



Newsletter No. 99: Winter/Makuru 2025

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<https://western-ground-parrot.org.au>

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The Friends acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community, of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Proud recipients of Australia's Gift for the Coronation of King Charles III

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Farewell to Fred

We are very sad to report that one of our long-time members passed away unexpectedly after a tragic accident in April this year. Fred Bondin, a life member of the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot and husband of founding member Anne Bondin, had been involved with the group right from its early days at the beginning of this century. Fred, together with his wife, spent many hours in the field searching for the elusive parrots. Once he was lucky enough to see a Western Ground Parrot fly past during a dusk listening session east of Albany. Fred also volunteered for the Parks and Wildlife Service, seen in the photo below installing an automated recording unit.



Photo A Bondin

To honour Fred's memory, the Western Ground Parrot Rescue Fund will receive an annual donation from Anne to support important work to save these critically endangered parrots from extinction.

Fred was farewelled by members of the Friends and the Albany Bird Group on a sparkling day in May. His ashes were scattered in a place where the Noisy Scrub-birds sing and where perhaps one day in the near future Kyloring will take up residence again.



Photo J Kilgour

DBCA Parks and Wildlife Service Update

Abby Martin and Sarah Comer for the South Coast Threatened Fauna Recovery Team

And just like that we are already halfway through 2025.

Since the last update, at Christmas we were all settling in for a summer break but come the new year, it was business as usual.

The DBCA led project team have had a busy autumn, walking to check all monitoring gear that is scattered over the landscape, listening and watching the bush, whilst also catching up on analysis of both acoustic and camera data.

The field team were joined by an amazing group of volunteers in March, to conduct listening surveys and install the 60 autumn automated recording monitoring units (ARUs) in Nuytsland and the Eastern parts of Cape Arid National Park. The dedicated volunteers, some of whom experienced their first time camping, journeyed out to Point Malcom near Israelite Bay and partook in a six-day trip, with no phone reception, a lot of driving, a lot of walking, early mornings and late evenings. The bird list for the camp site, beach and salt lakes included hooded plovers, grey plovers and fairy terns. Kyloriny were both heard and seen. Calling rates for the Kyloriny 'human' listening surveys in the mornings and evenings of this trip were low, but some of the sites we visited to survey were last visited in the mid-2000's and it was good to listen in case birds were using these areas again. The low calling activity during the human survey highlights the cryptic nature of this species and also the importance of ARUs and their ability to be recording constantly across time and space. As we frequently stress, ARUs now play a critical role in monitoring the cryptic Kyloriny across landscapes and seasons, and we would not have the same level of confidence in population trends and the effectiveness of our management actions without them. An additional 15 ARUs were deployed for PhD candidate Joseph Jantke, from the University of Adelaide, during the March trip.

Then before we knew it, it was May and time to pull in all the monitoring units that the volleys had helped us install in March. All the autumn monitoring units were collected, and the long term solar powered acoustic monitoring equipment was serviced. The team was joined by Joseph Jantke (see Joseph's summary of his project in this newsletter), who used the opportunity to put out a different array of monitoring units. Joe's PhD and work completed by Dr Kyle Armstrong (University of Adelaide) will continue to support our efforts to increase the volume of monitoring data that is processed, and in the longer term we hope that the project will help us to improve our understanding of birds in the wild.

The autumn period is also a busy time for feral cat research trapping and control, and whilst the team were installing and pulling in monitoring units, we were multi-tasking with feral cat traps over in Cape Arid National Park and Nuytsland Nature Reserve. Over the two trapping periods, which were conducted prior to the DBCA Western Shield aerial baiting program in these Parks, a total of 32 cats were removed from core habitat for Kyloriny in Cape Arid and Nuytsland. The baiting program was delayed due to rainfall, and this was evident in the number of sub-adult animals, female cats and high trap success at both Pt Malcolm and Poison Creek. Sub-adult and female cats are more likely to take baits, and it's unusual for the team to have two pre-bait trapping sessions. The 2025 results highlight the importance of maintaining the long-term landscape-scale Western Shield baiting program to manage cats in this landscape.

