

## FRIENDS OF THE FITZGERALD RIVER NATIONAL PARK

## NARPULUNGUP NEWS

[www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au](http://www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au)

2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & EXCURSION



9th & 10th March 2024

This year the AGM will be held at Twertup Field Studies Centre on Saturday 9th March with an excursion to Calyerup Rocks on Sunday 10th March.

### Saturday 9th

9.00-10.00 am  
Arrive at Twertup Field  
Studies Centre  
Morning tea

10.00-12.00 pm  
Annual General Meeting

12.00-1.30 pm  
BYO Lunch

1.30-2.30 pm  
Guest speaker - Malcolm  
French: "Eucalypts '24"

BYO dinner - outdoor  
barbecue available.

Overnight accommodation at Twertup is available from  
Friday 8th to Sunday 10th March inclusive.  
BYO swag/tent, or book a bed in a shared dormitory by  
contacting [admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au](mailto:admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au).



Become a member for FREE!



### Sunday 10th

9.00 am  
Leave Twertup and travel  
to Calyerup Rocks off  
Quiss Rd.

Calyerup Rocks are a  
place of significant  
cultural and spiritual  
interest to Noongar people  
as well as heritage interest  
to the wider community.

BYO morning tea and  
lunch.

\* In addition, another rock to the  
south of Calyerup Rocks can be  
visited, either by walking (5 km  
return) or 4WD vehicle and walk  
(1 km return).

Bring sturdy walking boots/ shoes,  
water, snacks, hat and sunscreen.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL VEHICLES AND FOOTWEAR ARE  
FREE OF SOIL TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF PHYTOPHTHERA  
DIEBACK.

CHECK THE DBCA WEBSITE FOR ROAD CLOSURES  
[HTTPS://ALERTS.DBCA.WA.GOV.AU/](https://alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au/) .  
NB THE ALTERNATIVE WET-WEATHER VENUE WILL BE THE  
BOXWOOD HILLS SPORTS CLUB.

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## GUEST SPEAKER MALCOLM FRENCH: EUCALYPTS '24

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Eucalypt expert Malcolm French will be the guest speaker at our AGM.

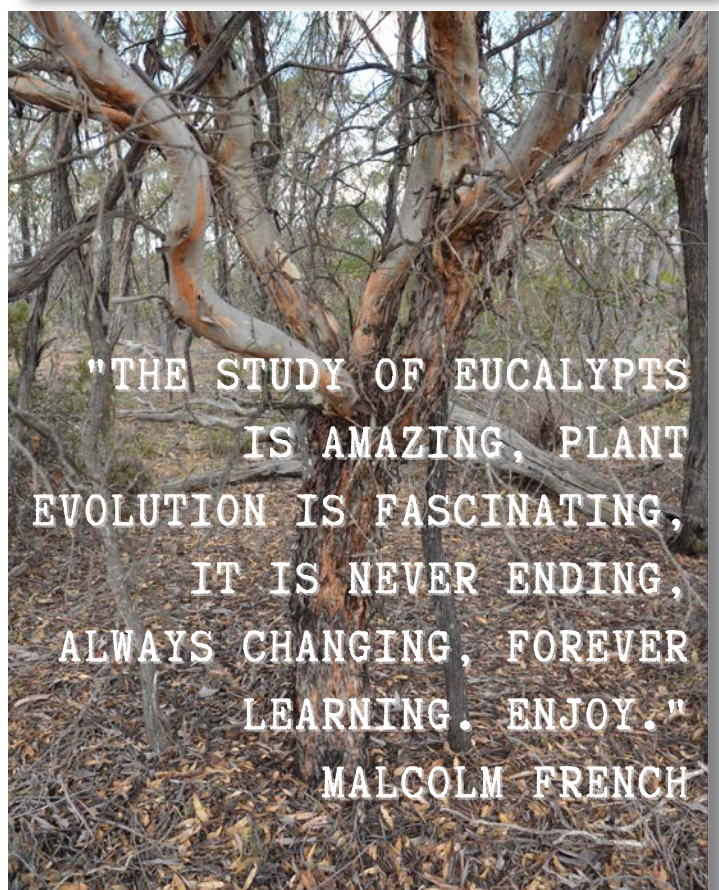
Malcolm has been interested in eucalypts since the 1980s when he grew them for his family farm in New South Wales.

