

Media Release

21st July 2004

Leave Only Footprints!

Waste management in Lincoln National Park is about to change. In line with national standards the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) has recently reviewed the wheelie bin system in Lincoln National Park and has decided to steadily introduce a new environmentally responsible rubbish disposal system. This will enable staff to spend more time on visitor management and conservation work, rather than collecting rubbish.

National Parks and Wildlife staff are about to start removing rubbish bins and a single rubbish drop off point will be established for visitor convenience. The new drop off point will have separate recycling and rubbish facilities.

Regional Conservator, Ross Belcher, said "The time spent by National Parks Staff on rubbish removal, has in recent years, become taxing on time originally allocated for biodiversity programs and environmental management."

Eyre Peninsula Ranger Katrina Pobke said "As visitor numbers steadily increase so does the amount of rubbish. Staff currently spend an estimated 415 hours and travel 6240km per year just to manage rubbish in Lincoln National Park. This is clearly not the best use of staff time or our limited resources. "Park visitors are therefore encouraged to bag their rubbish and dispose of it a responsible manner, preferably by taking their rubbish out with them, as is the practice throughout most of Australia", she added.

END

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Media Release

21 July 2004

Leave wood for wildlife

Campfires are a part of the experience when camping in our National Parks, but National Parks and Wildlife Rangers would like to remind people that the collection of wood for these campfires from parks is not permitted.

Senior Ranger Kerri Villiers says, "One of the most important reasons National Parks are set aside is for the conservation of wildlife".

"Much of our land has already been cleared, so it is important that large areas such as Lincoln and Coffin Bay National Parks remain intact so that our wildlife has habitat for survival.

"There are numerous small creatures that rely on dead wood for shelter and food. The Peninsula Dragon, for instance, which lives only on the Eyre Peninsula, shelters in the cracks and crevices and feeds on spiders and insects that live in this wood."

"People think that collecting a little bit of wood won't hurt. What they don't think about is that tens of thousands of visitors camp in these Parks every year and these little bits add up to a lot of wood," Kerri said.

"Visitors are burning wood that has provided homes for wildlife for many years in a matter of hours."

National Parks and Wildlife staff are putting up signs in campsites to remind people not to collect wood. Those who ignore this advice may be issued with a fine.

So if you want to have a campfire in Lincoln or Coffin Bay National Parks over the winter, think about buying the wood before you come. Bring your own wood from environmentally friendly sources such as cut-offs from commercial timber or sustainable wood lots and use your gas cooker whenever possible.

And leave the wood in the park for the wildlife that lives there all year round.

END

Media Contact
Kerri Villiers
86883111

Media Release

20 July 2004

New Mammal Species for Eyre Peninsula

A small carnivorous mammal, until now thought to live only in south-west of Western Australia, has been discovered on Eyre Peninsula.

The Grey-bellied Dunnart (*Sminthopsis griseoventer*) was discovered in December 2003 in Hincks and Bascombe Wells Conservation Parks during the Department for Environment and Heritage's (DEH) Biological Survey of South Australia field trip to Eyre Peninsula.

The South Australian Museum's Curator of Mammals, Dr Catherine Kemper, who identified the Grey-bellied Dunnart, said that several specimens of young (juvenile) dunnarts were collected and these were difficult to differentiate from a closely-related species, the Little Long-tailed Dunnart, that was most likely to be in the region.

"The clues to identifying the Grey-bellied Dunnart came from examination of the teeth after skulls were taken out of specimens brought back to the Museum. Genetic testing by Museum DNA scientist, Dr Steve Cooper, confirmed the identification. Sub-fossil deposits of this species had been previously studied by Graham Medlin (South Australian Museum) from Darke Peak and South Block on Eyre Peninsula and Innes National Park on Yorke Peninsula," she said.

"So far the species has been found in a variety of mallee habitats in conservation parks, but it is possible that the species may also inhabit private land," she said.

"This discovery demonstrates the importance of protecting habitats," she said.

It is anticipated that further biological surveys run by DEH may locate more places where the dunnart lives on Eyre Peninsula.

This is not the first time that a rare dunnart has been discovered on Eyre Peninsula. The Sandhill Dunnart was rediscovered close to Hambidge Conservation Park near Lock in 1969 after not being seen since 1894 near Uluru in the Northern Territory. About 30 years then lapsed without seeing this species on the Eyre Peninsula until 1999 when a Sandhill Dunnart was captured north of Cowell. A survey in January 2000 followed in which several adults and young were also recorded.

END

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Media Release

6/29/2004

Whale in Fisheries Bay

A Southern Right Whale was sighted in Fisheries Bay on Sunday morning, 27 July 2004. Several surfers saw the whale from Left Point before entering the water.

"It was slowly moving into the bay, occasionally surfacing to breath, but did not spend any significant time on the surface," said Great Australian Bight Marine Park Manager, Simon Clark.

