

# SIX SEASONS

Environmental Sustainability News from Shire of Mundaring

## Autumn Rabbit Control Trial



**Rabbits are Australia's most significant agricultural pest, threatening over 300 native plant and animal species through competition and land degradation.**

Following last year's rabbit survey, several large adjoining property owners in the Shire facing severe infestations will participate in a rabbit virus release trial this autumn. Funded by the Parks of the Darling Range Advisory Committee, the Shire has purchased vials of the Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV1) K5 strain (RHDV1-K5) to be used in the trial.

Participants will complete a free online training course through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to ensure safe handling and application of the virus. Bait is prepared by the application of reconstituted freeze dried RHDV1-K5 to diced carrots or oats.

RHDV1-K5 specifically targets rabbits (both wild and domestic) and poses no risk to humans, wildlife, other pets or livestock. However, since the virus is already widespread in the state, pet rabbit owners should always ensure their rabbits' vaccinations are up to date to protect them.

Rabbit populations will be monitored before and after the trial to assess its effectiveness. Learn more at [www.pestsmart.org.au](http://www.pestsmart.org.au).



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### RabbitScan

RabbitScan is a free app that lets you record rabbit activity, damage, and disease, helping agencies track and manage rabbit populations more effectively. If you come across a dead rabbit that may have succumbed to a virus, you can log it in the app and even request a sample kit to contribute valuable data on biocontrol spread. Every report helps improve rabbit management strategies. Learn more at [feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan/](http://feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan/).

### Bunuru - February to March

The Noongar seasonal calendar includes six different seasons in a yearly cycle. Bunuru is the time of hot easterly winds that dry out the land. It is also a time of white flowers - with Marri trees and ghost gums in bloom.



## Energy Audit Kits



Shire of Mundaring Libraries are thrilled to introduce Energy Audit Kits as part of the Switch Your Thinking Energy Efficiency Pilot Program, launching this March!

These free-to-loan kits will help Shire residents take control of their energy use and make their homes more efficient. Each kit includes:

- ✓ Diagnostic thermal imaging camera
- ✓ Power-Mate Lite 10 Amp power meter
- ✓ Energy efficiency thermometer
- ✓ Con-Serv basin flow measuring cup
- ✓ Easy-to-follow instruction manual

A series of in-person and online energy efficiency workshops will also be available. Stay updated by visiting the Switch Your Thinking website or enquire at the Shire libraries.

This initiative is proudly funded and supported by the Western Australian Government's Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety.

**Get ready to switch your thinking and save energy!**

## New Land for Wildlife Program



**Exciting News! The Shire is launching the Land for Wildlife Program this March! This initiative helps landholders protect and enhance watercourses and natural areas on their properties.**

Wildlife habitat on private land plays a crucial role in:

- Providing food, water, shelter, and breeding spaces for native animals
- Connecting conservation areas, allowing wildlife to move and find mates
- Supporting healthy watercourses by reducing erosion, sediment, and salinity
- Preserving the natural beauty of our landscape for future generations

If you own a property larger than 1 hectare (2.5 acres) with at least 10% native vegetation or a watercourse, we'd love to hear from you—especially if your property sits in a wildlife corridor! As a Land for Wildlife participant, you'll get access to:

- ✦ A wildlife camera loan to discover what's on your property
- ✦ Advice on land management, revegetation & habitat protection
- ✦ Free workshops & events with environmental and wildlife experts
- ✦ A Land for Wildlife Resource Kit full of tips on caring for native flora & fauna on your property
- ✦ Opportunities to join citizen science programs & conservation projects

We're kicking off with a series of wildlife-focused workshops and events (see the What's On Page for details).

**To find out more, contact the Land for Wildlife Coordinator at [environment@mundaring.wa.gov.au](mailto:environment@mundaring.wa.gov.au) or phone 9290 6666.**

## Meet the Native Bush Rat

The Bush Rat is a small, shy rodent native to Australia's woodlands, thriving in dense undergrowth. As nocturnal creatures, they're rarely seen, but their numbers are declining due to habitat loss and predation by introduced species like foxes and cats.

Bush Rats are distinctive thanks to their soft grey-brown fur, pinkish-grey feet, and tails that are brown to black, almost hairless, and about the same length as their bodies or slightly shorter. They can also be distinguished from Black Rats by their rounded heads, blunt noses, small round ears and chisel-shaped front teeth.

These solitary creatures are nocturnal and spend their days tucked away in grass-lined nests or burrows beneath logs and rocks. During spring and summer, males may travel up to a kilometre at night to forage and mate. Their diet varies with the seasons: in warmer months, they enjoy seeds, fruits, and arthropods, while cooler months see them feeding on fungi and fibrous plants. Remarkably, they can sip nectar without damaging flowers.

