



MEDIA RELEASE

Rangers Interpret Parks for Students

Darwin High School students will join rangers from Parks and Wildlife Service to explore the muddy mangrove habitats of Darwin as part of their year 11 biology syllabus.

Parks and Wildlife Service Community Education Unit ranger Dean McAdam said the visit to Charles Darwin National Park, would focus on mangrove zonation, identification and special adaptations for survival on land and in seawater.

Mr McAdam said the unit's visits to parks with schools are important to increase awareness of the Territory's natural and cultural environments, such as mangroves that are often overlooked as lifeless environments.

"Mangroves are special because they occupy land and water habitats," he said.

"The tropical Top End is especially diverse in mangrove species, with over 40 species.

"If you compare our mangrove diversity to southern states like Victoria, with only one or two different mangroves, you have some idea of just how lucky we are here".

Mr McAdam said throughout the visit to the park students could discover each mangrove's special way of coping with a salty life by the sea.

"The Grey Mangrove gets rid of salt by sweating through its leaves; while the Stilt-root Mangrove has snorkels (pneumatophores) to help it breathe when flooded by tides," he said.

Mr McAdam said plenty of animals live in and rely on mangroves as a nursery ground and without them our recreational and commercial fishing industry would not be as important to our economy.

"It's a great opportunity to show students the diversity of flora and fauna found in our National Parks and the importance of the ecosystems within these environments," he said.

"The Unit aims to provide fun and challenging educational programs to all sectors of the community, including primary; secondary and tertiary level schools.

"The interactive programs support school-based learning but require the students to investigate and discover the environments for themselves".

Mr McAdam said the Community Education Unit also played an important role in assisting with the management and support for parks and provided

opportunities for the public to play a role in protecting the Territory's environment.

“These community programs also assist in promoting positive visitor behaviour to current and future park users,” he said.

Activities provided by the Community Education Unit are generally linked to the NT Department of Education curriculum and provides a link from the Department to the public through its range of educational programs and services.

If you plan to visit one of our parks or reserves as a part of your curriculum and you would like a little help interpreting the park environment and its features to your class, then Community Education Rangers may be available to help out with your excursion to a local park.

If you are unable to make it to a park or reserve, a visit to your classroom may be organised with a Community Education Ranger.

All activities are free, but it is recommended that booking are made at least a month in advance to avoid disappointment.

Ends

Media Note - For more information contact Dean McAdam on 8999 4544 or Penny Beissbarth (Darwin High School) on 8999 1237.

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