



PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

In this issue

- Woylie translocation key to survival
- New walkways at Karijini National Park
- Chuditch discovery in Bateman
- Midwest volunteers retire
- Perup proves memorable for park visitor
- Breathing life into the Canning River
- Twin milestone for parks
- Trainees, graduates and award winners honoured

NEWS IN BRIEF

- [Workshopping Pilbara northern quolls](#)
- [New campground for Margaret River region](#)

Woylie translocation key to survival

Sixty-four woylies were recently translocated from Parks and Wildlife's Perup Sanctuary, near Manjimup, to three different sites to help with recovery efforts for the critically endangered species.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the recovery of the woylie, a small marsupial, was part of the Liberal National Government's *Western Shield* wildlife conservation program, which was working to reduce the threat of foxes and feral cats on native animals.

Cold mornings and early starts were no deterrent to dedicated Parks and Wildlife staff from Warren and Wheatbelt regions, volunteers, wildlife carers and Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) staff focused on preserving the woylie.

Four nights of successful trapping saw 214 individual woylies caught from Parks and Wildlife's Perup Sanctuary near Manjimup and translocated to three sites.

More than half of the translocated woylies were taken to AWC's wildlife sanctuaries at Mount Gibson, 350km north of Perth, and Karakamia at Chidlow, about 50km north-east of Perth.

Twenty-six woylies were taken to Dryandra Woodland, near Williams in the Wheatbelt region, where local farmers and traditional owners attended the release.

Conservation and forest management regional leader Brad Barton said the woylies moved to AWC properties were released in introduced predator-free sanctuaries.

"The woylies taken to Mount Gibson supplemented animals that were moved to the site in 2015," he said.



Above: Farmers living on the outskirts of Dryandra release translocated woylies to boost the genetics of the population living in the area. Photo – Astrid Volske

"There's been a long-term population of woylies at Karakamia and the introduction of five new males aims to improve genetic diversity of this population.

"The animals moved to Dryandra have added to the wild population and increased the genetic diversity there.

"The Perup Sanctuary supports the most genetically diverse woylie population in the State and this transfer

of the marsupials is part of conservation efforts focused on establishing and maintaining insurance populations across a range of locations."

The woylie population is estimated to be less than 20,000, including 400 to 600 of the marsupials in the Perup Sanctuary, with the only wild populations remaining in Dryandra and the Upper Warren in the State's south-west.

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Department of Parks and Wildlife





Above: Walkway at Fortescue Falls. Photos – Parks and Wildlife



New walkways at Karijini National Park

Visitors to Karijini National Park now have better access to popular Fortescue Falls and Fern Pool, with the completion of new steel stairs and walkways.

The three-year Parks and Wildlife project has created a safe and user-friendly path to the bottom of the 100m deep Dales Gorge.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the improved access was part of the State Government's investment in high-quality tourism infrastructure in national parks.

"We are encouraging more people to experience the natural wonders in our diverse and beautiful national parks, with better facilities and easier access," Mr Jacob said.

The department's Pilbara senior operations officer Geoff Passmore said the Fortescue Falls walkway project was

completed in the cooler seasons by staff from the Perth Hills District.

"The stairs and walkways were designed and prefabricated by staff at the Jarrahdale work centre and then assembled onsite," Mr Passmore said. "They were made of raw steel for durability and to blend in with the iron-rich gorge walls.

"The crews worked extremely hard during the installation, carrying in materials and using welders, grinders and other hot works in challenging terrain.

"The Fortescue Falls walk trail project, which cost \$679,000, has really improved accessibility for visitors and has created platforms for tourists to stop and take in the beauty of the gorge walls and the falls."



Chuditch discovery in Bateman

Above: The dead chuditch found in Bateman. Photo – Keith Morris/Parks and Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife is seeking public assistance following the discovery of a dead chuditch, or western quoll, on a footpath outside Bateman Primary School in the City of Melville.

The chuditch, a two-year-old male, was reported to the department on Thursday 9 June by a keen-eyed member of the public, Frances D'Souza, who recognised it as an uncommon native species. It was buried in nearby bushland by the Bateman Primary School gardener before it was retrieved by Parks and Wildlife the following day.

Animal science program leader Keith Morris said the discovery of the dead chuditch was exciting as it raised questions about how the animal came to be in suburban Perth.

