

**W e s t e r n
A u s t r a l i a**

is a series of deserts bordered by the temperate or tropical fringe where most of us live.

The vast desert regions include the flat limestone plains of the Nullarbor and great salt lakes such as Lake Carnegie.

There are undulating plains of red sand dominated by spinifex or loamy soils dominated by wattle scrub, arid ranges of the Pilbara and central Australia and the sandstone ranges of the Great Sandy Desert and southern Kimberley.

This harsh dry land is largely unvisited by non-Aboriginal Australians. When rain comes, a rich and diverse assemblage of plants transform the landscape into a spectacular wildflower garden.

**An unusual yellow daisy (*Myriocephalus guerinae*).
Photo - Jiri Lochman ◀◀◀**

***E. youngiana* has the largest flowers of any eucalypt.
Photo - Tony Start ◀◀**

***Heliotropium* sp. is a widespread tropical desert genus.
Photo - Tony Start ◀**

**Ghost gum at Gill Pinnacle in the far east; this area will be covered with colourful wildflowers with the coming of the rains.
Photo - Robert Garvey ◀**



S u m m e r

rains bring an abundance of grasses (over 100 species occur in these deserts) and winter rains promote the everlastings, vetches and mulla-mullas.



The rare event of summer rains followed immediately by winter rains synchronises the flowering of all the annuals and shrubs of the desert. The land is ablaze with pinks, mauves and yellows.



There are colourful poverty bushes (eremophilas), wattles and cassias, vetches (Swainsona, Sturt's desert pea), mulla mullas (Ptilotus), goodenias and daisies (everlastings and shrubby daisies).

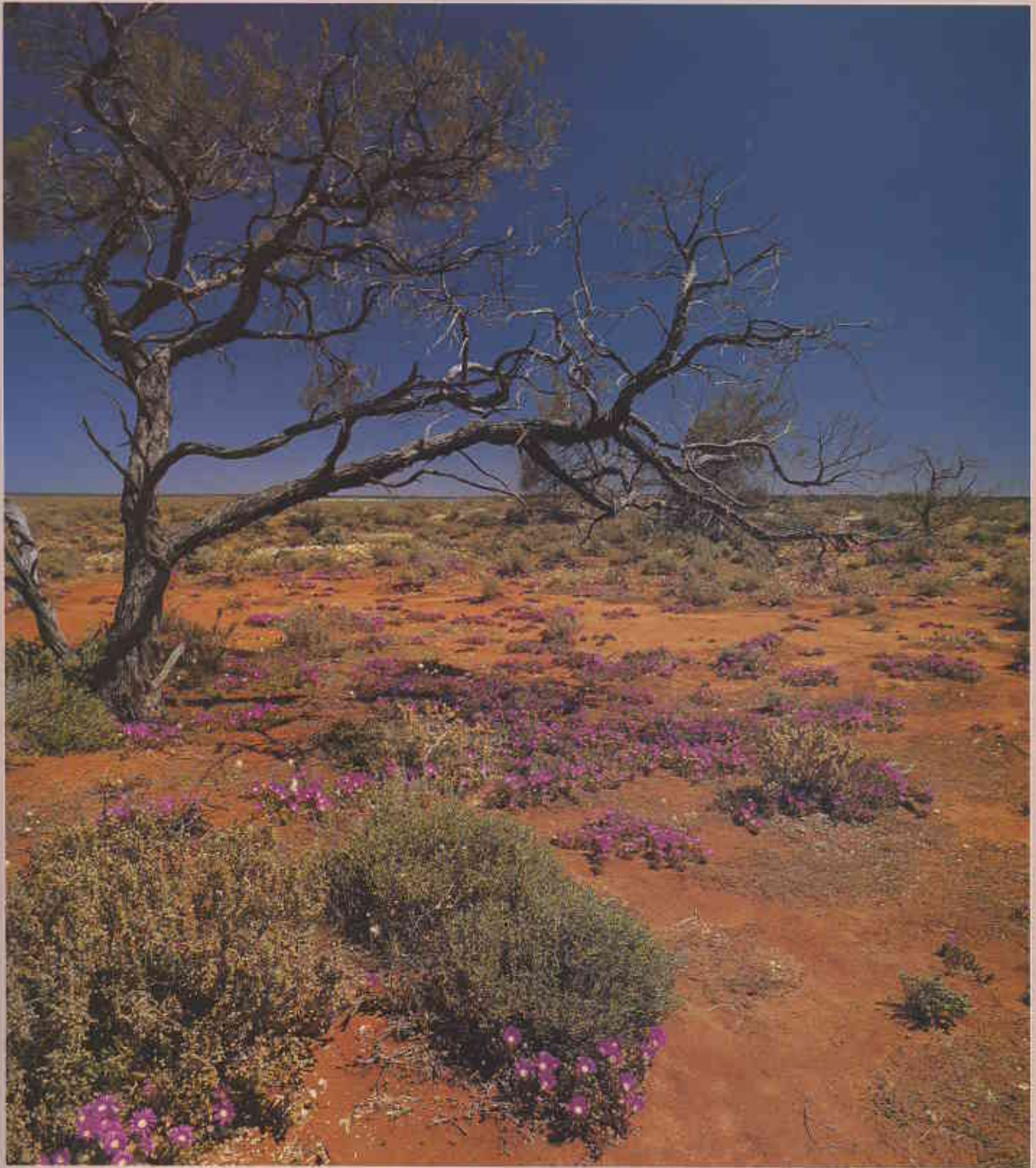


Cut-leaf goodenia (*Goodenia pinnatifida*).
Photo - Marie Lochman ◀

The Cape Range form of Sturt's desert pea (*Clianthus formosus*) lacks the black centre typical of this plant elsewhere.
Photo - Robert Garvey ◀◀

Eremophila duttoni (right); mulla mulla (*Ptilotus exaltatus*) and pear-fruited mallee (*Eucalyptus pyriformis*).
Photos - Michael Morcombe ▼▼





Salt-tolerant pigface grows around the margins of Lake Moore, not far from Payne's Find.
 Photo - Marie Lochman ▲

Starflower (*Calitrix carinata*). Members of this genus are widespread in desert and Wheatbelt areas.
 Photo - Andrew Burbidge ◀◀

Many mammals and reptiles of the desert live in spinifex hummocks, while some birds eat the seeds.
 Photo - Jiri Lochman ◀



LANDSCOPE

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Dolphins, whales and seals frequently strand along the WA coast. Find out who helps them and what they do on p. 10.



Powerful forces have formed the rocks and land surface of WA over billions of years. See p. 48.



Why are the thousands of feral camels that roam inland Australia the scourge of the desert? Turn to p. 22.



Explore the fascinating subterranean worlds deep beneath the earth on p. 28.



Inlets and rivers, towering karri and tingle forests, rugged coastline and remote wilderness areas - Walpole-Nornalup National Park has it all. See p. 15.

C O V E R

Australian sea-lion (Neophoca cinerea). Photo - Nick Gales



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