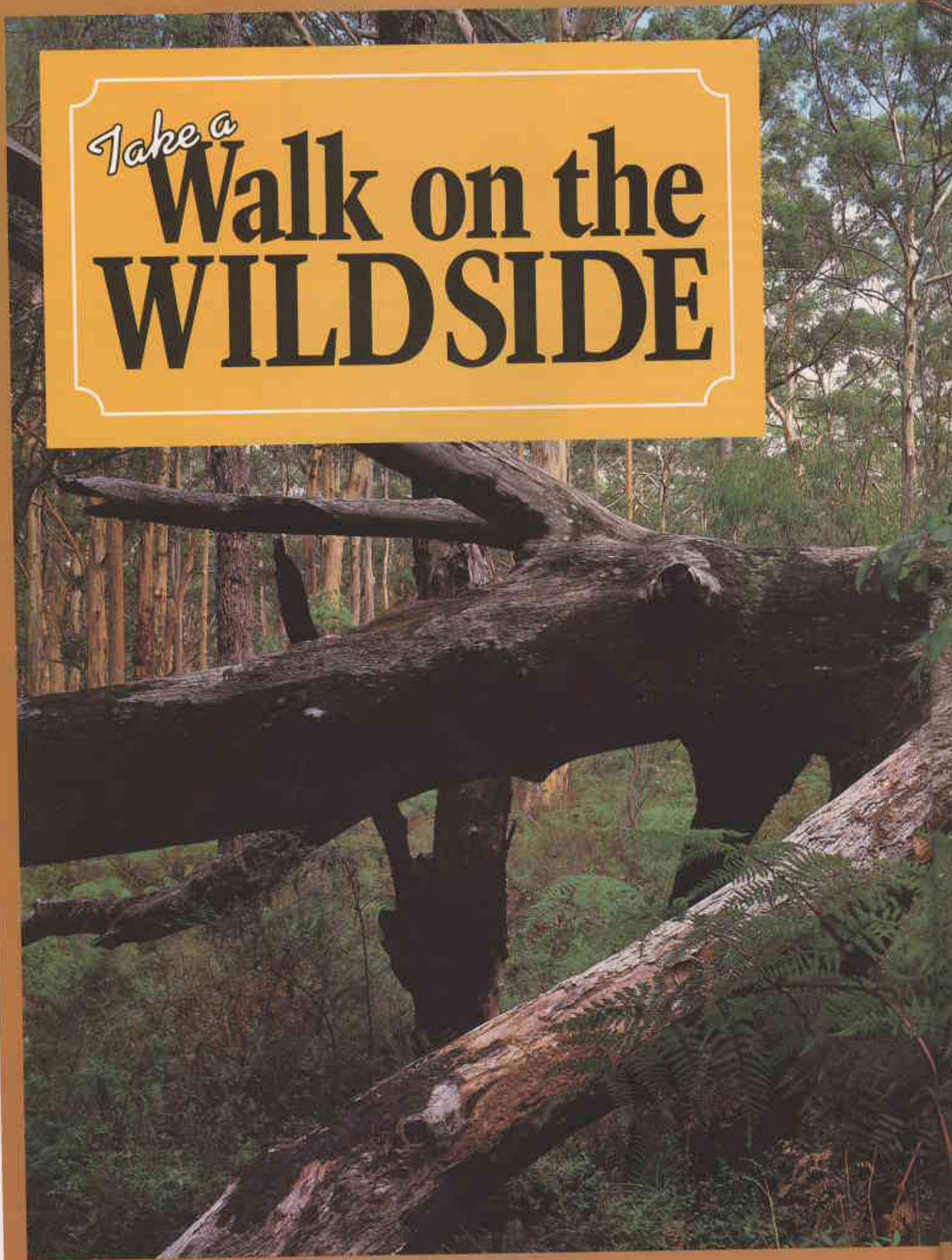


Take a
**Walk on the
WILDSIDE**





A twig snaps sharply underfoot. The sound sends a startled bird, feasting on insects in a tree, rocketing skyward. Hardly a murmur disturbs the crisp, early morning air. Yet, all around there is life. Nearby, a spider swings lazily on its silken trapeze while a thirsty butterfly drinks from nectar-laden flowers. And, overhead, a drifting breeze stirs the trees. Such are the simple pleasures in store for walkers in the Australian bush.

