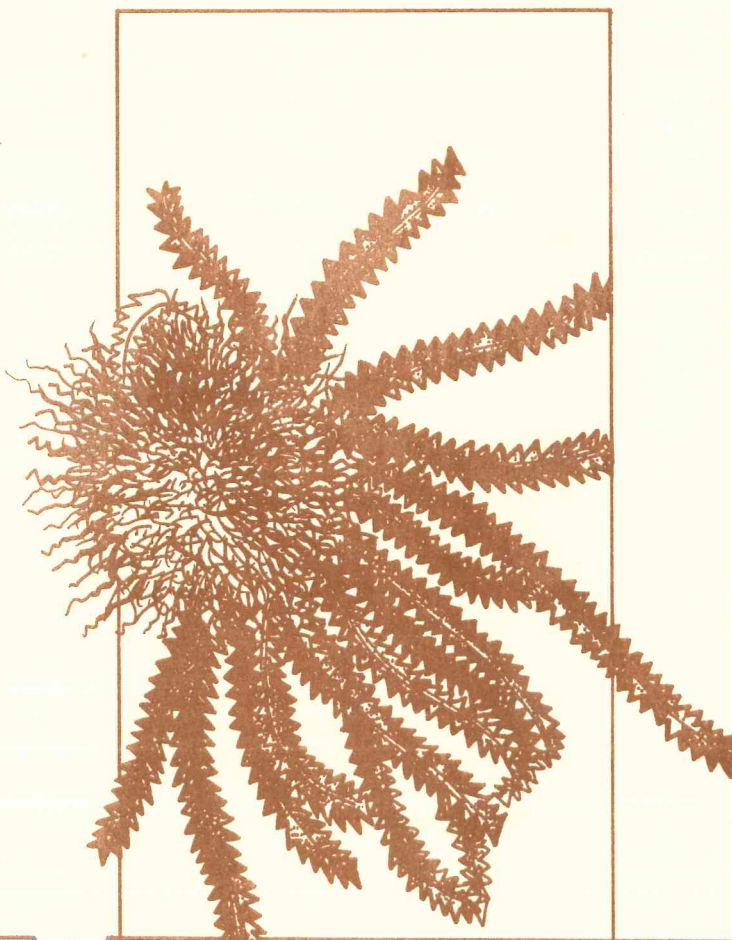


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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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DRYANDRA STATE FOREST



Department of Conservation & Land Management

Dryandra is one of the most scenic areas in the wheatbelt, with its magnificent woodland of wandoo and powderbark, brown mallet plantations and the bushland thickets which shelter large numbers of native mammals and birds.

The wheatbelt is the most highly disturbed region of Western Australia. Extensive clearing of bushland for farming and the introduction of exotic plants, disease and predators such as the fox have severely depleted the native flora and fauna. Dryandra is the largest area of remnant vegetation or woodland in the western wheatbelt, and, as such, has outstanding nature conservation, education and recreation value.

Dryandra State Forest lies about 160km south-east of Perth on the western edge of the central southern wheatbelt. It consists of nine separate blocks totalling 23,500 ha. The surrounding land is cleared farmland.

THE ABORIGINES

The Aboriginal people (the Nyungar) made extensive use of this area. A walk trail, the Ochre Trail, goes past a pit where they once quarried ochre. It was highly valued for body decoration and rock art such as the hand paintings found in Bates Cave near Hyden to the east.

The Nyungar people found food in abundance in the Dryandra area. Wandoo woodlands were feeding grounds for wildlife, especially kangaroos and wallabies. Trees also provided nesting sites for birds and possums. Fire was used to flush game and for the regeneration of food plants. The men hunted larger animals, particularly kangaroos and emus, and the women and children dug for roots, collected fruits and seeds and caught smaller animals.

