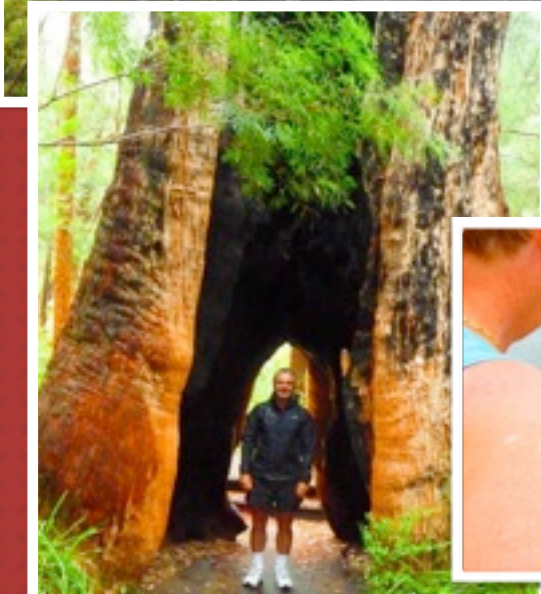


WALPOLE



Every day we come across plants and animals that we have little or no knowledge about - woylie, phascogale, numbat, mardoo, dunnart, bobtail, bungarra, dutite and more.



We spent this morning on an eco-boat tour and learned not only about unique local plants and animals but also about the history of this area and interesting stuff like how snake venom works and the major differences between Australian mammals and other mammals. The tour leader won the Australia Eco Tourism Award in 2009 and whose family originally settled this area in the 1860's.

Our afternoon highlight was walking through the Valley of the Giants – one of the best treetop walks we have ever experienced. The “giants” are Tingle eucalyptus trees. They have a girth of over 25 metres!! Tingles come in two types (yellow and red) and can only be found within 20km of Walpole where we are staying. The tree is one of earth's largest or thickest plants!!! But remarkably, the Karri tree grows higher. Many of these 450 year old trees have a hollow trunk - big enough to fit a car inside.

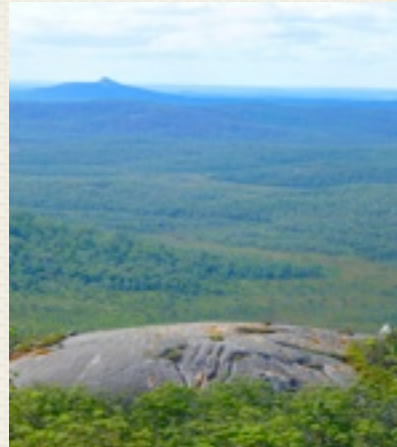
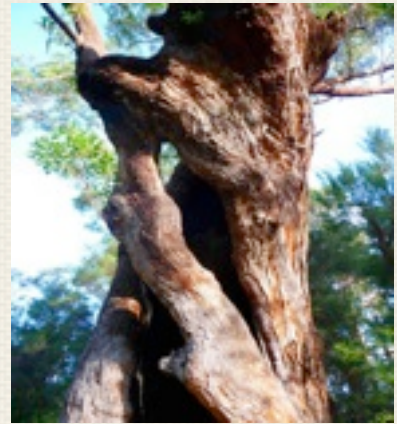
We knew about the South Pole and the North Pole Now we know about Walpole.

West Australian Marri trees flower profusely in March each year. Many insects are attracted to the nectar of the blooms of this eucalyptus tree. March is also a good month for a specific species of fly which gorges on those flowers, and once they are full of nectar, they look for proteins and minerals found in human blood. And so these flies (millions of them), conspire to seek a special treat - Nowak blood. No wonder we hate the March fly so much! They bite and bite often, and their bite is very painful.

The extra day in Walpole meant we could further explore the magnificent landscape and the unique flora and fauna. We visited the beautiful coast with its many inlets and went inland for a better perspective and to see more tingle trees. Five national parks, covering over 400,000 hectares, have been established to protect the logging of old growth forests. Today thousands of tourists enjoy the benefits of this far sighted policy. There are many Ecological Discovery Centers that explain the current situation and provide information about future plans and protection policy directions. This area deserves protection.



WALPOLE





THE TINGLE IS THE LARGEST EUCALYPTUS TREE AND ONE OF THE LARGEST PLANTS IN THE WORLD



NATIONAL PARKS

In the Walpole-Nornalup National Park we saw towering old growth forests which are part of the Walpole Wilderness area and have remained virtually untouched.

We got a close up of these pristine forest beauties at the Valley of the Giants and Tree Top Walk to the east of Walpole. This is where we saw giant red tingle trees with trunks up to 24 metres in circumference.

The famous Bibbulmun Track passes through this area on to Albany

