

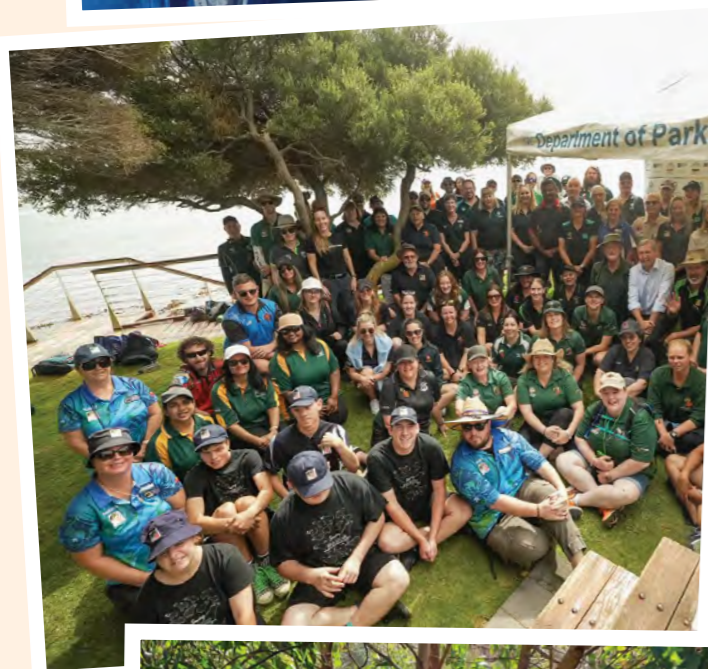


A snapshot of  
**2022–23 DBCA**  
**Parks and Wildlife Service**  
volunteer projects



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions





**Top left** Cable Beach Turtle Monitoring volunteers.  
**Top right** Friends of Hawkevale Nature Reserve. *Photos– DBCA*  
**Middle left** Bushranger Cadet Conference participants at Penguin Island. *Photo – M Giroud*  
**Middle right** Marine Science volunteer surveying intertidal reefs. *Photo – A Gill*  
**Left** Canning River Regional Park volunteers. *Photo– DBCA*

**Cover** Dirk Hartog turtle tagging volunteers. *Photo– DBCA*

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## Foreword

Volunteers make a significant contribution to DBCA's mission and goals each year. The effectiveness of the volunteer program relies on the collaborative efforts of the Volunteer Coordination Unit (VCU), DBCA staff, and the dedicated volunteers, all of whom play pivotal roles in volunteer management. During the 2022-23 financial year, a total of 6632 volunteers generously contributed more than 895,000 hours to support DBCA registered projects. This booklet provides an insight into the achievements made possible by working together.

Volunteering at DBCA gives individuals the opportunity to take part in meaningful and enjoyable experiences, pursuing areas of interest while connecting with nature and like-minded people. The local and wider community benefits from an improved level of information, education, and management of flora and fauna in their local area. Additionally, the department benefits from having a committed and passionate volunteer workforce, that is aligned with its mission, helping to achieve their environmental, conservation and recreational objectives.

DBCA staff and volunteer supervisors play an essential role in ensuring the safety of volunteers by following departmental processes and by providing ongoing support to volunteers while they undertake activities for DBCA. The VCU works alongside DBCA staff and volunteers to ensure that volunteers are managed effectively and consistently.

By working together, we continue to support DBCA in its mission to value, protect and conserve Western Australia's environment, for its intrinsic value, and for the appreciation and benefit of present and future generations.

Thank you to all our volunteers, and the supporting staff that make this all possible.

