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Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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Below Peron Peninsula has exceptional coastal scenery and contrasting colours of dunes and ocean. It is an important habitat for the conservation of biodiversity, another criteria for gaining acceptance on the World Heritage List.

## Caring for the park

**Stay cool** Don't light fires. Free gas barbecues are available at some picnic areas and visitors may use their own gas appliances anywhere in the park.

**Be clean** Put your litter in bins or take it with you. Discarded scraps attract feral animals, which threaten native animals.

**Pets** are not allowed in Francois Peron National Park. They can disturb wildlife and are also at risk of poisoning from fox baits which are laid throughout the park as part of CALM's Western Shield wildlife recovery program.

## Stay safe



**Coastal cliffs** are undercut and unstable and should be approached with caution. Be wary of crumbling edges and strong winds. Stay well back from cliff edges at all times.



Shark Bay is in sub-tropical waters and **poisonous marine creatures** such as stonefish and coneshells are common. Reef sandals or similar footwear should be worn when walking in the shallows. If you are unlucky enough to be poisoned or bitten by such animals, keep the injured area immobilised and seek immediate medical attention. A Silver Chain nursing post is located in Denham. The phone number is 9948 1213.

## Further information

### CALM District Office

89 Knight Terrace, Denham WA 6537

Phone (08) 9948 1208

Fax (08) 9948 1024

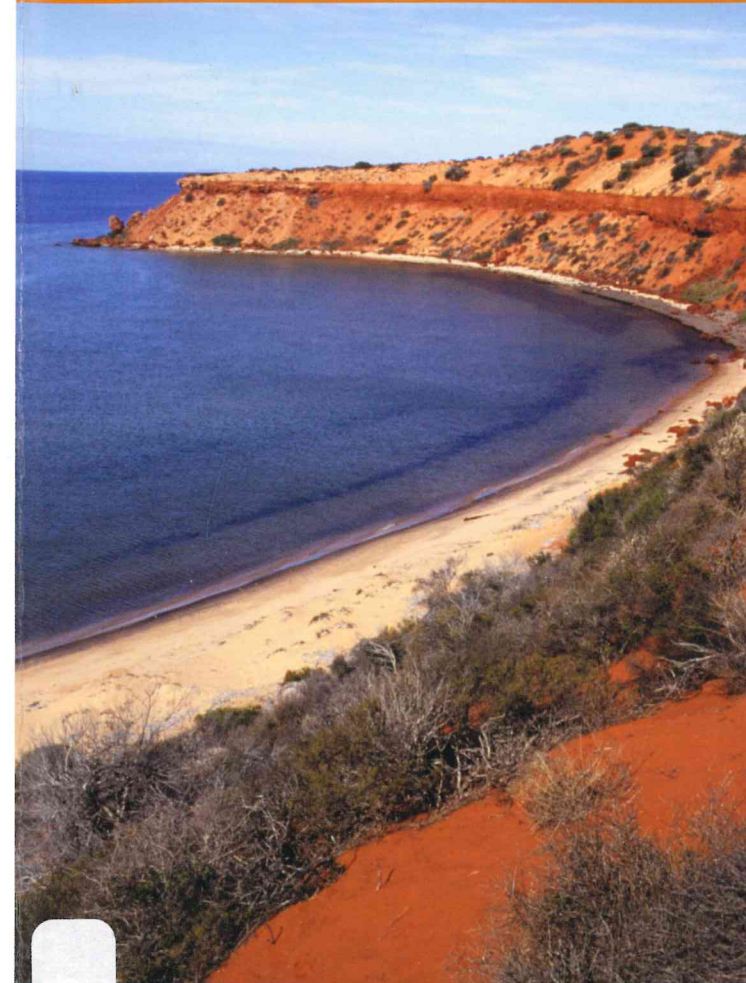
Website: [www.naturebase.net](http://www.naturebase.net)



**Front cover** Dramatic colour contrasts between land and sea are a spectacular feature of the Peron Peninsula and Francois Peron National Park.

All photos – CALM

# Francois Peron National Park



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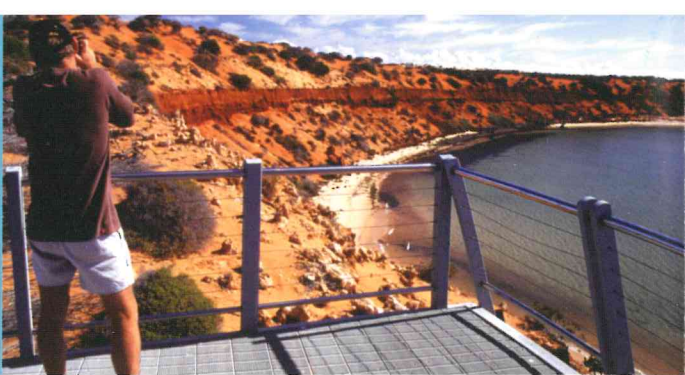
## Information guide



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**Above** Viewing platform at Skipjack Point.