In 1993, Malcolm moved to Perth to work as an agriculturalist and had the opportunity to travel extensively around Western Australia, stopping regularly to check out any eucalypts. The more he saw and researched them, the more his passion for eucalypts grew.

Malcolm's first book **The Special Eucalypts of Perth and the South-west** was published in 1997. Subsequently he published **Eucalypts of Western Australia's Wheatbelt** (2013) and more recently co-authored with Dean Nicolle **Eucalypts of Western Australia: The South-west Coast and Ranges** (2019). These books provide comprehensive information on individual eucalypt species and have been designed and written for both professionals and those with no botanical training.

At the Perth Herbarium, Malcolm is an Associate researcher and honorary curator of the genus *Eucalyptus*. Many botanists have benefited from Malcolm's knowledge which he generously shares. In 2015, Malcolm was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his work in conservation and the environment. More information can be found at [www.eucalyptsofwa.com.au](http://www.eucalyptsofwa.com.au)

Photos: *Eucalyptus calycerup*, habit (top), bark (bottom). Photos courtesy of Nathan McQuoid.



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## AGM - COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

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**Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park Inc.**

**Nomination for Membership of Committee**

I (name), \_\_\_\_\_

of (address) \_\_\_\_\_

email address \_\_\_\_\_,

being a full member of the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park Inc.

hereby nominate (name) \_\_\_\_\_

as a member of the committee of Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park Inc

Seconded by (name) \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's declaration of eligibility:

I hereby declare that I am eligible to be a member of the committee (see below for exclusion criteria)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

A person will be prohibited from sitting on the management committee of an incorporated association (without prior approval from the Commissioner for Consumer Protection) where they:

- are an undischarged bankrupt or their affairs are being managed under insolvency laws;
- have been convicted of an offence in connection with the promotion, formation or management of a body corporate;
- have been convicted of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty punishable on conviction by three months or more imprisonment; and/or
- have been convicted of an offence under Division 3 (the duties of officers provisions) or section 127 (the duty with respect to incurring of debt) of the Act.

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## AGM – PROXY VOTING FORM

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**Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park Inc.**

### Proxy Voting Form

I (name), .....

of (address) .....

email address.....,

being a full member of the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park Inc.

hereby nominate (name).....

as my proxy at the 2024 AGM of the Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park Inc.

Signature .....

Date.....

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## FBCC MEETS TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOSPHERE RESERVES

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BY ANNIE LEITCH

The Fitzgerald Biosphere Community Collective (FBCC), a group of stakeholder organisations and community members, came together on Friday 3rd November 2023 for our biannual meeting to discuss matters relating to our Fitzgerald Biosphere. There is always a lot to cover, so the day is booked out twice a year for our members to travel, discuss, action and network around themes relating to sustainable development aligning with the conservation of biodiversity and reinforcing the importance of our communities within the biosphere. This time we met at the Twertup Field Studies Centre – we meet on this day to give a nod to the international day of recognition for UNESCO’s Biosphere Reserves the world over. Journeying along the sandy track that leads us to Twertup, we are reminded of the significant flora that we know and love. Refreshing our purpose, we all meet together to discuss our local threats and how we can work together to progress in harmony. After a productive meeting of formalities and lunch we ‘ground truthed’ our discussions, learning more about our patch with a bush walk led by landscape ecologist and FBCC Chair Nathan McQuoid to appreciate why this place is indeed so special to us.

# FBCC MEETS TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOSPHERE RESERVES CTD.

BY ANNIE LEITCH

## SNAPSHOTS



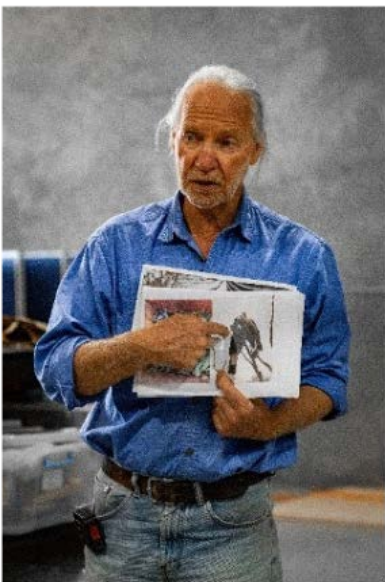
# HABITAT CREATION TICKS THE BOXES FOR CONSERVATION

BY ANNIE LEITCH

During the 2024 Hopetoun Summer Festival Hopetoun CRC hosted three Animal Habitat Workshops, held over 2 days each.