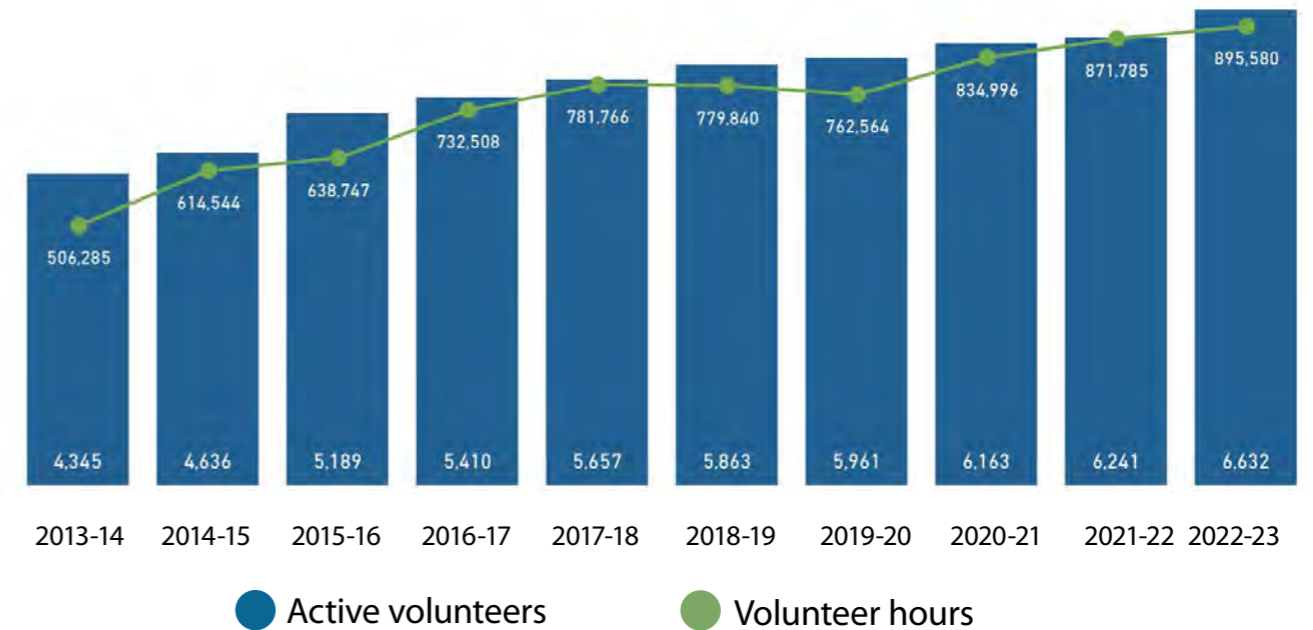
### Volunteer Coordination Unit 2023

**Below** Marine Science volunteers surveying intertidal reefs. Photo – A Gill



## Key statistics for financial year 2022-23

### Active volunteers and hours over 10 years



The 2022-23 annual report records 6,259 volunteers and 866,742 hours. Further information was received after publishing.

**Below** Loggerhead turtle tracks on Dirk Hartog Island. Photo – S Mitchell

## Key facts for the 2022-23 financial year

**6632** active volunteers

**895,580** hours contributed

**135** average hours per volunteers

**2646** volunteer park passes issued  
(to volunteers contributing over **50 hours**)

**368** volunteers contributed over **500 hours**



# Volunteer recognition funding

The Volunteer Coordination Unit (VCU) received funding in the 2022–23 financial year to recognise the outstanding contribution that volunteers make to the department. The funding was allocated across four key areas: training, uniforms, tools and equipment, and regional volunteer recognition events to thank volunteers for their efforts.

## Training

Various training opportunities were made available to active volunteers across the State to provide them with additional skills to enhance their volunteering roles. Volunteer groups applied for training specific to their project including Senior First Aid, wildlife and snake awareness, native seed collection and processing, chainsaw training, Volunteering WA personal development courses, botanical training, and chemical certification. The VCU also engaged St John WA to host essential first aid training sessions in Perth, Broome, Bunbury, Busselton and Albany.

