



A snapshot of Volunteer Projects 2023–2024

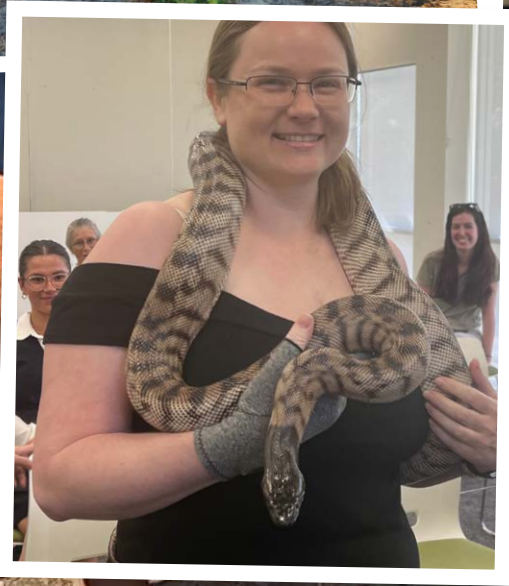
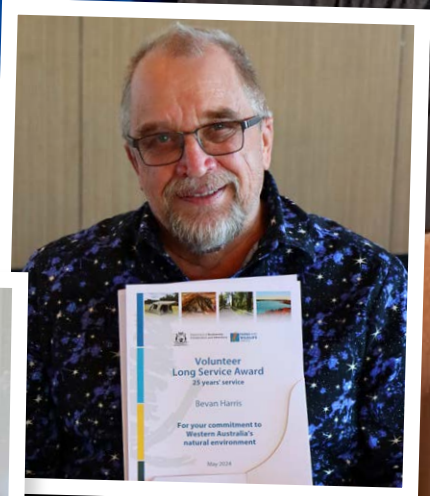
DBCA Parks and Wildlife Service



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Biodiversity and
Conservation Science



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Opposite page:

Main Thevenard Island Turtle Tagging volunteers. *Photo – DBCA*

Top left Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park. *Photo – J Davison*

Right Long Service award recipient Bevan Harris. *Photo – G Vesely*

Below Wildlife and Snake Awareness Workshop. *Photo – G Vesely*

Cover:

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

Foreword

Volunteers play an integral role in the work of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Their dedication, passion, and commitment to the natural environment help sustain Western Australia's unique biodiversity, landscapes, and cultural heritage. In the 2023-24 financial year, 7,100 volunteers generously contributed over 835,000 hours of their time to support DBCA-registered projects.

This booklet highlights the invaluable contributions across our parks, reserves, and conservation initiatives, made possible by the collaborative efforts between DBCA staff and dedicated volunteers. The stories and achievements captured here, highlight the diversity of work carried out by DBCA volunteers across WA. From restoring critical habitats to maintaining our extensive network of trails, volunteers bring their skills, energy, and enthusiasm to every project.

Their efforts not only support conservation goals but also strengthen the connection between communities and the environment, fostering a collective sense of stewardship for future generations. The impact of these efforts is felt across Western Australia, including within local communities, which benefit from enhanced information, education, and management of local flora and fauna.

Volunteers themselves benefit, gaining a sense of fulfilment and purpose by contributing to important environmental and conservation efforts. Through the training and support offered by DBCA, either formally or through hands-on work, volunteers develop new skills, enhance their knowledge, and build lasting friendships within a supportive community.

The Department benefits from a passionate volunteer workforce that aligns with its mission, aiding in the achievement of our environmental, conservation, and recreational goals. Together, we continue to support the vision to value, protect, and conserve Western Australia's environment for its intrinsic worth, and for the appreciation and benefit of current and future generations.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers and the staff who make this possible.