"We know that chuditch can move long distances, so maybe it travelled from the hills along the Canning River using reserves as corridors. That may be 20km or more," he said.

"For it to have avoided predators such as cats and dogs, along with vehicles, for that distance would be remarkable. Another possibility is that someone had been keeping the chuditch and released it.

"The other option is that the species is still naturally occurring in the area, however, this is unlikely because there are no remnant bushland areas large enough to support a chuditch population."

Chuditch probably occurred in the area until the 1950s when the Bateman area was still bushland and rural lots.

The animal was in very good condition and showed no signs of being predated, although it had a break in a rear leg, indicating it may have died after being hit by a vehicle. It has been taken to the Western Australian Museum to be added to the State's fauna collection.

Anyone with information about chuditch sightings in the Bateman area, or in wider metropolitan Perth, please contact Keith Morris at Parks and Wildlife on 0400 746 645, or keith.morris@dpaw.wa.gov.au

Midwest volunteers retire



Above: Don and Rhonda Anderson.

One of Parks and Wildlife's longest serving caretaker couples has retired after 20 years of service to the department.

Don and Rhonda Anderson have been caretakers at Burnerbinmah former pastoral lease, 70km south-west of Mount Magnet, since 1995 and prior to that held the pastoral lease for 13 years.

The Andersons arrived at Burnerbinmah in 1982, running sheep and growing fine merino wool with success and with a great appreciation for the fragile lower Murchison environment.

Rhonda said the 60,000ha station was acquired in 1996 by Parks and Wildlife's predecessor, the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

"In January 1995, Don was bitten by a king brown snake and spent some time in hospital under specialists who announced he had about six months to live," she said.

"After much deliberation, we offered the property to CALM to purchase, and within 18 months it had been acquired, with us as caretaker managers."

In the following years, Burnerbinmah was used by the department for research into sandalwood germination, growth and oil content.

"We enjoyed our years there collecting flora samples, ridding the property of feral goats, cats and wild dogs, assisting with fire control and every other job that was expected of us," Rhonda said.

"Don and I were also trained as honorary CALM officers, and during our years there had a wonderful association with the department's Geraldton staff, with never a cross word.

"It was a wonderful 20 years and we would do it all again."

Parks and Wildlife's Midwest Region manager Nigel Sercombe thanked the Andersons for their valuable contribution to the department.

"Don and Rhonda were instrumental in carrying out important work to ensure our biodiversity conservation outcomes were met, while also welcoming visitors and helping us maintain a presence in the lower Murchison area," he said.

"I would like to offer our sincere thanks for their years of dedicated service to the department, and I wish them all the best for their retirement in Toodyay."

Perup proves memorable for park visitor

The value of wildlife conservation work done at Tone-Perup Nature Reserve was highlighted last month by a visitor who kindly sent the letter below to the department's Director General Jim Sharp.

Dear Mr Sharp

I recently spent a wonderful week at Perup Reserve with the amazing Parks and Wildlife staff and Global Gypsies.

I found it to be a profound experience which enhanced my desire to promote the conservation message. I look forward to taking my grandchildren to the Perup facility to share the wonderful Aussie bush, birds and animals with them. I feel the more we share these facilities and teach our children about our wonderful environment the better our world will be for future generations to enjoy it as I have.

It was a unique opportunity to the public to see the fantastic work the department undertakes. The dedication the staff showed to the animals and the environment during our stay was a delight to see. The staff all proved to be professional and caring when handling the animals. They were also very willing to share their experiences and knowledge with us.

I hope to repeat this experience in the future should the opportunity arise to participate in the monitoring of the animals in the sanctuary.

Below: Senior technical officer Bruce Ward releases a woylie at Tone-Perup Nature Reserve. Below right: Preparing the woylies for release. Photos – Peter Nicholas/Parks and Wildlife



Workshopping Pilbara northern quolls

Research priorities for the endangered Pilbara northern quoll were the focus of a recent workshop hosted by Parks and Wildlife.

More than 60 scientists, environmental consultants, academics and researchers, Commonwealth and State environmental regulators, resource companies and environmental NGOs gathered to review research efforts and outcomes for the species, as well as identify new or emerging issues.

Assistant Director of Science Dr Stephen van Leeuwen said the event, supported by Roy Hill, built on two previous workshops and looked at “what we had learnt over the previous three years and in what direction this research would be heading.”

The northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*) is a predatory marsupial once distributed widely across northern Australia but its numbers have declined in the last 50 years, restricting it to five regional populations in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, including the Pilbara.

New campground for Margaret River region

The historic Jarrahdene Mill site in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park will soon boast a new campground.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob recently announced that site works at Jarrahdene would soon start to lay the ground work for the development of 45 individual camp sites and two group camping areas, as part of the State Government’s \$21.05 million Royalties for Regions *Parks for People* initiative.

The campground will complement nearby Conto campground and offer access to bushwalking, cycling, caving, surfing, swimming at nearby Hamelin Beach and other nature-based activities.

Jarrahdene campers will gain a sense of the area’s timber milling past with interpretive signage and a walk trail, while enjoying facilities including barbecue shelters, double-cubicle toilets, picnic tables and fireplaces at each camp site.

Breathing life into the Canning River



Above: Canning River monitoring buoy. Photo – Rhianna King/Parks and Wildlife

The health of the Canning River is set to be enhanced with work now underway to upgrade the Bacon Street oxygenation plant.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the \$1.4 million upgrade was a part of the Liberal National Government’s commitment to provide oxygen relief to all feasible areas of the Canning River upstream of the Kent Street Weir.

“The upgraded Bacon Street plant, as well as a plant built in 2014 further upstream at Nicholson Road Bridge, will provide refuge for fish and reduce the severity of algal blooms,” Mr Jacob said.

“The new and improved plant at Bacon Street will replace the two ageing plants along the

2.3km stretch of the river where natural oxygen levels are low, and will mean we can respond more effectively to provide relief when needed.”

Water Minister Mia Davies said the use of artificial oxygenation technology to support river and estuary health in the Swan Canning Riverpark had been extensively trialled and was now an effective management tool in the Vasse Estuary.

“Strategic use of this technology reduces risk of fish deaths and algal blooms while we continue to work with partner groups to reduce nutrients entering our waterways from catchments,” she said.

Rivers and Estuaries River Systems manager Mark Cugley said improved oxygenation of the river

meant organic matter will be broken down more quickly and nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen will remain bound to sediments.

As part of the works, one distribution pipe will replace eight pipes from the two older plants, significantly reducing maintenance costs.

“This upgrade will ensure that oxygen is dissolved more efficiently and distributed much further in the river,” Mark said.

The Canning River oxygenation upgrades are a joint project between the departments of Parks and Wildlife and Water.

Work expected to be complete at the end of the year in time for summer.

Twin milestone for parks

Marmion Marine Park in the Swan Region and Purnululu National Park in the Kimberley Region share a special connection – they were both created 30 years ago.

Key decisions in the development of the parks have come to light as part of 1985 State Cabinet records, recently released to the public for the first time.

The papers revealed in-principle agreement for the creation of the Marmion Marine Park – Western Australia’s first marine park - and consideration of a national park to protect the Bungle Bungle Range.

Purnululu National Park was gazetted in 1987, and with its distinctive beehive-shaped sedimentary rock towers known as the Bungle Bungles, it also became a World Heritage area in 2003.

Marmion Marine Park lies offshore from Perth’s northern suburbs, from Trigg Island to Burns Beach. It is a haven for seabirds, marine mammals and other marine life, as well as a popular area for aquatic recreation such as diving.

Left: Purnululu National Park. Photo – Parks and Wildlife



Trainees, graduates and award winners honoured

A number of Parks and Wildlife staff were recently recognised for their outstanding contribution at the recent Graduation and Awards Ceremony.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob attended and congratulated 58 staff from the departments of Parks and Wildlife and Environment Regulation, and the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority.

Mr Jacob told the audience of staff and proud family members that the State Government understood the value of the awards ceremony and the importance of recognising committed and motivated staff.

“Award ceremonies are a befitting way to highlight the positive work being done by people keen to make a difference,” Mr Jacob said.

“Their efforts provide leadership in the workplace and shine a light on the importance of training as a tool to further career goals and achieving the best possible conservation outcomes for WA’s unique and diverse environment.”

A number of key awards were presented.

The *Western Shield* award, which recognised commitment and excellence in wildlife conservation, was awarded to Parks and Wildlife’s bait manufacturing manager Robert Brazzell, who had been with the project since its inception in 1996.

Robert plays a key role in developing and implementing the production of *Eradicat*® bait - a scientific breakthrough which has since successfully controlled feral cats in various locations across the State.

