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Acknowledgment of Country

As an organisation, South Coast NRM recognises and respects that we live and work on the traditional lands of First Nations people. We acknowledge and honour First Nations people as the spiritual and cultural custodians of this land, and we recognise the ongoing importance of their values, languages, beliefs, and knowledge.

We are committed to working in partnership with First Nations peoples to support and promote respectful cultural and ecological practices, and to ensure that their land, culture, and knowledge is respected and protected. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging, and extend this respect to all First Nations peoples.

CEO update

Makuru (Winter) has arrived on the South Coast, and with it the annual return of the Southern Right Whales to our waters. It has been a quarter that has taken me far and reminded me how fortunate we are to call this region home.

In June, I travelled to the UK and across Europe, meeting with investors, foundations, government agencies, and conservation finance leaders to discuss how to fund long-term, locally led, landscape-scale nature restoration. The details are still taking shape, but I came home with a clear impression: the world is looking for regions that can genuinely deliver this work on the ground, with the relationships, the science, and the track record to back it. That is exactly what we have here across the south coast region. More to share as business development matters for the region firm up.

Closer to home, our two-year Fitz-Stirling Priority Place Project, funded by the Australian Government's Saving Native Species Program, is ending, but the work it has built will continue. Across that remarkable stretch of country between the Stirling Range and the Fitzgerald River, the work has been quietly extraordinary: Western Quolls turning up on our cameras after a five-year absence, more Carnaby's chicks fledging than in previous seasons, kilometres of fencing and thousands of hectares of pest and weed control, and First Nations Rangers trained and leading fire management on Country. To the staff who delivered it, and the landholders, Traditional Owners, and partners who made it possible, thank you. You are why this work endures. We are currently working hard to secure funding for this work and ensure this important focus continues for many years to come.

Out east, it was great to see our own Kahree Garnaut presenting at the ASHEEP & BEEF Autumn Field Day in Esperance, talking trees and shrubs in livestock systems, including shelter, grazing, and confinement, with producers at the Esperance Native Nursery. Those farm-gate conversations are some of the most valuable we have, and they keep our work grounded in what helps people on the land. There will be more of them ahead. Additionally, I am delighted to share that our South Coast Drought and Climate Resilience Consortium, eleven regional partners working together, has secured \$2.81 million through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund to help the region prepare for, adapt to, and recover from drought. You can read more about it later in this newsletter.

And as this newsletter lands, NAIDOC Week (5 to 12 July) marks fifty years, with the theme 50 Years of Deadly: five decades of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, culture, and truth-telling. On the south coast, we see it every day in the leadership of Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation and the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation, and in the work of many other locally based Aboriginal families and corporations. Their Healthy Country Plans and their vision for managing Country set a standard we're privileged to work alongside. Nature recovery and culture walk hand in hand.

Thank you for being part of it.

Warmest regards,

Luke

Right Whale Project

Eyes on the Ocean: Protecting Southern Right Whales from Denmark to Cape Arid.

Along with the wild, wet, and windy storms that mark the season of Makuru, we welcome the return of the majestic Southern Right Whales, seeking out protected bays along our coastline to give birth to their calves.

We're thrilled to announce a significant expansion of the Right Whale Tracker Project along Western Australia's South Coast. Thanks to additional funding from Water Corporation, we have extended the project's geographical scope from Denmark all the way to Cape Arid — covering a vast and vital stretch of coastline.

To support this expansion, we've been running a series of training sessions for volunteers and Indigenous Rangers, equipping them with the skills to become citizen scientists and contribute to data collection on this endangered species. Sessions were held at Cheynes Beach Caravan Park, 3 Anchors at Middleton

Beach, and Albany's Historic Whaling Station at Frenchman's Bay. Participants learned to use:

- The Marine Fauna Sightings app — to record whale sightings quickly and accurately
- The My Impact app — to log volunteer hours
- Binoculars and high-zoom cameras — to capture high-quality photographs for identification

All of this contributes to real scientific data, helping researchers better understand Southern Right Whale calving habitats and migration routes — critical knowledge for the species' long-term survival.

This season, we have 15 Indigenous Rangers and 35 citizen scientists trained and ready. Additional training is planned for August in Esperance, with online training available year-round for those unable to attend in person. Once trained, volunteers can monitor the coastline between Denmark and Cape Arid, with further opportunities to conduct surveys aboard Albany's whale-watching vessels.

This incredible work is a collaboration between South Coast Cetaceans, South Coast Natural Resource Management, Oceans Blueprint, and Edith Cowan University — made possible by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program, the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, and Water Corporation.