Habitat boxes play a crucial role in supporting wildlife conservation efforts, particularly in regions like Southwest Australia where biodiversity is rich but habitats are increasingly threatened. Habitat boxes can come in many shapes and sizes and use a variety of materials. We focused on designs for insects, amphibians, birds and mammals.

The preparation for the workshops began weeks before: Karrina Smallman, manager of Hopetoun CRC, mustered up plumbing pipe from Beecroft Plumbing and Gas, purchased solar lights, sphagnum moss, safety gloves and glasses, sourced donated timber and Jarrah offcuts. She enlisted the servitude of the Smallman family to fill a trailer with gravel from her home as we treasure hunted for banksia pods, paperbark and pine needles - culminating in a stock of supplies for 30 attendees to rummage through and create a masterpiece for our local wildlife to shelter and nest in.



Al, a local handyman volunteer, improvised a workshop out the front of the Hopetoun Youth and Art Space as we began with a tabletop introduction from local landscape ecologist, former park ranger and current chairman of the FBCC, Nathan McQuoid.

Combining his expertise in carpentry and ecology with his local knowledge, Nathan gave us an insight in tried and tested housing for native fauna in the Fitzgerald Biosphere.

Nathan brought in examples of natural hollows we tried to imitate and emphasized the importance of giving thought to what animals might occur in various areas, correct placement of habitat boxes, monitoring these safely and most importantly, encouraging the sharing of our findings and asking lots of questions.

It's events like these that bring us all together in a shared mission to nurture and protect our local environment. The event was inspiring, creative, educational and above all, hands-on and fun!

We want to express our thanks to Al Higgins, who contributed his time and energy to ensure the smooth running, teaching, cutting, sawing and mentoring our future habitat box builders.

On behalf of the FBCC and Hopetoun CRC, big thanks to all of the attendees, whose enthusiasm and engagement made the workshop a vibrant and enriching experience. It was heartwarming to see all ages from the community come together with a shared sense of curiosity, united in our mission to create homes - open for 'all hours'- for critters big, small, winged or furred.



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# HABITAT CREATORS, BIG AND SMALL

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SEE PREVIOUS PAGE



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# SOARING HIGHS AND PLUMMETING LOWS

## OR

### THE STORY OF A HOODED PLOVER BREEDING PAIR

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BY LEONIE MCMAHON, BREMER PROJECTS DIVISION, FBG

This summer our attention has been rivetted on a little sand island on the Wellstead Estuary in Bremer Bay where a fascinating story has been unfolding before our eyes.

Anne Gadsby, one of our local birding experts, has followed the trials and tribulations of Hooded Plovers on the Wellstead Estuary for many years. The prequel to this particular story is that the last time Anne observed a pair of Hoodies successfully fledge chicks on the estuary was in 2017. Every year since then a pair (believed to be the same birds each time but we can't confirm it) have failed despite making multiple attempts each season.

This year, we dare to hope things might be different. Anne first noticed a pair brooding in October 2023, on exposed sand close to the foredunes on Main Beach, near where a temporary fence would later be erected. The nest was abandoned fairly soon after it was first sighted though we don't know why.

Anne kept a close eye on the pair and was delighted to report they were nesting again, on a sand island further up the estuary. Every day she checked and on Day 30 – the third of January – she reported hatching success.

We held a series of early morning estuary walks throughout the summer holidays and our first, lead by Anne, was the day after two runners hatched. Our group had the enormous luck to watch them racing in mad little spurts across the sand, into the vegetation, along the mudflats, occasionally darting under a parent for rest and shelter. Meanwhile, in frantic efforts to keep them safe, their dedicated parents were busy fending off any predator that came too close. Most often this was seagulls, of which there are many on the estuary. They are a common source of nest failure.

Later that same day, myself, Annie Leitch, Communications and Extension Coordinator for the Fitzgerald Biosphere Community Collective, my partner Ants and son Finn Thomas went back to check on the Hoodie family. As we enjoyed the antics of the runners, three of us through our binoculars, Annie behind the lens of her camera, a raven suddenly entered the picture and in a flash, took one of the chicks. The second runner immediately disappeared into covering vegetation while the parents went into full-blown defence mode, attacking the raven, trying to distract it with broken wing displays. To no avail. The raven ignored them, walking calmly through the vegetation with the chick in its beak.