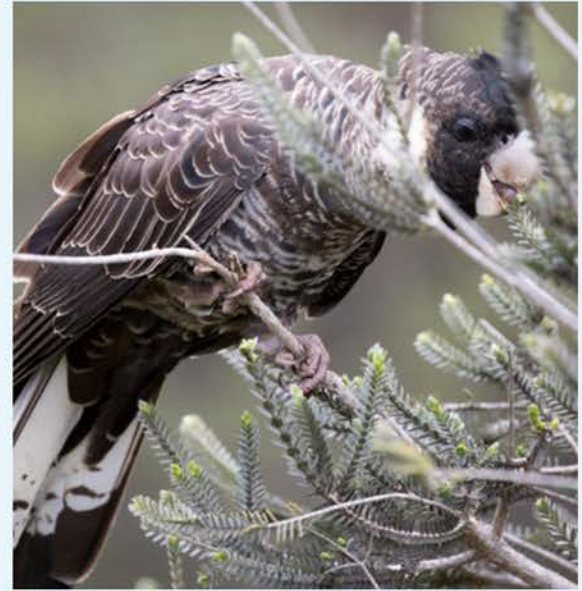
Breeding begins in November, with females giving birth to 4–5 young after a brief 22-day gestation. By 25 days old, the young leave their burrows to establish their own territories. Bush Rats are found across coastal regions of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and parts of Queensland. They favour woodlands, forests, and heathlands with dense undergrowth, rocks, and logs for shelter. Unlike the Black Rat, they are poor climbers and rarely enter urban environments.

Although one of Australia's most common native rodents, Bush Rats face serious threats. Introduced predators like foxes and cats are a constant danger, particularly after bushfires that remove their protective cover. They also compete with the larger Black Rat, which often outmuscles them for food and habitat.

Protecting their natural habitats and managing predator populations are vital to the survival of this fascinating animal. If you spot a Bush Rat on your property, we'd love to hear from you! Be sure to share any photos with the Environmental Sustainability Team.



## Great Cocky Count



**The Great Cocky Count (GCC) is a citizen-science survey, and the biggest single survey for black-cockatoos in Western Australia.**

In the lead-up to the GCC each year, Birdlife WA ask people to keep an eye out for roost sites, which helps them plan the upcoming GCC.

Then, on one evening each autumn, volunteers monitor known roost sites and count black-cockatoos as they arrive in the evening.

Records submitted from across south-western WA provide a snapshot of black-cockatoo populations, helping to quantify changes in their numbers.

### **Where can I take part in this survey?**

The Great Cocky Count takes place in south-western Western Australia — south-west of a line between Geraldton and Esperance — on a single night in autumn.

Citizen scientists can help in the lead-up to the GCC by locating night roosts (places where the black-cockatoos gather to sleep at night).

**Simply register before 16 March 2025 to take part in the Great Cocky Count and you'll receive instructions and a site to survey.**

**To register online, visit Birdlife Australia's website [www.birdlife.org.au](http://www.birdlife.org.au).**

## Restoring Mandoon Creek: Community Spirit in Action!



Friends of Mandoon Park and Shire staff show off their handiwork - a new rock riffle to slow water flow and reduce bank erosion.

On Wednesday, 22nd January, the Friends of Mandoon Park and Shire staff braved the summer heat to continue their vital work restoring the creekline.

With the help of Shire Landcare Coordinator Daniel Pekel, volunteers and staff installed rock riffles and stabilised creek embankments to combat erosion and protect this precious ecosystem.

### Want to make a difference?

Community Landcare is for everyone! The Shire has many Landcare Groups who are happy to welcome new members or just a spare pair of hands for an hour or a morning (and there'll be cuppas and biscuits and a chance to meet fellow community members).

To find out how you can get involved, contact Daniel at [danielpekel@mundaring.wa.gov.au](mailto:danielpekel@mundaring.wa.gov.au).

Let's work together to keep our local environment thriving!

## Landcare Calendar - Tips for Bunuru

- Monitor health of seedlings and water as needed
- Top up stock water troughs and bird baths daily to ensure water is cool, clean and fresh
- If you are planning tree planting or bushland revegetation for the coming winter/spring, now is the time to think about what species you'll plant (and where) and soil preparation and weed control that will be required ahead of time
- Continue to manage grazing to prevent over grazing, especially in non-irrigated pastures



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Engage with nature and sustainability and meet like-minded people!

**Birds of Broz Park and Beyond with Mike and Rachel Green**

**Boya Community Centre - Monday 10 February, 6.30pm to 8pm**

The lake at Broz Park in the Helena Valley looks like any ordinary park lake with a few birds and ducks to be seen, and not much else. Rachel and Mike will help you discover a completely different story, with evidence that it could be, on a bird per hectare basis, the number one bird hotspot in the Mundaring shire! Book online at [eventbrite.com.au](http://eventbrite.com.au) (search for Birds of Broz Park and Beyond).

**Creating Black Cockatoo Friendly Suburbs with Dr Christine Groom**

**Boya Community Centre - Sunday 23 February, 11am to 12.30pm**

Join us to hear Dr Christine Groom talk about her newly published book, *Creating Black Cockatoo Friendly Suburbs*. Book online at [eventbrite.com.au](http://eventbrite.com.au) (search for *Creating Black Cockatoo Friendly Suburbs with Dr Christine Groom*).

**Land for Wildlife Event (Bunuru) - Wildlife After Dark with Simon Cherriman!**

**Friday, 21st March, 6.30pm to 8pm Black Cockatoo Reserve**

Grab your torches and join Simon Cherriman for an exciting spotlighting adventure! Explore the bush after dark and discover the secret nightlife of local wildlife during the Bunuru season. Learn how to spot, identify, and track their hidden movements in the wild—and even in your own backyard!

This will be a fun and interactive evening of wildlife discovery! Register your interest in attending by emailing the Land for Wildlife Coordinator at [environment@mundaring.wa.gov.au](mailto:environment@mundaring.wa.gov.au).