These modern-day explorers follow in the footsteps of the Aborigines, who first roamed this land. For those nomads, however, bushwalking was born of necessity; of the need to hunt and forage for food. Not for them a tin of braised steak and vegetables warmed over a fire! Today, the bush has a different, but equally strong, appeal. It offers people the chance to escape the rigours of everyday life and to enjoy the peace and solitude found only in the wilderness. It is a temptation many find hard to resist, and it is not difficult to understand why.

BUSHWALKING is a healthy pastime which can be enjoyed by people of all ages, whether alone or in a group. It is also free and, perhaps best of all, the experience is never the same. Just as the seasons change, so, too, does the bush. With the sun and the rain come new sights, sounds, colours and smells. Imagine sniffing the scent of wildflowers or hearing the first winter rains pound relentlessly upon earth baked hard in the summer heat.

But such pleasures can't be had from the comfort of an armchair. Little wonder that thousands of people are swapping their slippers or thongs for a pair of sturdy walking shoes and stepping out into the bush.

A feast of walks awaits them. Twisting trails criss-cross much of this vast State and many of them pass through State forest, national parks and nature reserves. Some are short and clearly signposted; ideal for everyone from toddlers to grandparents and, in some cases, disabled people. Others are longer and more challenging and only for experienced hikers.

While public lands must be protected and conserved, they should also be enjoyed,



The Stirling Range in the south of the State, with its spectacular landscape and challenging peaks, is a popular destination for the adventurous. ▲

The bush gives you a chance to slow down, relax and notice details, such as this blossom of red-flowering gum. Photos-Jiri Lochman ►

hence the provision of walk trails. Enabling people to enjoy the bush generates greater environmental awareness which, in turn, encourages people to respect and care for the environment.

This is the thrust of CALM's "minimum impact" bushwalking campaign, which urges walkers to enjoy the environment without damaging it. They are asked to



BUSHWALKER'S CHECKLIST

Compiled by CALM's Recreation, Landscape and Community Education Branch

PRELIMINARIES

1. Have a clear aim for your walk and list the factors which may limit you, such as time, fitness, cost and transport.
2. Select a location for your walk. If you want to visit wild places but are not sure where to go, contact a CALM office for advice.
3. Make some preliminary reconnaissance of the area (e.g. maps, tourist guides and phone calls) to get some idea of campsites, topography and any other useful information.
4. It is courteous and sensible to advise authorities (CALM, shires, Water Authority, Police) about your intended walk.
5. Ensure all walkers in your group are fit and able to complete and enjoy the trip. Avoid large groups if possible - five is a good social number.

FIVE POINT PLAN

1. WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
Conduct detailed reconnaissance, taking into account campsites and alternatives, places of interest and how to get to them, water supplies, hazards and obstacles, and emergency escape routes. Use as many sources as possible. Look at maps and aerial photographs.



Photo-Robert Garvey

draw on local knowledge, contact the authorities, read books or visit the area.

2. WHAT WILL THE WEATHER BE LIKE?

Will it be hot or cold, dry or wet, when you walk? Make sure your equipment suits the weather conditions. For example, you may need waterproof tents, shady hats or thick jumpers. Also consider the best time of day for travelling and the distance you can cover in the daylight available. Plan for the unexpected.

3. WHAT SORT OF COUNTRYSIDE?

Will you travel through steep country and will this affect the daily distance covered? Also consider the vegetation: is it thick, fragile, or are there prickles or poisonous plants enroute? What wildlife are you likely to see? Does it pose any threat? For example, is it snake season?

4. WHAT ROUTE WILL YOU TAKE?

Plan your route, campsites and time schedule before you go and leave a copy with a friend or relative who can raise the alarm if you become overdue.



Bluff Knoll, with a height of 1073 m, is the tallest peak in the Stirling Range National Park and offers a challenge for walkers and climbers. Photo-Alex Bond ▲

take rubbish home, to avoid trampling fragile vegetation by staying on existing paths, to leave wildlife undisturbed, and to camp away from water to avoid pollution. All that should be taken are photographs and inspiration and all that should be left are footprints.