Volunteer Coordination Unit 2024

Right Wildlife and Snake Awareness Workshop. Photo – G Vesely

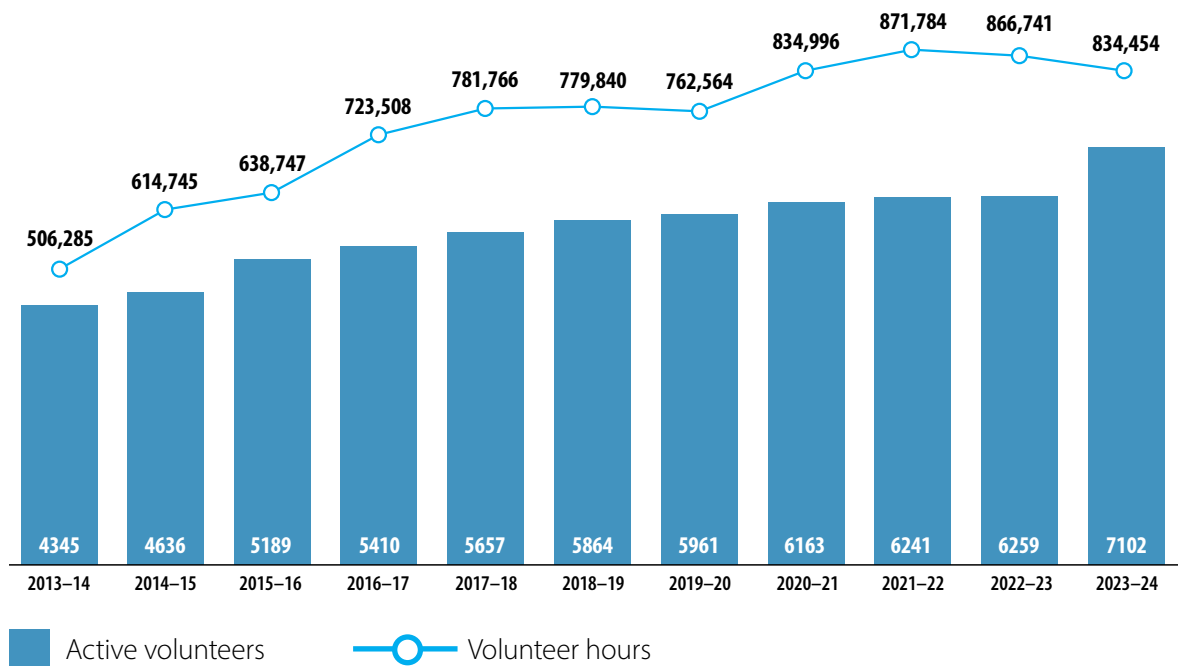
Far right Friends of Kattamorda volunteers Photo – B Benson

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



Volunteering at DBCA

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.

Key Facts

7102
active volunteers

834,454
hours contributed

350
Individual volunteers
contributed over 500 hours

2646
volunteer reward park
passes issued

117
average hours per volunteer



2023 DBCA Volunteer Awards

The Volunteer Awards were opened with a Welcome to Country by Ingrid Cumming, Traditional Owner of Noongar Boodjar. The awards were presented by Darren West MLC, on behalf of the Hon. Reece Whitby MLA, Minister for Environment; Climate Action and Peter Sharp.

26 individuals received Outstanding Service awards along with 2 community groups – Bibbulmun Track Volunteers and Cape Track Volunteers.

Breanna Brown was presented with the Young Volunteer award, and The Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Ross Simpson – Bibbulmun Track

Above main Bibbulmun Track Volunteers.

Right above Breanna Brown, Young Volunteer award recipient.

Right Ross Simpson, 2023 Volunteer of the Year.

Photos – DBCA



Outstanding Service recipients

| Recipient | Organisation |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Priscilla Roderick | Wildlife Rehabilitation |
| Patricia and Albert Chandler | Perth Hills Discovery Centre |
| Mark Davidson | Bibbulmun Track |
| Andrew and Lisa Rossi | Campground Hosts |
| Greg Hill | Cable Beach Turtle Monitoring |
| Una Bell | Swan Region |
| Lucy Hore | Wildcare Helpline |
| Lyn Rowland | WA Herbarium |
| Kristy Gaikhorst | Armadale Reptile Centre |
| Carolyn Tester | Native Animal Rescue AU |
| Cameron Wishart | Kalamunda Mountain Bike Collective |
| Jenny Rose | Various DBCA volunteer programs |
| Ken Suckling and Jurgen Kahlfield | Campground Hosts |
| Jan Richards, Sue Walker, and David Taggart | Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park |
| Maud Lowe, Rachel Olsen and Aaron Shackleton | WA Seabird Rescue |
| Jim Creighton | Western Ground Parrot Surveys |
| Carolynne Lowden and Jan Saunders | Friends of Beenyup Channel |
| Jacklyn Adams | Cable Beach Turtle Monitoring |

Below Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park. *Photo – J Davison*





Above left Mario and Margaret Matassa.

