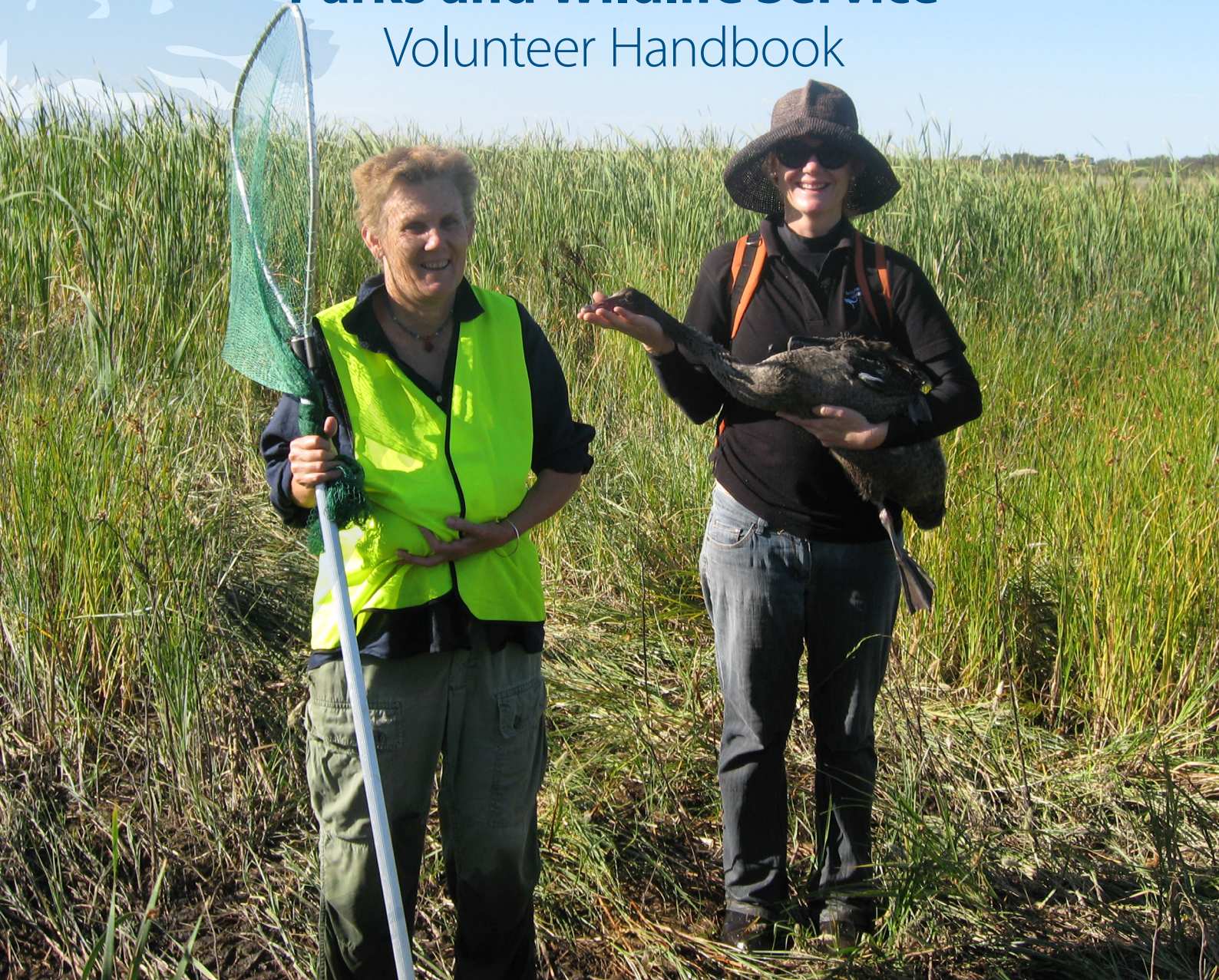




Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Parks and Wildlife Service Volunteer Handbook



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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' Parks and Wildlife Service. The formal volunteer program began in 1989 and now thousands of volunteers contribute to more than 200 projects across Western Australia each year. These projects range from flora and fauna monitoring, track, trail and park maintenance, wildlife rehabilitation and campground hosting.