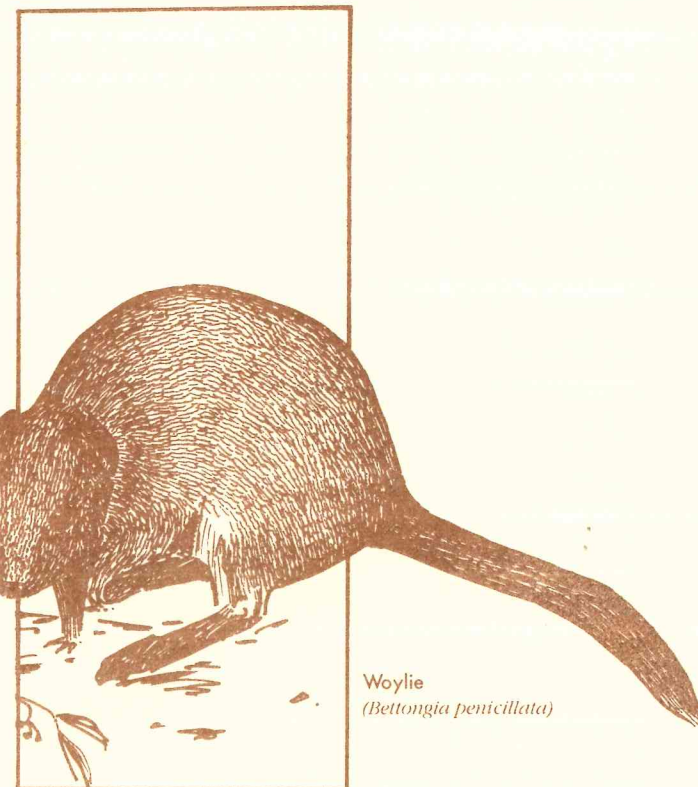
Their diet also included small marsupials, mice, snakes, goannas, parrots, and the grubs of some beetles and moths.

Hardwood from eucalypts was used for spears, boomerangs, axe handles and digging sticks. Cork-wood from the Christmas tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*) was used for shields, and selected stones for cutting edges and grinding stones.

FAUNA

Dryandra has populations of 14 species of ground-dwelling mammals. These include the small kangaroo-like woylie (*Bettongia penicillata*) and tammar (*Macropus eugenii*) and the unique numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*). The numbat is a small marsupial which feeds exclusively on termites and is the West Australian mammal emblem. The numbat and woylie are very rare with only a few known populations still remaining. Those who enjoy a quiet walk in the bush may be rewarded by a glimpse of the timid numbat, but the woylie won't be around. It sleeps during the day.

One hundred or so bird species have been recorded using the area. One of the most interesting is the mallee fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*). This 'incubator-bird' builds large mounds of leaf litter and soil over its eggs. The heat generated by the rotting vegetation is sufficient to hatch them.



Woylie
(*Bettongia penicillata*)

Brown Mallet
(*Eucalyptus astringens*)



MALLET

Areas of brown mallet (*Eucalyptus astringens*) occur naturally on breakaways where the laterite capping has tumbled to the valley below. Mallet has a straight trunk and erect branches. Its bark is smooth and brown or silver grey, with patches of unshed bark adhering to the trunk. The bark is rich in tannins and astringent in taste.

During the early years of settlement mallet bark was exported for tanning. With the large scale felling mallet became scarce and plantations were established to maintain the industry and conserve the species. Extensive plantations were established on the valley floors and slopes in Dryandra. However, the industry declined with the increased cost of labour and transport and the introduction of synthetic tannins, and mallet is no longer used commercially for tannin production.

The brown mallet plantations at Dryandra are now used as a source of wood for tool handles, fenceposts and firewood.

RECREATION FACILITIES

THE SETTLEMENT

The original Forests Department settlement is now a holiday village.

THE SETTLEMENT DAM

Picnic facilities are provided here and bird watchers should be rewarded at the dam and in the surrounding woodland.

THE ARBORETUM

A range of Australian native tree species is being grown.

THE OCHRE TRAIL

The Ochre Trail, a walk of 5 km, will introduce you to the natural and cultural heritage of Dryandra. It commences in wandoo woodland and goes through the upland powderbark and kwongan (heath) vegetations.

Watch out for the ochre pit, quarried by the local Aborigines, beside the trail.

THE FIRE TOWER

The Ochre Trail will take you past the fire tower which is still in use today. Fire control is important to help protect the forest, especially the commercial mallet plantations, and the thickets which provide shelter for many native animals.

CONGELIN DAM

Picnic facilities next to the old railway dam.

LOL GRAY

At one time the wives of the forest workers used tree lookout towers located on hill tops to detect fires in the forest. One such lookout has been restored at Lol Gray, where a picnic site is located.

CONTINE HILL

Another old lookout site. Picnic facilities provided.

ACCOMMODATION

Camping is not permitted in the forest, but the Dryandra settlement, or the nearby town of Narrogin, provides a base for you to stay.

The Dryandra settlement, situated within the forest, is leased as a holiday camp by the Lions Club of W.A. Six weatherboard houses are available for rent complete with gas stove, fridge, beds and hot water. A Nissen hut complex nearby can accommodate up to 80 people. Bookings and further information are available from the booking office (098) 83 6020 during business hours; and (098) 83 6065 after hours.

