

Narputungup ews

November 2015

No. 4

from the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park

www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au



Next issue:
February 2016

ADVANCE NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2016 AGM and activities weekend will be held over the weekend of 12-13 March at Jerdacuttup Community Hall. Professor Steve Hopper will be our guest and will lead an excursion on the Sunday looking at, amongst other things, pollination of scarlet pear gum at Jerdacuttup and banksias at East Mt Barren. Further details will be in the February edition.

REPORTS ON PAST ACTIVITIES

Jerramungup High School goes bush

The Jerramungup High School Year 7 & 8s ventured to the Australian Bush Heritage property Beringa in May to learn about identifying plants in preparation for starting a local herbarium. Though not the best time for flowers there was plenty to see, sniff and feel. Guided by Libby Sandiford - spotting characters of some plants were learnt like the smell & presence of oil glands in the Myrtaceae, the small leaves with parallel veins in Epacridaceae/Ericaceae, the 4 partite flowers of Proteaceae etc. Identifying the basic flower and its parts and its so many variations/combinations and learning what part of plants to pick or note (tree versus mallee) to aid identification were discussed as well as how to press plants, various ways to display specimens and where to find information on local plants. A few bush skills like orientating oneself in the bush, recognizing where you are and where you are going and interpreting maps were also discussed. Despite the intermittent rain everyone seemed happy to be in the bush and amazed at the variety.

Each student collected a plant to be identified later the Albany Regional Herbarium. After one bus break down the students finally arrived and were shown around the herbarium and its various resources and then guided by Libby and Linda Strahan identified their plant (well nearly all of the plants - which is normal for any survey) using a reference herbarium. Plants were then sent to Jerramungup to form the beginnings of a local herbarium. *Contributed by Libby Sandiford.*



**What are the
Regional Manager
and the District
Manager of DPaW
doing on top of Mt
Horrie?**

**See page 4 to find
out.**

Guided walk along the Hakea walk trail in Fitzgerald River National Park

Who could have asked for a better hiking day than the 16th of August? A balmy 21°C with a light cool breeze. The only down side was that our guide, Andy Chapman, had unfortunately damaged his knee a few days earlier so had to pass on hiking with us. He waved us off from West Beach car park with a friendly smile and the promise of tea and cake when we reached our destination; the Hamersley Inlet picnic area 14 km away.

Initially fourteen of us set off and made our way up to the top of West Beach headland. Here we stopped on the seat to enjoy the views of East Mount Barren, Cave Point and West Beach. Ten of us then carried on to Nature's Rockery Look-out, while the other three returned to the car-park. Along the way there was a beautiful show of orchids including blue fairy orchids, white spider orchids and carpets of donkey orchids. The next stop was for lunch at Edwards Point steps. Everyone paused to admire the superb view of the rocky beach below before descending to check out the zawn and refuel.

Whilst eating lunch a pod of dolphins entertained us by swimming by, but nature saved the best until last. Two southern right whales could be seen from Hamersley Beach, frolicking and splashing just beyond the breaking waves. A few walkers braved the surf and went for a dip to cool off.

As we turned off the beach to walk up the Hamersley inlet to the picnic area, something that looked like a lumbering rock was waddling across the inlet. To our delight, on closer inspection it turned out to be a good sized echidna, which happily posed while everyone took photographs, then turned tail and waddled back the way it had come. One walker was lucky enough to see a malleefowl on the final ascent to the picnic area and everyone was happy to see Andy with the promised tea and cake.

Thanks to the Friends of the Fitzgerald, Andy Chapman for organising and Louise Lodge for leading this superb walk.

For more detailed information about this walk please refer to the Hakea walk trail guide supplied by DPaW.

Contributed by Karen Roberts

Photographs by Leonie McMahon



The echidna at Hamersley Inlet and walkers on the beach. See also Leonie's splendid photo of the dolphins on page 6.