Want to help protect these endangered whales or learn more about the research?

Contact Laura at laurab@southcoastnrm.com.au or visit southcoastnrm.com.au/southern-right-whale



Community Comes together for a night of Threatened Species, fun and conservation

On the 19th of June 2026, South Coast NRM welcomed around 150 community members to Retravision Stadium in Albany for a Threaten Species Wildlife Quiz Night; an evening designed to raise awareness of threatened species in the South Coast Region. The free event attracted 19 tables of participants, who enjoyed a light dinner and an entertaining evening of friendly competition. Expertly led by the Quiz Mater Vicki Brown, the night featured prizes for the winning team, runners-up and, of course, the coveted wooden spoon award!

Across eight quiz rounds and two bonus rounds, participants tested their knowledge on a mix of general knowledge, sport, music and movies, alongside questions about the South Coast's threatened Fauna. Species featured throughout the evening included Gilbert's Potoroo, Western Ground Parrot, Noisy Scrubbird, as well as other threatened mammals, Birds, Fish, Reptiles, Frogs and Invertebrates.

The Quiz Night was developed to engage a broader cross-section of the community than traditional threatened species workshops typically reach. By combining entertainment with conservation messaging, the event encouraged participants to learn more about local threatened species and the challenges these species face. South Coast NRM thanks everyone who attended and contributed to making the evening such a success!

This fun event was funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and delivered by South Coast NRM, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners Panel, as part of our Threatened Fauna Project.



Urban Rivers - Whitby Basin

Another exciting milestone has been reached at the Whitby Street Living Wetland, with more than sixty rolls of biodegradable jute matting installed across the site during May and June. The work was completed by the South Coast Environmental team alongside the Southern Aboriginal Corporation (SAC) Rangers, whose awesome efforts have helped prepare the site for its next stage of restoration.

The jute matting will play an important role in protecting the newly constructed wetland by stabilising soils, reducing erosion and suppressing weed growth while native vegetation becomes established. With this stage of the work now complete, planting of more than 10,000 locally sourced native seedlings will commence shortly, bringing the site to life and laying the foundations for a thriving wetland ecosystem.

The Whitby Street basin is the most upstream site in the Restoring Upper Yakamia for Biodiversity and People project. Once a highly degraded drain, it has been transformed into the foundations of a living wetland that will help reduce flooding, improve water quality flowing into Oyster Harbour, and create valuable habitat for wildlife, including threatened western ringtail possums and black cockatoos. It's exciting to see the transformation taking shape, with each stage bringing us closer to a healthier Yakamia Creek for both nature and the community.

This project is funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust under the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, with support from The City of Albany. This project is a part of Healthy Estuaries WA - a State Government program that aims to improve the health of our Southwest estuaries."

Top panel shows the team hard at work. Bottom panel shows the condition of the site in January before earthworks and weed control (left) and in June after the jute matting was installed (right) (Photo Credits: South Coast NRM).



The Fitz-Stirling Priority Place Project

In January 2026, large wildfires affected the Fitzgerald River National Park, burning around 173,000 hectares and seriously impacting Carnaby's Black Cockatoo breeding and foraging habitat.

In May and June, expert ecologists, members of the Cocanarup Conservation Alliance and South Coast NRM staff, completed surveys surrounding known breeding locations. The surveys assessed impacts to foraging habitat and breeding locations. This work will compliment a broader post-fire recovery action plan and support the prioritisation of practical on-ground efforts, to protect the threatened Carnaby's Black Cockatoo.

We are currently working with partner organisations to support the installation of artificial hollows near the impacted area, bolstering breeding habitat that has been lost through the fires - monitoring of this site will continue this spring. A special thank you goes out to Cocanarup Conservation Alliance for their invaluable support and knowledge.

This project is funded by the Australian Government under the Saving Native Species Program and is delivered by South Coast NRM as a member of the Commonwealth Regional Deliver Panel.



Exploring the Peatlands of Walpole

Recently, the South Coast NRM team joined the PEAT Southwest Stakeholder Reference Group for a fantastic (and very wet!) field trip exploring peatland sites in the Walpole region.

Not sure what peatlands are? These ancient and highly specialised wetland ecosystems provide important habitat for unique and threatened species, possess significant geological, hydrological and biological features, and act as valuable carbon stores.

