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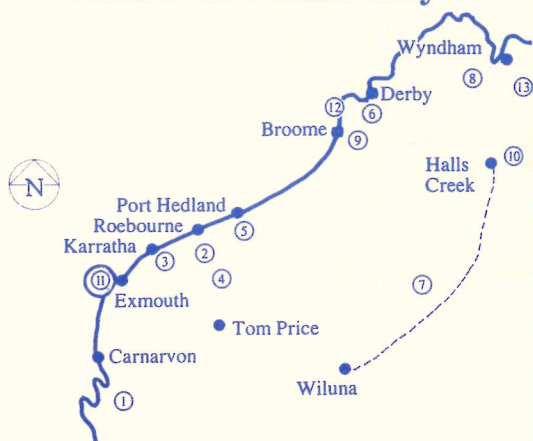


W.A. Heritage Trails Network

A Bicentennial Project
for Community Participation

The **Lightfoot Heritage Trail** is part of the Heritage Trails Network, a project for community participation devised by the Western Australian Heritage Committee. To commemorate the 1988 Bicentenary, the project established a statewide network of 'Heritage Trails' — routes designed to enhance awareness and enjoyment of Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage. The Heritage Trails Network was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments under the Commonwealth/State Bicentennial Commemorative Program. The map below indicates other Heritage Trails in the Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley regions of Western Australia.

Heritage Trails in the Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley.



- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Shark Bay H.T. | 7. Canning Stock Route |
| 2. Emma Withnell H.T. | 8. Wyndham Port H.T. |
| 3. Karratha H.T. | 9. Broome H.T. |
| 4. Chichester Range Camel Trail | 10. Old Halls Creek H.T. |
| 5. Port Hedland H.T. | 11. Lightfoot H.T. |
| 6. Pigeon H.T. | 12. Lurrjarri H.T. |
| | 13. Argyle H.T. |

Further Information:

W.A. Heritage Committee (09) 322 4375.

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Acknowledgements

The **Lightfoot Heritage Trail** was coordinated by Mr Jim Crouchley, and developed by the Exmouth District High School and the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

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: Do not light fires.

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

Further Information

National park rangers are always glad to help. Don't hesitate to contact them if you need information or assistance.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT EXMOUTH DISTRICT
(Cape Range National Park and Ningaloo Marine Park)
PO Box 201, Exmouth 6707.
Ph: (099) 49 1676 or (099) 49 1428

GREENOUGH REGION
PO Box 72, Geraldton 6530. Ph: (099) 21 5955.



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT
50 Hayman Road, Como, W.A. 6152 (09) 367 0333.