Safety is also important. Planning and attitude are the keys to tackling these issues. The environment can be unpredictable, but, by respecting it and planning carefully walking can be worry free. Planning takes time, but it is time well spent if it makes a walk more enjoyable or, most important, saves someone's life.

Consider the recent case of an elderly walker who ventured into the bush without telling anyone where he was going or when he expected to arrive. A concerned friend, fearing for the walker's safety, contacted CALM several days later - but nobody knew where to start looking for him. As it turned out, there was no cause for alarm, but some proper planning may have spared many people a lot of worry.

Notification is one of the key elements in a five-point planning regime recommended to all walkers. Keeping in mind Murphy's Law - that if something can go wrong, it probably will - planning helps walkers prepare for unexpected events. It will not stop something from going wrong, but it may well turn a potential tragedy into nothing more than a spot of bother. The plan involves asking five simple questions: Where are you

When estimating time, allow one hour for every 5 km on tracks, 3 km through open woodlands, 2 km through forest such as jarrah, and 1/2-1 km through thick forest such as karri. Allow an extra hour for every 500 m you gain, or 1000 m you lose, in altitude. For every five hours of walking, set aside an hour for rests.

Once you have calculated each day's total walking time, add time for cooking, eating, packing and unpacking, and relaxing. Subtract this from the time of sunset to see whether your plans can be achieved in one day.

Consider the question of permits. You may have to get permission to cross private property, stations, mining leases or some nature reserves. Permits to light fires may also be needed.

REGISTRATION In some CALM parks and forests, walker registration posts have been set up. Always stop at these and record your name and details of your plans.

5. WHAT IF THINGS GO WRONG?

When planning your route, select a feature - such as a road - which can be easily reached and identified in an emergency. Draw up a contingency plan and, if something does go wrong, stick to it! Make a list of emergency contact numbers, the names of everyone in the group, and any recurring injuries, illnesses or allergies they may have. Each group member and friends or relatives who care should have a copy of this list. Each walker should also carry a safety kit at all times. A basic safety kit should contain:

- ⊕ waterproof whistle;
- ⊕ compass;
- ⊕ waterproof matches or lighter;
- ⊕ fire starter in a plastic bag (for signal fire in emergency);
- ⊕ pocket knife;
- ⊕ water purification tablets;
- ⊕ clear plastic bag for collecting water (70 litre capacity);
- ⊕ marker tape (to mark position if lost);

- ⊕ 10 cm crepe bandage for snakebites and sprains.

WALK WIND-UP

1. Treat medical problems.
2. Let friends and family know that you have arrived safely.
3. Clean and repair equipment and return any borrowed or hired items.
4. Process films, notes, specimens and organise a reunion.
5. Revise your checklist and equipment list. It will make planning easier the next time.



THE Bibbulmun Track, Western Australia's longest bushwalking track, is 10 years old - and what a decade it has been! The track has been realigned, upgraded and extended since it was officially opened in 1979 and now stretches 650 km from suburban Kalamunda to Walpole on the State's far south coast.

The track is named after an Aboriginal group - the Bibbulmun - which once lived in some of the areas through which it passes. The Bibbulmun people often travelled long distances for tribal



To help walkers follow the Bibbulmun Track, yellow triangles, marked with a coloured Waugal symbol, have been placed at regular intervals on trees and posts.

Photo-Robert Garvey ▲



BIBBULMUN TRACK

meetings and corroborees, quite possibly walking on paths the track follows today. A powerful mythological character of Bibbulmun tradition is the Waugal, an incarnation of the Korrdon Marma man, the creator.

Legend tells that the Waugal existed a long time ago when the Aboriginals had learned to live in harmony with each other and the environment. Travel routes were opened and there was more contact between tribes. Survival knowledge and languages were shared and intertribal marriages took place. However, some people ignored the sacred teachings and fear, distrust and hatred were bred.

