throughout Cape Arid and Nuytsland Nature Reserve not previously known to be western ground parrot habitat."

Sarah said 10 feral cats were trapped during the trip to Cape Arid.

"Controlling feral predators is a priority – cats are known to target areas burnt by bushfires to hunt native animals."

Above Western ground parrot. *Photo – Jennene Riggs*

Wetlands celebrated across the globe

Tuesday 2 February was World Wetlands Day, marking 45 years since the signing of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in the Iranian city of Ramsar on 2 February 1971. More than 1000 events, photo contests and working bees were held across the globe in recognition.

Parks and Wildlife marked the day by co-hosting the 2016 Wetland Management Conference, together with the City of Cockburn and the WA Local Government Association.

Principal coordinator wetlands Michael Coote said the theme of this year's conference was 'Wetlands for our Future – Sustainable Livelihoods'.

"The conference brought together 160 community conservation volunteers, landowners, educators, local and State Government officers and private sector environmental officers," he said.

"Besides the plenary presentations covering a broad range of topics in wetland research, education, management and policy, a new item was trialled at this year's conference – a question and answer session with representatives from political parties, research institutions and environment NGOs to discuss gaps, priorities and drivers of wetland policy in WA.

"The session generated a lot of interest and genuine debate on future options for generating policies to assist in the better protection of wetlands."

WA has 12 sites listed under the Ramsar Convention – from the spectacular wetland systems in the Kimberley to the lakes on the south coast which are important wildlife refuges. For more information on wetlands, including the department's Healthy Wetland Habitats program, visit www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/wetlands.



Volunteers from the Waterbird Conservation Group hard at work weeding/planting at a Baldy's wetland. Photo – Waterbird Conservation Group