Lightfoot Heritage Trail

Cape Range National Park

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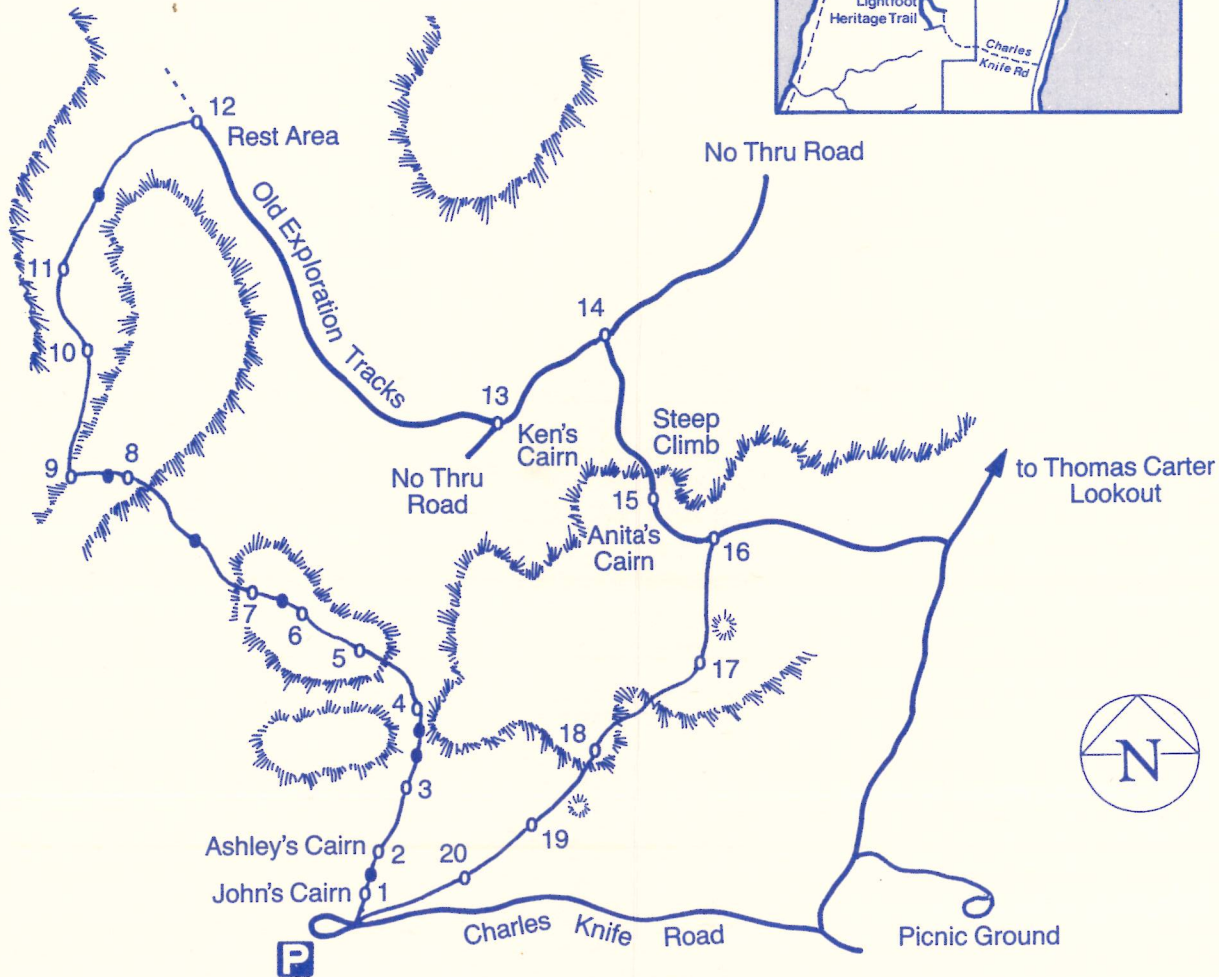


A Commonwealth/State
Bicentennial Project

Welcome to Cape Range National Park.

Cape Range National Park is on the North West Cape near Exmouth, 1,270km north of Perth via North West Coastal Highway (National Route 1).

The **Lightfoot Heritage Trail** starts at the end of Charles Knife Road (see map) some 35km south of Exmouth, and is a 7km walk through the rugged limestone formations of Cape Range. The walk takes about two and a half hours at a leisurely pace, and returns to the starting point.



Introduction

Fifteen million years ago the area the **Lightfoot Heritage Trail** covers was flooded by a warm, shallow sea. Giant white sharks topped the food triangle over a diverse marine fauna, and fossilised remains of some of these marine creatures may be seen along the trail by the keen observer.

In part the trail follows roads put in by companies exploring for oil in the 1950s. Some of those roads are still visible, but most have been overgrown and can only be seen from the air.

The trail is marked by numbered rock cairns, and occasionally white posts, which show the direction to the next cairn. Some of the cairns are named after the volunteers who helped build the trail. Unnumbered helper cairns have been placed along the route to assist trail users.

Please note:

- The ground is very rough in places and great care needs to be taken. As the environment can be very harsh it is recommended that the walk is not undertaken in hot conditions; walking shoes and long trousers are essential.
- Always carry plenty to drink.
- Stay on the marked trail. It is easy to get lost in this harsh landscape.
- Avoid cracks or openings in the ground. Not only are they a hazard underfoot, but they may contain poisonous gases.
- Persons using this Heritage Trail do so at their own risk.