Monitoring via the ARU network at the translocation site has also continued, with calling activity still being detected in January (the last service of the translocation site ARUs). Whilst no chick whistles were heard last breeding season, the persistence of birds nearly two years after the last releases continues to look promising. The DBCA team joined some of the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot Committee at the release site for an evening listening this autumn. Anne Bondin also joined us, but for the first time in many years without her Fred. Our deepest sympathies to Anne on her loss, and for those of the team that have had the privilege of spending time listening for ground parrots with Fred, sunsets east of Albany will never be quite the same. Unfortunately, even with insider knowledge no Kyloriny were heard, however a spectacular sunset was observed as we reflected on Fred's life and listened to the many other birds calling.

Weather cancelled the feral cat research trapping and control program at the translocation site this autumn but before the storm hit, a single cat was removed from the site. The team will be back in spring to run trapping program, but in the meantime the BirdLife and Friends-supported Felixer grooming traps (see the Friends Summer 2023 Newsletter on their website and update in "Chirpings") and Western Shield baiting program continues in and around the area.

In February, DBCA hosted the second two-day Structured Decision-Making workshop, with Doug Armstrong and Kevin Parker (from the IUCN's Conservation Translocation Specialist Group) again facilitating the process. The group reviewed the previously identified strategies developed for Kyloriny following expert election and prediction of the consequences of each. Twenty-three workshop participants re-ranked the eleven strategies, with a couple of clear priorities selected by the group to focus on for recovering Kyloriny over the next 10 years. In addition to the DBCA team it was great to have representatives from BirdLife, Friends of the Western Ground Parrot, South Coast NRM, Perth Zoo, Binalup, Southern Aboriginal Corporation and Tjaltjraak having input into the process. The SDM report is currently being finalised for the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team, and we will share the outcomes in the next newsletter.

The DBCA team was very happy to have Larisse Guislain return from a well-deserved holiday travelling the world to visit her widely scattered family. Additionally, we are lucky to have two new staff joining the South Coast Team: Dayna Hoadley in a Technical Officer position based in Esperance and Moses Pillay in a Technical Officer position in Albany (see Introductions below). Both Dayna and Moses will be working on Kyloriny, Djimaalap (Noisy Scrub-birds), other threatened fauna and supporting landscape scale management of introduced predators, and both have a vast array of experience in conservation work.



Sunset over the Kyloriny translocation site. Photo S Comer, DBCA



Many hands make light work, volunteers Peter Stewart (FWGP committee member) and Mike Senior with DBCA technical officer Moses Pillay installing one of the autumn monitoring units. Photo A Martin, DBCA.



Team photo from the March Trip to Nuytsland Nature Reserve. Photo S Comer, DBCA



Ready for deployment. Preparing the autumn ARU monitoring units for deployment in Cape Arid National Park. Photo S Comer, DBCA.

Introducing Dayna Hoadley

I'm Dayna Hoadley and I've recently joined DBCA as a Technical Officer. The role is based in Esperance, but I'll also be working regularly with the Albany DBCA team. I was drawn to this position after visiting southwest WA and learning about the inspiring, collaborative conservation efforts for threatened species like the Western Ground Parrot.

Originally from South Australia, my long-standing interest in all things avian led me to a role at Raptor Domain on Kangaroo Island as a Keeper/Presenter, where I educated guests about Australia's unique birdlife. However, I was eager to pursue more conservation-focused work. After witnessing the impacts of the Black Summer fires on Kangaroo Island firsthand, I had the opportunity to pivot into conservation, working with Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife, and BirdLife Australia to monitor the post-fire recovery of threatened species. Our main focus was the endangered Kangaroo Island Dunnart, along with threatened birds such as the Bassian Thrush, Western Whipbird, and Southern Emu-wren. I loved this hands-on conservation work and was keen to find something similar after leaving the island.