Numbat news

In early October John Tucker, Chris & Jenny Biddulph and Andy Chapman travelled to Dryandra to undertake the numbat tracks and traces training necessary to determine whether numbats are still present in Cocanarup Timber Reserve. We are now able to identify with some confidence numbat traces and scats and how they differ from those of other fauna.

At completion we were treated to an experience which left us feeling awed and privileged; we were invited to view juvenile numbats emerging from their burrow. Pictures tell the story....





Tony Friend of DPaW, John Lawson and Rob MacLean of Project Numbat are thanked for their numbat insights as well as for this once in a lifetime opportunity. We will apply our new skills in Cocanarup Timber Reserve commencing in December.

Dibbler news

One of the Fitz's significant conservation values is that it is now the only mainland site in Australia where natural (as opposed to translocated) populations of this carnivorous marsupial still occur. Partly on account of this the 'Friends' were recently invited to join the Dibbler Recovery Team as a representative community group. At a recent committee meeting the invitation was enthusiastically accepted. Our role will be fund raising by grant applications, community awareness raising and field work participation in dibbler monitoring in the Fitz and possibly elsewhere. In other dibbler news, a translocated population has recently been established on Gunton Island off Esperance.



A juvenile dibbler from the Fitz. feeding on nectar or pollen from bell-fruited mallee.

Progress at Twertup Field Studies Centre

Work at Twertup Field Studies Centre proceeds. All the interior walls and the exterior southern wall have been sealed, about half the floor has been cleaned with acid to remove mortar stains, the windows frames were prepared for painting and half of them were primed. This was all achieved in a weekend of work on October 24-25th. Ron Richards & Bill Thompson coated the walls; Libby Sandiford prepared the area and cleaned up after them; Anne Gadsby, Jane Thompson & Rosey Jasper cleaned floors ahead of the wall-sealers; and Pete Dawson & Keven Giles applied themselves to preparing the window frames for painting. We were sustained by good humour and a large tray of Libby's baklava. Thanks to everyone who was there on the weekend. It was a lot of fun as well as being nicely productive.

Since that weekend Ron & Rosey have spent a peaceful couple of days at Twertup painting the window and door frames. They finished the priming, applied the first coat of paint to all frames and the final coat to about half. There is about 6 hours work to complete the final coat. The building is now looking even smarter with the colour on the window and door frames.

In addition over the last 2 months, Tracey Ross, Louise Lodge and Rosey have been painting the window sashes and doors which are currently stored in Ravensthorpe. This has now been completed and they are ready for glazing.



Bill Thompson and Ron Richards spray sealant on the interior walls.

Text and photo by Rosemary Jasper



*View of building at current state of progress.
Photo Jane Thompson.*

Friends meet with DPaW staff at Twertup

In early September, the Friends invited senior staff of the Department of Parks and Wildlife's Albany office to meet at Twertup to discuss future management of the Field Studies Centre. The get-together started with a late afternoon walk through the quarry and part of the 'nature trail' along the base of the spongolite cliffs. This was followed by an evening barbeque where Andy Chapman welcomed everyone and gave an historical background of the Field Studies Centre.

The group walked the 'Horrie and Dorrie Trail' early the following morning. Twelve of us enjoyed perfect weather and views of Twertup and its surrounds. Friends attendees were Andy Chapman (Chair), Gil Craig, Richard Pepper, Rosemary Jasper, Nathan McQuoid, and Alison Lullfitz (who adeptly took the minutes). DPaW staff attending were Greg Mair (Regional Manager), Peter Hartley (District Manager), Deon Utber (Regional Leader Nature Conservation), Peter Masters (Operations Manager Ravensthorpe), Mike Shepherd (Regional Leader Parks and Visitor Services), Sarah Comer and Mark True, both of whom are long-term members of Friends and have hosted activities at the original Field Studies Centre.

The meeting agenda included (i) fire management, (ii) signage and safety, (iii) Twertup track access, (iv) walk trails, and (v) user groups. We were very pleased that, in most aspects, DPaW staff were accommodating of our wishes and were willing to find common ground for management of the site.

