

Narpulungup News

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A weekend on the Hamersley

By Rosemary Jasper

We all know we can't do anything about the weather but the resultant uncertainty does add a particular tension to organising a weekend of outdoor activities. So as we approached August 13th and 14th when we had planned a weekend of canoeing and 'moth-ing' at Hamersley Inlet, we were tentatively hopeful that the forecasts for fine weather would be correct. As it turned out the weather on both days was indeed, fine, warm and relatively still. So we were off to a good start! On Saturday, 13 people paddled up-stream and back, on the Hamersley Inlet. Andrew Chapman led the excursion. On the way up the inlet,

Sarah McKie, a local geologist, gave us a potted geology lesson about sediments, the movement of Antarctica, time and pressure, folding and faulting, schist and quartzite. It was a very clear explanation of the rock formations we were looking at and it is an awe-inspiring story. At the top of the inlet, rocks fill the river channel which makes canoeing impossible so we stopped there and had lunch sitting on some flat rocks with a backdrop of the massive quartzite cliffs. After our picnic lunch, Andrew told us some things about the inlet

including water levels, breaking of the bar, salinity measurements, birdlife, fossil shell beds and what they indicate, and fish and invertebrates found in the water. It was very interesting and it gave more meaning to our activity and its setting. Some of the detail was that the inlet broke through its bar on 28th March 2016 after 120 – 130 mm of rain in the catchment the previous week. In February the mean inlet/river salinity (using Electrical Conductivity as a salinity surrogate) was 146 mS/cm (noting that seawater

continued page 3

