

Poster Presentations

Mining Court Recognises Hidden Treasures in Northern WA

Jay Anderson

ABSTRACT

The Cape Range region of Western Australia is a place of world significance for many reasons. The karst system of the Peninsula is world renowned due to the subterranean fauna that reside there. The cave systems support troglobites, stygofauna, spiders, millipedes and mollusks. Despite the fragility and acknowledged importance of the karst and reef systems, the area is under pressure from tourism, oil and gas industries, mining and other human activities. Only a small part of this significant karst system lies within the National Park. During 1999, there was an application for a grant of 10 mining leases over 8,250 hectares of Cape Range, covering approximately 80% of the proposed "5 (h)" reserve area, and over which the company holds mining exploration licenses.

There were a number of objectors, on environmental grounds, to the grant of the mining leases. The Western Australian Speleological Group (WASG) and Speleological Research Group Western Australia (SRGWA) were the Objectors that were represented by the Australian Speleological Federation (Inc) (ASF). Representation of the Speleological Groups was made in court by the Environmental Defenders Office.

The ASF holds the view that Cape Range contains a karst area of considerable significance, which should be protected from mining. The ASF had information that the Cape Range karst contained features of considerable significance which should be protected from mining. The environmental attributes of the Cape Range Peninsula, and in particular the value of its subterranean fauna, were considered at a hearing in the Perth Mining Warden's Court. This hearing took place over 8 days during 1999 (August 12-11, 24-25, September 21-22). This poster follows the events that have occurred since 1999 regarding actions taken to protect the karst area at threat. Please contact the author for copies of several articles which detail the ASF vs Finesky legal proceedings.

Seasonal Roost Site Selection by the Chocolate Wattled Bat Chalinolobus morio in Quininup Lake Cave, WA*

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ABSTRACT

We are currently examining whether the chocolate wattled bat *Chalinolobus morio* changes roosting position within the Quininup Lake Cave, near Gracetown, according to season. Preliminary observations confirmed the presence of this bat species through an examination of echolocation calls collected at the cave entrance during nightly emergence. The ultimate purpose of this research is to be able to determine if current management practices can be augmented based on our observations. The cave has two main chambers, both of which appear to be used by the bats, although preliminary observations suggest that one is used more than the other. Track marking has already been undertaken in the cave, mainly with consideration to protection of geological features, however, we wish to establish whether this track is also suitable in terms of minimizing disturbance to bats at all times of the year. We are also considering whether current management practices are suitable for the troglomorphic invertebrates that occupy bat guano beneath bat roosts. We plan to extend our experience in Quininup Lake Cave to other caves in the southwest, with the development of a proposed regional management plan for bats in caves.

***Winner of the Best Poster Award**

(Award for Best Poster supported by Fremantle Arts Centre Press and the Department of Conservation and Land Management)