"I had not noticed the whale until someone pointed it out. By the time I exited the water the whale was not visible in the bay," said Bush Management Advisor, Andrew Freeman.

Mr Clark said "Populations of the Southern Right Whales visit the Great Australian Bight Marine Park and the Australian coast line on a three yearly cycle. From previous records it is predicted that this year will be a big year for the whale numbers in the region."

"Research has predicted that the Southern Right Whale Population is increasing at approximately 7% per annum.

In addition Yalata Land Management Officer Jeremy LeBois has reported 30 whales at the Great Australian Bight Marine Park at the Head of Bight in addition to four humpback whales.

END

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Media Release

24 May 2004

YELLOW-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO BREEDING UPDATE

The Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo breeding season is now over, yielding three chicks to boost the Eyre Peninsula population of approximately 30-34 birds. Eight breeding pairs were detected in the Koppio Hills and nest monitoring has shown an increase in the number of breeding pairs and nesting events since the Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo program began in 1998.

“Nest monitoring provides information on chick growth rates as well as why a nest may fail. This is important information, as it also helps us identify actions to reduce this failure,” said Sarah Way, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo Project Officer from the Department for Environment and Heritage.

Nine nesting attempts were recorded, with the three chicks successfully banded before they left the nest. Six nests were unsuccessful for several reasons including predation and infertile eggs being laid.

“All cockatoo breeding sites were located on private land, so the survival of the species is heavily reliant on the support of private individuals. The Department for Environment and Heritage would like to thank the Koppio Hills landholders for their continual support of the cockatoo project”, Sarah said.

Now breeding is finished, the endangered cockatoos will soon be making their annual migration from the southern breeding area to over-wintering habitats on north western Eyre Peninsula. Sarah will make the same trip herself in the coming weeks.

“It’s an important field trip to find out if the chicks are successful in making their way up north for the first time,” Sarah said.

Observing the cockatoos in their northern habitat allows for an accurate count of the population because both breeding and non-breeding birds flock together. It also gives Sarah the opportunity to find out if she overlooked any nests which may have produced previously undetected chicks.

Landholders throughout the north western Eyre Peninsula are encouraged to report sightings of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos in the coming months to Sarah on 8688 3111. Sarah can also supply interested landholders with a Cocky Diary for recording their observations. **END**

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Media Release

16 April 2004

Greencorps Team to provide a Boost for Local Projects

The Eyre Peninsula Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and remaining Sheoak Woodland habitats are set to gain from the efforts of a new Greencorps team which recently started early in April. The participants, who range in age from 17-22 years and will be based in Pt Lincoln, receive training and an opportunity to assist in Ark on Eyre environmental projects on Lower Eyre Peninsula for a period of 6 months. An initiative of the Australian Government, the project is a partnership between Greening Australia and the Department for Environment and Heritage. Other partners involved in the project include the Southern Eyre Animal Plant Control Board and Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management officers.

Ms Di Ancell, Ark on Eyre Coordinator, said the Green Corps team will provide a boost for two major Ark on Eyre projects by assisting with habitat protection, survey, weed control and plant propagation for the Recovery of the Eyre Peninsula Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo and Sheoak Restoration.

"This is not the first time we have had the pleasure of working with a Green Corps Team. Last year a team worked on the Threatened Flora Project, and it was wonderful to see the development of both the Threatened Flora project and the participants," she said.

"Green Corps is a Commonwealth Government initiative, which involves a voluntary youth development program for groups of 10 young people who are paid a training wage for the 26 weeks duration of each project. The program is designed to provide participants with personal and skill development, training and improved connections with their community and the environment" according to Green Corps State Manager, Dr Adam Main.

"Whilst environmental outcomes are crucial to the success of Green Corps, the Green Corps Consortium, which involves Job Futures and Greening Australia, emphasises youth development opportunities which give young people the inspiration, confidence, skills and commitment to make a difference to both the environment and their local communities," he said.

"At a local level, the project will be managed by Greening Australia (SA Inc.), which has previous experience in managing Green Corps projects and other environmental and landcare projects."

END

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Media Release

2 March 2004

Teachers Gain Awareness of Coast & Marine

A recent workshop for teachers on Eyre Peninsula organised by Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), Natural Resource Management officers and the Marine Education Society of Australasia (MESA) has been hailed a success. Held on 14-15 February at the Lincoln Marine Science Centre, the workshop aimed to contribute to professional development, increase participants content knowledge and to facilitate networking.

DEH Ark on Eyre Coordinator, Di Ancell, said that over 32 teachers participated from all areas in the region, as far away as Whyalla, Streaky Bay & Miltaburra.

"The workshop included exposure to available education resources, field based activities such as a plankton tow and reef walk, in addition to theory and sessions on the internet exploring sites of interest" she said.

"Input from Alex Gaut, the state MESA rep, was particularly relevant for teachers. Her passion and knowledge was appreciated by those who attended" she added.

"Feedback from teachers was very positive, and they got to meet plenty of local people to contact and local resources too" she said.

