

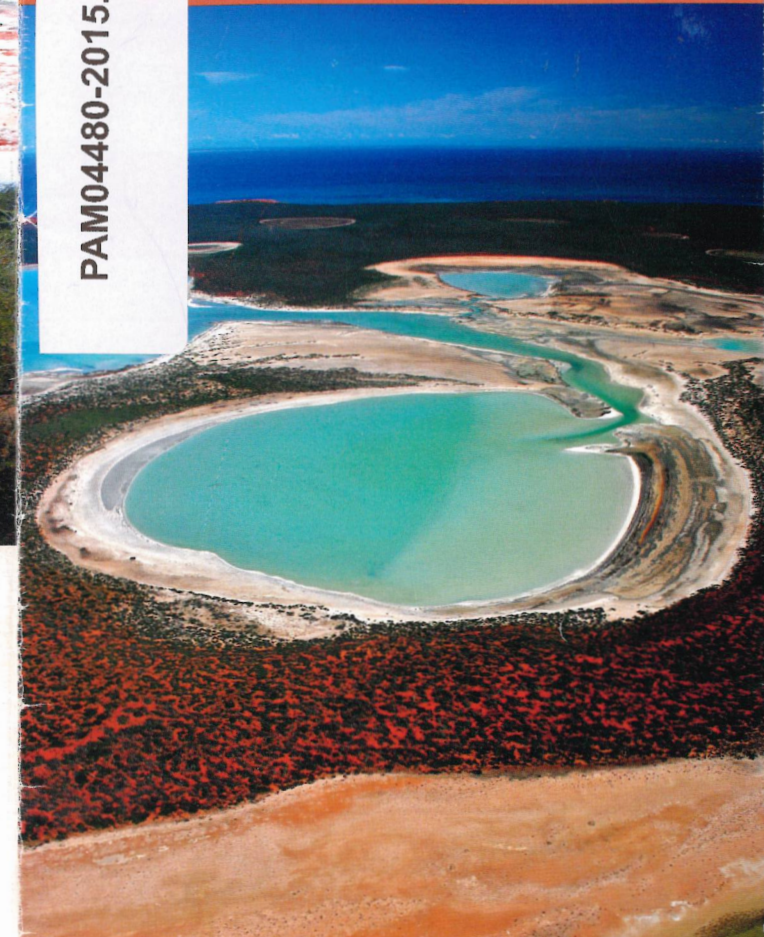
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Department of Biodiversity,
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François Péron National Park

PAM04480-2015.11



Above Kraskoe's Tank

More information

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Department of
Parks and Wildlife



Information current at November 2015
Available in alternative formats on request

Front cover Big Lagoon aerial view. Photo – Chris McMonagle

20150244-1115-10M

Above Bottle Bay. Photo – Chris McMonagle

Drive carefully

- Always watch out for wildlife on roads and tracks.
- A high clearance four-wheel drive is required for the tracks north of Peron Heritage Precinct.
- The access road north of the Peron Heritage Precinct is a sandy, single-lane track. Watch for on-coming traffic and drive 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.
- Unlicensed off-road vehicles (quads, motor bikes) are not permitted.
- Remember to inflate tyres when you return to the tyre pressure station near Peron Heritage Precinct.
- Drive only on existing vehicle tracks and keep four-wheel drive engaged to minimise track damage.

Below Halganias on red sand hills. Photo – Mary Barrett



Visitor guide



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



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Above Watch out for echidnas on the road. *Photo – Rebecca Stanley*

Below left Thick billed grass wren. *Photo – Mary Barrett*

Francois Peron National Park

Francois Peron National Park covers 52,000 hectares of arid shrub lands, rolling sandplains and circular depressions bounded by spectacular coastal scenery on the Peron Peninsula.

World Heritage

The park lies within the Shark Bay World Heritage area and its coastal scenery and diverse wildlife habitats are among the many reasons for its heritage listing.

Aboriginal and other Australian heritage

Shark Bay is the traditional country of three Aboriginal language groups: the Malgana, Nhanda and Yingkarta.

Malgana language speakers have occupied the central part of Shark Bay, including the Peron Peninsula for about 25,000 years. Wulyibidi is the Malgana name for Peron Peninsula and Gutharraguda, meaning 'two bays', is the name for Shark Bay.

French explorers were the first Europeans to provide reports of the Malgana people early in the 19th century. François Péron meticulously documented anthropology, oceanography, meteorology and zoology during Nicholas Baudin's 1801 and 1803 expeditions. The park bears Péron's name in recognition of his contribution to recording Australia's natural and social history.

In the late 1880s a pearl camp was established at Herald Bight, where pearl shells still litter the beach. It was also the site of a canning factory, the remains of which are still visible today. Peron Peninsula was managed as a 100,000-hectare sheep station until 1990, when it was bought by the State Government. Francois Peron National Park was declared in 1993.



