

NINGALOO COAST

WORLD HERITAGE



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Spring News | 2018

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Above: Working in partnership on country. Right: Recording plant diversity and abundance on the coastal plain.

Back to country

Parks and Wildlife Service and traditional owners have been working together to ensure the conservation of important natural and cultural values along the Ningaloo Coast. Traditional owners recently went 'back to country' with Parks and Wildlife Service staff to establish important monitoring sites for feral animals, native vegetation recovery and cultural heritage. These sites will contribute to future management within the proposed Ningaloo Coast reserves.

For further information on the proposed Ningaloo Coast reserves, visit <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/ningaloo-coast>

Eyes in the bush

Have you been exploring the bushland along the Ningaloo Coast and around Exmouth lately? You may have encountered one of our remote cameras designed to capture images and provide vital data about feral animals as well as native animals within the World Heritage area. If you happen to come across these cameras in your travels, please don't interfere. The information they contain can be easily lost. All of our cameras are code locked and contain tracking devices.

If you are interested in the images we capture and want to volunteer some time to help us catalogue and process the images collected, please contact Derek Sandow on 9947 8052.

Top right: Staff use a cat lure on top of the camera to draw cats in close enough to capture images. Right: A recent image from one of our remote cameras set up in Cape Range shows a feral cat capturing a native bird. The native bird is likely to be one of the nightjar species found in Cape Range.



Turtle time

It's that time of year again when turtles gather along the Ningaloo Coast. From October onwards, you will see hundreds of adult turtles mating and resting in the shallow lagoon along the Jurabi Coast. Female turtles will often rest on the water's edge, escaping excitable males and recovering before entering the water to continue mating. Please keep your distance from resting female turtles, so they can do just that – rest. Turtles are easily disturbed by dogs, so please keep dogs off turtle nesting beaches.

Mating turtles can also be slower to move from the surface, so please be mindful and watch out for turtles when boating in and around mating areas.

Did you know?

Marine turtles migrate long distances to reach their nesting grounds to mate and lay eggs. They return to the same area where they were born.

Mating is the first important reproductive stage for marine turtles, followed by nesting and hatching. All of these stages are vital for the long-term conservation of marine turtles.

Above: Turtles mating in the shallows. Below: A female green turtle taking a much-needed rest from mating. Photos – Maggie Wright.



What is the name for a group of turtles?
A bale!

Coral Bay coastal rehabilitation

The coastal environment within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area is one of the many remarkable habitats that supports this incredible large-scale ecosystem. Unmanaged vehicle and visitor access is impacting on this fragile coastal environment. Parks and Wildlife Service and traditional owners are continuing dune and track rehabilitation works around Coral Bay to provide sustainable access for visitors while minimising impacts to the coastal environment.

When driving on coastal tracks please remember to reduce tyre pressure and keep to defined tracks and parking areas. This will help conserve the coastline so future generations can continue to enjoy the area.



Above: Traditional owner Hazel Walgar opens a new parking area at Nyarrara Bula (Snapper Headland) near Coral Bay.

You CAN recycle in Cape Range National Park

Over the past nine months 21,000 aluminium cans have been collected by staff and volunteers in Cape Range National Park. The cans weighed in at 316kg equating to over 12m³ of waste which would have otherwise ended up in landfill. Local transport company NGT Logistics kindly delivered the recyclable material to Perth free of charge. The cans were sold for \$268.60 with the funds donated to Exmouth CARE Group to assist with purchasing equipment for rehabilitating injured wildlife. Thank you to visitors and community members for supporting this initiative.

Russian visitor to Ningaloo

Over the summer, the Ningaloo Coast received an unexpected visitor. A great knot was sighted during the annual migratory shorebird survey. The critically endangered great knot is one of about 20 migratory species that calls the shores of the Exmouth Gulf home over the summer months whilst their breeding destinations are in below zero temperatures. Photographs taken of the great knot by Parks and Wildlife Service wildlife officer and avid photographer Grant Griffin revealed a flag on the bird's leg. Birdlife Australia recently confirmed the origin of the flag and are almost certain that the individual was banded in Russia (Kamchatka). Bird banding work is conducted around the world to monitor migratory patterns of individuals as well as ageing them to assist in conservation efforts.

Migratory shorebirds use this holiday time to replenish their condition and create a new energy reserve in preparation for their long flight home. During this resting and feeding time they are vulnerable to disturbance, so please keep your distance and keep dogs away.



Above: Great knot spotted on Roberts Island in the Exmouth Gulf after making the long haul all the way from Russia. Photo - Grant Griffin

Did you know?

Exmouth Gulf is nationally and internationally significant for many migratory shorebirds. Four critically endangered shorebirds are found within the area, including the curlew sandpiper, bar tailed godwit, great knot and eastern curlew. The greater sand plover, grey-tailed tattler, ruddy turnstone, sanderling, and the pied and sooty oystercatchers are also found here.