Meeting outcomes included:

- **Twertup quarry and cliffs** - Peter Masters is to carry out a risk assessment and then determine signage/barrier requirements based on this assessment.
- **Fire** - DPaW staff are to work with Friends to develop a fire plan. Nathan agreed to organize a hazard assessment of building and potential for 'gardening' and selective thinning in envelope precinct around the building. In addition, a slashed perimeter, beyond (but not adjacent to) the entrance track was the Friends preferred management strategy.
- **Walk trails** - Friends would like to restore all walk trails, including 'Horrie and Dorrie' and the Roes Rock walk trails as per management plan. DPaW was comfortable with this and believe that walk trails are a fundamental part of appreciating the place and provide good opportunities for short walks in the park. DPaW is currently seeking funding for installation of a die-back hygiene station for walk trails.
- **Twertup track** - to be maintained at current standard by DPaW (given budget constraints).
- **Use** - Friends preference and philosophy is that groups, individuals with environmental theme and/or benefit be the principle users. Exclusivity of use was discussed and whether researchers using the facility would want exclusive use. Friends and DPaW staff strongly advocated lack of exclusivity and that great value can be gained from interaction between general public and researchers.

'Friends' are keen to re-establish the method whereby individuals register and pay via an honour box at Twertup. Groups would book and pay via DPaW's Albany office.

Use by commercial tour operators was discussed at length, including possibility of prohibitive impact on other groups (e.g. schools) and/or heavy use by those with pseudo-environmental interest compared to specialist tours (eg bird watching tours). This topic needs further discussion amongst Friends' members, with respect to whether commercial operators be allowed at all, and if allowed the best way to manage their bookings. Your opinion would be welcome.

We look forward to an ongoing positive relationship with DPaW staff. The potential for staff members to have 'team building' activities, such as re-establishing the walk trails, was suggested and would be heartily welcomed at Twertup.

Contributed by Gil Craig



Led by Gil Craig and Mark True the walking party returns to Twertup.

Carnaby's cockatoo annual nesting survey 24-25 October in Cocanarup Timber Reserve

While other 'Friends' were gainfully employed cleaning walls etc. at Twertup a smaller group of seven participated in this event. Approximately 20 nesting pairs were located. It was evident that total numbers of cockatoos were down on previous years and that many previously used hollows were either unoccupied or occupied by feral bees. Feral bee occupancy of hollows appears to be increasing at Cocanarup and it must be limiting cockatoo breeding success here.

Other notable observations were wedge-tailed eagles nesting in Jim Dunn Reserve and a malleefowl attending its mound in Cocanarup.

Deb Sullivan and John Tucker organised the weekend and are thanked for their commitment.



Photo bottom left. A malleefowl attends its mound at Cocanarup.

PHOTO GALLERY—TWERTUP PEOPLE

Previous issues have shown many images of construction stages of the building and groups of people doing things. Here are some of these people. Others will be in subsequent editions.



Top to bottom:

Rosey Jasper

Peter May

Peter Dawson

Libby Sandiford

Photos: Jane Thompson





Pod of dolphins seen off Hamersley Beach during Hakea Trail walk. Photo Leonie McMahon.

Twertup people (continued)



Keven Giles

LATE NEWS –The very serious threat to western ground parrot

Separate fires in October and November at Cape Arid have increased the likelihood this parrot will become extinct as 90% of its habitat was burnt. Visit www.western-ground-parrot.org.au to see what you can do to help.

QUESTION TO PONDER. How long is a juvenile numbat's tongue?



Apparently as long as its head plus a bit!

Here's wishing all readers a peaceful, safe and contemplative festive season and a smooth transition to 2016. *Editor*

Post Print approved 100002092 Surface Mail

Postage Paid

*If undelivered please return to:
The Editor
Narpulungup News
PO Box 199
Ravensthorpe WA 6346*

Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park PO Box 199, Ravensthorpe WA 6346