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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Life in Cape Arid National Park is ruled by the need to conserve water and tolerate salinity in the soil. Southern sandheaths and mallee extend inland as far as Mt Ragged, north of which there is a transition to woodlands dominated by saltbush and bluebush.

Granite outcrops and the occasional pool of permanent water form microhabitats supporting plants and animals not found elsewhere in the Park. On and near Mt Ragged many species of orchids and several ferns have been identified, together with a small population of the sticky-tail flower *Anthocercis viscosa*, which has only been found previously in coastal locations.

Like the Barrens of Fitzgerald River, and Peak Charles and Peak Eleanora of Peak Charles National Park, Mt Ragged and the Russell Range were islands during the late Eocene period about 40 million years ago. Wave-cut platforms can still be discerned on their upper slopes.

Animals common to south-west WA inhabit the Park, including the southern bush rat, western brush wallaby and a variety of small marsupial predators, reptiles and amphibians. In 1930 a "living fossil" was discovered in Cape Arid National Park: the world's most primitive species of ant, more primitive than known fossil ants, was found alive and thriving near Mt Ragged.

Whales are regularly spotted off the coast, especially during late winter/early spring, and seals occasionally visit the beaches. The rare Cape Barren Goose is a regular visitor and populations of the endangered ground parrot are known to survive here.

PIONEERS

In 1870 Mr Campbell-Taylor arrived to take up land around Thomas River for grazing. Ponton and Sharp settled the area around Pine Hill five years later. The ruins of their buildings and dams and the graves of some travellers can still be seen near the waterhole at Pine Hill. In a deep valley east of Mt Arid the grave of William Ponton and the remains of Hill Springs, the homestead of the Baesjou family, can be found.

REMEMBER

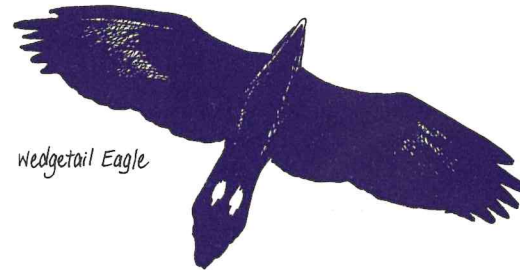
BE CAREFUL: Stay on paths and help prevent erosion. Your safety in natural areas is our concern but your responsibility.

BE CLEAN: Put your litter in bins, or better still, take it with you.

BE COOL: Light fires only in fireplaces provided. Bring your own portable gas stove.

PROTECT ANIMALS AND PLANTS: No firearms or pets, please.

STAY ON THE ROAD: Follow signs and stay on roads marked in this brochure. Normal road rules apply.



Wedgetail Eagle

FURTHER INFORMATION

CALM officers are always glad to help. Don't hesitate to contact them if you need information or assistance.



Department of Conservation
and Land Management

Cape Arid National Park,
PO Box 185, Esperance WA 6450.
Telephone (090) 75 0055

Esperance District Office,
92 Dempster Street, Esperance WA 6450.
Telephone (090) 71 3733

South Coast Regional Office,
44 Serpentine Road, Albany WA 6330.
Telephone (098) 41 7133

State Operational Headquarters,
50 Hayman Road, Como WA 6152.
Telephone (09) 367 0333

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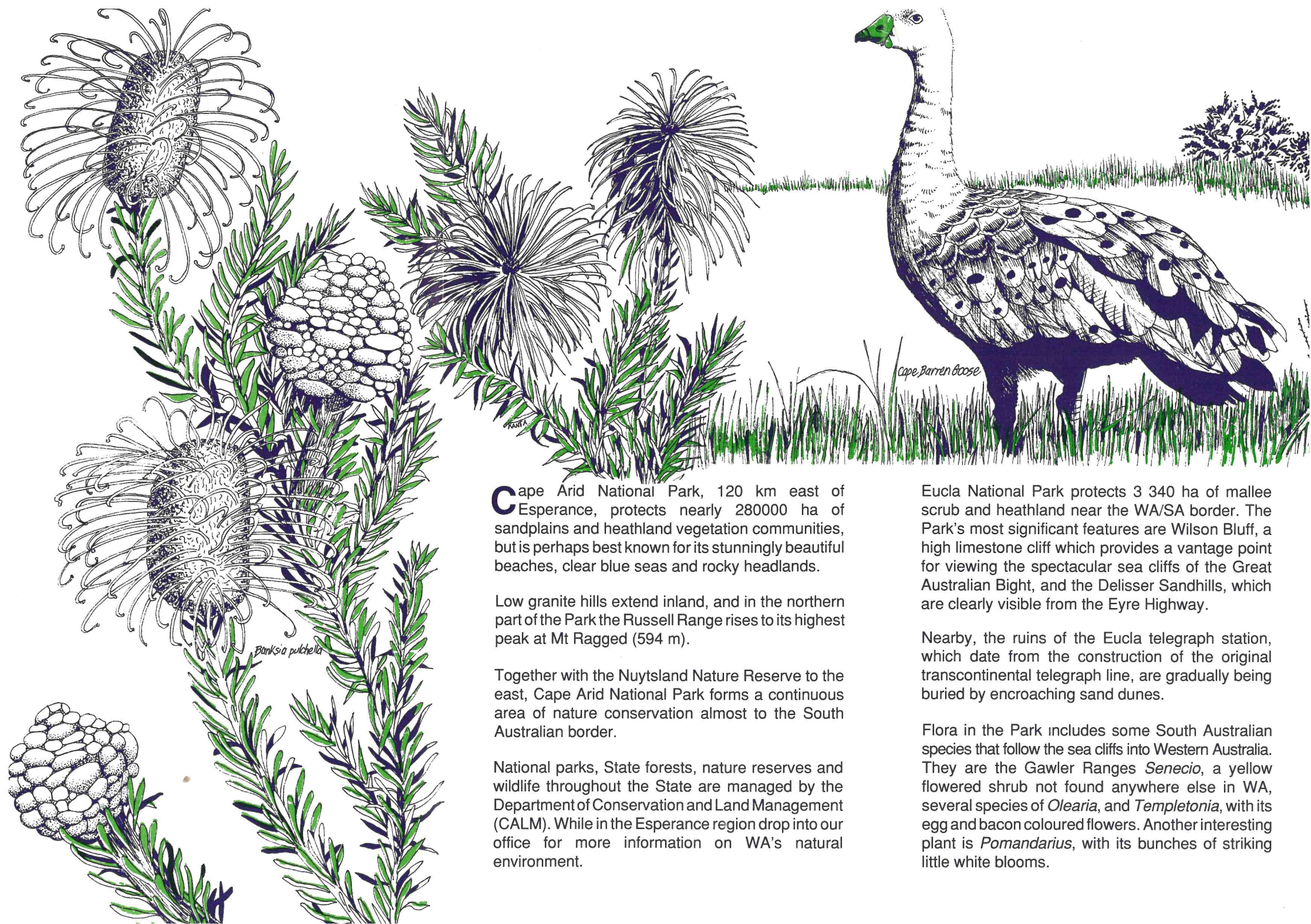
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CAPE ARID AND EUCLA NATIONAL PARKS