The field trip formed part of the PEAT Southwest project, an exciting initiative co-led by The University of Western Australia and Edith Cowan University to improve knowledge of, and address threats to, peatland ecosystems across southwestern Australia. South Coast NRM is proud to be collaborating on the project by helping identify peatlands across the South Coast region and supporting on-ground actions to protect and restore these important ecosystems.

Over the course of the day, the group visited four peatland sites in varying condition and heard from researchers, land managers, Aboriginal corporations and other conservation practitioners about the remarkable biodiversity and geodiversity these systems support, the threats they face, and opportunities for improved management and restoration. Field days like this provide a valuable opportunity to share knowledge, strengthen partnerships, and support collaborative efforts to conserve these unique and important ecosystems across south-western Australia.

The PEAT Southwest project is proudly supported by Lotterywest, the Ian Potter Foundation, The University of Western Australia and Edith Cowan University, with additional contributions from Jane Fenwick, the Australian Amphibian and Reptile Genomics Initiative, the Australia and Pacific Science Foundation, Wettenhall Environment Trust and the Australian Academy of Science.



Future Drought Fund Scaling Success - Success!

We are delighted to announce that the South Coast Drought and Climate Resilience Consortium has been successful in the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund's (FDF) Scaling Success Program.

South Coast NRM and our partners have secured \$2.81 million over the next two years to support the South Coast region to prepare for, adapt to and recover from drought.

The Consortium brings together 11 regional partners who together will scale the success of previous FDF projects delivered locally, so that this work can benefit the

entire South Coast region.

We would like to congratulate all consortium members:

- ASHEEP & BEEF
- Fitzgerald Biosphere Group (FBG)
- Great Southern Development Commission
- North Stirling Pallinup Natural Resources
- Oyster Harbour Catchment Group
- Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network (RAIN)
- Southeast Premium Wheat Growers Association
- Stirling's to Coast Farmers
- The Gillamii Centre
- Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee

The Consortium's work will include:

- Drought planning for producers in the high rainfall zone
- Farm and catchment-scale water planning
- Improved tools to support decision-making in drought
- Trials to improve drought resilience in soils, pastures and crops
- On-farm water quality improvements
- Capacity-building for NRM & grower group staff to enhance their ability to support producers and land managers during challenging times

A big shout out to FBG, RAIN and Gillamii who were involved in the original work that created the seed for this new project. Thank you also to Johanna Tomlinson of Clear South Consulting for her role in supporting our team to develop the grant application late last year. To read more about the FDF Scaling Success Program, see the Australian Government's announcement here: <https://minister.agriculture.gov.au/collins/media-releases/fdf-scaling-success-program>



Livestock Guardian Animal workshops, Salmon Gums

In May we were pleased to support Esperance Tjaltraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC) to deliver a series of workshops and conversations exploring livestock guardian animals and their potential role.

ETNTAC arranged for researcher Dr Linda van Bommel and grazier Wayne Wayte to travel to Esperance from the eastern states to share their extensive knowledge of and experience with livestock guardian animals. We spent two days at ETNTAC's property near Salmon Gums, participating in conversations with the ETNTAC team, the Esperance Biosecurity Association, Linda, Wayne and local landholders. A key focus of the workshop was how properly bred guardian dogs (usually Maremmas in Australia) must be carefully bonded with livestock as puppies in order to effectively guard them. Once bonded, guardian dogs are extremely effective at deterring a range of predators – from dingoes to ravens – and even keeping competitors such as kangaroos away from the paddocks.

Photo 1: Dr Linda van Bommel (Dingo Advisory Council), Bill Griggs (ETNTAC) and Wayne Wayne (Ballandean Station Manager) assessing the suitability of sheep yards for bonding young Maremmas.

Photo 2: Elder Gail Yorkshire, Dr Linda van Bommel and landholder Michelle Fowler. Photo credits: Suzannah Macbeth



Natural Capital training

During June, 11 staff from South Coast NRM and some of our partner organisations in the region participated in training to learn how to collect data to develop a farm scale natural capital account through the Farming for the Future program.

A “farm scale natural capital account” involves measuring certain aspects of a farm’s natural resource base (such as groundcover, pasture species diversity and ecosystem condition of vegetation patches) to produce an objective measure of natural capital – or an account. In much the same way that a financial account looks at how much money is in the bank and whether that balance is going up or down, a natural capital account looks at how much the natural environment is contributing to a farm, and – if repeated more than once – can show if the “balance” of natural capital is growing or declining. The 4-part training session included a day on a farm in near Bremer Bay, hosted by the Campbell family. We will revisit the farm in September to continue the data collection required to develop the farm scale account. Thank you to the Campbells for sharing their knowledge and experience, and for hosting the training session.

