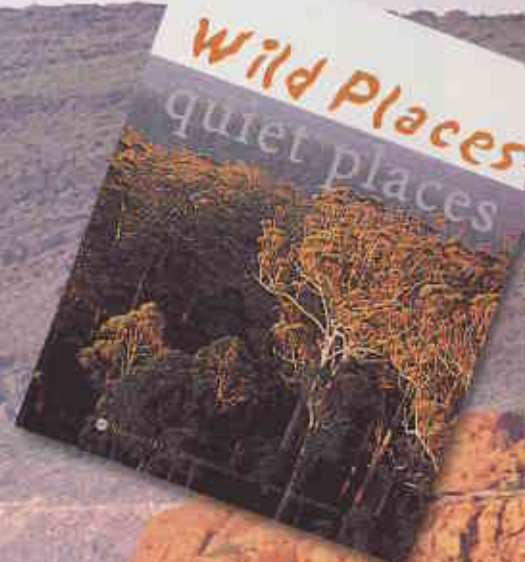






# THE BEST OF THE SOUTH-WEST

Looking for wild, quiet places? A special book shows you the best of Western Australia's south-west.



BY CAROLYN THOMSON-DANS



**M**any of Western Australia's tourism 'icons' are in national parks of the south-west. The scenic coastline of Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, Bluff Knoll in the Stirling Range National Park, the Natural Bridge and Blowholes of Torndirrup National Park near Albany, the Tree Top Walk in the Walpole-Nornalup National Park and the Gloucester Tree in Gloucester National Park at Pemberton are just a few that spring immediately to mind. The majority of people who live in the State have visited many of these places.

But how many are familiar with the other, lesser known wonders of the south-west? If you want to seek these beauty spots out, look no further than *Wild Places*, *Quiet Places*, a book that has just been released by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

**Previous page**

The coast near Canal Rocks, south of Yallingup, in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.  
Photo - Jiri Lochman

**Below:** The Penguin Experience discovery centre on Penguin Island.  
Photo - Michael James/CALM

**REWORKING OF AN OLD FAVOURITE**

This publication is actually a reworking of an old favourite. The original *Wild Places* was first published in 1988 and was reprinted three times due to enormous public demand. It is believed to be the biggest-selling publication on Western Australia ever produced.

However, additional conservation areas and new developments such as the Tree Top Walk at Walpole demanded a completely new, rewritten, redesigned (by award-winning CALM designer Sue Marais) and rephotographed version covering a similar, but expanded, area. Like the old one, the new book is a guide to the natural attractions of the south-west and the major towns en route to these areas. National parks, marine parks, major nature reserves and State forests are all featured in this 144-page book. Lavish colour photographs and detailed maps, as well as descriptions of good walks and other activities (for instance, caving, diving and much more), will motivate readers to explore these areas for themselves.

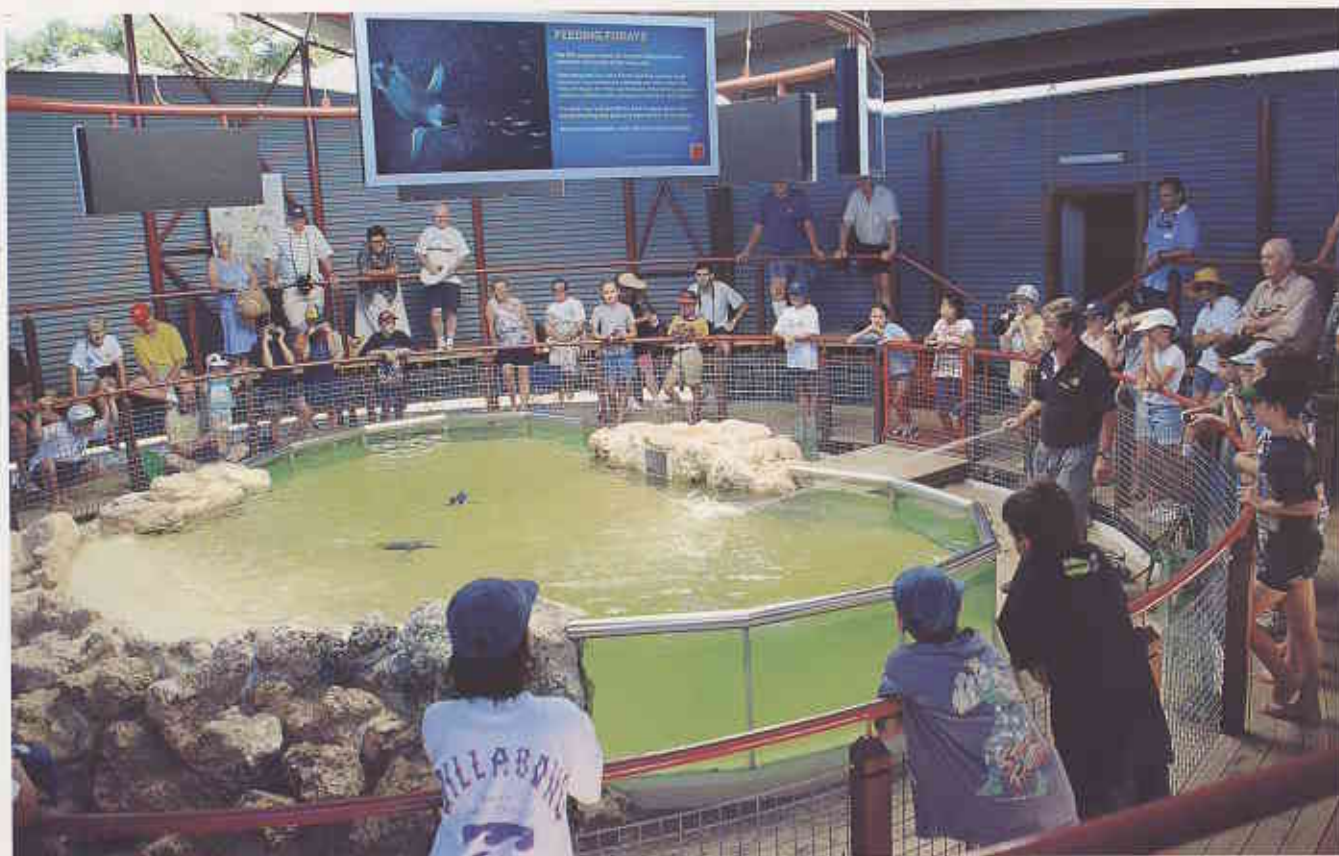
A new section covering Woodlands (Narrogin to Kalgoorlie) has been added