Above right John Murphy, Margaret Larke and Jim Baker.

Left Meg and Stan Salazaar.

Photos – G Vesely

Long Service Celebration

In May, DBCA acknowledged 68 long-serving volunteers across 26 different projects that had reached the incredible milestones of 20, 25, and 30 consecutive years of volunteering with the department.

As part of National Volunteer Week 2024, volunteers and their guests attended a well-deserved morning tea held at Fraser's Restaurant opened by the Director General Stuart Smith and attended by Executive Director Luke Bentley, Parks and Visitor Service.

20 years

Anne-Marie Adams

Jim Baker

Amanda Best

Peter Day

Glenda and Robert Dixon

June Gaynor

Graeme Gibson

Ann Gunness

Bronwen Keighery

Harold Levison

Walt Logue

Margaret and Mario Matassa

John Murphy

Peter and Vicki Robinson

Ron Snook

Alice Stubber

Peter Sweetman

25 years

Rose Best
 Deborah Buchholz
 Terry Casey
 Alan Compton
 Jill and Tom Cross
 Leona Della Sale
 Carol Durant
 Shirley Fisher
 Brian and Robin Foley
 Jonica Foss
 Tina Garbelini
 Denise and Lynton Gillies
 Gina Gregory
 Bevan Harris
 Chris Hollister
 Lesley and Trevor Houden
 Meryl and Ross Jarvis
 Fran Kininmonth
 Cathy Levett
 Jan Martin
 Cecil and Iris Mountford
 Glenda Olesen
 Val Preston
 Chris and Gwen Plunkett
 Helen Riley
 Meg Salazaar
 Libby Sandiford
 Steve Sertis
 Gillian Smith
 Mavis Sowry
 Kim Spence
 Lynda Strahan
 David Taggart



Above Brian Moyle, Fran Kininmonth, Margaret Larke and Bronwen Keighery



Left Glenda Olesen.

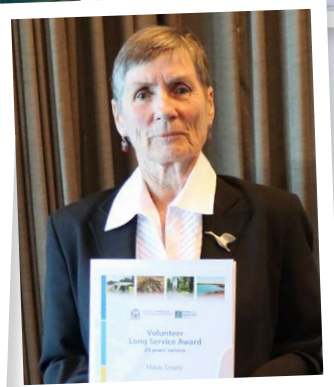
Below Crooked Brook Volunteers.

Photos – DBCA



30 years

Lex Bastian
 Anne Bellman
 David James
 Margaret Larke
 Brian Moyle
 Maurice Stonehouse
 Dot Terry



Above left Walt Logue.

Above right Gina Gregory.

Above Mavis Sowry.

Left Dot Terry.

Photos – DBCA

Volunteer Training

The Volunteer Coordination Unit (VCU) has been able to offer a variety of training opportunities to active DBCA volunteers, enhancing their knowledge and skills to assist them in their current volunteering roles.

Essential First Aid

Regional training sessions have been conducted by St John WA in Albany, Busselton, and Bunbury, alongside multiple courses at the DBCA Kensington Headquarters, for volunteers based in Perth.

These four-hour Essential First Aid courses were delivered in a relaxed manner by experienced St John WA instructors through videos, photos, conversations, and practical training.

All attendees had the opportunity to practice the recovery position, CPR and use the defibrillators. This course has been well received by more than 200 volunteers and the feedback has been extremely positive.

This page Essential First Aid training. *Photo – Gemma Vesely*

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"Good range of topics and essential knowledge. I liked the mix of demo videos, presenter speaking, and practical exercises."
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"I felt the course was very beneficial, especially because I now feel more confident in being able to help in a first-aid emergency. I particularly valued the opportunity to rehearse the first-aid steps on our partner as it helped consolidate the info from the videos. Would definitely recommend the course to other volunteers. TEN GOLD STARS!"
.....





Wildlife and Snake Awareness

Many DBCA volunteers expressed an interest in finding out more about what to do when they come across snakes while volunteering. The Wildlife and Snake Awareness workshops run by Animal Ark have educated more than 180 volunteers to increase their knowledge and give them confidence when working out in the bush. Before the sessions some attendees had stated that they were afraid of snakes, but by the end of the session, most were eager to handle a snake – or at least get close to one.