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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT



Cape Arid National Park, 120 km east of Esperance, protects nearly 280000 ha of sandplains and heathland vegetation communities, but is perhaps best known for its stunningly beautiful beaches, clear blue seas and rocky headlands.

Low granite hills extend inland, and in the northern part of the Park the Russell Range rises to its highest peak at Mt Ragged (594 m).

Together with the Nuytsland Nature Reserve to the east, Cape Arid National Park forms a continuous area of nature conservation almost to the South Australian border.

National parks, State forests, nature reserves and wildlife throughout the State are managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). While in the Esperance region drop into our office for more information on WA's natural environment.

Eucla National Park protects 3 340 ha of mallee scrub and heathland near the WA/SA border. The Park's most significant features are Wilson Bluff, a high limestone cliff which provides a vantage point for viewing the spectacular sea cliffs of the Great Australian Bight, and the Delisser Sandhills, which are clearly visible from the Eyre Highway.

Nearby, the ruins of the Eucla telegraph station, which date from the construction of the original transcontinental telegraph line, are gradually being buried by encroaching sand dunes.

Flora in the Park includes some South Australian species that follow the sea cliffs into Western Australia. They are the Gawler Ranges *Senecio*, a yellow flowered shrub not found anywhere else in WA, several species of *Olearia*, and *Templetonia*, with its egg and bacon coloured flowers. Another interesting plant is *Pomandarius*, with its bunches of striking little white blooms.

DIEBACK - HELP STOP THE ROT

Cape Arid National Park is infected with dieback, a plant disease caused by a fungus called *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. The fungus is microscopic and lives in the soil. Plants die when the fungus attacks their roots, because the roots rot and cannot take up water or nutrients.

Vehicles spread this fungus, so it is essential to keep to formed roads and follow road signs in conservation reserves. By keeping out of closed sections you will help preserve the beauty of these magnificent natural areas.

Bushwalkers can help by cleaning mud and soil from their boots before entering a park or reserve.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Basic facilities such as toilets, fireplaces, tables and rubbish bins are provided at places shown on the map. Always carry your own water supply. Information shelters on site will tell you more about the area.

CAMPING

Several camping areas are provided at Cape Arid, Seal Creek, Jorndee Creek and Thomas River are all accessible on gravel roads. Mt Ragged is accessible by 4WD vehicles only. Firewood is scarce in the Park and we recommend that you bring a portable gas stove for cooking.

FISHING

Coastal fishing is excellent all year round, although granite headlands can be slippery underfoot. Some beaches are open to vehicles, but please remember that beach sand can be treacherous, and do check tide charts when planning your trip. Keep to designated 4WD tracks when traversing the coast. Recreational fishing regulations apply; call at the Esperance Fisheries Department office or ask the Park Ranger.

BUSHWALKS

Several formal paths are provided in the Park, but you may decide to walk the bays and beaches as well. Ask the Park Ranger about other places.

Len Otte Nature Trail 1 km return. Allow 1 hr.

Features views over the Park and a close look at the varied plant and animal life of the area. A brochure that explains some of the things you will see is available from the box at the start of the trail.

Tagon Coastal Walk 7 km return. Allow 4 hrs.

Features views over the wild coastline. In winter you may be lucky enough to spot one of the southern right whales, which often come close inshore in these bays.

Boolenup Walk 4 km return. Allow 2 hours.

An easy walk to brackish Lake Boolenup. The trail goes from the car park off Tagon Road through banksia, eucalypt, paperbark swamp, and coastal heath. Bird life is prolific.

Mt Ragged Walk 3km return. Allow 3 hours.

A stiff walk to the top of Tower Peak (585m). Mt Ragged is a steep-sided pre-Cambrian ridge surrounded at about one-third height by a wave-cut platform.

WATER

Please carry your own drinking water. The only supplies in the park are undrinkable.

SUPPLIES

Condungup 55 km. Esperance 125 km.

