

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention: News Editor

Malleefowl centre hatches preservation plans

Community initiatives in the Great Southern town of Ongerup are leading the effort to save one of Western Australia's most threatened species.

Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre and the Malleefowl Preservation Group are active in the fight to save the malleefowl, recently ranked by the new Threatened Species Council as number 15 on the State's list of species at risk of extinction.

Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre opened in 2007 after years of development supported by the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC), and the Malleefowl Preservation Group was recognised in the award of last year's GSDC Medal for Excellence in NRM to the group's coordinator Susanne Dennings.

GSDC Development Officer Jessica van der Waag said the Yongergnow centre was working hard to build up breeding pairs beyond the current eight (*comment by Yongergnow's administrator/biologist Vicky Bilney on 7th November 2010: I appreciate Jessica's visionary thinking. We currently have two pairs of Malleefowl on site, and two further males which will be released back into the wild soon).*

Ms van der Waag said the centre faced significant disadvantages in being located off the region's main tourist routes but was highly committed to overcoming the challenges and building the population of malleefowl.

"The Hidden Treasures drive trail, a regional initiative supported by the GSDC, is designed to bring more visitors to points of interest such as Yongergnow," Ms van der Waag said.

"New options might also open up for the centre by engaging with mining companies in the northern reaches of malleefowl habitat.

"Because the centre is set up for captive breeding, there is potential to assist with environmental preservation work by hatching eggs from mining areas and releasing chicks to ensure the survival of the species, at the same time creating a welcome income stream for the centre," Ms van der Waag said.

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