

SIX SEASONS

Environment and Sustainability News from Shire of Mundaring

Hop in and tell us about rabbits!



They might be cute but across Australia, European rabbits cause about \$600 million in damage to properties and farmland every year. In WA, rabbits are officially declared as pests under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007.

Rabbits also put pressure on natural areas and biodiversity by eating small native plants and competing with native animals for food and shelter. They can create havoc in food growing areas, damaging crops and causing erosion from digging their burrows and warrens.

We're asking residents to participate in an online survey to share what's going on with rabbit numbers lately and how they might be affecting properties in the Shire. We are keen to know if you've tried any control methods and what success you've had. Your feedback is important because it will help us give other residents advice on dealing with these pesky critters. Plus, we're planning a rabbit control trial in 2024, and we want you to be a part of it!



Feb 2024 • Issue 1

IN THIS EDITION

Solar Batteries

Bobtail Flu - Signs To Look For

Improving Tree Health

Great Cocky Count

Community News

What's On

Rabbit Survey

Scan the QR code below to complete the Landholder Rabbit Survey or visit Engage Mundaring webpage at engage.mundaring.wa.gov.au/landholder-rabbit-survey



Bunuru - February to March

The Noongar seasonal calendar includes six different seasons in a yearly cycle. Bunuru is the time of hot easterly winds that dry out the land. It is also a time of white flowers - with Marri trees and ghost gums in bloom.



Solar Batteries



While a battery can help you use more of your own solar power instead of exporting it to the grid, it's a big investment that won't pay for itself quickly.

Some, but not all, batteries can also back up the more important circuits in your house to keep essentials running in a power outage. The range of batteries available in Australia has expanded in recent years. You can find a good up-to-date summary table online by searching 'Solar Batteries: Everything You Need to Know Before Buying' by ex-CSIRO engineer Finn Peacock.

Some time spent on research and seeking multiple quotes is a good idea before committing to the cost of a battery and professional installation. Another option may be a solar setup that can easily have a battery added later, or allow for future use of an electric vehicle as a battery backup.

Residents in the Shire of Mundaring can access discounts for sustainability products including solar battery storage through the *Switch Your Thinking* Rewards for Residents program. Currently participating suppliers are Plico Energy, Clean NRG Solar, and Solargain.

If you would like to know more, visit [switchyourthinking.com](https://www.switchyourthinking.com)

Bobtail Flu - Signs To Look For



A sick bobtail at Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre showing signs of the flu (flat tail and protruding spine). Image: Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre

Hills residents are well-acquainted with this gentle visitor to our gardens. However, are you aware that they are facing a threat from a virus capable of causing fatal consequences if left untreated?

Bobtail flu, also known as 'Shingleback nidovirus,' has become increasingly prevalent in bobtail lizards. Although bobtail flu can be severe, prompt action can lead to the successful rescue of affected animals.

Unfortunately, without proper treatment, bobtails are at a high risk of succumbing to the virus. Although the infection is not the same as a human flu, the symptoms are similar including a runny nose, sneezing, weepy eyes, lethargy, and weight loss. In young bobtails, a bloated torso and laboured breathing may be evident.

Affected bobtails may also exhibit a very flat tail, a protruding spine, and a emaciated appearance. Occasionally, their eyes may be sealed shut from discharge. The virus is highly contagious among bobtails, and you might observe multiple affected individuals in a given area.

If you come across a sick bobtail, it is safe to do so, use a towel to pick it up (while providing support to the entire body) and place it in a box before transporting it to a vet or wildlife hospital. Note the location where the bobtail was found; if it recovers, it can be released back into its home territory.

If you're uncertain about whether a bobtail is sick or injured, you can seek assistance by calling the Wildcare Helpline on 9474 9055 or Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre on 9291 3900.

Improving Tree Health

The recent summer storm in the Shire resulted in many trees being blown over or damaged by strong winds.

Unfortunately, stressed trees are more likely to succumb to severe weather events. So, what can you do to maintain their health in the long term? Identifying the source of stress can take some detective work as trees can be affected by a combination of factors over many years.

Depending on the causes, trees can develop symptoms of stress slowly over years, or very quickly within days or weeks. Common symptoms to look for include discolouration or wilting of leaves, defoliation (more than normal), heavier than normal seed production, dying twigs and branches, peeling, splitting or shedding bark, fungi on stems and branches, insect galls or bore holes in branches and stems and abnormal new growth.