Cairn 1 (John's Cairn)

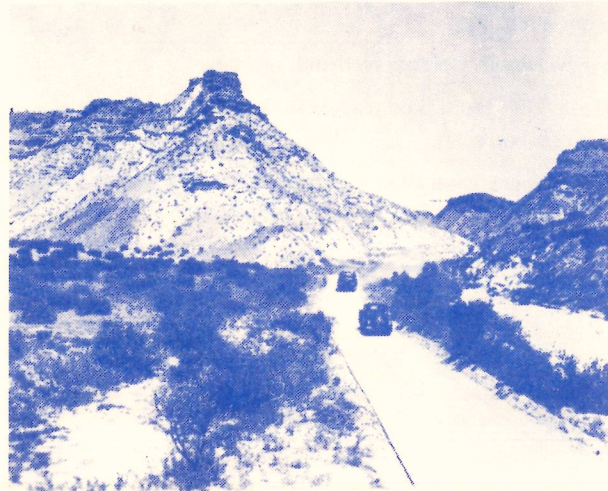
Cairn 1 is located near the carpark where the 'christmas tree' that caps the Cape Range No. 2 well is situated. The well was drilled by WAPET in 1954, and the cap indicates that there is still oil or gas in the hole.

Head in a northerly direction from here to Cairn 2.

Cairn 2 (Ashley's Cairn)

This area was once the campsite for exploration crews, and evidence of this may be seen. Cairn 3 can be seen ahead through a gap in the trees.

North West Cape is part of a trough in the earth's crust known as the Carnarvon Basin. This trough extends from Geraldton to Onslow, and most of the rocks of the range originally formed underwater. Here the earth's crust buckled millions of years ago, and a huge fold of limestone was forced up out of the ocean bed. This formation, known as an 'anticline', is now Cape Range.



Shothole Canyon Road, built by WAPET to carry heavy drilling equipment, c. 1955 (photo courtesy of West Australian Petroleum Pty. Limited).

Cairn 3

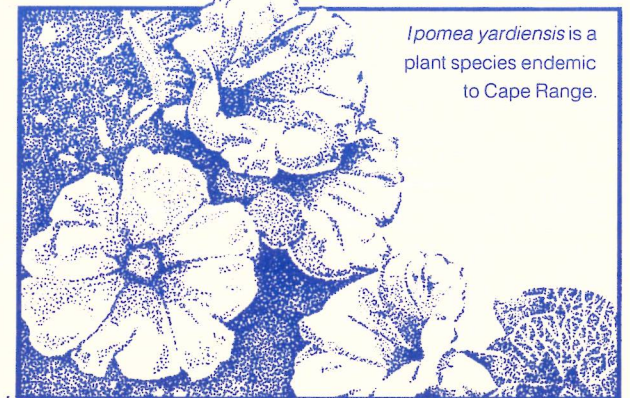
Continue in a northerly direction and follow the trail past two helper cairns to Cairn 4.

Cape Range was probably first sighted by Europeans in 1618, when it was recorded by Claeszoon van Hillegom and Pieter Dirkzoon of the Dutch East India Company, on board the 'Zeewolf' en route to Batavia in the Dutch East Indies.

Cairn 4

The first landing on the Cape was probably by the Dutchman Captain L. Jacobz of the ship 'Mauritius'. Jacobz noted that he had landed on the island, but did not specify the exact landing spot. Although it is likely that there were other sightings and landings in the area, the Cape was not charted until Lieutenant King arrived in 1818 to complete the survey of the Australian coastline started by Matthew Flinders.

To the north-west Cairn 5 is quite obvious, and is silhouetted against the sky at the centre of the next ridge.



Ipomea yardiensis is a plant species endemic to Cape Range.

Cairn 5

Part of this cairn is natural rock formation. Stay on the high ground and take great care when walking along the ridge to the next cairn. Cairn 6 is visible when standing next to the directional marker.

