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Dirk Hartog Island National Park

- Make sure your diving gear is secured, not dangling, and watch where you kick.
- Always leave someone on board when you are diving or snorkelling from a boat.
- Shark Bay Marine Park is zoned to protect marine life and habitats in certain areas. Please observe regulations for the area in which you are diving or snorkelling.
- Many marine animals use venom or toxins for catching prey or defending themselves. Some can cause serious harm to people.
- Shipwrecks are protected and the removal of artefacts is prohibited. Please help preserve our maritime heritage by leaving wrecks undisturbed.

More information

Department of Parks and Wildlife – for information and payment of camping fees

Shark Bay District

61–63 Knight Terrace, Denham WA 6537

Ph: (08) 9948 2226 Email: sharkbayenquiries@dpaw.wa.gov.au

www.sharkbay.org

www.dpaw.wa.gov.au

Steep Point Ranger Station

Ph: (08) 9948 3993 Email: ranger@steepoint.com.au

Dirk Hartog Island Lodge – for camp site, barge and accommodation bookings

PO Box 62, Denham WA 6537

Ph: (08) 9948 1211 Email: info@dirkhartogisland.com

Cover View of Dirk Hartog Island. Above Lighthouse keepers' quarters.
Photos – Parks and Wildlife.



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



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Visitor guide

Department of
Parks and Wildlife



PARKS
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PEOPLE



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Mulgara is a species planned for re-introduction to the island.



Cormorants.

Dirk Hartog Island is an important part of Australia's history and future, and Shark Bay's World Heritage status.

Each year the island hosts Australia's largest loggerhead turtle breeding colony. With more than 3000 turtles nesting on the beaches of Turtle Bay, the rookery is one of the five most important in the world.

At 63,000ha, Dirk Hartog Island is Western Australia's largest island and home to three threatened birds—the Dirk Hartog Island black-and-white fairy-wren, the Dirk Hartog Island southern emu-wren and the Dirk Hartog Island rufous fieldwren.

Among the 48 reptile species living on Dirk Hartog Island are the threatened western spiny-tailed skink and the Shark Bay ctenotus, a skink found only on the island and nearby Edel Land.

While many of the 13 native mammal species originally found on the island are now locally extinct, they will be reintroduced as part of an ecological restoration project to secure their futures.

Wirruwana

Shark Bay is the traditional country of three Aboriginal language groups: Malgana, Nhanda and Yingkarta. Dirk Hartog Island is part of Malgana country and is known as Wirruwana, while Shark Bay is called Gutharraguda, meaning 'two bays'.

There is evidence of past Aboriginal occupation of Wirruwana and Malgana people still regularly visit and fish its waters.

Recent history

In 1616 Dirk Hartog made the first recorded landing by a European in Western Australia. He was followed in 1697 by Willem de Vlamingh.

The first scientific collection of Australian plants began with species from Dirk Hartog Island collected by William Dampier in 1699.

In 1772 St Alouarn landed on Dirk Hartog Island and claimed the western half of New Holland for France, but his claim was never enacted.

Voyages of scientific discovery were conducted by Nicolas Baudin in 1801–03 and Louis de Freycinet in 1818, while Henry Mangles Denham surveyed the area in 1858, producing charts that were used into the 1960s.

Settlement and industries followed these voyages of discovery. Guano (seabird droppings) was mined from Shark Bay's islands in 1850, but the industry was short-lived as the islands were quickly stripped bare. Pearlming also began around 1850 and little was left of Shark Bay's pearl beds by the 1930s.

Sheep were introduced to Dirk Hartog Island in the 1860s while goats were probably brought over by lighthouse keepers in the early 1900s. At one stage there were 20,000 sheep on Dirk Hartog Island. Intense grazing and trampling denuded the island's vegetation and, combined with feral cats, exacted a hefty toll on the island's small mammal population.

In 2008 major destocking efforts began in preparation for the creation of Dirk Hartog Island National Park in November 2009.