**Below** First aid training session. Photo – G Vesely



## Uniforms

Uniforms were provided to increase the identity and inclusion of volunteers and you may have seen many of our volunteers wearing them proudly out in the field. So far, more than 1000 volunteers have been provided with new t-shirts, caps, wide-brimmed hats, polos, and hi-vis vests.



## Tools and equipment

A limited allocation of funding was provided to purchase tools and equipment and has benefited more than 650 volunteers across five regions. Groups have updated worn tools or purchased equipment to make their tasks more efficient, more productive, and ultimately more enjoyable.



## Volunteer recognition

Over 250 volunteers were acknowledged by their group leaders at morning teas and lunches throughout WA to celebrate their dedication and thank them for the efforts. Volunteer recognition can take various forms, such as public appreciation, awards or simply a heartfelt thank-you with a cup of tea and cake. These simple gestures foster a culture of giving and community engagement and boost the morale of volunteers, while also helping to retain and attract new volunteers.

**Top right** Capel 200 Maintenance Group volunteers in their new uniforms.

**Above right** Cape to Cape Track volunteers with their new tools. Photos – DBCA

**Below** Ningaloo Turtle Program volunteer recognition morning tea. Photo – D Robb



## Statewide/multi-region projects

### Marine Science Program

The DBCA Marine Science Program monitors the ecological values that are considered important for marine biodiversity and conservation to support the management of Western Australia's marine reserves, which includes 17 marine parks, two marine management areas and one marine nature reserve. Western Australia has the longest coastline in Australia and our ocean waters are home to some of the world's most remarkable marine ecosystems and a unique and diverse range of wildlife. Many of the State's marine plants and animals, particularly those found along the south coast, occur nowhere else in the world.

Scientists have teamed up with several volunteers to conduct intertidal reef surveys in temperate marine reserves, including Jurien Bay, Marmion, Shoalwater Islands and Ngari Capes. These reefs are 'natural laboratories' for the community to connect and learn about the marine life that is in our backyard.

In 2022–23, the team completed triennial surveys of intertidal reef communities in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park. Their main goal is to continue to monitor intertidal reef communities as part of a long-term marine monitoring plan to keep our oceans healthy and thriving.

"Working alongside volunteers that are so interested, motivated, and committed is very inspiring, and gives me hope for the future of these reefs" Dr Inês Leal, DBCA Research Scientist.

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"The experience was lots of fun and extremely educational, providing valuable experience with identifying species endemic to WA intertidal reefs. The volunteer team was very friendly, and the time passed too quickly."

**Elise, Marine Science volunteer**

To get involved in volunteering, contact Dr Inês Leal, DBCA Research Scientist, at [ines.leal@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:ines.leal@dbca.wa.gov.au)

**Below** Marine Science volunteers surveying intertidal reefs. *Photo – A Gill*



### Bushranger Cadet Program

In June 1998, the Environment and Youth Ministers launched the Bush Ranger Cadets Program, to encourage young people in Western Australia to play an active role in the conservation of the State's natural environment through practical, hands-on experiences. This was followed by the River Rangers program for primary aged students which has an emphasis on understanding and helping rivers, estuaries, and waterways.

In 2023, the Bush Rangers WA cadet program is proudly celebrating 25 years of successfully empowering young people to better understand the need for proper management of the natural environment and ensure Western Australia's natural biodiversity assets are conserved and protected for future generations.

The program is coordinated by DBCA and is part of the wider Cadets WA program which is facilitated by the Department of Communities. It's not just about the environment: it also enhances the wellbeing of young people and develops a sense of community service and civic responsibility. Cadets participate in activities designed to develop self-confidence, knowledge, leadership, and life skills to prepare them for the transition to adulthood. It has proven to have a positive impact on the lives of the young people involved and has made them feel more connected to their communities.

Over the last 11 years, more than 31000 school students have rolled up their sleeves and given over 627000 volunteer hours to help with conservation and community projects. They've been busy planting, picking up rubbish, watching wildlife, and building fences in their school areas and nearby national parks and nature reserves.