ACCESS

There are signposted entrances to the main Dryandra area off the York Williams Road to the west, and the Narrogin Wandering Road to the east. Signposts to Dryandra are found on the Albany Highway at North Bannister, on the Great Southern Highway at Yornaning and Cuballing, and at Narrogin.

Contact the CALM office at Narrogin for more information.

Where is it? 160km south east of Perth. 20km north west of Narrogin.

Travelling time: 30 minutes from Narrogin.

Facilities: BBQs, tables, rubbish bins.

Best Seasons: Anytime for nature study. September — November for wildflowers.

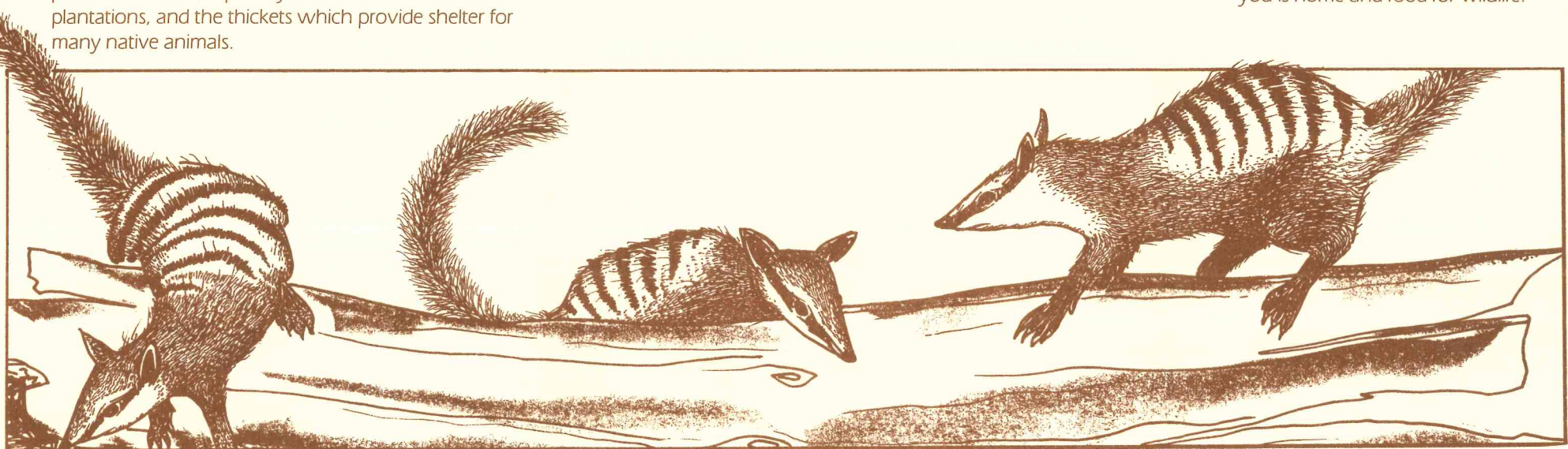
REMEMBER

Be careful: Your enjoyment and safety in natural environments is our concern but your responsibility.

