

The Leaflet

Environment & Sustainability Newsletter MARCH 2026

Welcome back for another year with the Environment and Sustainability (E&S) team! We're excited to share updates, insights and highlights from across our natural areas as we move into a busy season of restoration, learning, and community involvement.

Rabbit Workshops



Waggrakine Community Hall



Walkaway Public Hall

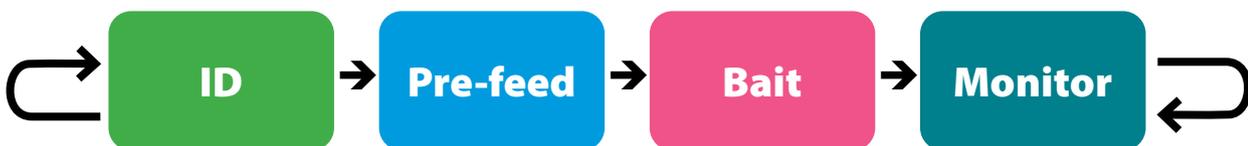
At the end of January, our team hosted two educational rabbit-management workshops to help the community gain a clearer understanding of the rabbit baiting cycle and the practical steps involved in an effective control program.

The workshops provided landholders and residents with an opportunity to speak directly with our E&S team, ask questions, and learn why coordinated action delivers the best results. By encouraging participants to align their efforts with the upcoming baiting program delivered by our pest-management contractor, we aim to increase the effectiveness of rabbit control—particularly across the Chapman River Regional Park (CRRP) and neighbouring suburbs.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed.

Please note: The City has begun its eight-week Integrated Baiting Program in late February and encourages community members to undertake baiting at the same time to maximise effectiveness. Pindone baiting will run from 23 March to 14 April 2026. The pre-feeding phase with clean oats has already commenced through our pest contractor.

Below is a visual guide summarising the recommended steps in our coordinated baiting program:



For more information, please visit our [European rabbits webpage](#)

If you observe any feral species or rabbits, please record the sighting on [FeralScan](#)



Do you have a local environmental initiative, success story, or sustainability tip you'd love to share with the community? The Environmental and Sustainability team would love to hear from you!

Send your stories to: environmentalplanning@cgg.wa.gov.au

Post-fire Remediation Works

Since the start of the year, the E&S team has continued coordinating remediation works within CRRP, this includes the following key actions that has been completed so far:

- Last year's bushfire, while challenging, offered valuable insight into the landscape and exposed several issues previously hidden beneath dense canopy. This includes:
 1. The discovery of asbestos remnants throughout CRRP, which were safely removed by licensed specialists.
 2. With the vegetation cleared, our pest management contractor has taken the opportunity to carry out warren deconstruction now—ensuring long term improvements to habitat condition before regrowth makes these sites inaccessible again.
- The re-establishment of fencing around the Jenna's Walk entrances. A friendly reminder that this trail is **WALKING ONLY** — cyclists and horse riders are not permitted due to the environmental sensitivity of this area.



Regrowth post fire

Our natural areas continue to show the remarkable resilience typical of Midwest bushland. Many native species are already resprouting from their bases, producing trunk shoots, or germinating from soil seed banks.

Fun fact: Several iconic species — including banksias, wattles and some eucalypts — rely on fire to regenerate. Some require heat to open seed pods, while others respond to smoke activated germination cues. This year, keep an eye out for new seedlings and species that may not have been visible before the fire.

BirdLife has recently undertaken a bird survey within the Chapman River Regional Park (CRRP) and recorded several interesting sightings following the fire event. The reduced canopy has temporarily changed the wildlife-viewing experience; with more open sightlines, species such as the **Rainbow Bee-eater**—usually a rare treat—have been observed more frequently along the CRRP trails.

Another notable species is the **White-breasted Robin**, considered an indicator species as changes in its population can reflect broader ecosystem health. An increase in individuals may be associated with expanded suitable habitat and a reduction in predation pressure. Their population relies heavily on the quality of riparian vegetation, which can improve through the removal of invasive species such as boxthorn, prickly pear, and invasive grasses—some of which may have been reduced by the bushfire.



Rainbow Bee-eater.
Photo courtesy Bill Belson



White-breasted Robin.
Photo courtesy Bill Belson



Photos showing the post fire resprouting of local native flora within the CRRP, from both the base (basal resprouting) and the canopy (epicormic resprouting). These images highlight the remarkable resilience and recovery of our natural systems.

