

# Conservation Matters

## Being part of something special - *Return to 1616*

With two years of above-average winter rainfall in the bay, vegetation is flourishing on Dirk Hartog Island National Park. This is good news for the fledgling, native animal populations being returned as part of the *Return to 1616* Ecological Restoration Project. With each new flush of growth comes more food and shelter for the island inhabitants. It's still early days though and whilst populations of these animals appear to be doing well, they are still small, fragile and precious. Everything possible needs to be done to look after these populations.

Whilst it's generally well understood that dogs are not permitted in national parks, it's particularly important in Dirk Hartog Island National Park. Dogs will do what comes naturally and it would potentially only take a few seconds for a dog to have a serious impact on a small, newly introduced population of threatened native animals. It is therefore critically important for visitors to the island to remember to leave their dogs at home.



Giving each individual native animal as much protection as possible can have a really positive effect and it's good to know that we can all 'do our bit' to help protect this internationally significant wildlife restoration project.

Every protection measure that visitors take, adds to a bright future for these vulnerable Australians. Even small things like installing rodent bait stations on your boat will help to keep out the highly invasive black rat, which is known to have significantly impacted wildlife on islands around the world.

**Left** - It only takes a few seconds for a dog to have a serious impact on these precious animals. Remember to leave your dog at home when visiting the island.

**Right** - Remember to install bait stations on your boat and keeping them topped up with fresh bait will help to prevent bringing any 'freeloading rodents' with you when you visit Dirk Hartog Island National Park.

Fortunately helping these fragile populations is easy! Whether travelling to the island by boat or 4WD, watch the island protection video, and download and read the island protection brochure before you leave home, to find travel tips that will help you plan your trip.



### Scan these codes to:

Watch the island protection video



Read the island protection brochure



## **What! No Kangaroos?**

Did you know that there are no kangaroos on Dirk Hartog Island? Any 'kangaroo-like' animal that you see there is a threatened hare-wallaby. Wild populations of hare-wallabies are extinct on the mainland as a result of predation by feral cats and foxes and loss of habitat. However in Dirk Hartog Island National Park, there are many places where you can now enjoy the unique experience of finding hare-wallaby tracks as a result of the *Return to 1616* Ecological Restoration Project.



Visitors driving on the island are often surprised to learn that they aren't the only ones using 4WD tracks. Hare-wallabies and many native animals use vehicle tracks too! To help to keep these precious native animals safe, avoid driving from dusk to dawn when they are most active.

**Left** – It's important to drive slowly from dusk to dawn in Dirk Hartog Island National Park. Footprints along vehicle tracks reveal how many animals use vehicle tracks including this hare-wallaby. *Photo – Kelly Rayner DBCA*

**Below** – Smiles all round after DBCA Denham staff Dale Fitzgerald and Tariq McDonald complete the installation of animal safety reminders across the island with DBCA research staff member Kelly Rayner. *Photo – Fiona Knox/DBCA*

