

PHCC BOARD MEETING – 22 OCTOBER 2020

DBCA OUT-OF-SESSION UPDATE

- Entangled dolphin in Mandurah estuary – the DBCA has formed an Incident Management Team (IMT) inclusive of vet colleagues from Perth Zoo to coordinate its continued response to a dolphin that has been entangled in fishing line for several months now in the estuary. On water patrols have increased to continue to gather information on its condition and behaviours, in addition to the valuable information that had already been provided by key stakeholders including Murdoch University and the Mandurah Dolphin Volunteer Rescue Group. If the opportunity presents itself and it is safe to do so, a disentanglement attempt will be made and relevant equipment remains on the vessels being used at all times in anticipation of this. The IMT is being supported by an Incident Response Group (ISG) of key stakeholders that are continuing to provide significant information and support in accessing additional resources such as boats and nets that could potentially be used to capture and disentangle the dolphin.
- Fairy Tern breeding on Boundary Island – planning for the trial of a safe breeding area for Fairy Terns by fencing off a 50m x 130m area on the southern part of the island is continuing. The initial area to be fenced may be smaller than this and run as a trial to see if the terns are likely to breed in the fenced area. Boundary Island is vested with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. DBCA is also liaising with Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, City of Mandurah, BirdLife Australia and the WA Fairy Tern Network. A key threat to the species, identified by the WA Fairy Tern Network, is the loss of nesting habitat due to coastal development, predators such as foxes, and increasing sea levels. Fairy Terns have been observed attempting to breed on Boundary Island in previous years but without success, as a result of disturbance by humans and domestic dogs. The DBCA is aiming to construct the fence by mid-November 2020, while fairy terns are still prospecting for new breeding areas. The Fairy Tern Network will place decoys (artificial terns) on the sand within the fenced area and attract the prospecting terns with play-back calls, in the hope that they will establish a breeding colony. The District will regularly survey the island for fox activity and if identified, will increase fox control measures in the adjacent Creery Wetlands Nature Reserve. BirdLife Australia is providing State NRM funds for construction of the fence (\$10,000).
- Feral animal control – the contractor engaged by DBCA on behalf of the Department of Communities to undertake feral pig control at Keralup is now beginning a comprehensive culling program given the landscape is drying out and the pigs are being attracted to watering points. The DBCA has also engaged another contractor to undertake feral animal control, primarily foxes at Kooljerrenup Nature Reserve, Lake McLarty Nature Reserve and Lake Mealup Nature Reserve. This work at these three nature reserves is being done with the valuable support of the Peel Harvey Catchment Council and the Lake Mealup Preservation Society.
- The Lake McLarty Technical Advisory Group (TAG) met on 8 October 2020 in the PHCC Shed. TAG members reviewed water levels for 2019 and 2020, future monitoring requirements, the living stream project at Lot 68 Mills Road and the findings of macroinvertebrate, sediment and waterbird studies since its last meeting in 2019.

MARK CUGLEY