These workshops are always conducted in a relaxed, reassuring manner by knowledgeable presenters who give personal anecdotes, along with all the facts, to make volunteers feel more comfortable and prepared for the next time they encounter a reptile.

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“David has extensive knowledge, and his passion is obvious. This came across very clearly in his informative and interesting presentation”

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“Fantastic, very informative. Was an experience to touch / hold the reptiles at the end. One of the reasons I wanted to do this course was to lessen my fear. I feel I made a good start. I actually touched the snake! Very proud of myself!”

This page Wildlife and Snake Awareness training.
Photos – Gemma Vesely





Main Native Seed Collection. *Photo – Alison Melvin*
Above Seed collection workshop, Yanchep National Park. *Photo – G. Vesely*
Left Banksia. *Photo – Rob Bradbury*

Native Seed Collection

Thirty-five volunteers enhanced their knowledge by attending one of the Native Seed Workshops organized by APACE. The workshops covered a range of topics, including licensing, hazards and risks of seed collecting, seed collection and storage for different species, record keeping, seed processing, and seed viability. Some volunteers enjoyed a tour of the APACE facilities, while others participated in a bush walk in Yanchep National Park

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“Beneficial? Absolutely! I took substantial notes and came away more aware of what to do and how to go about doing it.”

De-escalating Conflict and Aggression

The popular De-escalating Conflict and Aggression workshop presented by Evolve WA has provided volunteers with the tools and techniques they need to react effectively to aggressive, violent, threatening, and other unexpected or inappropriate behaviour. Packed with technical know-how, real-world examples, and interactive scenarios, these workshops were met with significant praise.

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“I really enjoyed the course. I now feel more confident in my ability to work with the public and handle situations whilst representing DBCA in the highest professional manner if things were to escalate.”

Aboriginal Culture Awareness

Volunteers were taken on a tour of Western Australia’s Aboriginal history and culture by Mark Bonshore DBCA’s Aboriginal Engagement and Training officer.

Many expressed that they had gained a greater understanding of cultural customs, language groups, object and totem awareness, dreaming stories, and the respect that each Aboriginal group has for each other’s country.

Everyone was grateful to Mark for providing an approachable and safe environment for them to ask questions.

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“I found this was an excellent workshop both in its presentation and content, Mark was very passionate and knowledgeable and delivered an excellent workshop.”



Above Deescalating Conflict Workshop. *Photo – DBCA*

Swan Region – Regional Parks

Herdsman Lake Bird Banding Group

Herdsman Lake Bird Banding Group is a group of volunteers who regularly meet at Herdsman Lake to band and study birds in their habitat. The group was established in 2001 with a focus on bush birds, however a broad range of species from different Orders have been encountered due to the diversity of habitat at the lake. Members of the group have also been conducting vegetation management alongside their bird banding studies this winter, primarily to produce habitat that benefits local wildlife.

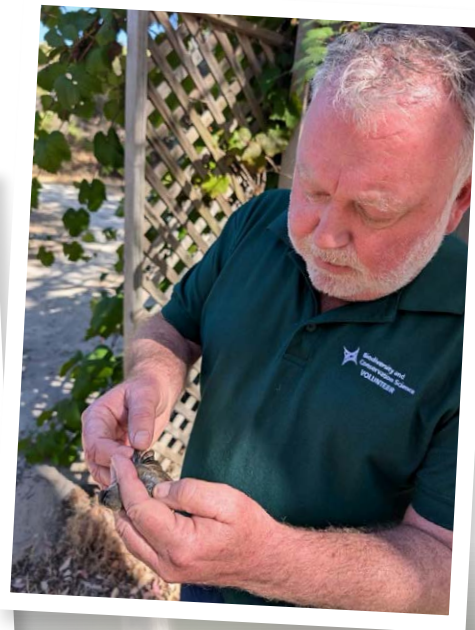
The Settlers Cottage site at Herdsman Lake has a tradition of non-native plants being established in the area and recent years have seen efforts to remove Japanese Pepper (*Zanthoxylum piperitum*) from the area, all of which have been unsuccessful. The group is now using a different approach to the management of this troublesome shrub in the form of Wattle Fencing.

This practice from Europe dates to the neolithic times and it can now be seen at Herdsman Lake, where the suckers from the Japanese peppers have proven to be suitable for the wattle fencing project the group has been planning for several years.