South Coast NRM’s natural capital training program and the farm-scale accounts are supported by the Australian Government, through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate Smart Agriculture Program.

Photo: Natural capital trainees in the field on a very cold and windy June day! Photo: Michael Campbell.



South Coast NRM recently attended the Carbon Market Institute's Carbon Farming Industry Forum in Fremantle, joining farmers, researchers, investors, conservation practitioners and policymakers from across Australia to discuss the future of carbon and nature markets.

Key discussions focused on the growing role of carbon projects in delivering multiple benefits, including improved biodiversity, climate resilience, sustainable agricultural production and food security. The emerging Nature Repair Market was also a major theme, with new opportunities expected to reward landholders for restoring and protecting native vegetation.

The forum reinforced the importance of trusted local relationships, practical on-farm benefits and peer-to-peer learning in supporting landholder participation. It also highlighted the valuable role of regional NRM organisations as neutral facilitators, helping connect communities with emerging carbon and nature investment opportunities.

South Coast NRM will continue to monitor developments in carbon and nature markets and explore opportunities that support sustainable land management and environmental outcomes across the region.



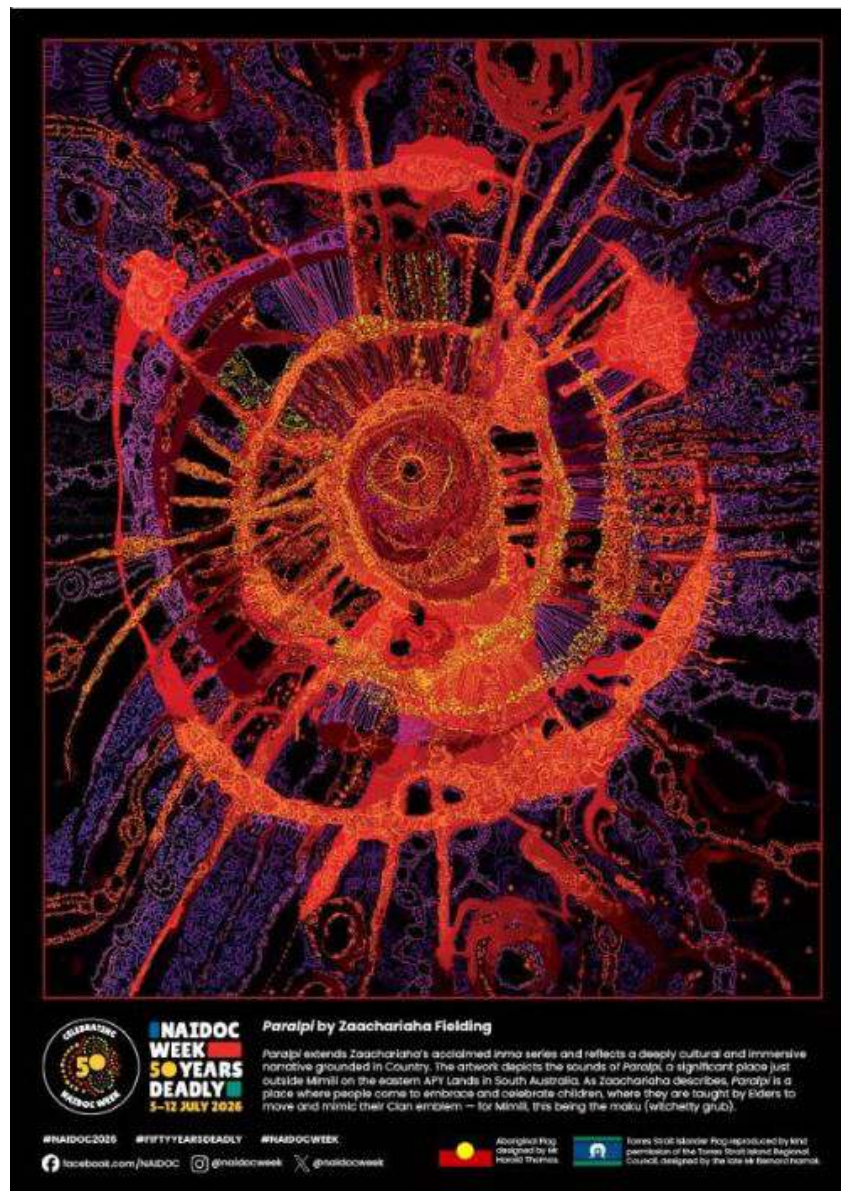
50 Years of Deadly NAIDOC Week 2026

This NAIDOC Week, South Coast NRM celebrates the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across our region — the Menang, Goreng, Wudjari and Njunga peoples — and pay our respects to Elders past and present, whose care for Country continues to guide land and water management for future generations.