Whale calf strandings along the Ningaloo Coast

Every winter, the world's largest population of humpback whales migrate from their feeding grounds near Antarctica to the warmer waters of the Western Australian coast. The Ningaloo Coast is recognised as an important area for mothers to give birth as they travel north towards the Kimberley.

Humpback whale mothers with very young calves swim close to the reef at Ningaloo, using it as protection from packs of hunting orcas that target whale calves. Orcas will attempt to separate a young calf from its mother to drown it before eating the tongue and lower jaw. In some instances, calves may be washed over the reef and into the lagoon. Calves are totally dependent on their mother and unfortunately once separated are unlikely to survive on their own. As the population of humpback whales continues to grow we may see an increase in calves being separated from their mothers and stranding on beaches along the Ningaloo Coast.

When a calf strands, it is very unlikely that it will reunite with its mother. In these situations, Parks and Wildlife Service will work quickly to address and manage the welfare of the calf and ultimately, humanely euthanise the calf.

Members of the public should not attempt to return stranded calves to the water. The most humane outcome for the calf is to be euthanised by a trained professional. Returning stranded calves to the water can attract sharks to the area.



Above: A very young humpback calf stranded along the Ningaloo Coast in August this year. It was reported to Parks and Wildlife Service, and was humanely euthanised and buried to minimise visitor risk.

If you come across a stranded calf, please call Wildcare Helpline (08) 9474 9055 or the Exmouth District Office (08) 9947 8000.

The Ningaloo Turtle Program is recruiting for this summer!

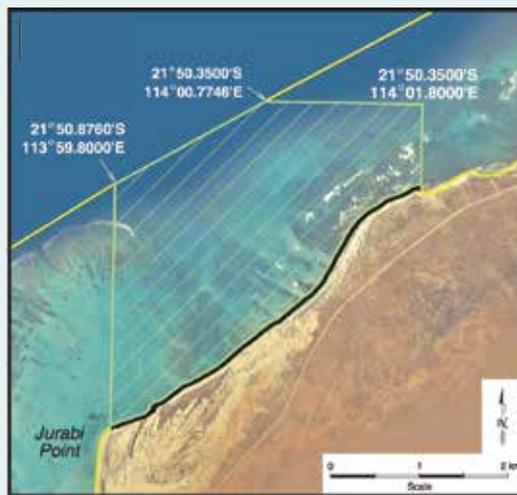
Do you love turtles and early morning beach walks? We are looking for local volunteers to assist with our annual monitoring program which contributes to the long-term conservation of marine turtles.

For more information, contact
ningalooturtles@dbca.wa.gov.au or call 9947 8000.

Ningaloo Coast In Focus

The Ningaloo Coast was inscribed on the World Heritage list for its outstanding natural beauty and exceptional biological diversity. Covering 6045km² and stretching more than 300km along the coast the rare mix of intact, diverse and large-scale terrestrial, coastal and marine habitats form an incredible interconnected ecosystem. These diverse habitats are protected by a marine park, national park and many other reserves.

Each issue will feature one of the many reserves we manage within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area.



Jurabi Coastal Park

Jurabi Coastal Park lies on the western side of the Cape Range Peninsula approximately 17km north of Exmouth. It covers just under 1300 hectares of land and is set aside for conservation and recreation. Jointly managed by Parks and Wildlife Service and the Shire of Exmouth, the coastal park extends to the high-water mark where it adjoins the Ningaloo Marine Park.

Jurabi is derived from the local Aboriginal language name for the white plumed honeyeater that can be seen living in the coastal scrub of the Jurabi Coastal Park. The coastal park provides important habitat for three of the world's seven turtle species, the green, loggerhead and hawksbill turtle. Over the summer months turtles mate in the shallows and come ashore to nest. Towards the end of summer turtle hatchlings emerge. It is also a prime spot for shorebirds to rest on the water's edge in sheltered bays and headlands.

Jurabi Coastal Park has many recreational activities on offer and is a popular destination for the local community and visitors. Here, you can enjoy beach walking and fishing, whale watching and nesting turtle watching. There is also easy access to the marine park to enjoy swimming, surfing, boating, fishing and snorkelling.

Upgrades to designated carparks along Jurabi over recent years have minimised coastal tracks and prevented vehicles and visitors impacting this fragile coastal habitat. The Jurabi Turtle Centre offers information and guidelines for interacting with nesting turtles and hatchlings. An introduced predator control program has been in operation along the Jurabi Coast since 2004, targeting foxes and feral cats that predate turtle nests and hatchlings. The program has been so successful that there has been no recorded predation by foxes on turtle nests for the past four nesting seasons. Please look out for signs along the Jurabi Coast that indicate where baiting occurs. Baits are toxic to domestic animals and dogs can disturb nesting turtles, so please keep dogs away from turtle nesting beaches.

As a community we can all help ensure the Outstanding Universal Value of the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area is conserved for future generations.



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