The strong aesthetic nature of wattle fencing complements the artistic theme of the site and provides habitat, in the form of standing dead wood for insects, that in turn benefit the insectivorous birds that use the site. The installation of the first section of the fence has begun thanks to a tool grant from the VCU.

Main Juvenile male Splendid Fairy wren. *Photo – DBCA*

Below right and left Herdsman Lake Bird Banding Group. *Photos – HLBBG*



Friends of North Lake

The North Lake – West revegetation project has been going since 2012. There have been many challenges during this time, causing the group to change their strategies to overcome some of these difficulties. During the early years of the project, local volunteers would hand water new plants with water carried from their homes. There is now a water tank on site to help make the job much easier although sufficient water supply can still be an issue, particularly during the hottest part of summer.

Last year was particularly dry and several of the trees that were planted in the first three years of the project died or showed signs of dying during the summer months. An increase in ant colonies invading new plantings has also impacted their growth.

Main Friends of North Lake.

Right Hand watering new plants.

Photos – DBCA

Another concern for the group is the increase of Black Flag in the area. Black Flag is a perennial cormous herb that is a major threat to the conservation values of Banksia woodlands in Western Australia. If left, it will spread through bushland and compete with native plant communities. The affected area is too large for the small group of volunteers, and they are working with DBCA on a future management plan.





Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group

The Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group Inc. (SERAG) is a community-based organisation concerned to protect, conserve and restore the rich and diverse natural heritage values of the Swan River Estuary. The group was formed in 2010 in response to a pressing need for action to ensure the long-term health and well-being of three unique sites in the Swan River Estuary that have been set aside by the wider community as the Swan Estuary Marine Park. Members volunteer their time and expertise to restore and strengthen the resilience of the native habitat in and around the margins of these very special areas.

In 2021 the group received a Community Rivercare grant, part of which was to complete the rehabilitation of the Tompkins Park foreshore by the removal of *Typha orientalis* and its replacement with several species of sedges and a diverse range of other plants native to the area. After two years of planting wet land species and one winter's planting of dry land plants, the area has been transformed.

DBCA officers supported the group's planting efforts by joining them on numerous early summer mornings to auger holes through the *Typha* roots into which the sedges could be planted. The heat and humidity made this a particularly gruelling task but nearly 1,000 sedges were planted over the two summers. Winter 2023 saw over 990 tubes being planted by volunteers, including a corporate group from GHD, between the High-Water mark and the dual use path that runs along Tompkins Park. Many of those plants were supplied by the City of Melville adding to the tubes purchased under the grant. They also assisted with the watering of the dry land plants over the long hot summer months which contributed to a survival rate of over 95% of the plants.

Above all, the success of this environmental project has been due to the co-operation and hard work of so many people who have adopted a positive, energetic approach to improving the foreshore habitat for flora and fauna.

Main Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group. Photo – DBCA

Friends of Paganoni Swamp

The Friends of Paganoni Swamp was formed in 2004 in response to the threat of Geraldton carnation weed (*Euphorbia terracina*) which was moving into Paganoni Swamp Reserve on its western boundary. Over a period of about eight years, with the support of staff at Urban Nature, the group was able to control the spread of the weed.

The group has continued to meet weekly and during the winter and spring months they concentrate on weed control, targeting Dune onion weed (*Trachyandra divaricata*), Cape Tulip (*Moraea flaccida*), Fumitory (*Fumaria capreolata*) and Perennial veldgrass (*Erharta calycina*). The other months are spent constructing exclosures, planting, weed mapping and removing redundant fencing wire which can be a threat to the native wildlife.

Volunteers have also participated in the monthly monitoring of 24 bat boxes to ascertain the presence or absence of microbats in the Reserve and undertaken bat surveys during the warmer months of the year to help with the protection of these species. The placement of a few cameras plus a sound recorder in the field has helped to gain a better understanding of what fauna is present in the reserve, with considerable time spent in data analysis of what has been photographed and recorded.

The group relies heavily on grant funding for herbicides, feral animal control and revegetation.

This page Friends of Paganoni Swamp. Photos – DBCA



Woodvale Waters – Friends of Beenyup Channel

The Woodvale Waters – Friends of Beenyup Channel volunteer group was established from the local resident group over ten years ago to undertake rehabilitation and revegetation work at Beenyup Channel in Yellagonga Regional Park. They have a small regular volunteer group who organise several corporate planting and weeding days each year, as well as engage with local schools and scout groups, to increase their environmental impact in the area.