DIRK HARTOG ISLAND RETURN TO 1616

Return to 1616

The Dirk Hartog Island National Park Ecological Restoration Project, known as *Return to 1616*, is returning the island to how Dirk Hartog would have seen it



in 1616. Since 2007, more than 10,000 goats and 5000 sheep have been removed and the island's vegetation is showing strong signs of recovery.

After the feral cats and the remaining goats have been removed, the project will then return 10 small native mammals—the boodie, woylie, western barred bandicoot, chuditch, brush-tailed mulgara, dibbler, greater stick-nest rat, desert mouse, Shark Bay mouse and heath mouse. Two other species will also be brought to the island—rufous hare-wallaby (mala) and banded hare-wallaby.

When visiting, please help the ecological restoration project by:

- not taking any animals or plants to the island
- making sure your footwear, clothes, packs and camping gear are free of soil, seeds, lizards, insects, spiders or other hitchhikers
- transporting food in clean, sealed plastic or metal containers rather than cardboard
- making sure fresh food is free of soil, ants, snails or other small animals
- brushing vegetation and soil from your vehicle before going onto the barge
- making sure your vehicle's underside, radiator, tyres, sump and gearbox guard plates are free of seeds
- installing and checking rodent bait stations on board your vessel to reduce the risk of rats reaching the island.

Things to see and do

Access and camping

Dirk Hartog Island can only be accessed by private boat (about 35km from Denham), a commercial barge service from Steep Point or light aircraft charter. A high clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle is required to drive on the island.

Camping is basic with no facilities or rubbish collection. If you are camping, make sure you have enough food, water and fuel as there is nowhere to purchase supplies. Please take your rubbish off the island with you.

Camping fees apply and campsites can be booked through apac.littlehotelier.com/properties/Dirk-Hartog-Island. The commercial barge service and lodge accommodation are also booked through this website.

Eastern sites

Whether boating or four-wheel driving, there are many places to enjoy along the island's eastern coast. From south to north:

Notch Point



In 1887 this was the scene of a confrontation between European and Chinese pearlers after the Chinese, who were imported as cheap labour, bought their own boats and started competing with their former employers. Boats can access the beach here.

Quoin Bluff South



An army garrison was set up at Quoin Bluff South in 1851 to collect royalties from ships mining guano from the many small islands in the area. Look for the stone remains of the jetty and storehouse here.

Louisa Bay



Boats can access the beach in this bay with coral communities about 200m from shore. While cabbage corals dominate, there are also staghorns and massive pocillopora and pink pocillopora species. Reef fish include coral trout, blue-lined emperor, scribbled angelfish and the fully protected potato cod.



Take care by the sea

- When near the water or at cliffs, watch the water for large unexpected waves.
- Please keep well clear of cliff edges.
- Be prepared for sudden wind gusts.
- Supervise children at all times.

Stay safe when rock fishing

- Check the marine weather forecast and tides.
- Watch the sea conditions for at least 30 minutes before fishing and stay alert to sea conditions while on the rocks.
- Never fish where waves and spray have been washing over rocks.
- Plan an escape route in case you fall in.
- Always fish with at least two other people so that if one person falls in, one can keep watch while the other gets help.
- Do not jump in to rescue someone – throw them a rope or other life-line.
- Make sure someone responsible knows where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Have the right safety gear – wear a life jacket and rock-hopper boots and carry a VHF radio or satellite phone, flares and a torch.

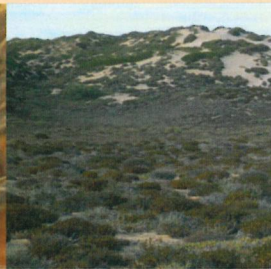
Above Dampiers Landing. Above right Herald Bay. Below left Legless lizard. Below centre Track to Charlies Harbour. Below right West Coast banded snake.