Eutrophication

Eutrophication is the enrichment of waterways with nutrients—primarily nitrogen and phosphorus—which can trigger excessive algal growth. This can lead to algal blooms, oxygen depletion (hypoxia), fish kill events and long term ecological decline.

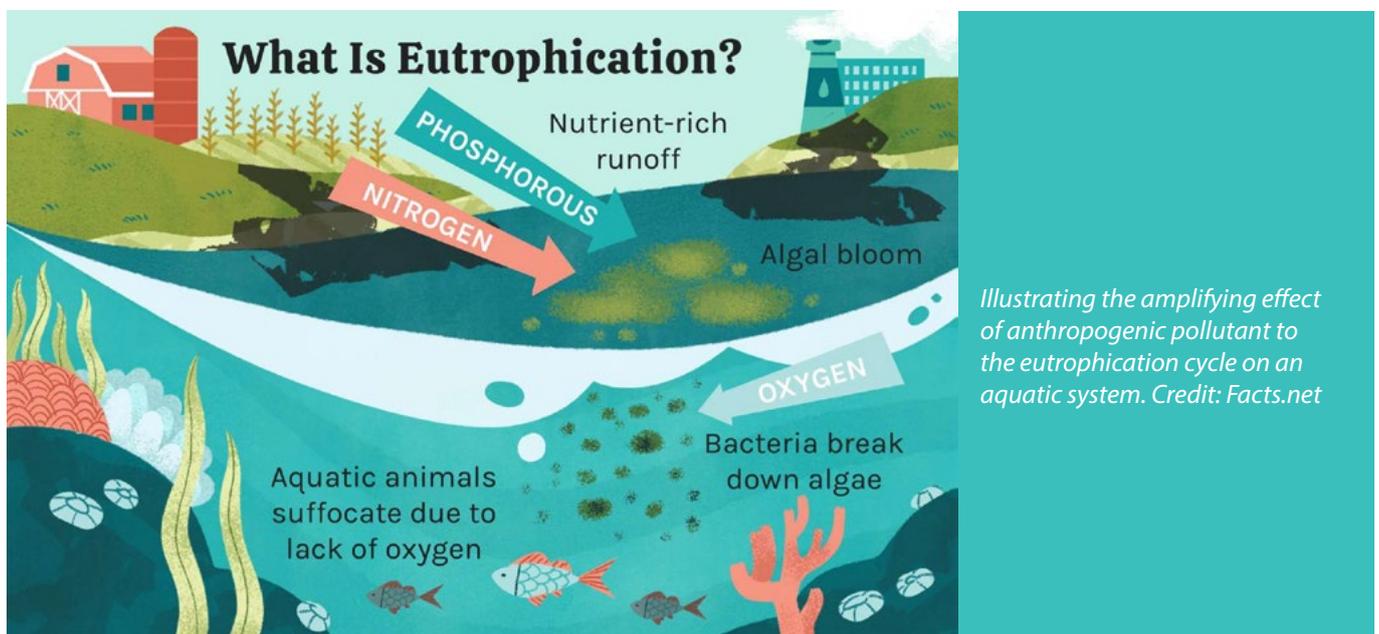
While it can occur naturally, land clearing, soil disturbance and reduced filtration following a fire can significantly increase nutrient movement into waterways.

Following the recent bushfire, the E&S team anticipate higher nutrient loads in the Chapman River due to:

- Exposed soil and increased runoff
- Ash and burnt biomass entering the water
- Elevated water temperature from the loss of canopy shade.

This means fish kills can occur if those prolonged temperatures persist. Please rest assured that the E&S team has already assessed this risk and is closely monitoring the river system.

If you notice a fish kill, please report it to environmentalplanning@cgg.wa.gov.au with GPS location and photos.



Upcoming E&S projects

1. Trail stabilisation within CRRP include erosion control works along the northern end of the park ahead of the rainy season. These works aim to reduce sediment movement, prevent bank erosion events and help minimise the severity of any potential eutrophication outbreaks. The trail will remain open during the works with pedestrian management in place. Keep an eye on TrailsWA ([Chapman River, Geraldton - Trails WA - Trails WA](#)) regarding track works.
2. Rehabilitation plantings across northern CRRP to support natural recruitment, alongside revegetation works in other fenced areas and along our coast as part of our ongoing biodiversity enhancement program. Planting locations are currently being finalised based on contractor availability, with completion planned before the first major rainfall event of 2026.