As a Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer you can be proud of contributing to the vital work in maintaining natural areas and conserving wildlife for future generations. We could not maintain our vast workload without the support of volunteers.

About the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) was established on 1 July 2017 and brings together the functions and staff of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, Rottnest Island Authority, Zoological Parks Authority and the former Department of Parks and Wildlife. The Parks and Wildlife Service is one of the key brands within DBCA and is the visitor-facing brand for national and marine parks and other reserves.

DBCA has a strong emphasis on improving Western Australia's natural attractions as key tourism assets and creating opportunities for private sector investment and partnerships while conserving environmental values. It consolidates conservation science to build and share knowledge of the State's biodiversity.

Parks and Wildlife Service

The Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for the management of Western Australia's parks, forests and reserves for wildlife conservation, sustainable recreation and tourism, while protecting communities from bushfire. Parks and Wildlife Service's core business is the conservation and promotion of Western Australia's unique natural assets.



Why does the Parks and Wildlife Service need volunteers?

Volunteers contribute greatly to the work objectives of the Parks and Wildlife Service. It has been shown the department can achieve more through volunteer involvement. However, these benefits are not the only reason for engaging volunteers.

The department's volunteer program provides benefits to three main groups:

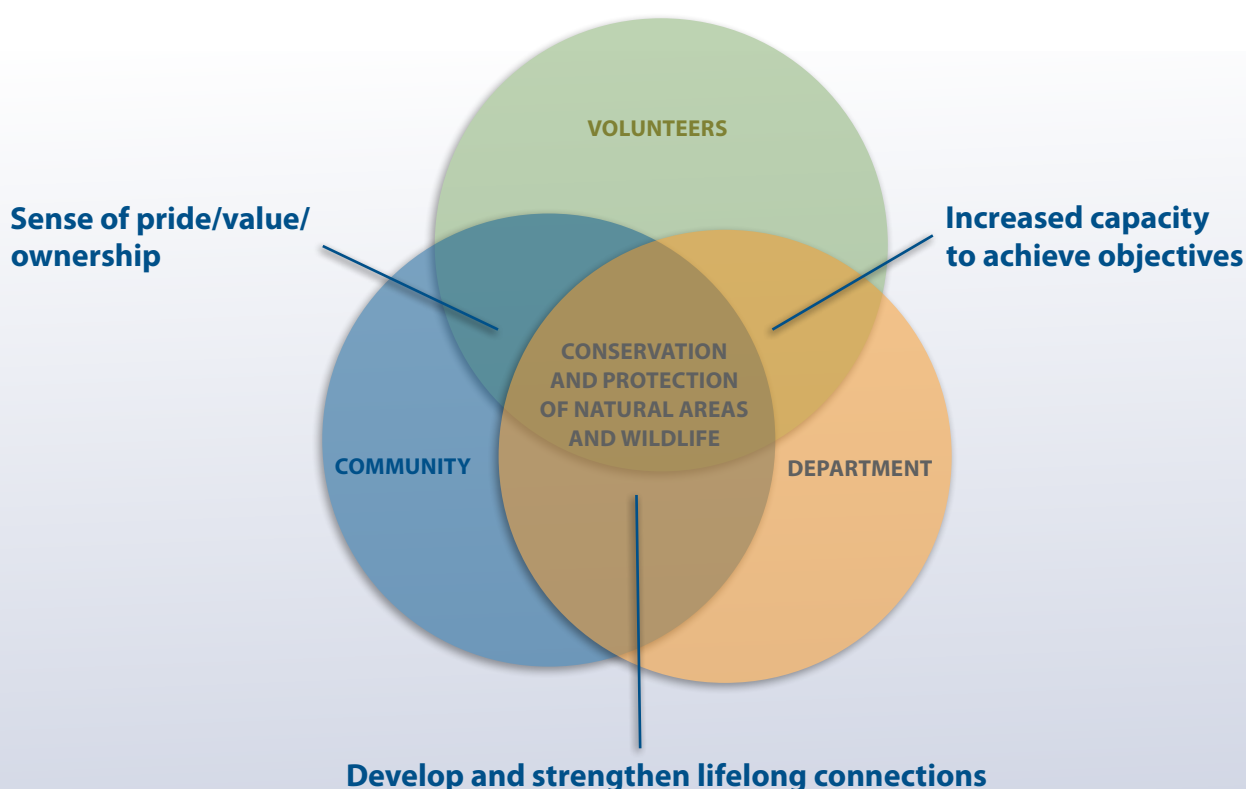
1. **The volunteers** – they are given opportunities to take part in meaningful and enjoyable experiences and pursue areas of interest while connecting with nature and like-minded people.