Plants

Meeting at Shark Bay are plants of two vegetation provinces – the southern temperate vegetation of the south-west and the desert vegetation of the north and east. The result is two distinct vegetation types found in Francois Peron National Park.

Red, sandy plains are dominated by desert-adapted acacias while flowering plants from cooler climes, such as hakeas and grevilleas, are not found north of this area.

William Dampier collected plants from the region in 1699 and was particularly impressed by the blue-flowering plants, including wild tomato, halgania and his namesake, the hoary dampiera.

Animals

Francois Peron National Park and the Shark Bay World Heritage area are home to threatened species including the bilby, woma python, thick-billed grass-wren and mallee fowl.

Nearly 100 reptile and amphibian species live in Shark Bay. The thorny devil, racehorse goanna, bobtail skink, knob-tailed gecko and bearded dragon are abundant. Snakes include the gwardar, mulga and woma python.

Migratory and wading birds including godwits, greenshanks, plovers and sandpipers can be seen around the coastline while emus, fairy-wrens, scrubwrens, finches and wedgebills are common on dry land. Wedge-tailed eagles, osprey and white-bellied sea eagles may be seen riding thermals.

Mammals are mostly nocturnal and tend to be harder to spot, but the tracks of euros, echidnas and native mice are scattered over the red sand.

The sea around Peron Peninsula teems with wildlife, including bottlenose dolphins, dugongs, green and loggerhead turtles, manta rays and sharks. They are best seen from Cape Peron and Skipjack Point.

Marine

The waters of Shark Bay Marine Park abound with whiting, snapper, bream and kingfish, to name just a few.

Special rules apply to fishing and other marine activities surrounding the park. Please see the Shark Bay Marine Reserves brochure for details. Abide by Fisheries regulations in the recreational fishing guide

Project Eden

An ecological restoration project succeeded in returning bilbies and malleefowl to the park. Restoration of natural habitats has also allowed woma pythons to flourish.

Access

The Peron Heritage Precinct is two-wheel drive accessible. High clearance four-wheel drive is needed to access the rest of Francois Peron National Park.

Check track conditions at the Department of Parks and Wildlife office before driving into the park.

The four-wheel drive tracks are single-lane soft sand. They are not suitable for caravans or large boat trailers.

Reduce tyre pressure to 20psi at the tyre pressure station to avoid getting bogged or damaging tracks.

Be aware of oncoming traffic, drive to the conditions and please stay on marked tracks. Some sections traverse large birridas (*gypsum claypans*) which can be boggy when wet. Take care when driving on birridas after rain.

Fees

Entrance and camping fees apply. A self-registration fee collection box is located at the park entrance off Monkey Mia Road. Your fees are used to maintain and develop park facilities.

Below Bungarra (Gould's goanna). *Photo – Dana Norman*





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 750 by 600 millimetres.
- It is recommended that a dive flag is displayed when snorkelling more than 200 metres from the shore.
- Interaction with marine plants and animals is both a privilege and a responsibility. Leave areas as you find them.
- Make sure your diving gear is secured, not dangling, and be careful where you kick.
- Always leave someone on board when 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.

Enjoy your visit. Look after the park and yourself

There are no water, food, fuel or vehicle services in the park and there is also limited mobile phone coverage.

- Fires are prohibited within Francois Peron National Park. Please bring gas appliances or use the free gas barbecues provided at most campgrounds.
- Heat is a potential safety hazard - make sure you take enough drinking water. Allow at least three litres per person per day.
- Do not empty chemicals into toilets as chemicals destroy composting micro-organisms.
- Where there are no toilets, bury human waste at least 30 centimetres deep and 100 metres from public areas and the water.
- Firearms, weapons and fireworks are not permitted.
- No pets allowed.
- Poisonous stonefish are common around reef areas - supervise children at all times, wear reef shoes or sandals to protect your feet and be careful what you pick up.
- If stung by a stonefish immerse affected area in hot water (test it's not too hot with unaffected limb) and seek medical aid.
- All native wildlife is protected. Leave plants, animals, rocks and shells as you find them.
- Fish bag limits and size restrictions apply. Please check and abide by Department of Fisheries' regulations (www.fish.wa.gov.au). Fisheries officers conduct regular patrols within the park.