to the five original sections of The Jarrah Forest (Dwellingup to Collie), the Limestone Coast, The Karri Forests (Manjimup to Walpole), Mountains and Sea Cliffs (Denmark to Albany) and The Vast South-East (Bremer Bay to Eucla). The Limestone Coast has been extended to cover the area from Rockingham to Augusta, as Penguin Island, the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park and the Leschenault Peninsula Conservation Park were not included in the first version. We also listened to our readers, who have told us over the years that they didn't like the landscape (horizontal) format of the first book, so the new *Wild Places* has a portrait (upright) format.

But where are these little-known beauty spots we have promised you? We only have room here to describe a few.

**PENGUIN ISLAND**

Penguin Island, just 42 kilometres from the heart of Perth, has breathtaking marine and coastal scenery. It supports the largest colony of little penguins on the west coast. The small 12.5-hectare island is less than 700 metres offshore from the growing regional centre of Rockingham. A ferry service operates between the island and mainland.







The island and the surrounding waters of the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park provide a variety of recreational opportunities for visitors of all ages. You can enjoy picnic areas, lookouts, pristine beaches and the beauty of the island itself. Snorkelling, scuba diving, swimming, surfing and exploring the island's network of boardwalks and walkways are popular pursuits.

A specialised viewing centre (The Penguin Experience) has been established on the island for visitors to see the little penguins at close range during the day. The public can watch little penguins frolicking in the water and learn about how these little diving birds live and behave in the wild. Entry into the centre is included in the cost of the ferry ride or tour, which leaves from the mainland.

### HONEYMOON POOL, WELLINGTON DAM

The hilly area that surrounds Collie is wonderfully scenic. Lush jarrah forest surrounds the spectacular Wellington

**Above left:** Meekadarabee Falls, said to be the 'bathing place of the moon', in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. Photo - Marie Lochman

**Above right:** Invertebrates, such as this seven-armed brittle star, abound in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, offshore from Rockingham. Photo - Peter & Margy Nicholas/Lochman Transparencies

Dam, in the Darling Range. Gravel forest tracks suitable for two-wheel-drive vehicles wind along the valley to a number of attractive picnic and camping areas on the banks of the Collie River. The river is characterised by wide deep pools, rapids and massive rock outcrops. Marroning, fly fishing for redfin perch and rainbow trout, canoeing, bushwalking, camping, picnicking and sightseeing are popular.

The jewel of Wellington Dam is Honeymoon Pool, a picnic area along the Collie River that lives up to its name. At night friendly, but rarely seen, quenda and chuditch emerge to forage around the camp.



### MEEKADARABEE FALLS

In the heart of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, a walktrail leads from the historic homestead at Ellensbrook to the beautiful and surprising Meekadarabee Falls. The trail and all facilities are universally accessible.

Meekadarabee Falls were known to Aboriginal people as 'the bathing place of the moon'. According to legend, a girl called Mitanne would spend her time exploring caves and strange places. Sometimes a boy called Nobel would accompany her. One evening, Mitanne hurried back to camp and told her mother she had found Meekadarabee, the Moon's bathing place. Her grandmother was angry, for to gaze on *Meeka* in the water brings death and sorrow. Mitanne had been promised to a tribal elder, but eloped with Nobel. They lived happily at Meekadarabee, hunting at night to avoid being found. The elder sent warriors to find Nobel and kill him. One night he stayed out hunting much longer than usual and Mitanne found



him speared through the body. He died in her arms. She was taken back to the elder and forced to do all the hard work around camp until she collapsed and died.