The Waugal finally presented himself in a dream to a true-hearted

son of the Bibbulmun, Buerrna, at a time when the tribe had lost its customs and laws and many karrtwarra (deformed) children were born because kinship rules were ignored. Buerrna dreamt that the earth was

But the sign of the Waugal lives on today. The mythical snake appears on the Bibbulmun Track markers, twisting his way through forests, farmland, towns and pockets of undisturbed wilderness. He is a welcome sight to novice walkers, who use him as their guide. Shorter circuit walks have been developed to enable people to park their car, walk for half a day or up to a week, and return to the car without backtracking. For those who prefer to plan their



covered with water and the Waugal was swimming, carrying him, and other tribal members who respected the ancient traditions, away from their drowning kin.

The Waugal eventually left Buerrna and his small band at a sacred rock, instructing them to keep their laws and to hold him as their totem. That rock was Boyagin Rock and there the Waugal, the sacred snake, still sleeps.

Walkers wishing to tackle the wilderness should have a well designed route, be well equipped and have contingency plans in case there is an emergency.

Photo-Murray Simon ▲

The Bibbulmun Track traverses a wide range of wild, quiet places, including karri forest and its attractive understorey, in the heart of the South-West.

Photo-Jiri Lochman ▲

own route, campsites have been placed a day's walk apart (about 15-25 km).

The publication "The Bibbulmun Track Guide", which is packed with information and colour maps, sells for \$14.95 from all CALM offices, tourist bureaux, major bookstores and newsagents, and RAC outlets.



going? What will the weather be like? What sort of countryside will you travel through? What route will you take? What will you do if things go wrong?

These questions are critical. The best way to make sure that nothing important is overlooked is to make a checklist. In this way, a logical and systematic check can be made before each walk (see Planning Checklist).

Reconnaissance is vital and walkers are strongly urged to draw on local knowledge. For example, a bushfire may have been through the area to be visited. A phone call to a CALM office or park ranger, or the shire council, would make intending walkers aware of this. These officers can also provide information about relevant laws, such as fire bans and camping restrictions.

For a complete list of recommended equipment contact: Department of Conservation and Land Management, 50 Hayman Road, COMO 6152 Phone: 367 0333

A final word of advice: allow plenty of time. Take into account the time needed for pitching tents, packing up, eating meals or for simply catching your breath and enjoying nature. Why rush? Isn't that, after all, one of the best things about bushwalking? Slowing down and taking the time not only to leave some footprints, but to soak up some inspiration...☐

KYLIE BYFIELD



Photo-Murray Simon

Clubs & Courses

There are many bushwalking clubs in both metropolitan and country regions. Check the Yellow Pages under 'Clubs'.

CALM runs two courses in association with the Ministry of Sport and Recreation and the Ministry of Education.

1. A week-long expedition skills course combines theory with practice. Lessons on navigation, equipment and the like are complemented by practical instruction and a camping expedition. For details, contact the Ministry of Sport and Recreation's Outdoor Recreation Branch on 421 4666 or the Pemberton Camp School on (097) 761 277.

2. A bushcraft course, which focuses on survival skills, is held every March and November. Weeknight lessons teach basic survival and commonsense attitudes and these skills are put into practice during a weekend bush session. For details, contact CALM on 367 0333.

A variety of courses are also offered by commercial operators. Check the Yellow Pages under 'Outdoor &/or Bushcraft Equipment & Services'.

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LANDSCOPE

VOLUME 4 NO 4 WINTER EDITION 1989



Effluent disposal ponds from industry disfigure an idyllic strip of coastal land. But restoration work and a new conservation park are planned for the Leschenault Peninsula, near Bunbury. Turn to p.8.



Wood that was once only suitable for firewood can now be used to make high grade furniture. Find out how on p.24.



With spring approaching, the bush beckons...but without proper planning your walk could turn to disaster. See p.40.



A spectacular landscape, with an astounding array of plants and animals lies inland from Jurien Bay. Read about the Mt Lesueur area on p.28.



A population explosion of coral-eating snails threatens the unique reefs of Ningaloo Marine Park. How does CALM plan to counter their attack? See p.14.

COVER



In W.A.'s far north, Aboriginal rangers with ties to land now in national parks draw on the traditional wisdom of their people for use in Park management. Photo-Robert Garvey

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