The Fire Management Reward and Recognition Program Outstanding Leadership Award was presented to Parks and Wildlife South Coast regional manager Greg Mair.

Greg is one of the most respected bushfire incident controllers and has commanded some of the State’s most significant bushfires during the past decade.

Parks and Wildlife Aboriginal Trainee of the Year was Peter Curtin, and Curtis Robinson received the Kwabalitch Award.

Peter is an extremely worthy recipient who successfully completed his qualifications in a record time of 11 months.

The Kwabalitch Award recognises a trainee that had demonstrated an admirable level of dedication throughout their studies and a commitment to professional development.

Curtis is the first Yawuru Ranger to successfully complete Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management.



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1 Kununurra ranger Peter (Benji) Curtin was named the Aboriginal Trainee of the Year. **2** Parks and Wildlife chaplain Stephen Bradfield, proud Nhandu woman Sandra Kelly and Director General Jim Sharp share a happy moment at the graduation. Mrs Kelly’s son, Curtis Robinson, received a number of awards. **3** Jim Sharp, Kwabalitch Award winner Curtis Robinson and Environment Minister Albert Jacob. **4** Pathway graduates (left to right) Carol Ebbett, Lincoln Marissen, Ricky Pearce, Glenn Ewing, Trevor Brown, Rowan Carville, Christopher Tom, Stephen Tate, Rob Young, Paul Dunstan. Photos – Jennifer Eliot/Parks and Wildlife

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Fire Reward and Recognition Program 2015	Outstanding Leadership Award	Greg Mair
	Outstanding Achievement Award	Greg Standing
	Outstanding Crew Member Award	Kevin Barnsby
	Excellence Award	Trevor Dye Peter Gibson Sharon Hann
	Outstanding Contribution Award	Daniel Biddulph Brad Bourke Stephen Bradfield James Carbone Ian Kealley Anthony O'Neill
<i>Western Shield</i>	<i>Western Shield Award</i>	Robert Brazell
Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme (MATES)	Aboriginal Trainee of the Year	Peter Curtin
	Runner up	Curtis Robinson
	Aboriginal Trainee Supervisor of the Year	Sally Johnston
	Runner up	Sean McGee
	Kwabalitch Award	Curtis Robinson
Pathways Program	Runner up	Tristan Jessell
	Pathways Award	Ricky Pearce



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Women's Scholarship in Honour of June Craig	Gail Dodd, Frances Hoskins and Laura Howie
Leadership Scholarship in memory of Seamus Mulholland	Stuart Barter, Stephen Bradfield, Tim Gregson, Kharis Johnson, Lincoln Marissen
Science Scholarship in Memory of Dr George Malajczuk	Rowena Beaton, Hayley Rolfe
Director General's Career Development Study Assistance Scholarship	Sonia Gillespie, Chantal Laval and Chantal Wilson

1 South Coast regional manager Greg Mair was the recipient of the Outstanding Leadership Award as part of the Fire Management Reward and Recognition Program. **2** Fire Management Reward and Recognition Program award winners, back left to right Stephen Bradfield, James Carbone, Brad Bourke, Greg Mair, Trevor Dye and front left to right, Anthony O'Neill, Sharon Hann, Kevin Barnsby, Daniel Biddulph, Ian Kealley. **3** It was a big day for Lincoln Marissen. He was acknowledged for completing Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations) as well as receiving the Leadership Scholarship in memory of Seamus Mulholland for Master of Emergency Management. **4** A/Director Forest and Ecosystem Management Dr Martin Rayner outlines the significant achievements of Robert Brazell, the winner of the Western Shield Award, which was presented by Jim Sharp and Environment Minister Albert Jacob. Photos – Jennifer Eliot/ Parks and Wildlife

GRADUATES

MATES	Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management	Kyle Hill, Tristan Jessell, Peter Curtin
	Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management	Jason Richardson
	Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management	Curtis Robinson
Pathways	Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management	Rowan Carville
	Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management	Trevor Brown, Hayden Cannon, Glenn Ewing, Glenn Hancock, Craig Hexter, Tamara Leonard, Megan McManis, Jonathan Myres, Ricky Pearce, Ryan Pollock, Stephen Tate, Scott Thomson and Christopher Tom
Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)		Lincoln Marissen, Matthew Wood
Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management		Steven Leeder