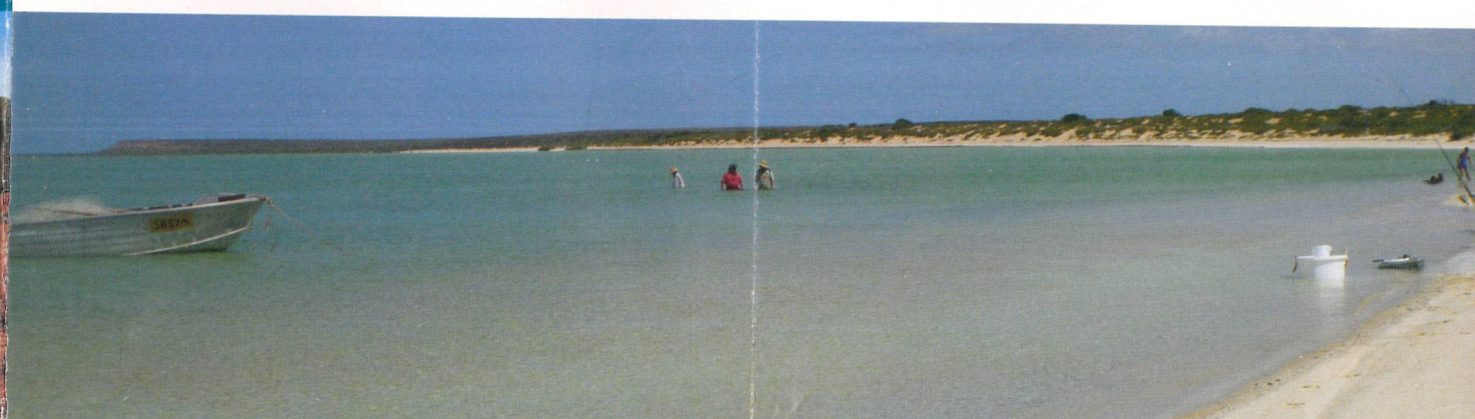
- There are zones in the Shark Bay Marine Park where recreational activities are restricted. See the Shark Bay Marine Reserves brochure or go to www.sharkbay.org for further information.
- Stow rubbish where wildlife cannot get it and the wind cannot blow it away.
- Take your rubbish out with you. A bin is provided at the tyre pressure station near the Peron Heritage Precinct.

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.
- While on the water, keep an eye on the weather and the water at all times. Boats have been swamped and lives lost as a result of 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, and remember to let them know when you have returned safely.
- Keep at least 50 metres clear of dive flags.
- Avoid anchoring on fragile corals.

Below Fishing at Cape Peron

Below Herald Bight



Things to see and do

Peron Heritage Precinct



This precinct offers an insight into what life was like during the pastoral era. Explore the history of the area around the self-guided walk and see how the shearers worked and lived.

Enjoy a dip in the hot tub, a popular place to soak in artesian waters.

Big Lagoon



Launch your boat or kayak near the camp site at Big Lagoon. You may fish in the special purpose zone from the campground towards the sea, but not in the sanctuary zone north of the campground. See the *Shark Bay Marine Reserves* brochure for details.

Kraskoe's Tank

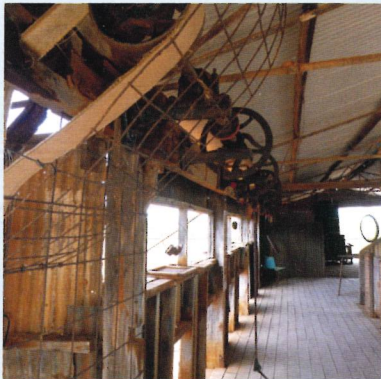


Krasker was a one-legged entrepreneur who rode his horse from Denham to Herald Bight every week to buy pearls and collect mail. He perished trying to reach this water tank after falling off his horse and breaking his remaining good leg.

Cattle Well



Throw in a line and enjoy the fishing at Cattle Well.



Right Shearing shed at Peron Heritage Precinct

South Gregories



Camp and enjoy the scenery, swimming and fishing. Walk along the beach and inspect the layers of shells partly consolidated into rock. You can also launch your boat here.

Gregories



At high tide snorkel and explore one of the most accessible reef systems within Shark Bay. Great camp sites and scenery within easy reach of the beach.

Bottle Bay



Enjoy camping with easy access to swimming, fishing and walks along the beach. You can also launch your boat here.

Cape Peron



You can see a line where ocean and bay waters converge at Cape Peron creating dangerous currents.

Walk to the top of the dune at the start of the Wanamalu trail to soak up the views and striking colours of Péron. From there you can also see many cormorants – known as wanamalu to Malgana people – crowding the water's edge.

Wanamalu trail, 1.5km, 45 minutes one-way



This walk from Cape Peron to Skipjack Point has outstanding views of the coastline and colours of Shark Bay. If you have someone to drive the car and meet you at Skipjack Point, this is an easy short walk although the sand is soft. Otherwise it will be a three-kilometre, 1.5-hour return walk. Make sure you protect yourself from the sun, and keep hydrated, especially during the hot summer months.

Skipjack Point



It's just a five-minute walk from the carpark to the lookouts at Skipjack Point where you may see dolphins, dugongs, turtles, rays, manta rays and sharks cruising in the shallows below the lookout. Remember your binoculars.

Herald Bight



On the eastern side of the peninsula, the long crescent beach at Herald Bight offers informal beach camping sheltered from south-westerly winds.

Keep an eye out for the remains of a fish canning factory established in 1933 and converted to a fish freezer in 1938. The freezer was closed in 1947 when a new freezer plant was built in Denham.

Below Lookout at Skipjack Point

