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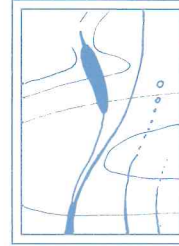
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Conservation and Attractions

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SHARING THE DREAMING

Nyoongar Aboriginal Stories of the Dreaming





WHY THE FRESHWATER TORTOISE HAS ITS SHELL

During the Dreaming, the yargan (the freshwater tortoise) had no shell. The Nyoongar people were friends with the yargan, so they did not eat it.

During a period of drought, food was scarce. What little food could be found was guarded carefully. One day the Nyoongar people departed from the camp to find food, while the yargan stayed behind to watch over the small amount of food left at the camp.

The Nyoongars were away for a long time. Eventually the ravenous yargan became hungrier and hungrier, and ate all the food at the camp. When the Nyoongars returned and found all the food eaten, they became very angry and wanted to spear the yargan. The yargan cut bark from a tree for a shield and stuck this on its back to protect itself from the Nyoongars' spears. From that day to this, the freshwater yargan has carried the protective shell on its back.