Volunteers also get social benefits from working alongside like-minded people, as well as the proven physical and mental health benefits – volunteering is good for you!

2. **The community** – the local and wider community benefits in terms of high-level management of the environment and involvement in areas that are important to them. They also receive an improved level of information, education and general communication from the department.

3. **The department** – the department benefits from having a committed and passionate volunteer workforce that believes in its mission and to help achieve its environmental, conservation and recreation objectives. By offering a range of opportunities, the department gets assistance from the community to achieve objectives across all aspects of its work.

What we are attempting is an overlap of the benefits to each group, creating positive outcomes for all. This can be achieved by developing and managing volunteer projects that bring these three groups together in a mutually beneficial relationship.



Rights and responsibilities

Volunteer rights

Volunteering is a two-way relationship. Volunteers can expect to have several rights, but they have certain responsibilities too, as outlined below. The rights of volunteers are addressed by a range of legislation, but volunteers are not covered by awards or work-place agreements.

Volunteers have the right to:

- work in a healthy and safe environment
- be adequately covered by insurance
- be engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- have a job description and agreed working hours
- worthwhile and stimulating activities, using any special skills they may have
- be given constructive and honest feedback
- be recognised for their contribution
- say no if they are uncomfortable with the task assigned
- have access to a grievance procedure
- be given accurate and truthful information about the department
- be provided with orientation to the department
- be provided with sufficient training to do their job
- be provided with a copy of the department's volunteer policy and any other policy that affects their work
- be reimbursed for agreed out of pocket expenses
- not fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- not do the work of staff during industrial disputes, and
- have their confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Volunteer responsibilities

While volunteers may not have a formal contract, they are expected to fulfil responsibilities to the department. These include:

- following policies and procedures and abiding by the department's Code of conduct and State Government's *Code of Ethics*
- being loyal to the department
- accepting direction
- respecting and maintaining privacy and confidentiality
- maintaining safe work practices in accordance with health and safety
- speaking up regarding important issues or concerns regarding regulations that apply to the department
- undertaking training provided to them
- carrying out agreed duties in the agreed time frame
- being dependable and reliable
- working the hours agreed
- being accountable and accepting feedback
- saying no when they are unable or uncomfortable with completing a task
- complying with the legal and organisational requirements of the volunteer position.



Departmental rights

The department has the right to:

- interview, screen and check all applicants as per departmental policies and procedures
- assess the volunteer's capacities and place them appropriately
- expect volunteers to adhere to their job / role descriptions
- expect effort and service from the volunteer
- expect volunteers to work within the department's Code of Conduct
- expect volunteers to follow occupational Health and Safety rules
- expect assignments to be adequately completed
- expect loyalty to the department
- expect clear and open communication from the volunteer
- negotiate work assignments
- redirect volunteers determined unsuitable for placement or to say no to volunteers
- release (dismiss) volunteers under certain circumstances, following appropriate procedure
- evaluate volunteers regularly
- express opinions about poor volunteer effort in a diplomatic way.

Departmental responsibilities

The department is expected to:

- ensure that the volunteer rights are upheld
- offer volunteers work opportunities appropriate to their skills, experience and aspirations
- provide volunteers with clear duty statements and orientation to their work and the agency
- implement safe systems of work to ensure volunteer safety and well-being
- offer reimbursement or other compensation to cover out-of-pocket expenses
- recognise volunteers as valued team members with opportunities to participate in relevant agency decisions.