Through the Ark on Eyre Program, other education support is planned for this region. For further details, please contact Di at the Pt Lincoln DEH office, 75 Liverpool Street Pt Lincoln or by phone on 08 86883174.

END

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Media Release

12 February 2004

One Good Tern Deserves Another

Visitors to Coffin Bay National Park are asked to take special care when driving down Seven Mile beach as Fairy Terns are nesting on the beach along this section. The smallest of our terns, Fairy Terns are small coastal birds that feed on aquatic animal life and occasionally insects. These little birds nest on sandy beaches and islands in our region, but their numbers are declining. Mainland beaches are fraught with danger from vehicles, and the eggs and chicks often fall prey to foxes. This has been the case in Coffin Bay National Park in the past, but an ongoing fox baiting program and marking the nesting sites to alert motorists should assist in a successful breeding event.

Senior Ranger with the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), Tom Gerschwitz,, said that for the last three years Fairy Terns have attempted to breed along Seven Mile Beach.

"In the first nesting attempt a fox managed to eat all the eggs and chicks. The last two breeding attempts have been successful, with chicks surviving and fledging (getting adult plumage)".

"Ongoing fox baiting in the park for the last five years has no doubt contributed to this success" he said.

"We want to encourage drivers to take care and slow down, especially near the nesting site as the tiny young chicks will be moving around and are difficult to spot" he said

"The nesting site is marked with bunting tape to alert visitors to their presence" he said

DEH staff will continue to monitor the birds until they have completed breeding. .

END

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Media Release

2 February 2004

Coffin Bay National Park in top 10

Yangie Bay in Coffin Bay National Park has been listed in the top 10 campsites around Australia in a new book which lists more than 2000 campsites around Australia.

According to the authors of "Camping in Australia", Cathy Savage and Craig Lewis, Yangie Bay in Coffin Bay National Park features as one of their top ten campsites around Australia. Coffin Bay is rated alongside other top ten favorites of the authors such as Palm Valley in the Northern Territory, the Grampians National Park in Victoria and Millstream-Chichester National Park in Western Australia. The authors claim that camping is the perfect way to see Australia.

56,438 people visited the Coffin Bay National Park in 2002, an increase from the previous year by 111%. Of these, 29% were visitors from interstate while 4% were overseas visitors. More than half the visitors (58%) were visiting the park for the first time.

Regional Conservator, Ross Belcher, said that it wasn't surprising that Coffin Bay National Park was rated among the top ten as it has many scenic areas on offer with wild southern ocean beaches contrasting with sheltered bays and the opportunities for 4WD adventure, boating and fishing.

"We're very fortunate in this region to have many parks providing recreational and wildlife opportunities. Inland wilderness parks and outback Gawler Ranges are ideal to visit in the cooler months of the year, while our many coastal parks are enjoyed by locals and visitors over the summer months," he said.

"While rating campsites can be a very personal and subjective process, publications such as these will assist in promoting the region. There's no doubt that parks in this region assist the tourism industry in this region," he said.

For more information on the region's parks visit www.tep.com.au or www.parks.sa.gov.au

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Media Release

27 January 2004

Project officer for cockies appointed

Our own Eyre Peninsula Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos have returned once again to the Koppio Hills to breed. Sarah Way, newly appointed Project Officer with the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) and the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Group (EPNRM), is busy undertaking nest monitoring of this vulnerable species. Five successful nesting attempts have been located to date this year. Before joining the Department for Environment and Heritage, Sarah worked as a zoological consultant as well as conducting wetland ecology projects and threatened species monitoring. Funding from the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Group (EPNRM) has allowed the appointment of a fulltime project officer for the first time.

There are currently between 30 and 34 black cockatoos remaining on Eyre Peninsula. Nest monitoring and protection of nesting and feeding habitats is crucial to ensure the survival of Eyre Peninsula's black cockatoos.

"Nest monitoring is only part of the recovery team's goals." Sarah said.

Other important items on Sarah's agenda include collaboration with landholders to protect remaining Sugar Gum Woodlands and strategic revegetation together with liaising closely with the Southern Eyre Pest Management Group on their Aleppo Pine management project.

"Our cockatoos now depend on certain stands of Aleppo Pines, *Pinus halepensis*, as a food resource both in the southern breeding grounds and the northern over-wintering habitats. "

"This is due to the loss of large areas of native food resources such as larvae in Yakka (*Xanthorrhoea semiplana*), flower spikes and Wrinkled Hakea (*Hakea rugosa*)".

"The challenge will be to achieve a balance between protecting those stands of Aleppos identified as important feeding habitat for the cockies in the short term while not compromising native flora communities and biodiversity through further pine invasion in the longer term." Sarah said.

Landholders are encouraged to report sightings of the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo to Sarah at the Department for Environment and Heritage office at 75 Liverpool Street, Port Lincoln or by phoning 8688 3111.

END

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