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Rangers find bilby habitats

■ Kandy Curran

The greater bilby that previously lived across WA is now only found in the Kimberley and Pilbara.

In the past 18 months increased survey effort by indigenous ranger groups has uncovered bilbies living across the southern Kimberley region, including around Broome.

Indigenous rangers have been working hard to find out where the bilbies live and what they do.

Researchers from Kimberley Land Council, WWF-Australia, Environs Kimberley, Nyamba Buru Yawuru and the Department of Parks and Wildlife have been working with seven indigenous ranger groups in the Kimberley to bring science and indigenous knowledge.

The exciting news is that



Bilbies are known as ecosystem engineers. Picture: Jiri Lochman

Gooniyandi, Karajarri, Ngurrara, Nyikina Mangala, Nyul Nyul, Paruku and Yawuru Country Rangers have all found populations of bilbies on or near land they manage.

At a recent Science on the

Broome Coast presentation, bilby researcher Martin Dziminski from the science and conservation division of the Department of Parks and Wildlife, provided an informative overview about the greater bilby and his research in the Pilbara.

"The lesser bilby and related pig-footed bilby were found across a large portion of arid Australia; however, in the 1950s and 1960s they both became extinct and we are now just left with the greater bilby," he said.

"The fox is credited with the removal of bilbies from its southern range."

With bilby numbers in decline in the Pilbara and the marsupial being solitary, nocturnal and spending a lot of time digging burrows that spiral down several metres, the likelihood of a layperson finding them is low.

However there are some key signs that indicate their presence.

To improve the efficiency of monitoring bilbies in the vast, remote desert areas of Western Australia, Dr Dziminski has adopted alternate methods — genetic testing of scats and surveys for burrows and diggings using camera drones.

Using these techniques, Dr Dziminski said researchers found small populations of between two and 10 individuals that were quite isolated.

Rangers have also identified and mapped previously unknown populations of bilbies and are building an impressive picture of what is going on.

■ Kandy Curran is the project manager of the Roebuck Bay Working Group.

what's on

Wednesday, March 16

■ **Fame Trivia Night**, Divers Beach bar from 7.30pm-10pm, hosted by Hutzy from Spirit FM. Entry is free.

Thursday, March 17

■ **Wet T-Shirt competition**, The Roebuck Hotel's Oasis Bar from 10pm until late. Entry is free for women, \$5 for men.

Friday, March 18

■ **Ghost Ship**, Divers Beach Bar from 8pm-11pm. Entry is free.
■ **Friday Night Acoustic Sessions with Scott McDougall**, The Roebuck

Hotel's Sports Bar with Scott McDougall from 9pm until late. Entry is free, raffles drawn at 6pm.

Saturday, March 19

■ **Miss Sunset Coast 2016 - Broome Heat competition**, Divers Beach Bar from 8pm-11pm. Entry is free.
■ **Goose Club**, The Roebuck Hotel's Sports Bar, raffle drawn at 2pm. Entry is free.
■ **Saturday Night Live**, The Roebuck Hotel's Sports Bar from 9pm until late. Entry is free.

Sunday, March 20

■ **Family Fun Day**, Mangrove Hotel from 3.30pm-6.30pm

with a children's bouncy castle. Entry is free.

■ **Black Minx**, Matso's from 2pm. Entry is free.

■ **Gold Card Members' Jackpot Draw**, Divers Bar from 4pm-6pm, featuring Vincenzos pizzas all day. Entry is free.

■ **Crazy Crab Races season opener**, Divers Beach Bar from 6pm-9pm. Entry is free, with funds raised supporting local charities.

Monday, March 21

■ **Colourfest Harmony Day Short Film Festival**, The Broome Civic Centre from 6pm. Entry is free, seats booked online at www.broomecivic

centre.com.au.

Wednesday, March 23

■ **Fame Trivia Night**, Divers Beach Bar from 7.30pm-10pm, hosted by Hutzy from Spirit FM. Entry is free

■ **Roey Pool Competition**, The Roebuck Hotel's Sports Bar from 7pm. Entry is \$5.

■ **Bodyheat**, Skylla from 8pm. Entry is \$25 from Roebuck reception or \$30 at the event. Women-only event.

Thursday, March 24

■ **Black Minx Trio**, Divers Beach Bar from 8pm-11pm. Entry is free.

YOUR STARS

Aries
(March 21 - April 20)

Daily hassles give way to a sense of calm and security. And being equally comfortable with everyone around you, you'll enjoy their company and make the best of any team efforts.

Taurus
(April 21 - May 20)

Job satisfaction can be elusive, especially if your heart's not really in it. Why not consider retraining? If nothing else, it will keep your mind active.

Gemini
(May 21 - June 21)

This week calls for some special "me" time, but a needy friend could try to derail your plans. You won't be any good to anyone, including yourself, if you don't allow for some down time.

Cancer
(June 22 - July 22)

As much as you want to get away, you're stuck where you are right now, still listening to other people's problems. It's been some time since you've had some serious fun.

Leo
(July 23 - August 23)

An old playmate reinforces a strong bond of friendship. Some Leos fall head over heels with a stranger. Others find companionship in the company of someone older.

Virgo
(August 24 - September 22)

Old issues are likely to resurface this week. You may need to draw a line in

Tanya Obreza

the sand, or perhaps bring an end to a relationship. But make sure you're heading in the right direction.

Libra
(September 23 - October 23)

For you, life's nothing less than a great adventure. You've an unapologetic policy of experiencing each day to the max. Librans place faith in life itself. An enviable asset this week.

Scorpio
(October 24 - November 22)

While not all old cohorts are about to disappear, you could find that new interests place you in different company. An altercation may also see you avoiding contact with someone.

Sagittarius
(November 23 - December 21)

Don't hold back when you see someone in need. On a more personal level, settle outstanding debts.

Capricorn
(December 22 - January 20)

Right now though, the cosmos seems determined to outmatch you. Should Mars suddenly instigate change, don't panic. Shake off doubts.

Aquarius
(January 21 - February 18)

If you've been waiting for something special to happen, this could be your week. A new passion or job promises to further enrich and reward your life.

Pisces
(February 19 - March 20)

Be discreet this week, as someone wants to pry into your personal affairs. Maintain your silence.

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if it's happening in Broome,
it's happening at The Roey!

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