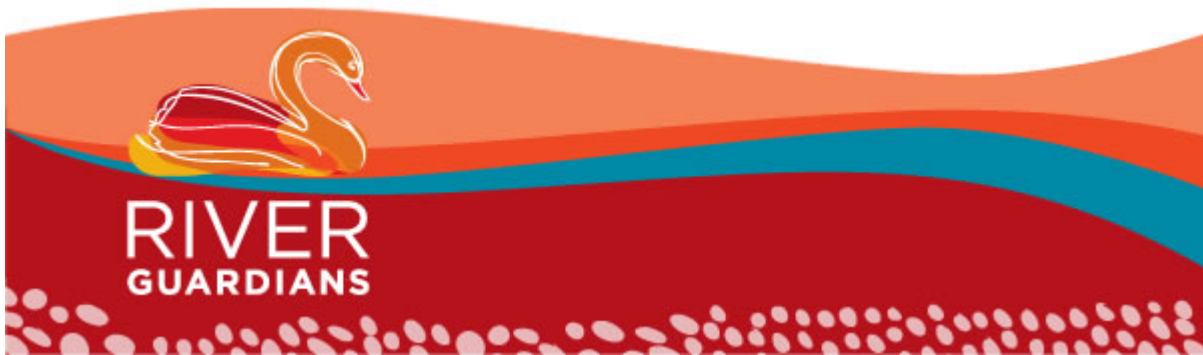




River Guardians eNews Djilba (Aug-Sept) Edition

The Noongar Season 'Djilba' is represented by the colour pink as it symbolises growth of wildflowers and plants. This is the start of the massive flowering explosion that happens in south west WA, beginning with the yellow flowering plants such as the acacias (*Acacia saligna* pictured below)

Djilba is a transitional time of the year, with some very cold and clear days combining with warmer, rainy and windy days mixing with the occasional sunny day or two.

In this edition we take a look at the 2026 River Guardians Family Festival, H5 Avian Influenza, engaging with our school children, Dolphin Watch news, events, and more!



2026 River Guardians Family Festival

With over 1000 people joining us on a beautiful May morning, it was a joy to bring together organisations, passionate volunteers, partners (including [Nature Play WA](#)), families and a whole flock of curious kids for conversations, hands on activities and plenty of river nerdery along our beautiful Perth riverside.

The community questions were a standout, hearing everything from the big scientific curiosities like “How do microplastics move through the river system?” and “Why do black swans choose certain nesting spots?” to the wonderfully imaginative contributions from our youngest river guardians: “Do turtles have best friends?” and “Do fish sneeze?”.

As River Guardians Program Manager and event coordinator Jason Menzies put it, “It’s genuinely heartening to be surrounded by so many people who care deeply about the health of our waterways and their future.”

We hope everyone who joined us enjoyed the day as much as we did 🙌

Check out the [video](#) to see how it all unfolded.



Above: More than 1000 people enjoyed this year’s festival.

Below: Whadjuk Noongar Elder, Vaughn Joshua McGuire, performed a heartfelt Welcome to Country to open proceedings.



H5 Avian Influenza (bird flu)

H5 bird flu has been detected in Western Australia, in a small number of migratory sea birds. Currently there have been no detections of H5 bird flu in poultry and no evidence of other significant mortalities.

If you see dead or sick birds or marine mammals showing signs of H5 bird flu, you should:

- Avoid contact and keep your distance.
- Record the date, time, location and take photos.
- Report it to the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Find out more about the [signs and how to report](#).

For more information, visit the Australian Government website at birdflu.gov.au.



A new online home for Eastern Region Landcare

The Eastern Region Landcare program has launched a new website to help connect the community with local volunteer groups, landcare projects, catchment information and opportunities to get involved in protecting WA waterways. The site brings together useful resources and updates for people who care about healthy rivers, wetlands and bushland in Perth's eastern region.

Visit erl.org.au to explore the new website and find out how you can support local action for cleaner, healthier waterways.



River Guardians Education

Our Education Officer Rosie has been kept busy delivering dolphin, wetland, and river health programs to a diverse audience! We're proud to work with students from kindy right through to year 12, home school and community groups - there is always space to engage, begin conversations, and inspire educated action in a positive way.

During 2026 River Guardians have so far engaged with 35 school and community groups, run 7 school holiday activity programs, and attended 5 community/school events across the Perth metro - bringing river health and conservation messages to 2,350 people!

The education program is currently undergoing a refresh - River Guardians will be launching some new offerings over the coming months whilst promoting our mainstay Junior Dolphin Watch and Drains to Living Streams programs to a wider audience.

Watch this space!

Below: *River Guardians Education Officer Rosie out and about running a Junior Dolphin Watch program to homeschool students in June.*



Dolphin Watch News

Dolphin Watch volunteer morning tea

A large pod of enthusiastic Perth Dolphin Watch volunteers was spotted in early July enjoying morning tea at a riverside cafe!