## Francois Peron National Park

Francois Peron National Park lies within the Shark Bay World Heritage Area and adjacent to the Shark Bay Marine Park. The park covers 52,500 hectares of arid shrublands, rolling sandplains and spectacular coastal scenery at the northern tip of Peron Peninsula.

Features of Peron Peninsula contributed to Shark Bay's listing as a World Heritage Area. Not only is the peninsula an example of superlative natural phenomena, it also contains important and significant habitats for the conservation of biodiversity. These World Heritage values make Francois Peron one of WA's most unique national parks.

Interspersed throughout the park and across Peron Peninsula are gypsum claypans known as birridas. Thousands of years ago, when sea levels were much higher than at present, most birridas were landlocked saline lakes. In more modern times the sea has invaded some birridas, such as Big Lagoon, to form shallow inland bays.

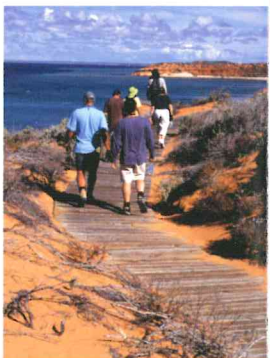
**Above from left** The rich red sands of Peron Peninsula show the tracks of native animals. Umbrella bush (*Acacia ligulata*) is common throughout Shark Bay, especially on Peron Peninsula.

Sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*) fruit.

The distinctive pink flowers of the Shark Bay daisy (*Pembertonia latisquamea*).

**Right** Walking track at Skipjack Point.

**Far right** The red flowering *Eremophila glabra*.



## Aboriginal and European heritage

Aboriginal people have lived on Peron Peninsula, or *Wulyibidi* in the Malgana language, for about 25,000 years. At that time, much of Shark Bay was an arid valley with little fresh water.

The first written descriptions and images of Malgana lives were documented by French explorers early in the 19th century. One of the explorers was French naturalist François Péron who made meticulous descriptions of anthropology, oceanography, meteorology and zoology during Nicholas Baudin's 1801 and 1803 expeditions. The park bears his name in recognition of his contribution to Australia's natural and social history.

Péron's visit marked the beginning of European activities on Peron Peninsula. In the late 1880s a pearling camp was established at Herald Bight, where pearl shells still litter the beach. The peninsula was managed as a sheep station until 1990, when it was bought by the State Government. In 1993 Francois Peron National Park was declared. Today, Peron Homestead offers visitors an insight into what life was like during the pastoral era.

**Below** Big Lagoon, once a land-locked saline lake, is now a shallow inland bay.



**Above** The flowering of colourful parakeelyas (*Calandrinia* sp.) in spring.

## Wildlife

### Plants

Shark Bay is an important transition point between the temperate vegetation zone of WA's south-western region, and the desert vegetation zone of the north and east.

As a result, two distinct vegetation types are found in the park. The red sandy plains are dominated by desert-adapted acacias (wattles), while flowering plants from cooler climates, such as hakeas and grevilleas, reach their most northern range on the peninsula. Living at the extreme, these 'pioneer' species have stretched their survival capabilities to withstand the harsh environment.