**Background:** Hooded Plover with runner. Photo Annie Leitch

**Left:** A Hooded Plover brooding both its runners. Photo Annie Leitch.

**Right:** Our group on the early morning estuary walk, rivetted to their binos. Photo Leonie McMahon.



## SOARING HIGHS AND PLUMMETING LOWS CTD. FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

BY LEONIE MCMAHON, BREMER PROJECTS DIVISION, FBG

On shore, the observers went ballistic too. There may have been some extreme cursing, which only increased when Annie, who kept taking pics through the entire incident, showed us the evidence none of us wanted to believe. The raven had picked the second chick from its cover, too. We watched in devastated silence as the raven flew off with both runners and the parents ran frantically around the sand island calling for them. Fairly soon the raven was back, following the parents around in case there was more to take, much to their (and our) distress.

The pair took a few days to recover then got on with the next chapter in the story of #powercouple (as Annie Leitch has taken to calling them). At time of writing they are 29 days into their third breeding attempt. Interestingly, they are using the same nest they used for their second attempt.

Unfortunately, ravens are still in the vicinity. On the evening of Day 28 (Sunday 11th February) Anne observed three ravens searching the vegetation very close to the nest, which the sitting bird had vacated. We had to wait with baited breath until Monday morning to learn if disaster had struck so close to hatching. Morning revealed one Hoodie back on the nest and the other feeding close by. Half a dozen ravens were roosting about 200m away.

Even though ravens and seagulls are natural predators of chicks and eggs, we have anecdotal reports that numbers of both species have increased greatly around the Wellstead Estuary, whilst Hooded Plover numbers have decreased.

Back at the beginning of summer, our greatest concern for our beach-nesting birds was human disturbance.

To reduce this impact we worked with the Shire of Jerramungup to put in place a number of measures. The temporary fence at the mouth of the estuary was erected in late spring creating a vehicle-free sanctuary throughout December and January. Many people have been observing the 'no dogs' and 'no vehicles signs' around the estuary and keeping good distances from loafing, breeding and feeding birds. The waters on the estuary are drying fast though and those wide expanses of sand and shoreline are now an even more tempting place to ride your bike or exercise your dog. We continue to encourage people to resist the temptation.

How to discourage a raven on the hunt though? If cheering from the shoreline could improve their chances, we can almost guarantee that their third time will be lucky for #powercouple, so invested are we in their story. In the days (and hopefully weeks) ahead we will learn if luck is indeed on their side.



Raven with both Hooded Plover runners.

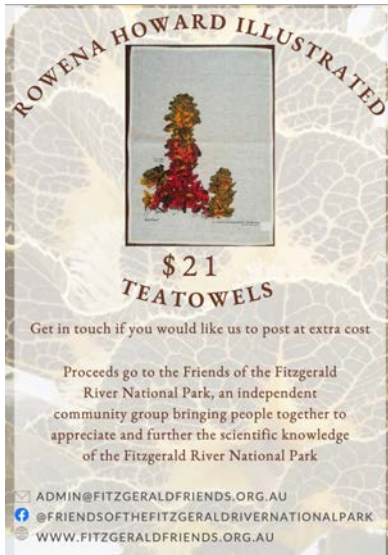
Photo Annie Leitch.

This project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program.



natural resource  
management program






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## NATIONAL MALLEEFOWL RECOVERY GROUP SEEKS DNA SAMPLES

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BY DR ELIZABETH KINGTON, WA COORDINATOR

The National Malleefowl Recovery group (NMRG), in partnership with Australian research geneticists, plan to undertake important DNA analysis to further understand our cryptic malleefowl bird.

The NMRG would like to obtain as much genetic material (malleefowl feathers and dead carcasses) as possible to enable this DNA research. Feather samples would need to be in individual envelopes/bags, each with the date collected and GPS (or equivalent) location details recorded. Please include your name and contact email with your posted sample(s). Additionally, the NMRG are seeking any and all frozen malleefowl bird carcasses collected from the field or road-side fatalities for this new DNA research. If you know of recent bird fatalities, or have stored frozen bird samples please contact Liz.

Post feather samples to:

Liz Kington, PO Box 1327, Toodyay, WA 6566.

[lizk@nationalmalleefowl.com.au](mailto:lizk@nationalmalleefowl.com.au) | 0417 996 719

[www.nationalmalleefowl.com.au](http://www.nationalmalleefowl.com.au)



We respectfully acknowledge the Noongar People as Traditional Owners of Country. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, culture and community and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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 Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park  
 PO Box I99  
 Ravensthorpe WA 6346