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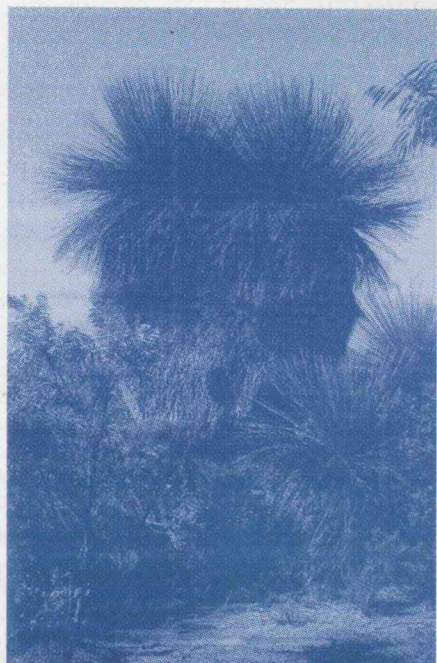
Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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BUSH CODE OF ETHICS

- ☐ Stay on established paths wherever possible - take care not to damage surrounding bush;
- ☐ Please use *only* fuel stoves at bush campsites;
- ☐ Where toilets are not provided, bury toilet waste more than 150mm deep and at least 100metres away from any water supply;
- ☐ Clean, crush and carry out all rubbish;
- ☐ Respect private property by not straying onto land adjacent to the National Park;
- ☐ Be courteous to other track-users, and be prepared to lend assistance if need be;
- ☐ Enjoy the wildflowers, take photos, but please do not pick them;
- ☐ Please report any damage or problems to CALM, Busselton Office:
Ph (08) 9752 1677.

HELP US TO MAINTAIN YOUR TRACK!



3m high balga, *Xanthorrhoea preissii*, Prevelly Ridge.

WALK SAFE!

- ☐ Suggest walking parties min 3, max 12.
- ☐ Carry a first-aid kit.
- ☐ Take adequate drinking water. 2 litres per person per day; on a hot day you may need at least 3 litres.
N.B. When overnighing you will need to carry extra water or plan a water drop.
- ☐ Take appropriate clothing (hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, raincoat etc.) - remember, weather conditions can change rapidly.
- ☐ Tell someone where you are going, and how long you expect to be before returning.
- ☐ Take great care when swimming - many beaches have dangerous rips and undertows.
- ☐ Do not walk on black, wet rocks as these can be unexpectedly slippery. Watch out for extra large waves.
- ☐ In the event of a wildfire, move to or stay on the coast for your safety.
- ☐ Snakes are common, but rarely seen. Watch where you walk and keep your distance!
- ☐ Coastal limestone cliffs are fragile at their edges. Never camp or light fires in caves or overhangs, especially under wet, windy conditions.
- ☐ Beware of deep water at creek crossings during winter and after heavy rain.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

Margaret River Police: (08) 9757 2222

Margaret River CALM: (08) 9757 2322

(Telephones at Gracetown, Prevelly Park)

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The CALM office in Busselton,
14 Queen Street,
Ph. (08) 9752 1677.

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Section 3

CAPE TO CAPE WALK TRACK

*Cowaramup Bay to
Redgate Beach - 31 km*



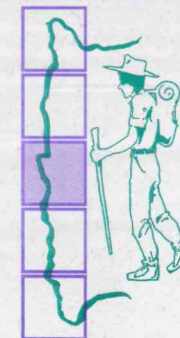
Photo: J. Scott

Rivermouth - Margaret River

PAM00821



Conservation and
Land Management



THE LEEUWIN-NATURALISTE NATIONAL PARK



Ellensbrook House 1903

The names bestowed on the natural features between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin indicate the rich history of this region. They tell of a succession of explorations and settlement, first by aboriginal people, and then by Europeans.

Some of the aboriginal names are well known: Yallingup - a place of love; Meekadarabee - the moon's bathing place. The meaning of many others have unfortunately become clouded with time, eg. Kilcarnup, Gnarabup, Boodjidup, but their abundance reflects the close association with this area held by Australia's first people.