There are currently more than 320 schoolteachers volunteering their time to lead and support 73 cadet units around the state. These dedicated individuals give many hours to the program, in addition to their normal teaching or school duties, to inspire the next generation to conserve, protect and value Western Australia's natural assets.

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"The success of the Bush Rangers program is evident by the fact that it has the highest proportional levels of participation among female students, Aboriginal students and students with a disability."

**Brad Cusworth, Cadets WA**

**Below** Cadets with Environment Minister Hon. Reece Whitby at a Saving Sealions event. *Photo – S Bisluck*



## Northwest Shelf Flatback Turtle Program

DBCA's Northwest Shelf Flatback Turtle Conservation Program aims to increase the conservation and protection of the Northwest Shelf flatback turtle population away from Barrow Island. This is achieved by surveying, monitoring and researching flatback turtle populations, reducing interference to key breeding and feeding locations and establishing information and education programs. The studies also influence the development of wider conservation strategies and the management of the Northwest Shelf region.

In 2023, there were 59 volunteers who spent up to four weeks in hot and humid conditions on Thevenard and Delambre Islands. They worked day and night with scientists and Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation rangers to identify turtles, record the number of nests and tracks, mark and excavate nests to record hatchling success and survival and conduct health observations. A total of 1073 individual turtles were monitored, with 97% being flatback turtles and the remaining 3% hawksbill and green turtles. 728 nests were recorded over the season and 25% of the turtles were observed nesting for the first time at Delambre Island and 9% at Thevenard Island. Some turtles even returned to the same beach up to eight times throughout the monitoring season.

Back at Kensington, Dr Bob Prince volunteers many hours to organise and analyse the monitoring data for the team. He is an invaluable volunteer with over 40 years' experience in turtle conservation working for DBCA!

In the future, the program will continue to monitor key rookeries (nesting beaches) and flatback turtle populations across the Northwest Shelf, including annual monitoring on Thevenard Island and Delambre Island in the Pilbara, to assess the impacts of the conservation priorities. Volunteers will continue to play an integral role in this huge monitoring effort.



**inset** Flatback emerging from the ocean at Delambre Island.

**Below** Turtle monitoring volunteers at Delambre Island. Photos – T Simpson



## Saving our Snake-necked Turtle Program

Saving our Snake-necked Turtle is a citizen science and community engagement program to help conserve the southwestern snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina oblonga*). This species only exists in the southwest of Western Australia and is long-lived, but recent research shows that the population is in decline and has been significantly impacted by habitat loss. The project aims to save the southwestern snake-necked turtle populations from further decline and potential extinction by increasing public awareness of the species and empowering the southwestern WA community to contribute to turtle conservation.

Community involvement is critical to help scientists understand the distribution and status of cryptic species such as the southwestern snake-necked turtle, and the project relies on hundreds of people across Perth and the southwest volunteering as citizen scientists to observe and map turtle activity.

Monitoring occurs throughout the year using TurtleSAT to help track where the species is being seen, what they are doing and where the problems are, such as road trauma and predation. Volunteers complete essential training to become official 'Turtle Trackers' and commit to a roster at their local wetland. The turtle tracker teams watch for female turtles leaving the wetland to lay their eggs, observe and protect them, and then install nest protection to prevent predation of the eggs.

Over the 2022 nesting season, 116 volunteers gave their time to protect 164 nests. The 2023 season promises to be even more successful with more local governments involved and over 500 volunteers registered to become turtle trackers. The project aims to continue growing participation across Western Australia by engaging with more local government areas and gathering more data which is critical to achieving long term protection for this unique species.

“We simply could not achieve this work without our highly valued volunteers. It would be impossible for one person to be at all the wetlands all the time to observe and protect these amazing turtles as they continue to strive to survive!”

