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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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Scientific names for plants mentioned in this leaflet:

berry saltbush	<i>Rhagodia baccata</i>
dune wattle	<i>Acacia rostellifera</i>
sea kali	<i>Salsola kali</i>
sea spinach	<i>Tetragonia decumbens</i>
spinifex	<i>Spinifex longifolius</i> and <i>Spinifex hirsutus</i>

CARING FOR CARNAC ISLAND

BE CAREFUL: Stay on the beach. Parts of the limestone cliffs may collapse without warning. Tiger snakes are abundant.

BE CARING: Protect wildlife such as seabirds and sea lions by causing as little disturbance as possible. Pets are not permitted on Carnac Island.

BE RESPONSIBLE: Barbecues and fires are not allowed on the island.

BE CAUTIOUS:

- ❖ Stay at least three metres away from sea lions.
- ❖ Disturbing or feeding marine wildlife can alter their natural instincts and jeopardise their wellbeing.
- ❖ Display the appropriate flag when SCUBA diving or snorkelling.

BE COURTEOUS: Make sure your activities do not spoil someones else's enjoyment of the island.

BE MODERATE: Conserve fish numbers by taking only what you need. Marine wildlife need to feed first.

COME BACK: Return with your children to enjoy and learn more about this magnificent environment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

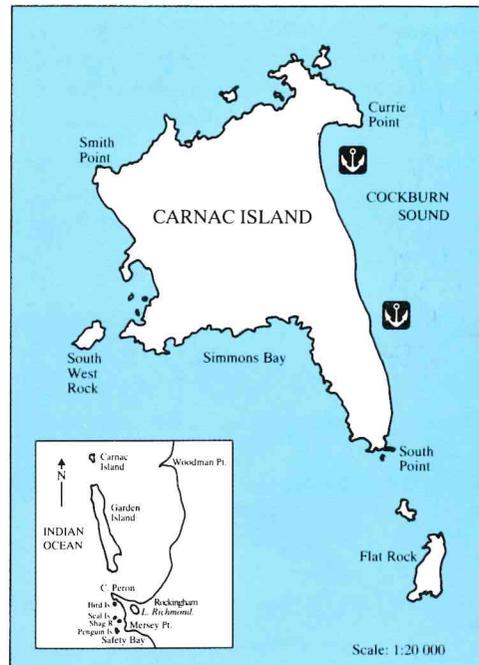
Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) marine park rangers regularly patrol the waters and coastline of the marine parks and Carnac Island. They will be glad to answer any questions you may have.



Department of Conservation
and Land Management

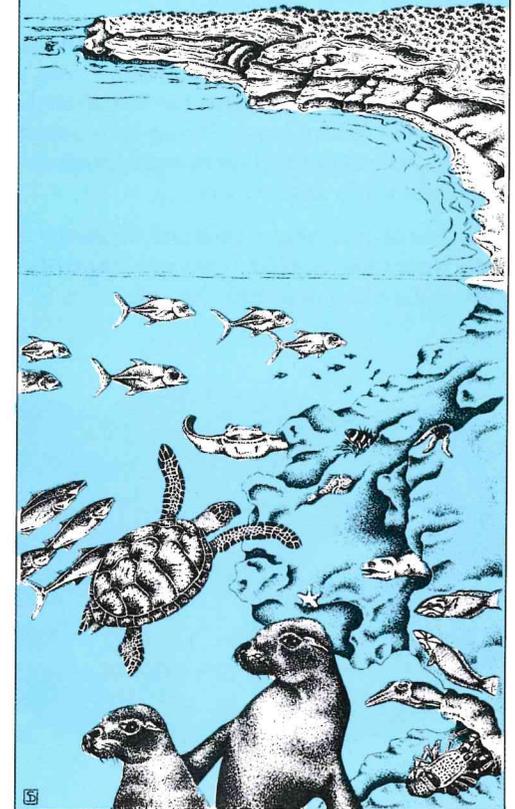
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CARNAC ISLAND

A GUIDE FOR VISITORS



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT

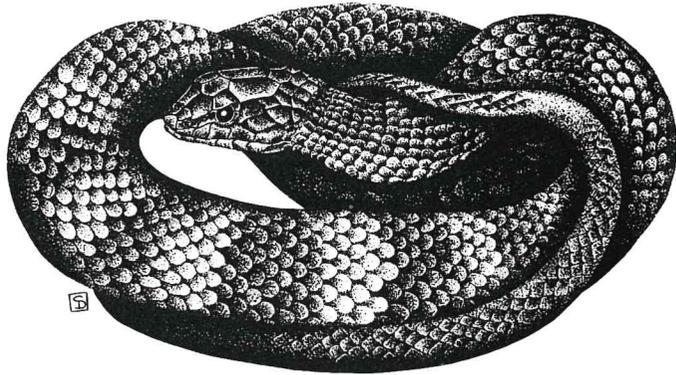
VISITING CARNAC ISLAND

The waters surrounding Carnac Island are great for snorkelling and diving. The fringing reef supports a rich diversity of marine life, including starfish, sponges, corals, crabs, fish and sea lions.

