



MEDIA RELEASE

Devil's Claw Festival a Gripping Success

Parks and Wildlife Service today hailed this year's Devil's Claw Festival at Gregory National Park as a tremendous success.

Gregory National Park chief district ranger Garry Fischer said only 51 of the noxious weed was found by a team of Parks and Wildlife Service rangers, locally employed indigenous ranger groups and volunteers.

"This is one of the lowest numbers of Devil's Claw that we have found in the park since the festival began more than 10 years ago," Mr Fischer said.

"I think it is a testament to the drive and commitment of everyone involved, especially the volunteers who give up their time and in particular those who continue to stick it out and return every year.

"This year's effort demonstrates that if you continue to work hard you can certainly move closer to controlling this weed.

"And what makes this year's effort even more remarkable is the fact it was a late wet season with a higher than average rainfall, which are conditions well suited to the Devil's Claw."

The weed is a bushy herb, native to Africa that grows to about two metres tall.

After initial aerial spraying more than 10 years ago reduced its numbers in the park, the most effective and environmentally-safe way of eradicating it is through hand removal

Trials undertaken on the park by Parks and Wildlife Service rangers are helping determine how long viable seeds may remain in the soil.

The 2006 festival concluded on May 12 with the East Baines and Humbert rivers coming in for close attention.

Mr Fischer said the Gibbie Creek was not targeted due to April's Cyclone Monica but plans have been made to inspect the site towards mid June of this dry season.

He said the festival was thoroughly enjoyed by all involved as it also allowed participants to camp and bushwalk at particular parts of the park that normal visitors are not normally allowed to access.

"Everyone got to enjoy a bit of fishing and bushwalking and Parks and Wildlife Service supplied all the food so it was certainly a tremendous experience," Mr Fischer said.

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Media Note – For more information contact Garry Fischer on 8975 0936

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