**C Baudains, Project Officer**

To get involved in this project, email [SOSNT@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:SOSNT@murdoch.edu.au) or visit their website [SOSNT.net.au](http://SOSNT.net.au)



**Above** Snake-necked turtle.

**Above right** Turtle Tracker volunteer.

Photos – C Baudains



## Wheatbelt Region

### Dryandra Woodland National Park

The Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Western Australia adopted Dryandra Woodland as a maintenance project in 2006. What started out as mainly track maintenance, developed to include the delivery of strategic project work to add value to the current infrastructure.

The woodland areas are habitat to many endangered fauna species including numbats, malleefowl and woylies. It is also a hotspot for flora with many distinct vegetation communities including the iconic Open Wandoo Woodland. In January 2022, the area was announced as the first national park in Western Australia's Wheatbelt region and is expected to receive an influx of visitors in the future.

The group usually meet up at Dryandra for two weeks in May each year to work on the existing trail network in conjunction with DBCA staff in Narrogin. They have also been upgrading the existing infrastructure to allow visitors to experience the wonders of the woodlands safely and to ensure that it remains protected for future generations to enjoy.

This year's works were focused at Contine Hill, with barrier rails being augered in at the lookout. The rails were installed with mortise and tenon joints so there was not a hint of a nail or concrete in sight. They also installed trail marker posts and directional markers on the two walk trails located nearby and other walk trails within the park. They are a much-valued partner and plan to continue working with Narrogin DBCA staff to deliver worthwhile projects to the park.

“As volunteers, we not only enjoy working in a beautiful bush environment, but we have the satisfaction of knowing that we are doing something that will benefit others.”

Chris and Chamutal, volunteers



Above Volunteers Chris and Chamutal of the Toyota Landcruiser Club of WA at work. Photo – DBCA

## Swan Region – Regional Parks

### Friends of Hawkevale Nature Reserve

This newly formed group of local families reached out to DBCA to discuss how they could take care of the local reserve. In less than six months, they have 33 registered volunteers between the ages of four and 81. The initial aim of the group is to preserve and protect a 10ha area of banksia woodland in the Hawkevale Nature Reserve and with so many young families involved, they have already made an impact by collecting rubbish, monitoring birdboxes and planting new seedlings.

The group has actively sought funding and received a grant which will be primarily used for the installation of a walk trail, and with the help of DBCA staff they are hoping to begin the installation of the first section in the next few months. They will continue to focus on monitoring the birdboxes using motion-detecting cameras from DBCA, monitoring the revegetation areas with their new seedlings, conducting regular photo point monitoring, major rubbish and weed removal projects, and hope to introduce a wildflower walk and talk.

“I love that I’ve met like-minded people in my own neighbourhood that I’d likely not met if it weren’t for the volunteer group. I love showing my kids that it is important to play a role in maintaining our local community.”

Katelyn, volunteer and local resident

Below Friends of Hawkevale Nature Reserve working in the community. Photo – DBCA



## Canning River Regional Park volunteers

The Canning River Regional Park volunteers have been working in the park for more than 30 years, restoring and conserving the natural environment, as well as educating the public on the ecological values of the park.

In 2022–23, they continued their work across four major sites, with particular focus on the urban forest site near the Nicholson Road bridge. The vegetation in this area provides a buffer between Nicholson Road and a billabong, and a grant was received from the Australian Business Enterprise Centre to assist with weed removal and the purchase of 1300 native plants for revegetation.

Hand weeding and solarisation were used to prepare the site ready for the planting of tube stocks over the winter months. Local councilor Mark Bain, and the Riverview Church's Green team, assisted the group to complete the planting in very wet and muddy conditions. Watering of the plants occurs over the summer months and despite the hot and dry conditions on the site, there has been an incredible survival rate of around 70%. The group will monitor the site over the next few years and start planning the restoration of other areas within the park.



