

Photo credit: Belinda Cantwell

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DECEMBER 2023

WELCOME TO THE CHAPMAN ESTUARY TIMES

Welcome to the second edition of the Chapman Estuary Times Newsletter. This newsletter provides community with an update on the status of the recommended actions identified in the Chapman River Estuary Reserve Action Plan 2022-25. The newsletter will be uploaded to the City's website every second month.

What's been happening in the Estuary?

'Reel it In' fishing tackle bins have been installed at the four identified locations in the Estuary. The Chapman River Friends (CRF) have kindly adopted the bin initiative. They will regularly empty and monitor the bins. All debris deposited will be uploaded to the Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database to provide an overview of types of rubbish that were making it into our waterways. Community promotion of the program will occur each year.

Three large rabbit warrens were identified and have now been treated. Two of the warrens were fumigated with entrances and exits filled in. A large monitor lizard (*Varanus gouldii*) had made the last warren its home. The goanna's home was protected with all other rabbit entrances filled. This warren was not fumigated.

A project called 'Re-Connect to Country,' run by Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) Aboriginal Custodianship team, has taken place along the Chapman River Estuary. NACC has partnered with Birdlife Midwest-Geraldton, Chapman River Friends, and students from Bluff Point Primary School and Waggrakine Primary School to undertake three stages of the project; Stage 1 'Connect to Country,' Stage 2 'Looking after Country,' and Stage 3 'Healing Country.' This included educational bush walks, rubbish cleanups, Aboriginal Painting workshops and more. For more information on this project please contact NACC NRM's Aboriginal Custodianship Program Coordinator Priscilla Papertalk at priscilla.papertalk@nacc.com.au or on (08) 9938 0121.

What's been happening at the Chapman River Regional Park?

In the wider Chapman River Regional Park, the Environmental team has been attending to reports of ongoing vandalism to fences and gates. All reports are promptly investigated and maintenance works undertaken.

The Environment and Sustainability team is currently in the initial planning stages for the City's rabbit baiting program which takes place annually through a licenced contractor around late January/ February.

The City undertakes rabbit control on City managed lands that are identified as having high conservation value, including the Chapman River Regional Park, the Chapman River Wildlife Corridor and in the Tom Muir Arboretum. This is to reduce and control rabbit numbers in these sensitive environmental areas.

We continue to advocate to the community that the responsibility for biosecurity is shared by everyone. All landholders are under an obligation to undertake control of invasive species such as rabbits on their own property to have the best impact across the landscape.

UPCOMING EVENTS



- Coastcare Week 4th to 10th December. Coastcare Week acknowledges the Australians who are actively restoring, enhancing, and protecting the coastline, waterways, habitat, and biodiversity in their community. To get involved visit <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/coastcare/coastcare-week-2023/>
- A Threatened Species Exhibition, brought to you by Birdlife-Midwest and Chapman River Friends, will be running all of December and January at the Geraldton Regional Library.
- Community Citizen of the Year Award 26th January 2024. The Awards recognise individuals and organisations making a notable contribution during the current year, and/or to those who have given outstanding service over a number of years
- World Wetlands Day - 2nd of February 2024.

BREAKING NEWS

A deliberately lit bushfire occurred in the Chapman River Regional Park, Green Street entrance, on Sunday 3rd December. Firefighters promptly extinguished the bushfire with very little ground disturbance. The fire was approximately 2 hectares in size which burnt to a low fuel area, on the Wonthella golf course, where it was extinguished. Well done to the attending firefighters to keep the bushfire footprint small with very minimal damage to the Park.

The amended Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 1972 has been passed by Parliament and came into effect on November 15th 2023. The amended Act will assist the team in ensuring there is no harm to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

WATCH OUT FOR WILDLIFE! Now that the weather is warming up, please be mindful of wildlife on the move.



Photo credit: Dakota Jones – Fire scar, Chapman River Regional Park.