The group is currently four years into a ten-year project with 3 main objectives:

- Increasing the flora and fauna biodiversity in the area by increasing the planted corridor around the Beenyup Channel / Lake Joondalup Southern area.
- Nutrient reduction in groundwater entering the wetlands
- Significant increasing the short to medium-term feeding opportunities and long-term nesting opportunities for the endangered black cockatoo population.

This page Woodvale Waters – Friends of Beenyup Channel.
Photos – DBCA



Visitors to the area have given extremely positive feedback, regarding the improvement the project has already made, which inspires the group to continue their conservation work. Each week they work together to water, plant, weed, mulch, whipper snip, mow and so much more. Over the last financial year alone they planted more than 2,000 wetland (sedge) plants and a similar number of dryland plants which then required fortnightly watering through the very dry 5 months of summer experienced in Perth. The remainder of the year was taken up with weed management and pre-planting preparation.

The group are also involved with the Save Our Snake Necked Turtle Project, The Wetlands Centre, NatureLink Perth, DBCA and more recently the WA Conservation Council Bat Monitoring Project. They continue to get assistance from the VCU through training courses and tools and equipment which has helped with increasing their environmental knowledge base and work efficiency.

.....

“Our group has a real sense of community. We love being involved in a group that is committed to supporting and allowing our local environment to thrive for future generations”

Kerryn James, volunteer



Midwest Region

Marine Debris Program

The Jurien Bay Marine Debris Program has been operating in collaboration with Curtin University since 2014. Student volunteers work alongside local DBCA staff to collect marine debris from Jurien Bay Marine Park for analysis. The program also provides an important platform to raise community awareness and mitigate threats that affect the local coastal environments and wildlife.

Last year debris was collected from twenty-two 1 kilometre transects within an area including Jurien Bay, Sandy Cape, Hill River and the coastline between Grey and Wedge Island. The debris was collected, weighed and classified according to the Australian Marine Debris Initiative methodology and the data was entered into the Australian Marine Debris Database. This database is used by local, state, and national government, as well as industry and communities, to identify the types and amounts of marine debris impacting each site, and then to find practical ways of preventing these items from ending up in the ocean in the first place. The data can also be used to gauge levels of improvement or worsening of marine pollution.

A total of 1054 kilograms of marine debris was collected and classified last year, contributing to a combined total of 10,703 kilograms of marine debris collected over the 10 years of the program.

“DBCA would like to extend a huge thank you to the staff and students of Curtin University for their 10 years of dedicated and enthusiastic contribution to this program. The success of this program would certainly not be possible without their continued support.”

Andre Bobojcov, DBCA Marine Ranger

This page Marine Debris Program. *Photos – DBCA*





Monkey Mia Hosts

Campground hosts at Monkey Mia live onsite at the Reserve and patrol the beach after hours to watch over the dolphins and educate visitors to the area. In the mornings they assist with the daily dolphin experiences and help the local staff. Many volunteers return regularly and even stay longer than required to lend a hand.

Thanks to the efforts of these volunteers there has been more maintenance and conservation work completed at the reserve and the daily beach clean ups have ensured that there is less rubbish making its way into the ocean. The whole visitor centre area looks much brighter and cleaner with the extra support and visitor satisfaction has increased with more people available to answer questions.

The local staff are extremely grateful to all of the volunteers for their assistance as it allows them the time to focus on other tasks.

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The Monkey Mia Volunteer Program is invaluable to our staff and offers volunteers a uniquely rewarding experience. Volunteers enable our team to focus on providing visitors with the best possible experience while also helping complete essential daily tasks. New volunteers bring joy, passion, and fresh perspectives, often offering new ideas and suggestions that enhance the program

Rebecca Pavey, Morning Volunteer Coordinator



Main Rod and Glenda.
Right and far right Monkey Mia Volunteers.
Photos – Bec Pavey, DBCA

Statewide / Multi-region Projects

Nearer to Nature

Nearer to Nature is a DBCA program which focuses on providing opportunities for the community to get into the environment with hands-on, engaging activities for children, families, adults, schools and community groups. Activities are run across the metro area and cover a range of themes such as plants, animals, wetlands, forests, conservation, waste and more.