Cairn 6

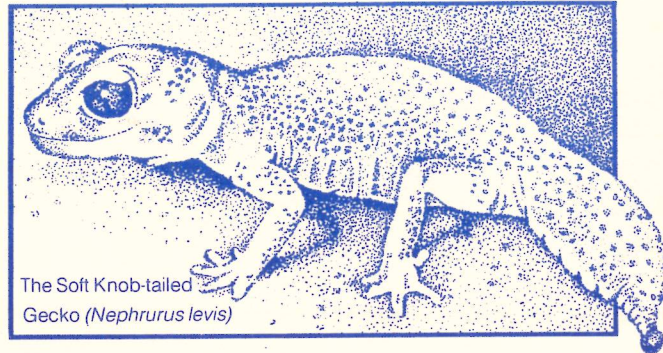
Anticlines such as Cape Range are often signs of oil or gas bearing rock formations. In 1940 geological surveys of the Range indicated that there might be oil in the region, but the Second World War postponed further exploration.

Continue along the top of the ridge past a helper cairn to Cairn 7.

Cairn 7

Cairn 8 is located on the next ridge some 600m across the valley. There is a helper cairn on the valley floor. Easiest walking is along the top of the ridge.

Numerous gullies and valleys are to be found across the Range, some leading to gorges, others, like the one between Cairns 7 and 8, are blind. When it rains, water is channelled through the gullies and gorges and eventually reaches the ocean; however, in blind gullies water cannot flow through to the ocean and soaks into the porous limestone.



The Soft Knob-tailed
Gecko (*Nephurus levis*)

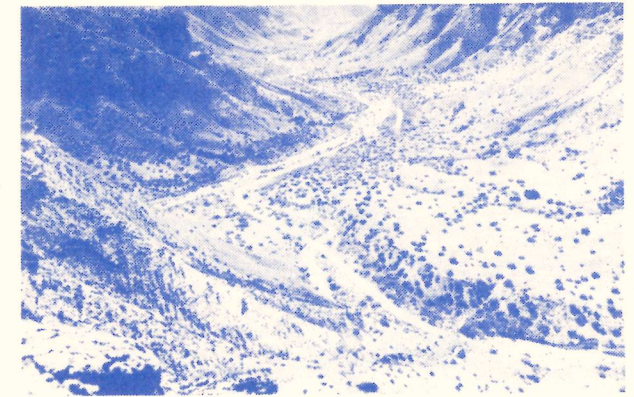
Cairn 8

From this cairn it is possible to make out an old exploration track winding over the far hills to the east. Looking from the helper cairn close by, Cairn 9 is clearly visible to the north-west.

The limestone of Cape Range is honeycombed with sink holes and caves. Some of the caves contain water which has been invaded by creatures adapted to a life complete darkness: colourless: blind troglodytes. One species of fish, an eel, and two species of shrimp are all likely to appear in the bottom of any newly dug well.

Cairn 9

WAPET drilled the first wells into Rough Range at the base of the Cape in 1953. Their first well struck oil, but several others drilled nearby were dry. They then moved exploration to Cape Range. The No. 2 well, which was passed at the start of the trail, showed gas, but not in commercial quantities. In 1958 exploration in the area was terminated. However, recently seismic exploration has resumed and a number of new wells have been drilled, largely because the Carnarvon Basin has become the most likely alternative prospect to the Bass Strait oilfields. Head north to Cairn 10.



Shothole Canyon Road c. 1955 (photo by courtesy of West Australian Petroleum Pty. Limited).

Cairns 10 & 11

Continue along the trail to Cairn 11 (white post).

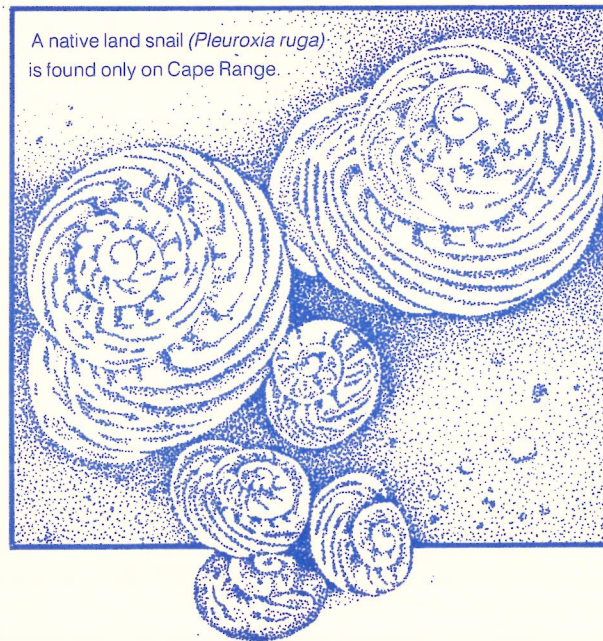
Walking to Cairn 12 is easier along the lowest point of the gully. En route you will pass a helper cairn on the left.