A qualified arborist or Dieback consultant may be needed to confirm which diseases or factors are affecting tree health and advise on treatment options.

Simple, at-home strategies that can help improve tree health and vigour include removing weeds (which compete for water and nutrients), planting native shrubs around trees to improve soil health (and attract birds that eat insects that can attack trees), providing water to drought-stressed trees in summer, pruning diseased branches, improving soil health with compost and fertilisers as well as reducing soil compaction.

For more information on tree decline visit the Shire website. If you are seeing a decline in street trees on local verges or within reserves, please contact the Shire's Operations Service on 9290 6716 or email shire@mundaring.wa.gov.au.



Great Cocky Count



Spread your wings and join us for an information session all about our charismatic black-cockatoos, the annual Great Cocky Count, and how you can get involved!

The Great Cocky Count is a long-term citizen science survey and the biggest single survey for black-cockatoos in Western Australia. During one night in autumn, volunteers monitor and count black-cockatoos as they arrive at dusk to roost at known sites.

Records submitted from across the southwest provide a snapshot of threatened black-cockatoo populations, and over time this has helped to quantify changes in their numbers.

During this free talk by Birdlife WA on Sat 24 Feb, participants will learn about the three species of black-cockatoos in southwest WA, their biology, ecology, and behaviour, how to get involved with the survey, and what else you can do to help black-cockatoos in your neighbourhood.

See What's On for more information and registration details.

An evening at Karakamia Sanctuary



The Shire and Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) teamed up once again in December to run the ever-popular Fauna Foray at Karakamia Sanctuary in Chidlow. Karakamia was AWC's first sanctuary, protecting 268 hectares of wetlands, granite outcrops, and large areas of Jarrah, Wandoo, and Marri woodlands.

Karakamia is home to many species, some of which are declining or regionally extinct, providing a snapshot of what the Australian bush might have been like 200 years ago. The entire sanctuary is surrounded by a feral-proof fence, which excludes cats and foxes.

Twenty-four residents joined AWC guides on a 2-hour night stalk to observe a range of native animals including tamar wallabies, woylies, echidna, western grey kangaroos, brushtail possums, and western brush wallabies. AWC also provides opportunities to visit other sanctuaries - find out more at www.australianwildlife.org

Landcare Calendar - Tips for Bunuru

- Monitor health of seedlings and water as needed
- Top up stock water troughs and bird baths daily to ensure water is cool, clean and fresh
- If you are planning tree planting or bushland revegetation for the coming winter/spring, now is the time to think about what species you'll plant (and where) and soil preparation and weed control that will be required ahead of time
- Continue to manage grazing to prevent over grazing, especially in non-irrigated pastures



Six Seasons has been prepared by the Shire of Mundaring's Environment and Sustainability team
To subscribe email shire@mundaring.wa.gov.au

What's On



Engage with nature and sustainability and meet like-minded people!

DIY Plastic Free Deodorant (FREE)

Sat February 10, 9 am to 10.30 am

Mundaring Garden & Farmers Market

Come along to a fun workshop where you will learn how to make your own sustainable, plastic-free deodorant. Perfect for a Valentines or birthday gift. To register or and find out about other sustainability events visit the Mundaring Chamber of Commerce webpage at www.mundaring.org.au/events.

Great Cocky Count Talk (FREE)

Sat February 24, 10 am to 11.30 am

Civic Room, Shire of Mundaring

The Great Cocky Count is a long-term citizen science survey and the biggest single survey for black cockatoos in WA. At sunset on Sun 14th April, participants will count black cockatoos as they come into their evening roosts. The talk is for residents who want to learn all about black cockatoos and how to participate in the April count. To register visit www.eventbrite.com.au and search for 'Shire of Mundaring Great Cocky Count'.

Decluttering Workshop (FREE)

Mon March 25, 9.30 am to 11 am

Boya Community Centre (Boya Library), Shire of Mundaring

Are you tired of feeling overwhelmed by clutter? Come along to this workshop to learn how to declutter your home and live better with less! Join sustainability educator Laura Monisse for an engaging session on the art of decluttering and learn practical strategies you can use to live a better life with less. To register visit www.eventbrite.com.au and search for 'Decluttering Workshop: Living Better with Less'.

For more info on events in the Shire, visit our events webpage at www.mundaring.wa.gov.au/events/