Their holiday programs provide nature-based learning through fun, hands-on activities. Volunteers have a great time helping during these programs, getting involved with games, craft activities, stories and meeting some of Western Australia's wildlife up close.

The success of these programs is achieved with the dedication and help of volunteers.



This page Nearer to Nature volunteers. *Photos – DBCA*



West Australian Seabird Rescue

Western Australian Seabird Rescue is a network of seabird and waterbird rescuers based in coastal south-western Australia. Their main areas of activity are Perth, Shoalwater, Mandurah and Albany. Every year they rescue and rehabilitate hundreds of waterbirds such as herons, swans and ducks, and many seabirds including pelicans, cormorants, shearwaters, penguins and albatrosses. Most of the coastal seabirds like pelicans and cormorants they deal with are entangled in fishing line and hooks.

The paralyzing disease Botulism is also common in ducks and pelicans. Big winter storms blow pelagic seabirds such as albatrosses, gannets and giant petrels onto beaches, while juvenile shearwaters leaving their burrows may be drawn to coastal lighting and crash-land. Penguins come ashore to moult and are brought into care if they are at risk from dogs and foxes. The group has several techniques to rescue birds that are injured or entangled but are still able to fly.

Earlier this year, there was a massive botulism outbreak in Lake Jualbup, located north of Perth, due to extremely low water levels and six months of the driest weather Perth has experienced. Volunteers were called to help retrieve 25 deceased ducks and 25 were rescued and made a full recovery. By the end of June, rain had filled the depleted lake and the remaining water birds looked healthy and happy.

We are looking for volunteers to answer phones and be involved in the committee and working groups. Please email WASR: info@wasr.org.au

Main WASR volunteer attending a rescue. *Photo – DBCA*



Marine Science Program – Intertidal Reef Surveys

The DBCA Marine Science Program helps to monitor the biodiversity of temperate intertidal reefs across Western Australia’s marine parks. At the beginning of the year, DBCA researchers and volunteers teamed up to survey intertidal reefs along the Ngari Capes Marine Park. From bubble snails to living fossils, these diverse reefs harbour a huge diversity of life. Over 65 species have been recorded as part of this survey and the resulting data will build on previous monitoring work, allowing to estimate changes in reef health.

Community involvement through volunteering plays a huge role in the success of intertidal reef monitoring programs and the scientists working on the Marine Science Program are thankful to all volunteers involved for helping to manage and protect these reefs. The Volunteer Coordination Unit also supported the program by providing uniforms which were essential in identifying DBCA volunteers who were often approached by the public during the surveys.

.....

“The week we spent monitoring reef invertebrates with DBCA was not only a great learning experience for me in survey techniques, intertidal ecology and marine park management, but also opened my eyes to the variety of species and rocky platforms around my home. It was inspiring, fulfilling work and so much fun with the team. I can’t wait to be more involved with the department in the future.”

Matilda, volunteer



Top *Hydatina physis*. Above and below main Marine Science Program volunteers, Ngari Capes Marine Park.

Photos – Dr Ines Leal, DBCA





Track Care WA

Track Care WA started when a group of like-minded individuals came together and formed the Canning Stock Route Working Group in November 1996 with the purpose of preserving the state's pioneering history along the Canning Stock Route. A lot has changed since then, and over the years Track Care WA has continued to evolve into a champion of bush heritage and environmental conservation.

Over the last 12 months, Track Care WA, together with teams of 4WD enthusiasts, have volunteered over 1,000 hours within Wandoo National Park to clear fallen trees from tracks, remove dumped rubbish and in the process enjoy the distinct and ecologically diverse Wandoo forest. The eager group of volunteers checked and cleared over 208 kms of track with 349 obstructions removed during nine working bees to provide easy access for all.

This long-term project is one of many undertaken by the group throughout their 28-year history with the aim of ensuring access for all future generations. Members of the group come from all walks of life, bringing with them a wealth of practical experience, knowledge and skills that enable the group to undertake projects all over Western Australia.

.....
"We appreciate their assistance in maintaining Wandoo National Park as an important conservation area."

Rebecca Hamilton, DBCA Operations Officer

Above Volunteer health and safety briefing. *Photo – Track Care WA*

For more information about volunteering with DBCA, please visit dbca.wa.gov.au/volunteering or email pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au

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