The first Europeans to stumble across the West Australian coastline were better known for their follies than their discoveries, as they were blown fatefully too far south of their intended destination of Batavia in the Dutch East Indies. The first recorded sighting of the south-west coast was by the Dutch ship, Leeuwin, in 1622, which later gave its name to the Cape. The theory that some, at least, of the Leeuwin's crew went ashore was substantiated by the finding of a 17th century Dutch clog at Flinders Bay in 1930.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? - HISTORY OF THE CAPES REGION

The Dutch were followed by the French and the English in the 1790's and the early 1800's, both nations eager to establish their influence on this new land with a view to later settlement. It is the French names which dominate the coast between the Capes from the explorations of this period - de Freycinet, Hamelin, Mentelle, Clairault, Naturaliste - although it was an Englishman, Matthew Flinders (Flinders Bay), who accurately charted much of the coastline. Eventually it was the English who settled, first at Augusta in 1830, and soon afterwards on the Vasse (later Busselton).

Alfred and Ellen Bussell established the first homestead between the Capes - Ellensbrook - in 1854, where they farmed successfully for 11 years before moving to Wallcliffe House on the Margaret River. Other settlers followed gradually, until the population exploded during the timber industry boom of the 1890's. The legendary empire of M.C.Davies (Lake Davies, Davies Rd) exported jarrah and karri logs all over the world from Augusta and Hamelin Bay, the many wrecks off-shore here testifying to the fickle weather and swells. It was at this time that the lighthouses were built - Leeuwin in 1895, Naturaliste in 1903 - warning ships away from this wild coastline.

Attention turned inland during the 20th century, with the establishment of Margaret River townsite in 1910, and other small centres during the Group Settlement era of the 20's and 30's, with the Busselton-Augusta railway taking over from the sea as the major transport link. Stock



Ellensbrook House 1997

continued to be grazed along the Ridge and down to the coast in many places, however, right up until the establishment of the National Park in the early 1970's, and many old fencelines can still be seen.

Despite the years of tears and toil that have made the region what it is today, the Capes coast has long been a place of recreation also. Fishermen wound their way along the sandy bush tracks to the beaches long before there were roads, and named their favourite spots - Cosy Corner, Bob's Hollow, Conto's (probably from Conti's wine, enjoyed here in quantity) - adding another layer to the tapestry. As we enjoy this beautiful piece of land as it is today, it is worth reflecting on those who have been here before, and their differing perspectives on the Capes coast.

For ease of reading, the track is described from North to South, but may be enjoyed equally walking the opposite way.

For map and track notes, see overleaf

OVERVIEW: SECTION 3

Along much of this central, populous section of the walk, the ridge is low and the slopes gentle. Even here though, there are surprising wild pockets - the steep, thickly vegetated valley of Boodjidup Brook, and the rocky promontories of Cape Mentelle. Walking is mainly on easy bush tracks. Two inland loops add variation to the coastal scenery.

Gracetown, named after Grace Bussell (daughter of Alfred and Ellen) is renowned for its surf, along with Margaret River and Yallingup. Waves are whipped up by strong prevailing westerly winds, potentially travelling over thousands of kilometres of deep ocean before running into the exposed Capes Coast.

After crossing the beach, the track heads around South Point, through a dune area, and along a cliff-top path above beach, reef and surf breaks. Just before **Ellensbrook**, it traverses an old blow-out which was rehabilitated in the 1980's. The vegetation is finally regaining a hold on this windswept spot. The track turns inland, past the homestead, just before Ellensbrook stream.

It is perhaps easier to appreciate, when approaching on foot, just how isolated this little settlement was 150 years ago, with its nearest neighbours over 40 km. away. Alfred and Ellen Bussell raised their family here, growing vegetables, grazing their cattle and keeping butter and cheese cool in a cave near the dairy, until Alfred could make the two day journey to Busselton to sell their produce and buy provisions.