PARK TRAIL BROCHURE

The new Chapman River Regional Park Trail Network brochure has been developed and is now ready for use. The brochure includes the formalised trail network in the Chapman River Regional Park showing the different options, for different users, ranging from a long 11km loop trail to short 1km trails. Trails take in the wildflowers, the estuary, the river, with some rocky and steep sections for the more experienced walkers. To complement the brochure, trail way markers can be found throughout the Chapman River Regional Park to direct trail users. Installation of the trail way markers on the Estuary trail will be coming soon. Brochure can be found here <https://bit.ly/3uNRDzO> and maps can be found here <https://bit.ly/3R7RXkd>



WILDFLOWERS APP

CRF volunteers are currently working on updating the CRF Wildflowers App to incorporate new plant species found after the initial App was published. This free interactive app was developed to assist users to learn more about the spectacular wildflowers in the Chapman River Regional Park. The App features plant photos and information about flora in the region. Users can search by characteristics such as plant habit, flower colour and flowering season until the plant is identified. No professional botany experience is needed.

Newly discovered, or missed species, will be included in the update. One such plant *Hakea preissii*, also commonly known as the Needle Tree, will be a new addition in the app. Well done Chapman River Friends on undertaking this initiative.



MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UPDATE

E1 Rabbit Control

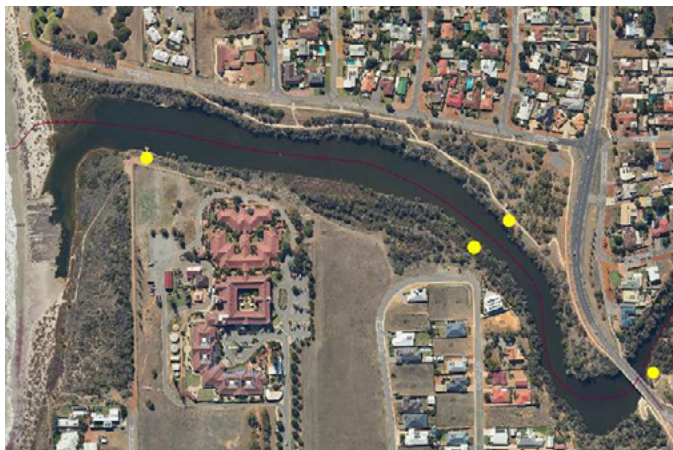
Recommended Action: Rabbit control.

Action to Date: The City's Environmental team engaged a City tendered contractor to fumigate the rabbit warrens located at the Chapman Estuary mouth. To avoid ground disturbance in the ACH area the contractor filled in the warren entrances and exits with hessian material instead of collapsing the rabbit warrens. Since the rabbit treatment community concerns have been raised of the increase in rabbit population at the Estuary. The team is further investigating rabbit treatment options to reduce rabbit numbers in the area.

E6 Managing Recommended Fishing Spots

Recommended Action: Designated fishing spots with appropriate signage, bins and tree pruning.

Action to Date: The four 'Reel it In' Fishing bins have been installed at various locations around the estuary; pontoon carpark, end of Charles Street, under Chapman Road bridge, and gazebo area. CRF have received a City induction and have commenced emptying and monitoring the contents of the bins, with the data collected uploaded to the Tangaroa Blue Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) database.



Locations of the preferred fishing locations and the "Reel It In Bins" at the Chapman Estuary



Chapman River Friends volunteers

S5 Install/ Renew Seating

Recommended Action: Install and renew bench seating.

Action to Date: The Environmental team has received the new recreational seat to replace the current broken seat by Nazareth House. With the amendment of the ACH Act 1972 the team is waiting on advice on how to proceed with the installation.

ONE FINAL NOTE



If you have any information on upcoming community events, a great photograph, or a good news story, please share and we would be happy to include in our next edition. Please email your information to the City at council@cgg.wa.gov.au and make sure to address it to the Environment and Sustainability Team.

We wish you a joyful Christmas and delightful holiday season. Warm Wishes from the City's dedicated Environment and Sustainability team.



Photo credit: Belinda Cantwell, Pelicans at Chapman River Mouth



Photo credit: CRF - Splendid Fairy Wren