This year's theme, "50 Years of Deadly," marks five decades of NAIDOC Week and honours the strength, leadership, and cultural authority of First Nations communities across generations.

South Coast NRM values the leadership and generosity of the Aboriginal Corporations across our region. Our work in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and nature conservation is stronger because it is shaped by Healthy Country Plans and strategic vision developed and led by local Aboriginal Corporations and Elders.



Western Ground Parrot Threatened Fauna

In January 2026, A large bushfire impacted around 30% of known occupied Western Ground Parrot habitat. In response, the Department of Biodiversity, conservation and Attractions and project partners quickly implemented a range of emergency post-fire conservation actions to support the recovery of this critically endangered species.

Watch the video to see some of the conservation efforts underway for the Western Ground Parrot: <https://youtu.be/U9ZlmkGrjYQ?si=H31l1fK9UAM926JA>

We are proud to be a project partner supporting this important work to help secure the future of one of Australia's rarest birds. For even more updates, check out the Friends Of The Western Ground Parrot Newsletter: <https://www.western-ground-parrot.org.au/news> It's packed with stories on the Perth Zoo chick, the impacts of the January bushfires, and the latest progress from Joseph Jantke's groundbreaking PhD research.

Photo: Alan Danks, DBCA



Avian Influenza (H5 Bird Flu) Update

Important message for our community

H5 bird flu has been detected in a small number of migratory seabirds in Australia, including Western Australia. Authorities, including WA DPIRD, are actively monitoring the situation through increased surveillance and working closely with industry, wildlife carers and local communities. There is currently no evidence of infection in Australian poultry or the wider agricultural industry, and the risk to human health remains low.

How you can help:

- ✓ Avoid contact with sick or dead birds and marine mammals.
- ✓ Record the location and, if safe to do so, take photos or video.
- ✓ Report unusual wildlife illness or deaths to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline.

 **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline:** 1800 675 888

 **Stay informed:** birdflu.gov.au

Let's work together to protect our region's wildlife, agriculture and environment.



What you need to know about H5 avian influenza (bird flu)

Avoid

contact with sick or dead birds

Record

the date, time, location and take a photo

Report

multiple dead birds or other animals
to the Emergency Animal Disease
Hotline **1800 675 888**



Be prepared **birdflu.gov.au**

Photo credit: Chris Purnell

South Coast events update

There's something for everyone this July and August, from sustainable agriculture events to opportunities to join a citizen science program tracking the Southern right whale

July 10th: The Fight to Save the Western Ground Parrot - 10:30am Documentary published.
<https://youtu.be/U9ZlmkGrjYQ?si=iQSQfFABfGdjM5VF>

July 17th: Gillamii Winter Field Day 1:00pm - 5:00pm Click the link for more information and to register: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1609414>

July 22nd: Applications Close - Soils New Horizons and Healthy Estuaries Soil Testing Programs. please see link for more information and Apply here: <https://estuaries.dwer.wa.gov.au/strategies/sustainable-agriculture/soil-testing/>

29th July: The Albany Carbon smart Workshop for wine producers, Albany 9am - 1:30pm. Contact sustainability@greatsouthernwine.org.au for more information and to register.

August 20th: Hitting the Target with Hay and Silage 9am - 4pm. Click the link to register: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1608518>

September 8th-9th: DIG 2026, Celebrating 30 years of Dieback awareness Conference, please click here for more information and to register: [DIG Conference 2026 - Dieback Working Group](#)

Keen for subsidized soil testing and a nutrient map of your farm?

Soils New Horizons and Healthy Estuaries soil testing programs are both open for applications from livestock producers in areas that receive greater than 550mm rainfall, and/or are within one of the major estuary catchments. Applications close 22 July 2026. Apply now: <https://estuaries.dwer.wa.gov.au/strategies/sustainable-agriculture/soil-testing/>

Bioenergy in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region:

Curtin University's Sustainability Policy (CUSP) Institute is currently seeking farmers' views on the potential for a local bioenergy industry in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region. Click here to complete the 15-minute online survey: https://curtin.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5tF4yBcZ1x1NMW

All The Latest News

Looking for more? To stay up to date with all our latest news, head to our website or social media channels.



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