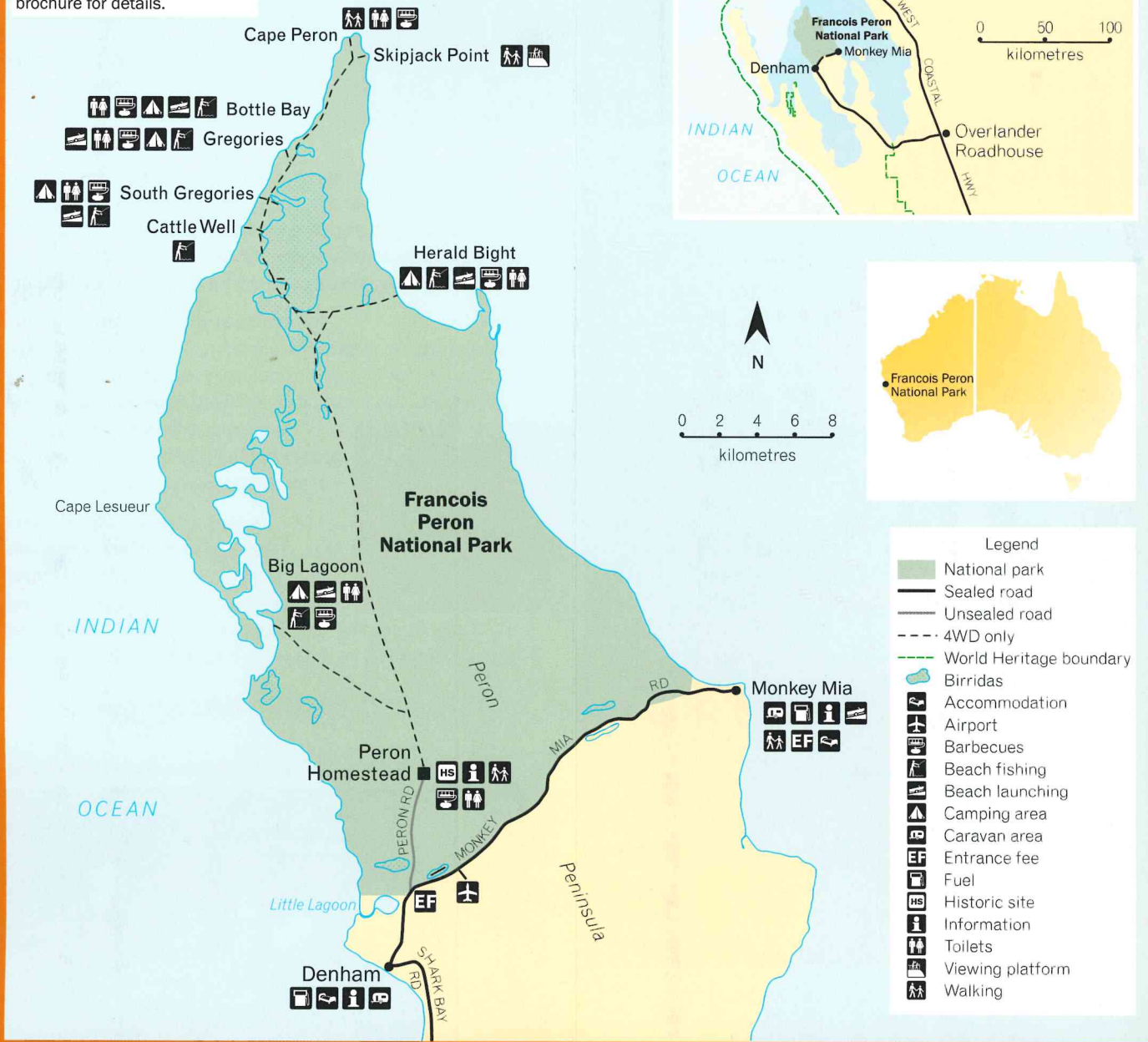
Peron Peninsula also boasts a dazzling array of wildflowers. One of the most striking and abundant flowers is the Shark Bay daisy, a creeper that displays its large mauve to pink flowers well above surrounding shrubs. Navigator William Dampier, who collected plants from the region in 1699, was impressed by the blue-flowering plants, including wild tomato bush, halganina, and his namesake, the hoary Dampiera. Dampier's specimens of the pink coastal thryptomene, a type of heath, are some of the earliest records of Australian plants. Along with white myrtle, yellow wattles and purple peas, they form a colourful display in spring.





**Marine Park Regulations**  
Special rules apply to fishing and other recreational activities in waters surrounding the park. Please obtain a copy of the Shark Bay Marine Park brochure for details.

### Shark Bay Marine Park



## Visitor information

### Vehicle access

Access to Francois Peron National Park is from the Monkey Mia Road, about four kilometres east of Denham.

The road to the Peron Homestead is seasonally accessible for two-wheel-drive vehicles but four-wheel-drive vehicles (4WD) are recommended. Please ask Department of Conservation and Land Management staff in the Denham office about road conditions before setting out.

For travel further north into the park, a high-clearance 4WD is essential. It is advisable to lower your vehicle's tyre pressure before travelling beyond the Peron Homestead. North of the Peron Homestead is not suitable for large caravans or boat trailers. Only camper trailers and dinghies may be taken beyond this point.

Many old station tracks are being revegetated, and some are for management purposes only. Follow the signs and stay on the correct roads. Do not drive over birridas. Their geological structure consists of a thin surface crust over a bog mire, kept wet by groundwater. Vehicles attempting to cross birridas will get bogged. The recovery of bogged vehicles is not only costly and time consuming, but scars the birrida and degrades the surrounding vegetation. These landscapes are difficult to rehabilitate.