I feel incredibly privileged to now be in southwest WA, part of a team making a real difference to the future of conservation, and learning from some extremely experienced and passionate people. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to contribute to the protection of some of Australia's most elusive and threatened species.



Dayna with her first Kangaroo Island Dunnart. Photo Pat Hodgins, Terrain Ecology

Introducing Moses Pillay

I'm Moses, and I've recently joined the DBCA team as a Technical Officer supporting threatened fauna recovery programs in the South Coast Region. My conservation journey has taken me from Southeast Asia to halfway across the world at the Caribbean, and across different states in Australia working on various projects.

I've had the opportunity to work with iconic cryptic species in unique remote conditions that were challenging to study. This had made me passionate about working with these elusive threatened species. Each project has shown me that good conservation needs patience, creative thinking, and strong teamwork with researchers and local people.

The opportunity to work with Western Ground Parrots really appealed to me because these remarkable birds present the kind of unique conservation challenges I find rewarding. Having developed a special interest in creating conceptual frameworks for conservation managers to apply in real-life scenarios, I'm excited to work with the different teams involved in executing a comprehensive conservation plan for the Western Ground Parrot. I'm looking forward to contributing to the ongoing recovery efforts alongside DBCA, Friends of the Western Ground Parrot, and the dedicated community that's already achieved so much for this species.



Moses Pillay, new DBCA technical officer on his first day in Cape Arid. Photo S Comer, DBCA

Western Ground Parrot Update from Perth Zoo

We have entered the quietest period of the year for the Western Ground Parrots, with all the birds settling down and preparing for the coming Winter. This year we have allowed Minko, Brutus, Joy and Kopin the opportunity to socialise throughout the entire original aviary complex. Housing them more socially has resulted in the birds spending lots of time interacting and has sparked an adventurous streak in Minko, who can be seen roaming throughout the entire aviary, rather than displaying his usual sedentary nature of sitting near his food tray! Joy and Kopin continue to show behaviours that indicate they are maintaining a strong pair bond.

Kangal and Golumbiddee remain housed together in the new aviary together and continue to show pair behaviours such as feeding closely together and the male continues to feed the female on occasion.

Over Winter, we will complete some minor work on the aviary complexes to ensure we are prepared for any possible incursion of Avian Influenza in the state. This will include addition of solid roofing over both aviaries to protect the Western Ground Parrots from exposure to wild birds flying overhead and a few additional modifications to our facilities to further strengthen our biosecurity procedures. Once the works are complete, we will shift our focus to the coming breeding season.

CHIRPINGS FROM THE CHAIR- PAUL WETTIN



I'm still Chirping about catching this Northern Pike in Canada last year!!!

Visit by Committee member Julie Lee

Continuing the trend in this Newsletter to “exhibit” activities of some of your Committee members, those of us based in Albany were pleased to be visited from NSW by Julie Lee and her husband Garry in April. Although a native “sandgroper”, Julie has been absent from her birthplace for many years, residing and working mostly in Sydney. She still has family and friends in WA and came to visit them, with a detour to Albany to meet the rest of the FWGP gang “in the flesh”.

Sarah Comer and Abby Martin generously made themselves available to host Julie, Garry, Anne Bondin and I for visit to the translocation area, as Sarah and Abby mention in their report.



Julie visiting the translocation area in April. L-R me, Julie, Garry, Anne, an ARU and Sarah. Credit Abby Martin, DBCA

Welcome to the Team Joseph Jantke

The Friends are delighted to welcome Joseph to the Saving Kyloring team and after funding the pilot project outlined below which is contributing to his further research. If successful, his research could start opening the “vault” of content of thousands of hours of ARU recordings, greatly enhancing the monitoring results and knowledge about the parrot’s habits and populations!

“I’m Joseph Jantke and I’m a PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide. After doing a few research projects on small marsupials and microbats in South Australia and microhylid frogs in Papua New Guinea, I’m fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to begin research on the Western Ground Parrot, or Kyloriny, last year. I jumped on this project because it offered a balance of cutting-edge computer-based methods and fieldwork in a beautiful part of Australia on an equally beautiful and vulnerable species. As both a keen birdwatcher and avid computer enthusiast, I think my unique set of interests and skills are well-matched for such a project.