Dr Delphine Chabanne of Murdoch University and Associate Prof. Chandra Sagado Kent of Edith Cowan University were also in attendance to report results of the latest round of Strategic Monitoring Project, and Masters student Marigoula Mouriopoulos updated the combined pod on her postgraduate study progress looking at risk associated with marine debris interaction and known resident dolphin community hotspots within the Derbal Yerrigan Djarlgarro / Swan Canning river system.

River Guardians Education Officer Rosie really enjoyed getting to know the extended Dolphin Watch family too!

We will be holding the next Perth Dolphin Watch training event at the Swan Canoe Club in Mosman Park on Tuesday 24 November from 6pm to 8pm. Free tickets will be released on Eventbrite soon...keep an eye out on our website for details.

Below: Top - Delphine, Chandra, and Marigula updating the Dolphin Watch volunteer pod. Bottom - one of several tables filled with happy, chatty volunteers!



Where do I record dolphin sightings?

Download the [Marine Fauna Sightings app](#), available for Apple or Android, and you can become a Dolphin Watch citizen science volunteer by contacting us on community@dbca.wa.gov.au

New Dolphin Watch research findings - through a volunteer's lense!

Sue Harper is a dedicated wildlife photographer and long-time Dolphin Watch and Reel it in volunteer. Sue has built an exceptional collection of high-resolution images of the Swan Canning Riverpark's resident dolphin community which she kindly shares with us. Her photographs not only capture the beauty of these animals but also provide valuable research and conservation data, demonstrating how meaningful contributions can be made from the shore without disturbing dolphins in their natural habitat.

Dolphin Watch researcher, Dr Delphine Chabanne and one of her students from Murdoch University's Harry Butler Institute, recently conducted a review of the photo's Sue has shared with the Dolphin Watch team and found some very interesting findings. You can read the short report [here](#).



Click's new 3-month calf entangled in fishing line

Unfortunately, our newest Swan Canning Riverpark dolphin resident, 3-month old calf, Bindi Bindi (mother is Click) has been spotted by Dolphin Watch researcher, Dr Delphine Chabanne, suffering from severe fishing line entanglement around it's rostrum, pectoral fins and dorsal fin.

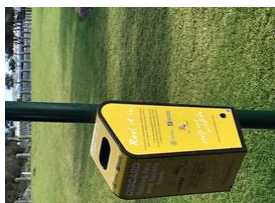
DBCA marine rangers were deployed on Monday 24 August and briefly located Bindi Bindi near Karrakatta Bank. The calf was observed for about 15 minutes before being lost from sight in choppy conditions near the Point Walter sand spit.

The entanglement remains and appears tight around the calf's mouth, dorsal fin and pectoral fins. Based on observations, the calf appears to be in a similar body condition to previous sightings.

Unfortunately, the complexity of the entanglement has ruled out simpler boat-based intervention.

Marine rangers are continuing to work with researchers to monitor Bindi Bindi and plan our next move.

See the video of Bindi Bindi struggling to swim properly that was taken by Delphine on 21 August while conducting her final winter survey [here](#).

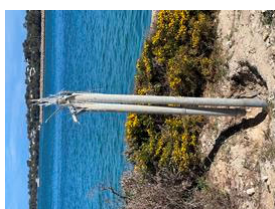


Reel It In Fishing Line bin program

The Good News

We're excited to report that almost all fishing waste bins are now adopted across Western Australia! Only one lonely bin requires a loving carer to regularly check and empty it and is located at North Beach jetty in the northern Perth suburbs.

If you live locally and would like to adopt the North Beach jetty bin please get in touch community@dbca.wa.gov.au



The not so good news

Estuary Guardians in Mandurah have reported vandalism of more than one bin in central Mandurah. One bin has been removed and the pole snapped (pictured above), another bin has been stolen with the pole subsequently found in the sea.

We're trying to spread the word that Reel It In bins play an important role in protecting local wildlife and are to be left alone - if you witness vandalism in Mandurah it can be reported to WA Police (131 444 or use the online form), anonymously to Crime Stoppers WA (1800 333 000 or download the Eyes on the Street app), or City of Mandurah (08) 9550 3777.



Events

National Science Week 2026

We hope you managed to get amongst it for National Science Week 15th-23rd August! This year's theme was Seeds of science: Nurturing knowledge for all, here's some of the events that were delivered in WA last week:

- [WA Maritime Museum Science Week Open Day](#), FREE, 23rd August. River Guardians was in attendance and had many visitors to our stall.
- [Noongar Two-way learning walk](#), Kings Park 20th August
- [Kings Park science - the hidden life of seeds](#), Kings Park 15th-21st August
- [WA Museum Boola Bardip Biggest Science Lab Ever!](#) 23rd August



Everlasting Ideas at Everlasting Kings Park Festival

ABC's Gardening Australia presenter and River Guardians Ambassador, Josh Byrne, will be on stage delivering his FREE [RiverWise Gardens presentation](#) from 11am – 12pm, with the final 20-30mins allocated to answering your gardening questions! Learn how to create a waterwise, climate resilient garden that will help protect our precious rivers and support biodiversity and wildlife.

Warm regards,

River Guardians Team
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

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CARING FOR THE SWAN CANNING RIVERPARK