The gully eventually opens out to a flood plain which becomes very soft and boggy and may remain covered in water for some time after rain. In some areas small holes in the ground — known as gilgais — have formed, the result of the clay soils shrinking and swelling.

Cairn 12 (Ken's Cairn)

Make a right turn and follow the old exploration track to Cairn 16, Cairns 13 - 15 are fairly widely spaced. A rest area is located along this track some 100m after Cairn 12.

A myriad of exploration tracks were made throughout parts of the ranges and they indicate how essential it was considered to drill in exactly the right spot. No matter how rough the going, roads were built so that big trucks could haul in whole drill rigs.



Cairn 13

As this Y junction the trail continues in the direction indicated on the marker.

Evidence of the long period of time that the Cape was under the sea can be found even on the highest points of the Range. In places fossilised coral, shell and even the teeth of giant white sharks have been found.

Cairn 14

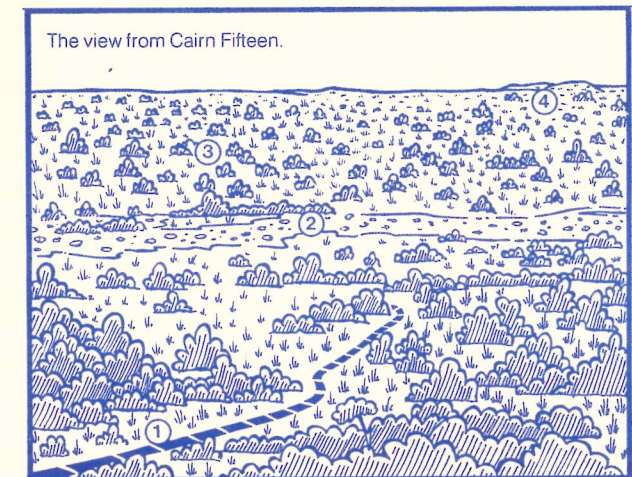
Take this right turn. A few hundred metres ahead is a steep ascent leading to Cairn 15, well past the halfway point on the trail.

Cairn 15 (Anita's Cairn)

On a clear day it is possible to see the communications towers at the tip of North West Cape to the north and the ocean on both sides of the Cape. Just below and to the left is the track, (1) on the diagram. Further out is the clay pan (2) which holds water after rain. This appears as a dark patch.

Behind this lies the flat looking country (3), which is in fact intersected with shallow gullies and covered with flat hills which make it very difficult to travel across.

On the horizon lie some flat hills (4). Straight out and slightly to the east is a quite noticeable hill. The broken ground in front of the hill is approximately where Shothole Canyon ends.



To the north-west is another quite prominent hill. From here the canyon runs west to the Indian Ocean. This formation with the two-way slope is part of the anticline which favours the trapping of oil and gas, and which led to early oil exploration in this region.

Continue along the seismic track to Cairn 16.

Cairn 16

The trail turns right, off the exploration track, at this Cairn.

The Bureau of Meteorology Weather Watch radar station is at the top of a far hill. Cairn 17 (white post) is visible to the lower right of this station, some 150m from Cairn 16.

The rocky depression or donga en route has resulted from the collapse of an underground limestone cavern.

Cairn 17

Facing roughly south-west toward the next ridge, Cairn 18 (white post) is visible through a break in vegetation.

Cairn 18

Continue in the same direction to Cairn 19, which lies at the foot of the ridge you are now on. In the distance, and just to the right of this, you may catch a glimpse of the carpark from where the trail started.

Cairn 19

Continue ahead in a direction slightly to the left of the carpark to Cairn 20 (white post).

Cairn 20

Follow the trail to the west back to the carpark some 400m ahead. On the way back you may notice several small mounds of tailings produced while drilling for oil.

This completes the trail.