The work I did last year to develop a convolutional neural network-based acoustic recogniser for automating call identification of the Kyloriny (Western Ground Parrot) shows great promise for the use of these technologies with the species and I hope will lead to improved monitoring for the species. In summary, the report prepared by Dr Kyle Armstrong and I details an iterative method of model development based on gradually introducing training data to increasingly complex models to eventually result in a model that performs acceptably according to standard evaluation metrics and which can also be used to process the huge ARU data set much more quickly. Since this work, I have started a PhD at the University of Adelaide that, as well as furthering the development of this model, seeks to use small arrays of microphones throughout CANP and the Nuytsland Nature Reserve to estimate the density of Kyloriny throughout the park and determine whether density is impacted by a variety of habitat-level predictors such as vegetation fire age and vegetation structure and composition. It is a personal goal of mine to hopefully be able to use this method to calculate a more current and robust population estimate of the species in CANP-NNR.”



Joseph setting up his research ARUs in Cape Arid in May. Photo M Pillay, DBCA

Strategic Decision-Making process

As indicated in the DBCA report, I participated in the second facilitated SDM workshop in February. The workshop was intensive and significantly progressed consideration of a substantial number of alternative strategies for future management activities of the wild and captive birds. These are to be considered by the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team leading to the Recovery Plan for the next 10 years. This Plan will thus guide the activities of the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot.

Felixer update

Supported by BirdLife Australia and the Friends, two Felixer grooming traps were installed during 2023 to provide more support for the intensive invasive predator management program at the translocation site.

BirdLife Australia are the contracted party for the provision of these units and have provided the following update:

Since deployment of the two Felixers¹ in Aug 2023 (with field operations overseen by the DBCA team), two cats have been targeted by the FelixersTM in the Kyloring translocation area. Seven cats were either misidentified as non-targets or had low confidence on the image and did not fire. In addition, 16 foxes have been fired upon by the device. An additional 16 foxes were photographed but not fired upon due to low confidence or misidentification. Since deployment, Thylacine have introduced two firmware updates to improve target detection and firing rates to avoid missing targets. The two FelixersTM deployed through this grant will remain within the Kyloring release site until February 2026, contributing to the ongoing control of predators and reducing predation risk for the newly translocated Kyloring and improving the chances of long-term establishment.

Noongar names/spelling for the Western Ground Parrot.

The following is my (limited) understanding of the current situation about the Noongar naming of the Western Ground Parrot.

Saving Kyloring is the Friends' motto, mission and brand. Nevertheless, and in keeping with the 14 different and 3 major language groups within the Noongar "cultural block" (<https://www.noongarculture.org.au/noongar/>), other spellings and names are used, such as Kyloriny by DBCA and some others. *Djerap: Noongar Birds* is a book produced by the Noongar community after consulting extensively about the names for 198 birds. It identifies 4 different names for the Western Ground Parrot: booroondoordi, djardoongkari, djoolbarda, gayiloring. The book spells Kyloring differently using "Gayiloring" instead. Kyloring is the anglicized version of Gayiloring. Kyloriny is an alternative spelling with the pronunciation de-emphasising the "g".

New Website

We decided there was a need to update our website to make it more user-friendly, particularly on smaller devices such as smartphones and tablets. Anne Bondin has (again) generously devoted significant time preparing this new site and Committee Member Rosemary Argue has greatly improved the content of the text material. We hope you will enjoy reading this Newsletter on our new website and webpage.

Donations and Grants

We continue to receive a regular stream of donations and the contributions from those donors are greatly appreciated.

We are grateful to South Coast NRM for the acquisition of our updated *Saving Kyloring* brochure, with funds provided from their *Targeted Action for Highly Threatened Species in the South Coast Region* project received from the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust.

SCNRM has also purchased 100 Kyloring pins for us from BirdLife Western Australia to on-sell and raise funds for the Recovery Plan.