Sea lions haul out and rest on the eastern beach. Remember they are wild animals and can be unpredictable in their behaviour. **Attacks on people do occur. Stay at least three metres from the animals and never feed them.**

The extensive weathering in the cliff faces has resulted in an abundance of bird nesting sites. A range of species and behaviours can be seen on the cliffs on the eastern beach. Parent birds protect the eggs and chicks from heat stress and predation; be careful not to disturb them!

The risks of disturbing wildlife and the danger of tiger snakes and crumbling cliffs make the central part of the island unsuitable for visitors.



A BALANCE OF WILDLIFE

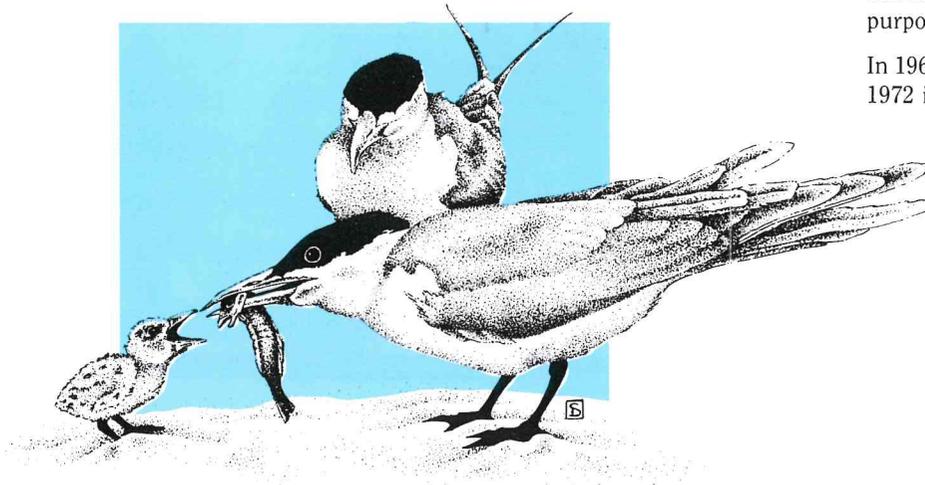
Every island has a special balance of plants and animals. The balance of plants, seabirds, snakes and lizards on Carnac Island is vulnerable because of the large number of human visitors from nearby Perth.

Strong winds and storms have created a graduation of vegetation from the shore to the centre of the island. Pioneering plants such as spinifex and sea kali bind the sand together on the shores, while mats of sea spinach and low shrubs such as berry saltbush and dune wattle occur in more sheltered parts.

Wedge-tailed shearwaters, little penguins, a variety of terns and silver gulls use the island for roosting and breeding. The cover of thick shrubs provides shelter and protected breeding sites.

The large population of tiger snakes survives by eating young seabirds. As there is no fresh water on the island, the snakes get moisture from sucking or even eating the succulent leaves of plants such as sea spinach. King skinks also help to balance the population of seabirds by eating their eggs.

The island is popular with male sea lions as a place to rest out of the water. They haul up on the beach or sometimes shelter under the weathered and crumbling limestone overhangs.



ISLAND HISTORY

The island was originally named Bertholet Island by French explorers in 1801. It was renamed Carnac Island in 1827 by Captain James Stirling after his First Lieutenant, John Carnac.

When Stirling later returned as Lieutenant-Governor with the first settlers of the colony, his ship, the *Parmelia*, ran aground on the sand bar which runs between Woodman Point and Carnac Island. Twenty-nine passengers spent five days on the island while the ship was floated.

In 1832, three Aborigines including Yagan, a tribal leader, were imprisoned on Carnac Island in the care of R. M. Lyon and a number of soldiers. Their confinement lasted only a few weeks. The prisoners escaped from the island in a stolen government stores boat.

One of the first two whaling enterprises in Perth waters was established on Carnac Island in 1836-37. The whalers bought and transported Perth's first church to serve as a store on the island. The whaling station closed a few years later after the loss of several lives, damage to boats and frequent theft of their supplies.

In 1884, the State Government gazetted Carnac Island as a quarantine station for the Port of Fremantle. Although a few buildings were constructed, the island was never used for this purpose.

In 1961, the island was reserved for nature and in 1972 it became a wildlife sanctuary.