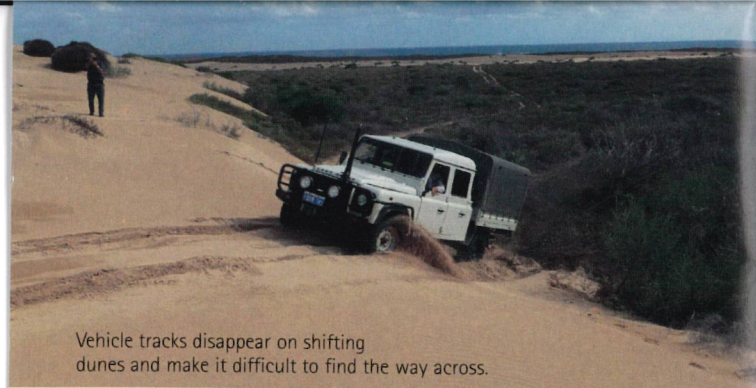
Boat safely in Shark Bay Marine Park

- Plan your trip well and observe standard safety precautions.
- Always check the weather forecast before you leave.
- Boat according to your skills, experience and the conditions.
- Keep an eye on the weather and the water at all times while on the water. Boats have been swamped and lives lost by unexpected waves.
- Carry the safety equipment relevant to your vessel and enough life jackets for each person on board.
- Ensure your boat is in good working order and has extra fuel.
- Carry enough water, food supplies and sun protection for your trip.
- Let a responsible adult know about your trip.
- Keep at least 50m clear of dive flags.
- Avoid anchoring close to cliff edges or on fragile corals.

Take care when diving or snorkelling

- Only dive and snorkel on a slack tide.
- Stay alert for boat traffic.
- Display a dive flag when diving. Dive flags should be at least 750x600mm.
- It is recommended that a dive flag is displayed when snorkelling over 200m from the shore.
- Interaction with marine plants and animals is both a privilege and a responsibility. Leave areas as you find them.





Vehicle tracks disappear on shifting dunes and make it difficult to find the way across.



Loggerhead turtle nesting at Turtle Bay.

Drive carefully

- The access road to the Steep Point barge site is long and rough (140km unsealed track – about 3 hours driving). Be prepared.
- Only high clearance four-wheel-drive vehicles are able to traverse the sandy tracks on the island and the last 30km of sandy tracks to the Steep Point barge site.
- Unlicensed off-road vehicles (such as quad bikes or motor bikes) are not permitted.
- Ensure your vehicle is in sound condition and has all of the recommended safety equipment.
- Normal road traffic rules apply.
- Seat belts must be worn and riding in the back of utilities is prohibited.
- Drive at a safe speed suitable to the conditions.
- Reduce tyre pressure to at least 20psi (trailers included) to negotiate the soft sand tracks. The pressure will vary according to vehicle type and load as well as type of tyre and rim.
- Remember to inflate tyres when you are back on the Useless Loop Road.
- Drive only on existing vehicle tracks and keep four-wheel drive engaged to minimise track damage.
- Entry to the Useless Loop town site and surrounding area is not permitted.

Enjoy your visit – look after the park and yourself

- Dirk Hartog Island is remote and potentially dangerous – your safety is your responsibility.
- It is recommended that you carry a satellite phone programmed with emergency numbers.

- There are no water, food, fuel or vehicle services in the area.
- The barge service must be booked in advance.
- Camp sites must be booked prior to arrival.
- Visitors must register on arrival at Steep Point/Shelter Bay and display an entry permit on vehicle dashboard.
- Open fires are not permitted. Please use portable gas cookers.
- Bury human waste at least 100m from public areas and the water.
- During summer, heat is a potential safety hazard – make sure you take enough water.
- Firearms, weapons and fireworks are not permitted.
- No pets allowed.
- A 1080 baiting program is underway on the island as part of a feral animal eradication program. 1080 baits are poisonous to pets and people.
- All native wildlife is protected. Leave plants, animals, rocks and shells as you find them.
- Turtles nest on the island's beaches during summer. Please keep light to a minimum and do not disturb nesting turtles or hatchlings.
- Fish bag limits and size restrictions apply. Please check and abide by Department of Fisheries regulations, available at www.fish.wa.gov.au.
- Sandy Point Sanctuary Zone and Surf Point Sanctuary Zone are marine refuges in Shark Bay Marine Park. See the Shark Bay Marine Reserves brochure for more information.
- Fishing is not permitted in, and nothing may be removed from, marine sanctuary zones.
- Stow rubbish away from wildlife and prevent it from being blown away. Please take your rubbish off the island with you.

