

Return to 1616

Eight of the hare-wallabies released on Dirk Hartog Island in August have joeys in their pouches!

Some of the joeys were conceived on Dirk Hartog Island and others on Bernier and Dorre islands before they were caught and translocated to Dirk Hartog Island. Like many other macropods, a hare-wallaby can delay development of a fertilized egg and reactivate an embryo when conditions are favorable or a joey has left the pouch.

Banded hare-wallabies usually breed in their second year and joeys spend about six months in the pouch and are weaned at nine months.

Rufous hare-wallabies have a shorter breeding cycle and can breed from five months old. Although they only have one joey at a time, they can produce up to three young a year as joeys leave the pouch within three months and are weaned by five months.



Three banded hare-wallabies (above) and five rufous hare-wallabies (right) on Dirk Hartog Island have pouch young.



Scientists at work

Twelve banded hare-wallabies and 12 rufous hare-wallabies were caught on Bernier and Dorre Islands and released on the southern part of Dirk Hartog Island late in August.

Since then scientists have been monitoring the animals – locating them regularly by radio-tracking and catching each at least once for a health and collar check.

Except for one rufous hare-wallaby that died a few days after release, all are healthy and have gained weight, with some weighing more than they did when first caught.

The translocation between Shark Bay islands this year was a trial to help identify the best methods for a full release of up to 50 banded and 50 rufous hare-wallabies next year. Scientists are assessing the most suitable mode of transport between islands within Shark Bay and refining monitoring methods.

The pilot release has been labour intensive with the science team using a combination of radio collars, GPS collars, automated cameras, spotlighting and trapping to monitor the released animals. People on the ground will be replaced with radio-tracking flights over summer before radio-collars are removed in autumn.



Dr Saul Cowen is the research scientist responsible for translocations.



Kelly Rayner, Technical Officer, setting up a camera to detect animals.



Volunteers Liz and Andreas radio tracking. Keep an eye out for volunteering opportunities with the fauna monitoring team on the island next year.

Three months after translocation Dr Saul Cowen and his team are cautiously optimistic, keeping in mind the animals have a hot summer ahead of them.

Help stop this noxious weed



The yellow flowers of Golden crownbeard, *Verbesina encelioides*, are very attractive, but it is a noxious weed.

Golden crownbeard is drought tolerant and efficient at pollination and germination. It is toxic to stock and humans and displaces native vegetation. The light seeds are easily dispersed by light winds and once established the weed takes over and there is no controlling it.



The weed is all over Geraldton but so far a cooperative effort between the Shire of Shark Bay and the Parks and Wildlife Service has kept golden crownbeard under control in Shark Bay. We must remain vigilant to prevent it from becoming established in our beautiful World Heritage area.

Don't let golden crownbeard take over Shark Bay. If you see it, please bag it and bin it.

Toilets on Dirk Hartog Island



Prefabricated toilet structure being unloaded at Herald Bay.



Urchin Point and The Block now have toilets and somewhere to hang a shower.

A Remote Regions crew from Manjimup / Pemberton helped local staff install these toilets over two weeks in August. Getting materials onto Dirk Hartog and then transporting them up to the top of the island was a mammoth effort.

There are plans to install another toilet at Withnell Point in the near future. This should be a little easier with no further transport required after materials are barged directly to the site.

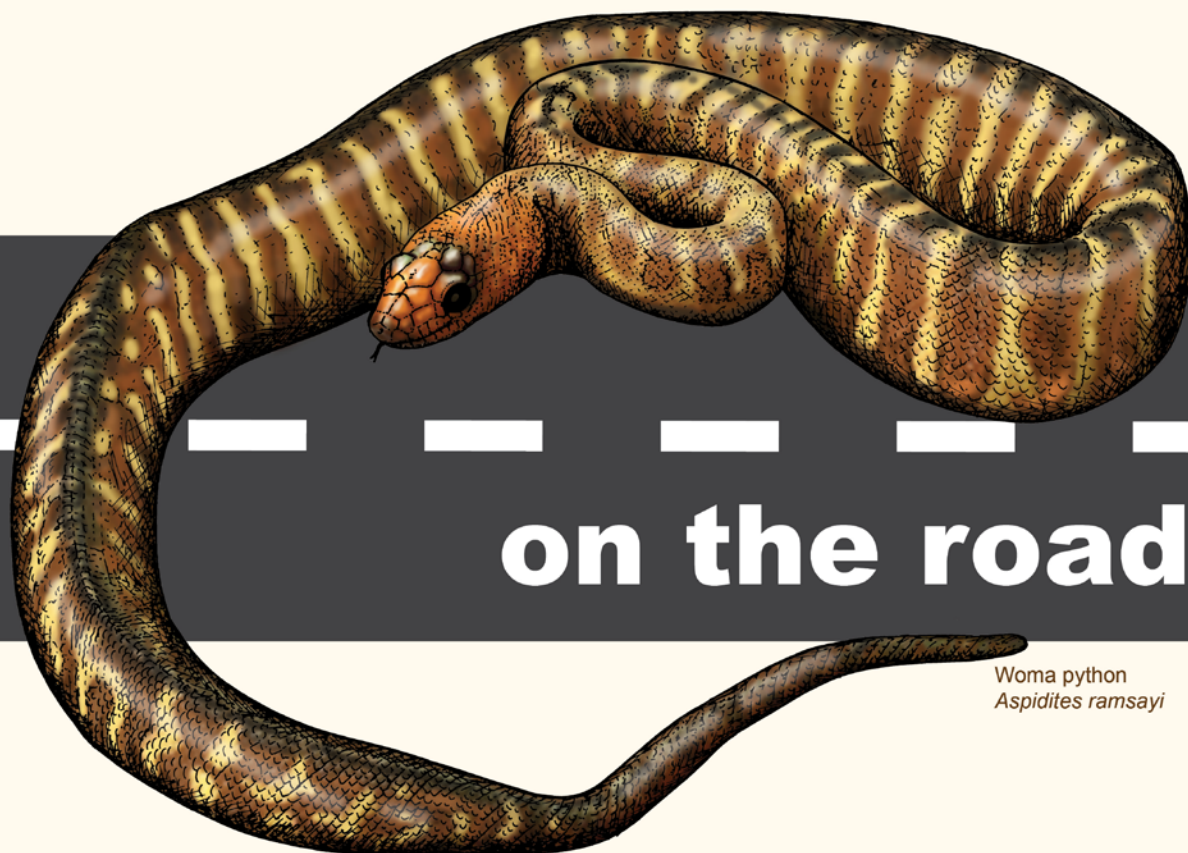
Hopefully the new toilets will help keep the island clean and stop visitors leaving toilet paper around the place.

If you are visiting the island and do not have a portable toilet, please dig a hole at least 30cm deep and bury your waste.

Left : Completed structure at Urchin Point. The shower section has great views for those tall enough to see over the walls. Bring your own shower and toilet paper.

The Parks & Wildlife Service team

Watch out for me



Woma python
Aspidites ramsayi

It's warming up and woma pythons are active.

Unfortunately that means they're on the roads and getting run over, especially between Denham and Monkey Mia.

Please slow down when you see something shiny on the road - it could be a woma python.

If you see a woma python, please let the Parks and Wildlife office in Denham know exactly where you saw it - call 9948 2226.

Woma pythons are not venomous. They prey on reptiles, including lizards and other snakes.

Womas have been making a comeback on Peron Peninsula thanks to Project Eden's feral animal control programs.

They live in burrows dug by bilbies and feral rabbits but also do some digging themselves. Womas and their close relatives, black-headed pythons are the only snakes known to dig.



Department of Biodiversity,
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