Above Canning River Regional Park volunteers. Photo – DBCA

## Woodvale Waters Friends of Beenyup Channel

Woodvale Waters is a housing estate bordering the southern section of Lake Joondalup and the Beenyup swamp area in Yellagonga Regional Park. Woodvale Waters – Friends of Beenyup Channel was established from the local resident group, the Woodvale Waters Landowners Association, who had been aware of the degradation and weed infestation in the Beenyup Channel and lakefront area of the park bordering the estate for some time.

With the support of the landowner association, a small subgroup was formed approximately ten years ago to undertake rehabilitation and revegetation work in the park.

In 2022–23, the group started work on four new rehabilitation and planting areas. They planted over 4500 sedge and dry land trees and plants, joined the '1 million turtles' project and commenced a collaboration with the Harry Butler Institute at Murdoch University to raise funding for a project to address the koi carp, goldfish infestation in Lake Joondalup and Lake Goollelal. Funding received from DBCA's Volunteer Coordination Unit provided equipment that was instrumental in increasing the efficiency of the small group and allowing them to exceed their objectives.

The group has several long-term objectives. These include reducing the nutrient load levels in water moving from Beenyup Swamp to Lake Joondalup, ongoing rehabilitation and revegetation work on the channel and lakefront areas, increasing the native plant biodiversity and volume. Additionally, they aim to expand the native plant buffer zone on either side of the channel and on the lakefront area, all while enhancing nesting and breeding opportunities for native fauna endemic to the lake and its surrounding areas. There's a particular focus on increasing future nesting and feeding opportunities for black-cockatoos. This ambitious team tirelessly contribute hundreds of volunteer hours with proven results.

Below Woodvale Waters Friends of Beenyup Channel planting day. Photo – B Saunders





## Wilbinga Conservation Park

The Wilbinga Shacks Crew, in conjunction with local DBCA staff, have been coordinating annual cleanup events in the Wilbinga Conservation Park for the last fifteen years. The group is dedicated to the sustainability of the coastal lands and the promotion of responsible four-wheel driving and coastal fishing.

Their 2023 event was held in May and, despite heavy overnight rain, it was well supported by local 4x4 clubs with over 100 volunteers contributing more than 500 volunteer hours to assist with the clean-up efforts. Less rubbish was collected throughout the park than previous years, which illustrates the significant efforts of previous cleanups and the importance of the group's continued efforts to encourage all users of the conservation park to treat the park respectfully.

The group has also been educating visitors to the area on the importance of keeping to the four-wheel drive tracks, never driving on vegetation, and taking back out what is taken into the park to help conserve the natural environment and maintain future access for all visitors.



**Above** Wilbinga Crew accepting their Outstanding Service award from Minister Reece Whitby MLA. Photo – P Nicholas

## Kimberley Region

### Cable Beach Turtle Monitoring Program

The Cable Beach Turtle Monitoring Program was founded in 2006 and run by Conservation Volunteers Australia with passionate members of the Broome community. In 2013, DBCA acquired this volunteer program, and it is now coordinated each year by the regional interpretation team and supported by the Yawuru park rangers, who assist with turtle nest marking and public education. The project aims to raise awareness within the community about how to help conserve and protect the nesting turtles of Walmanyjun (Cable Beach), particularly the flatback turtle endemic to northern Australia.

More than 85 volunteers signed up for the 2022–23 season and monitored almost daily between November to February, totaling 2066 hours of monitoring and over 1800km of walking. Seventy-three turtle nests were found, 75 of which were endemic flatback turtles and three were green turtle nests. The program upgraded to a more streamlined, intuitive monitoring and rostering application that improved volunteer experience and enjoyment.

The team have also created a great working relationship with the Shire of Broome and Nyamba Buru Yawuru, working together in tripartite joint management. In consultation with the Shire, they successfully closed the beach to all vehicles during peak nesting time in December and January to protect turtle hatchlings. As a result, no turtle hatchlings were impacted by vehicles and tyre ruts this year—an amazing result from years of ongoing advocacy.

