

EXPLORING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**Rock pools and rugged ranges, the
Nullagine River and Ripon Hills**

**This expedition was lead by CALM in
May 2001**

**Meentheena station east of Marble
Bar had been taken over by CALM
and was being restored to its natural
environment**



**Setting up our camp site on the edge of the
Nullagine River**



**Organising some
shade for the cooks
and having meals**



Arid spinifex country what animals can we find here?



This is hard work in this rocky ground



You can understand why the original owners abandoned this place



The results of a camel eradication program



**Four wheel drive vehicles are essential here,
very few tracks**



Our first success a stripe faced dunnart, a healthy specimen. Other species recorded were the ningaui, quolls, Antechinus, mice, and various bats. Plus 21 species of reptiles.



Most animals were measured weighed and returned to the environment . Some were kept as Museum specimens



A great campsite, one man insect free tents and near the Nullagine river



Recording data on collected specimens



Even though it had been a very dry year there was still enough water for a swim and to go fishing



Caught an eel tailed catfish



**If you look carefully
you may spot
someone sitting
beside the river
enjoying this idyllic
location watching
the bird life that
gathers for the
water.**





Much of the cattle station has been burnt out and we decide to explore for large rock water hole



**The dry river
bed with sand
stone cliffs and
coolibah trees**

**We find the lonely
grave site of the
stockman James
Spinney with his
headstone slightly
damaged by a
falling tree branch**





**We carry out
some repair and
preservation
work on another
stockman's head
stone**



It's a great wide river when in flood but now very dry looking



It's burning off season in this wide barren country



A vast burnt out area for us to explore



No longer functional sheep yards



A friendly local inhabitant



How did cattle and sheep survive in this country?



But where there is water there is life, Rock Wallaby Hill



**We are looking for a
rock hole full of water
A view from here helps
us determine where to
go, much exploration is
on foot as the terrain is
too rough for vehicles**



This is not it as this is still the Nullagine River



**We find it, hidden
away in a rocky
outcrop, a
permanent water
hole**



What a great place to relax and swim



An opportunity for a swim and to cool off



The surrounding countryside is rather barren



A member of our team and we advised him not to try diving from that cliff top



We make a number of discoveries here including this forlorn memorial to a deceased individual in this area.



We are not the first to visit this area



Animal and human forms tell a story?



Lots of fingers and wavy hair?



**The rock hole with
water was hidden
behind this hill**



Much of our work was in recording plant species. In 1999 there were 89 plant species recorded here, the 2000 Landscape expedition added another 197 species to the list. There are over 50 different grass species listed here. We were able to add 31 new species to the list now of 330



Wildflowers



Everyone will recognise this one

We move our campsite to the largest sink hole in Western Australia in the Rippon ranges. It is not an ideal camp site





From here we can explore the old abandoned manganese mine



The end of the journey for this one and much more here



It must have been a sizeable operation at one stage



No more the sound of a clanking conveyer belt



Abandoned machinery



No roads, its rough going and we need to change tyres



After searching down a canyon we find a somewhat inaccessible water hole



We emerge from the canyon and the water hole to see it expand out into this pool and now time for a swim



This country is rugged and largely explored on foot



Our campsite is somewhat exposed and needs a good fire at night



Rocks everywhere so to sleep at night one needed to clear a flat space



This is a large sink hole, difficult to photograph and difficult to get down to. Underneath the overhang we look for the bones of deceased animals that have fallen into the hole. Don't walk around here on a dark night!



Individual sections of the Sinkhole





Another view of where we were able to dig around for animal bones



**We caught a northern quoll a vicious little
carnivorous animal with very sharp teeth**



Don't let him get hold of your fingers

Its time to leave this remote area and we need to find a different route out so we try this track





**And so we say goodbye to this manganese rich, but
barren country**



Rugged terrain of the Ripon Ranges



And as we leave we discover another memorial



Farewell to the Ripon Ranges and the Nullagine river