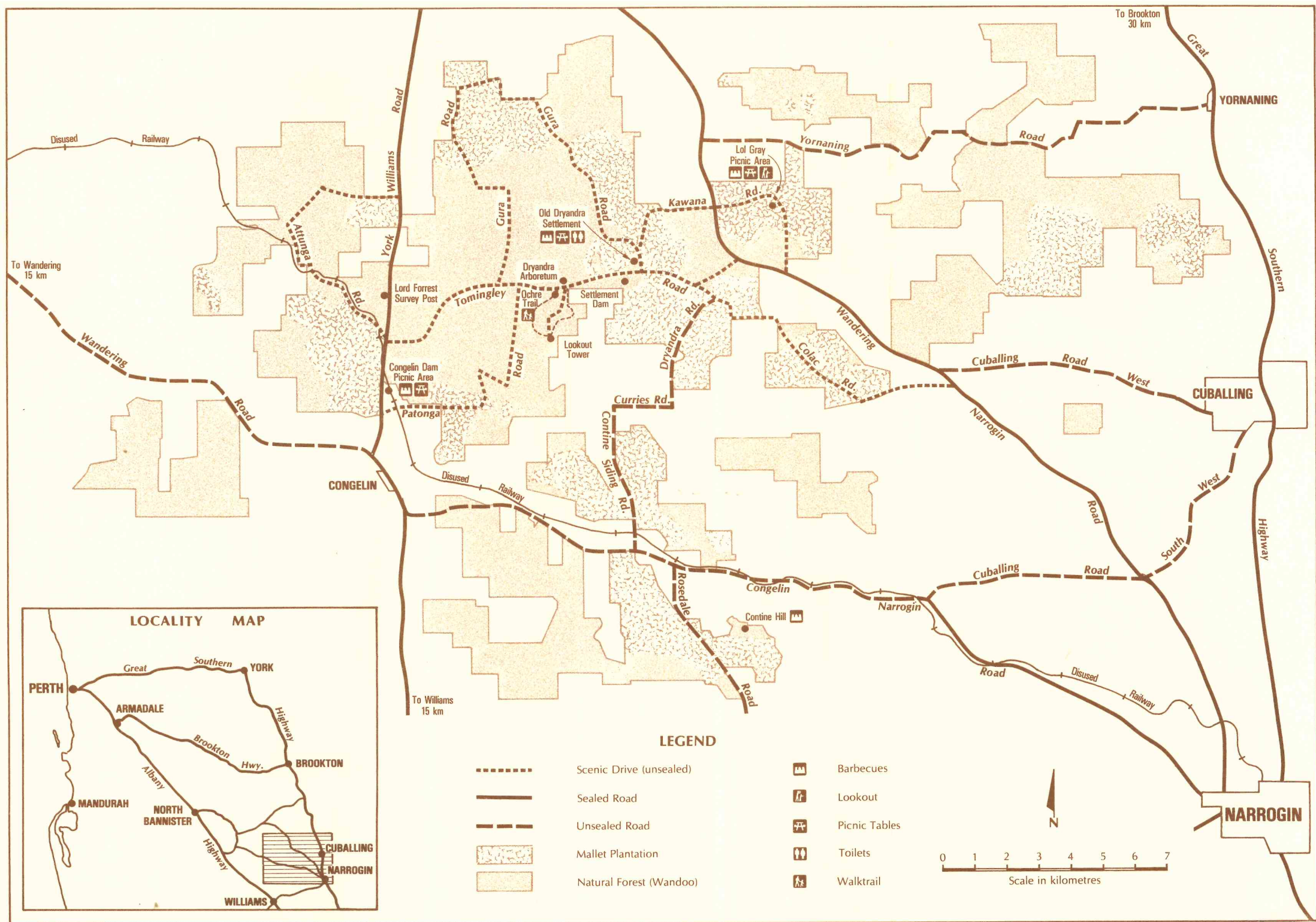
Be clean: Put your litter in bins, or take it with you when in areas not serviced by bins.

Stay Cool: Don't light fires.

Conserve: Retain the area as you find it. Firewood for you is home and food for wildlife.



Young Numbats
(*Myrmecobius fasciatus*)



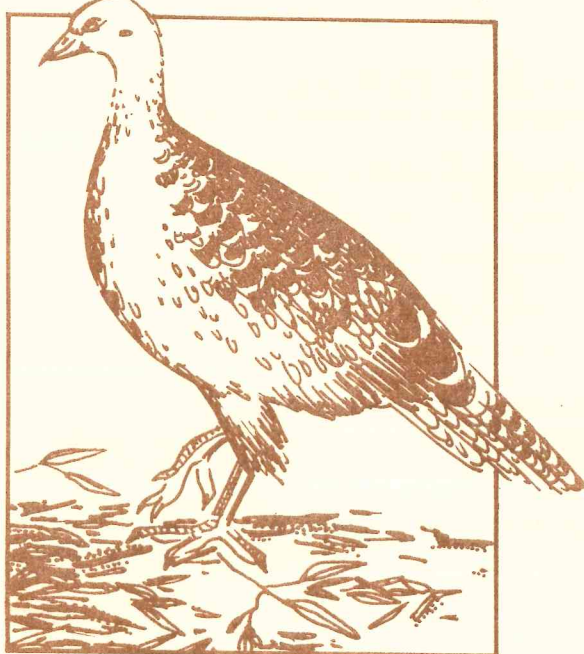
VEGETATION

Open woodland of wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) and powderbark (*Eucalyptus accedens*) predominate in Dryandra. The smooth, white-barked trees growing on the lower slopes are wandoo. Powderbark has larger fruits and thicker rounder buds, and grows on the higher, gravelly slopes and plateaus. Its bark is powdery to touch.

The plateaus also contain pockets of jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*), often associated with kwongan (*Dryandra heath*). Isolated areas of marri (*Eucalyptus calophylla*), mallee (*Eucalyptus* species) and rock sheoak (*Allocasuarina huegelliana*) also occur.



Mallee Fowl
(*Leipoa ocellata*)



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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