The program aims to continue to contribute to long-term monitoring data that can be used for management decisions and local conservation strategies. This includes providing support and advice to the Shire of Broome regarding vehicle closures to protect turtle hatchlings and contributing to management decisions for the proposed Cable Beach foreshore redevelopment to protect turtle nesting areas.

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“I have loved the opportunity to learn about and help protect turtles, meet new people, and start my day in such a positive way. Even when there is no turtle action, I never regret the beautiful morning walk at the beginning of the day, seeing the sunrise, observing the treasures washed up and cleaning up rubbish from the beach.”

**Millie, volunteer.**

**Right** Recording turtle statistics.  
Photo – DBCA



## Pilbara Region

### Dirk Hartog Island National Park Ecological Restoration – *Return to 1616*

The Dirk Hartog Island National Park Ecological Restoration Project is one of the largest ecological restoration projects in the southern hemisphere and aims to restore the island of Wirruwana, or Dirk Hartog Island, to an ecological state similar to that when the first Europeans arrived there in 1616. Over a 12-year period, the project aims to reintroduce 13 fauna species that have previously become extinct on the island. This includes the restoration of the ecological values of the island, including the ecosystem services provided by many of these species, while promoting long-term security. It is hoped that for several of the species intended for translocation, this will help towards their delisting as threatened species.

Since the commencement of the project in 2017, volunteers have provided invaluable assistance in the translocation and monitoring of Shark Bay mice, greater stick-nest rats, dibblers, and western grass wrens, along with monitoring the three previously translocated species; rufous hare-wallabies, banded hare wallabies, and Shark Bay bandicoots. Translocations of up to six more species are intended to take place over the next seven years. These species will include brush-tailed mulgara, boodies, woylies, desert mice, heath mice, and chuditch.

Everyone can help with this project by giving each individual animal as much protection as possible when visiting the island. Educating ourselves and others on what we can do to protect these fragile populations can have a positive effect on the future of these vulnerable Australians.

“Volunteering for *Return to 1616* was such an incredible experience—I learnt so much about wildlife conservation from the experts whilst experiencing the natural beauty of the island. I feel extremely lucky to have been involved in such an important project.”

Grace, volunteer

**Below** Learning about turtle nesting habits. Photo – DBCA



## West Pilbara Turtle Monitoring Program

In 2023, the West Pilbara Turtle Monitoring Program celebrated 20 years of monitoring turtles in the West Pilbara region. Initially starting as a small group of community members monitoring turtles at Cape Lambert near Wickham, the program has grown into a partnership with DBCA and Rio Tinto, monitoring and recording nesting success and educates the community about marine turtles and raising awareness of turtle conservation and the protection of nesting beaches.

Over the past year, 45 volunteers conducted beach monitoring across four beaches and recorded a total of 383 turtle nests over 57 days. They also assisted with two beach cleanups gathering over 30 large bags of rubbish and educated the community at local events such as FeNaCING (Karratha’s community festival) and National Science Week fairs. In March 2023, Rio Tinto and DBCA staff, program volunteers and supporters came together to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the program at Port Walcott Yacht Club. This milestone highlights the importance of long-term programs like this that are critical to understanding long-lived species such as marine turtles.

With such strong community support for the West Pilbara Turtle Program, the aim is to continue for another 20 years. This will help to understand local nesting populations of marine turtles and assist in the protection of their important nesting beaches.

“I’m amazed at the ongoing level of commitment from the volunteers. They are a great bunch of people. It is wonderful that so many families can take part and have these shared experiences.”

Judymae Napier, Education Officer, DBCA Karratha

**Below** Public education tour. Photo – J Cridland



For more information about volunteering with DBCA, please visit [dbca.wa.gov.au/volunteering](https://dbca.wa.gov.au/volunteering) or email [pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au)

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