Surprise of the month

Greenough River Opening!

Cyclone Mitchell delivered significant rainfall across the northern coast and Midwest, leading to the Greenough River system exceeding capacity. This resulted in an unexpected natural opening of the sandbar mid-February — a dramatic example of the dynamic nature of estuarine systems.

Gentle reminder: Please avoid deliberately or prematurely breaking estuary sandbars. Sudden releases can shock aquatic ecosystems and cause significant environmental harm.



H5 Bird Flu warning

If you observe a cluster of deceased or sick seabirds, shorebirds or other wildlife in a single area, this may indicate a potential H5 bird flu event.

For more information on H5 bird flu, including how you can help protect local wildlife, visit [BirdLife Australia](https://www.birdlife.org.au).

Please report any concerning sightings immediately to the appropriate hotlines.

WHAT TO DO

Do not touch or pick up! Do the following



Avoid



Record



Report

WILD BIRDS

Sickness/deaths in **>5** wild birds or seabirds, waterbirds, shorebirds, birds of prey.

**CALL EAD HOTLINE
188 675 888**

Sickness/deaths in **<5** wild birds that are NOT seabirds, waterbirds, shorebirds, birds of prey.

**CALL WILDCARE
HELPLINE
9474 9055**

OTHER WILDLIFE including marine mammals

Unusual signs of disease or mass deaths.

**CALL EAD HOTLINE
188 675 888**

All other concerns such as sick, orphaned or injured wildlife.

**CALL WILDCARE
HELPLINE
9474 9055**



Snake Safety

Our local reptile species are still very active during the warmer days, and snakes remain a common part of our natural spaces. Please continue to be cautious and respectful while enjoying our reserves.

General safety tips:

- Watch where you step, especially in grassy or bushy areas
- Talking or walking loudly will alert wildlife of your presence
- Never attempt to handle or provoke wildlife
- Keep a safe distance and observe quietly if you encounter any fauna.

If you are bitten by a snake:

- Do not move – staying still as possible slow venom circulation.
- Call 000 immediately
- Remain calm and wait for emergency services.



A timid bobtail blending into the leaf litter of the bushland.

The Point Moore fledgling has left the nest!

Our resident osprey pair has successfully raised their young to independence, marking another successful breeding season.

With the fledglings now dispersed, BirdLife Midwest-Geraldton confirmed that essential maintenance and repair works could safely proceed without the risk of defensive behaviour from the adult birds. The E&S team has been waiting for this important window, and contractors completed the works in February.

These upgrades will ensure the nest remains stable and structurally sound for the next decade, supporting the ongoing return of the osprey pair and the successful fledging of future chicks.

Kind Reminders: According to the *Wildlife Conservation Plan for Seabirds* (DAWE, 2020), Ospreys are listed as a migratory species and are protected under both the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* and the Bonn Convention. For more information <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/wildlife-conservation-plan-for-seabirds.pdf>

When operating drones near the coast, follow *Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)* website drone safety rules and avoid disturbing wildlife. Keep at least 100m away from Osprey nests to prevent disturbance, as they are protected migratory and marine species under the EPBC Act. For safe-flying guidance and local restrictions, visit CASA's Know Your Drone: <https://www.casa.gov.au/knowyourdrone/>.



An osprey keeping a close eye on the contractors, swooping in just as one returned to the ground.



Community nursery

Our Mayor, Jerry Clune, recently visited the Community Nursery and gave us his full support of the recent renovations. Fresh paint and a thorough spring clean have created a welcoming environment for our hardworking volunteers and Community Nursery Officer as they prepare seedlings for the year's rehabilitation programs.

With the propagation season now in full swing, up to 25 000 native plants will be grown for Geraldton's natural areas, coastal rehabilitation projects and the 2026 street tree program.

Mayor Jerry Clune visited the Community Nursery in February and has given us his thumbs up:

"I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who continues to give their time, expertise and enthusiasm to our nursery, your efforts make a real difference to our community. These enhancements will go a long way in enabling our volunteers to grow the thousands of native species that are then planted throughout our regions"



New to our local plants or want to brush off your plant ID skills?

Here are a few handy apps to help you out:



CRF wildflower



NACC coastal plants



WeedScan