Sandy Point



You may fish from the beach at Sandy Point, but not offshore in the waters of the marine sanctuary zone, which protects a diversity of staghorn, brain and plate corals. Boats can access the beach here.

Withnell Point



Once a sheltered haven for boats, this small bay has been hit by storm surges which have made it shallower and less accessible.

Dampiers Landing



William Dampier came ashore here in August 1699, describing the vegetation and making the first scientific collection of Australian plants. He also named Shark Bay and 300 years later, a plaque was erected at this site in his honor.

Western sites

If you are taking a four-wheel drive to the island you can visit several places along the island's west coast. From south to north:

Surf Point



Tropical fish species and coral communities occur in 3–4m of water at Surf Point. Fish include various parrotfish, wrasse, butterflyfish, angelfish and snapper. Corals include staghorns, vase and plate corals. Fishing is not permitted in the marine park sanctuary zone.

Blowholes



Ocean swells push water up through holes in the rock shelf at the base of the cliffs. Take care on the soft sandy track and sand dune.

Quoin Head/Charlies Harbour



Massive chunks of collapsed cliffs in Charlies Harbour make for dramatic scenery from Quoin Head, a place enjoyed by fishers. If fishing, take care and follow the rock fishing guidelines.

Mystery Beach



Mystery Beach is renowned for being a repository of flotsam and jetsam. Enjoy a walk along this beach to see what has washed up.

West Point (The Block) and Urchin Point



Huts at these two sites provide shelter from the wind and are popular with fishers. Giant slabs of limestone dumped by a tsunami give The Block its popular name. If fishing, take care and follow the rock fishing guidelines.

Cape Inscription



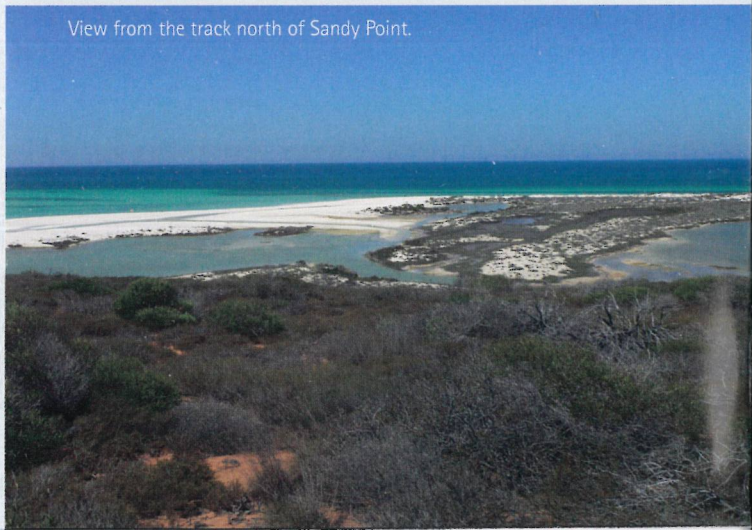
Dirk Hartog left a pewter plate inscribed with details of his voyage at Cape Inscription in 1616. Willem de Vlamingh followed in 1697 and left a new plate with his own inscription and a copy of Hartog's. This historic site is overlooked by a lighthouse built in 1909 and lighthouse keepers' quarters which were restored in 2012.

Turtle Bay lookout



Remnants of a tram track used to transport materials for the lighthouse buildings lead to views of Turtle Bay. During summer the beaches below are covered in the tracks of loggerhead turtles that have struggled up the beach through the night to lay their eggs.

View from the track north of Sandy Point.





Left Louisa Bay. Centre Whittnell Point. Right Surf Point.