The track follows the signposted walk to **Meekadarabee Cave** where the stream disappears underground for a short way. The waterfall comes from a spring, accessible on the walk loop, which is a good source of drinking water. The track continues for 1 km up the valley along the alignment of the original road. The grassy flats beside the Ellenbrook stream here make an ideal camping spot. It then turns south, up a steep rise and over the ridge, following old firebreaks for 3 km until the headland of Cape Mentelle comes into view. The track turns right and steeply downhill. After 1 km it turns right, heads over a steep ridge to the coast again, and soon reaches a sandy beach under a small limestone cliff, known as **Joey's Nose**. (NB. 500m before this, a side track to the beach leads to a freshwater spring.) The beach is followed around to **Kilcarnup**, a sheltered fishing spot protected from the south-westerlies by Cape Mentelle.

Cape Mentelle is the largest of three high, narrow headlands, separated by deeply indented bays. They are unusual for this coast, being formed of limestone, rather than the harder, underlying granite. Erosion at their base has produced a wide, wave-cut rock platform in places with isolated rock stacks offshore, all that is left of a much more extensive peninsula. In time, these and the headlands will also disappear. Meanwhile, they provide a safe haven for birds such as ospreys, which can often be seen here by quiet observers.

The **Margaret River** is the largest of several surface streams which cross the ridge, flowing through to the sea during the rainy winter season, and becoming blocked by sand-bars in summer as their volume decreases. **N.B. The flow of the Margaret River in winter is substantial, and it can be hazardous to cross. Always check the situation before your walk, and make arrangements for an alternative route if necessary.**

Once again, the Cape To Cape Track turns inland along the spine of the ridge, following the old Prevelly Road above the river to cross Wallcliffe Road via the Bike Track, then heading south on one of several wooded tracks above Prevelly Park township. (N.B. The facilities at Prevelly - shop, cafe etc - are just a 1/2 km detour south.)

A lookout on Wallcliffe Road gives a good view of **Wallcliffe House**, tucked into the south bank of the Margaret River. This was Alfred Bussell's dream home, to which the family moved in 1865. Sadly, Ellen only had a few years here before she died, aged 42, in 1877, a year after the rescue of survivors from the "Georgette" off Redgate Beach by daughter Grace and Sam Isaacs.

The sandy track over the ridge is fringed with wildflowers in spring. Look out for some very old, gnarled marri trees as you climb and many huge blackboys further on amongst the tall heath. South of the water tanks, there are great views down the coast towards Cape Freycinet. The track turns left across the ridge and then right up a steep little hill to a superb viewpoint. From here it meanders for 1 1/2 km along the eastern edge of the ridge above the steep slip face of the former dune. Eventually, it turns right, steeply up, then left, to a high point above the steep valley of Boodjidup Brook. Take in the spectacular views along this section, which put into perspective the ocean, ridge and gently rolling farm and vineyard country to the east.

Boodjidup Brook is another stream which maintained its course as the dunes of the ridge built up. The path drops steeply to cross the stream, at present on a temporary log bridge, then follows its south bank to the coast.

The final 3 km stretch of sandy beach to Redgate is the haunt of red-capped and hooded plovers, as well as sooty and pied oystercatchers, sandpipers and cormorants.

SHORT WALK SUGGESTIONS

Rivermouth to Kilcarnup - 3 km return.

Short hike to admire the spectacular cliff features.

Caution: stay on tracks well away from crumbling or overhanging cliff edges.

NB. Only attempt if river can be crossed easily.

Prevelly/Boodjidup Brook Circuit - 11 km.

Access is from Baudin Drive (Gnarabup) via the road to the water-tanks (foot access only). Follow the Track south to Boodjidup Brook and return along the beach. A substantial hike, rewarded with great views, a beautiful hidden valley and spectacular beach. A longer circuit can be done from the rivermouth.

FULL DAY WALK SUGGESTION

Gracetown to Prevelly Park - 17 km.

Long, but varied walk between the two coastal settlements, taking in contrasting scenery of ridge, valley, cliff-top and beach. Vehicle pick-up necessary.

NB. Only attempt if river can be crossed easily.