### Peron Homestead precinct

The Peron Homestead precinct provides an insight into how life was when the park was a working sheep station. A self guided walk trail around the precinct explores the history of the area, visiting the shearing shed, shearers' quarters and stock yards. Interpretive signs explain the station's interesting history along the way.

A small interpretive centre depicts stories of Indigenous inhabitants, European colonisation and current day conservation programs such as Project Eden (see information on this page).

The 'Hot Tub' is a popular stop to relax and soak in the hot artesian waters that originally supplied vital water to the station's stock. A barbecue and lawns are provided for picnicking.



### Wanamalu Trail

The Wanamalu Trail stretches for 1.5 kilometres along the cliff edge between Cape Peron and Skipjack Point. This 45-minute (one-way) walk provides excellent views of the coastline and interpretive signs along the trail provide an introduction to the features of the area.

Two viewing platforms at Skipjack Point provide spectacular coastal views and the opportunity to view Shark Bay's abundant marine life.

### Boating, fishing, swimming

Recreational fishing is a popular activity in the Shark Bay area, and many species will take a bait all year round. Species commonly encountered on Peron Peninsula include whiting, bream and kingfish. Dinghies can be launched from the beaches at Big Lagoon, Gregories, South Gregories, Bottle Bay and Herald Bight.

Swimming is good at all camp site beaches but is not recommended at Cape Peron, where two strong currents meet.

Please remember that special rules apply to fishing and other activities in the Shark Bay Marine Park. Fishing is not permitted in sanctuary zones such as in the northern waters of Big Lagoon that are nursery habitat for fish species. In the special purpose zones around Cape Peron and the mouth of Big Lagoon, drop nets for crabs are allowed but set netting and spearfishing are not permitted. Because of the prevalence of dolphins and dugongs, waterskiing and freestyle jetskiing are also not permitted. Please check appropriate Department of Fisheries and CALM information before setting out.

### Camping

Camping areas are located at Big Lagoon, Gregories, South Gregories, Bottle Bay and Herald Bight. Only limited facilities are provided. No provision is made for caravans.

Carry all of your rubbish with you when leaving the park. To protect native plants and animals, firearms and pets are not allowed.

### Fees

Entrance and camping fees apply to visitors. A visitor fee collection box is located at the park entrance, where you turn off the Monkey Mia Road. Your fees are used to maintain and develop the park.

### Fires

Wood-burning fires of any kind are not permitted. Gas barbecues are supplied at camp sites.

### Water

There is no drinking water. Always carry your own supplies. Drinking water is available in Denham.



**Above** Sightings of the woma python have been rare in the past half century but the Shark Bay population appears to be increasing.

### Animals

Francois Peron National Park and the Shark Bay World Heritage Area are home to some of the rarest and most endangered animals in Australia and the world.

The region's bird-life is particularly rich, with land-based wading and migratory birds all being seen on the Peron Peninsula. Emus, fairy-wrens, scrubwrens, finches and wedgebills are the most common species but visitors may also spot the thick-billed grasswren, a threatened species once widespread on the mainland but now restricted to a small area that includes the national park.



**Above** A bilby (left) and a malleefowl (right), species that have been successfully reintroduced to Peron Peninsula.

### Project Eden

Project Eden – one of WA's most significant conservation projects – is based in Francois Peron National Park. Its aim is to return to Shark Bay native species that have become extinct in other parts of the country because of predation and habitat loss caused by introduced foxes, cats and grazing animals.

Project Eden's integrated, whole-ecosystem approach combines feral animal removal with a captive breeding and reintroduction program. Five native species – the woylie and the captive-bred banded hare-wallaby, mala, bilby and malleefowl – have been reintroduced into the national park. The woylie, bilby and malleefowl are now successfully established and it is possible to see them around the Peron Peninsula. Reintroductions of animals such as chuditch, bandicoots and red-tailed phascogales are also planned for the future.

Reducing the number of feral animals has resulted in the recovery of many other fauna species including the woma python, echidna, several species of dunnart and many reptiles from tiny geckoes to the race-horse goanna.

The feral animal control program requires the regular distribution of meat baits treated with 1080 poison throughout the park and across the Peron Peninsula. Native wildlife has a high tolerance for this naturally-occurring poison but the baits are lethal to feral animals and domesticated cats and dogs. Please do not bring your pets into the national park.



**Above from left** Woylies, a loggerhead turtle and a thick-billed grasswren.

**Right** A banded hare-wallaby being released.

**Far right** Dugongs are common in the waters of Shark Bay.