Volunteer rewards

The Parks and Wildlife Service is appreciative of the commitment that volunteers make and has a reward system in place to acknowledge these contributions. Rewards are calculated based on voluntary hours reported in a financial year, and distributed at the end of each financial year, as follows:

| | |
|------------|---|
| 20 hours | 20 per cent discount voucher (on DBCA publications) |
| 50 hours | Volunteer park pass for 12 months |
| 150 hours | Limited edition, WA-species lapel badge |
| 300 hours | \$30 voucher for purchase of DBCA publications |
| 500+ hours | 12-month <i>LANDSCOPE</i> magazine subscription |

It is essential to return accurate and timely records of the volunteering time. Primarily to ensure insurance cover can apply, but also so volunteers receive any rewards due to them. It is also important for projects to submit contributions for departmental reports, and accurate reporting of contributions may also be useful to groups who are seeking funding through grants or other sources.

Volunteers are responsible for ensuring they keep records of their daily contributions (hours) and reporting them to their project supervisor. Project supervisors are responsible for ensuring timesheets are approved and forwarded to the Volunteer Coordination Unit (VCU) prior to the end of each financial year (30 June).

Other entitlements and reimbursements

Depending on the project and budget, some authorised costs associated with equipment or required resources (e.g. fuel) for volunteer duties may be reimbursed. Volunteers should speak to their project supervisor before spending money, to ensure that the expenses are approved so that they do not accrue out of pocket expenses.

Issues or problems

If you have issues or concerns with any aspect of your volunteer role, please contact your Parks and Wildlife Service staff supervisor in the first instance. If you are unable to, or do not wish to, please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator via pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au

Your safety and health

Volunteer training/induction

When you register as a Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer, your supervisor will provide you with a health and safety induction as part of the onboarding process. For your reference, documents relating to the induction can be found here –

pwsdbca.wa.gov.au/get-involved/volunteering-opportunities

To minimise risk to you and those you are working with, it is important for you to understand hazard awareness and to know what to do and who to contact in case of emergencies.

Volunteer insurance – personal accident and public liability cover

Parks and Wildlife Service holds insurance for all registered volunteers with RiskCover. To be covered for this insurance volunteers must be registered and have completed a timesheet or signed on at the worksite at the time of any incident.

It is important to note that insurance is for out-of-pocket medical expenses and is not Workers Compensation. All accidents and incidents involving volunteers must be reported to supervising staff and / or the Volunteer Coordination Unit as soon as possible.

Limitations and exclusions to the insurance cover:

It does NOT cover:

- sickness
- volunteers who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- volunteers who, in the event of an injury requiring medical attention, do not follow the advice given by the medical practitioner.

Non-Australian citizens must provide visa evidence that they are entitled to volunteer and hold current travel / health insurance.

Wellbeing support

Volunteers needing wellbeing support can access the department's Peer Support program; contact your supervisor or pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au for information.

External services such as LifeLine (13 11 14) or Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636) are recommended. Alternatively, if necessary, volunteers can consult their GP and seek a referral for an appointment with a psychologist

Working alone policy

DBCA prefers that volunteers do not work alone, for safety reasons. Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 (the Regulations) state that if a volunteer is isolated from other persons, due to time or location constraints, or the nature of the work, then the employer (DBCA) must ensure that:

- there is a means of communication available for the employee to call for help in the case of an emergency
- there is a procedure for regular contact to be made with the employee and the employee is trained in the procedure.

Please discuss this procedure with your supervisor if you are working alone.

Smoke-free environment policy

Smoking is not permitted within departmental offices or in government vehicles. In office situations, smoking is restricted to normal lunch breaks and morning and afternoon tea breaks.

Sun protection policy

When working, driving, lunching or exercising outdoors, it is essential to protect yourself from exposure to UV radiation.

A combination of protective equipment, rather than reliance on one form of personal protection, is the best defence against UV radiation. This should include appropriate hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and clothing.

More information

For any issues that are not covered in this Handbook, or if you have any questions relating to volunteering, please contact the Volunteer Coordination Unit on 9219 8251 or email pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au

Appendices

This handbook should be read alongside the following documents:

- Parks and Wildlife Service Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Parks and Wildlife Service Cultural Awareness for Volunteers
- Health and Safety Induction
- DBCA Corporate Policy 15 – Volunteers and Community

These documents, and more information regarding the Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer program, can be found on the website: pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/get-involved/volunteering-opportunities