These small but delightful falls are at their best in winter and spring and should not be missed.

### MOUNT FRANKLAND

Not far north of Walpole and the amazing Tree Top Walk is a much lesser known but utterly charming attraction. In fact, when we were searching for a visually stunning image to use on the front cover of *Wild Places, Quiet Places*, we couldn't go past the view from Mount Frankland, in Mount Frankland National Park, where stately karri forest stretches for as far as the eye can see. Look in the other direction and you may (if it is a clear day) see the Stirling and Porongurup Ranges and Chatham Island, near Walpole. What a place!

### BLACK POINT, D'ENTRECASTEAUX NATIONAL PARK

The vessels *Espérance* and *Recherche*, under the command of Admiral Bruny D'Entrecasteaux, sailed east along the western coast of New Holland in December 1792, and reported that the land between Cape Leeuwin and Point D'Entrecasteaux

**Cathedral Rock near Windy Harbour in D'Entrecasteaux National Park.**  
Photo - Jiri Lochman

was harsh and arid, with no sign of habitation. Yet they had just sailed past an area through which Aboriginal people migrated to hunt and fish, and past the Blackwood and Warren Rivers, whose upper catchments have become the most productive agricultural land in the region.

As if trying to emulate the early French navigators, tourist buses and large numbers of visitors usually bypass D'Entrecasteaux National Park, which stretches for 130 kilometres from Black Point near Augusta to Clifty Head west of Walpole, and extends inland for between five and 20 kilometres. Essentially a wilderness area largely inaccessible to two-wheel-drive vehicles, the park protects isolated beach campsites and wild coastal vistas.

The basalt columns west of Black Point, a good fishing and surfing spot, form one of the most stunning landforms in this sprawling and remote park. This feature originated from a volcanic lava flow, some 135 million years ago. The formation resulted from the slow cooling of a deep pool of lava, similar to the development of mud cracks. In the process of it cracking and

shrinking, columns were formed perpendicular to the surface. The result was a close-packed series of hexagonal columns, now slowly being eroded by the sea.

### WILLIAM BAY NATIONAL PARK

Granite boulders and rocky shelves form much of the coastline between Greens Pool and Madfish Bay, extending 100 metres or more out to sea, and creating a reef that bears the brunt of heavy seas. Inside the reef, sheltered pools, channels and granite terraces create a fascinating seascape for beachcombing. At Greens Pool, a sheltered beach is ideal for swimming in summer. The granitic rocks are well weathered and rounded, providing spectacular coastal scenery, such as at Elephant Rocks.

### TWO PEOPLES BAY

Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve is well known for its rare and secretive animals, such as the endangered noisy scrub-bird and Gilbert's potoroo. But the breathtaking beauty of the bay, its beaches, islands and tumbled granite boulders is enough to draw you to this location.

The chance to learn about the area's rare animals, and its fascinating history



of early mariners and whalers, in the newly built Two Peoples Bay Visitor Centre is an added bonus. Plan to spend the entire day in the reserve to explore it properly. It is an ideal location for picnicking, walking, birdwatching, beachcombing, swimming and snorkelling. You can launch small boats off the white sandy beach.

## WOODY ISLAND

Woody Island Nature Reserve is one of more than 100 islands in the magnificent Archipelago of the Recherche, which stretches for more than 200 kilometres along the State's southern coast, offshore from Esperance.

Visitors to Woody Island can either take a day trip from Esperance or camp overnight. Masks and snorkels can be

hired at Woody Island for underwater viewing of fish, coral and wrecks. A glass-bottomed boat operates for those who aren't keen to get their feet wet. Other activities include bushwalking, diving, fishing from two jetties, swimming or just relaxing and soaking up the peace and serenity of this unique island hideaway. Kangaroos, sea eagles, honeyeaters, finches,

shearwaters, geckoes and other lizards are all abundant on the island. Shady trees include eucalypts, melaleucas and sheoaks, and there are sheltered sparkling bays.

The catamaran *MV Seabreeze* stops at the island for morning tea and a short guided walk on its daily three-hour Bay of Isles Wildlife Cruise. During this highly recommended



**Right:** East Mount Barren, in the Fitzgerald River National Park.  
Photo - Bill Belson/Lochman  
Transparencies

**Below:** The campground at Lucky Bay, in Cape Le Grand National Park.  
Photo - Jiri Lochman





cruise, dolphins usually surf in the wake of the boat and you can gain excellent views of photogenic Australian sea lions and New Zealand fur seals. Sea eagles and Cape Barren geese can usually be seen.

## CAPE LE GRAND NATIONAL PARK

People who visit Lucky Bay, 57 kilometres from Esperance in the Cape Le Grand National Park, will indeed consider themselves lucky. This bay has one of the most scenic beaches in the Esperance region (an area considered by many to have some of the best beaches in the world) and provides a delightful snorkel or scuba dive in a very sheltered area.

Be prepared to spend a few days in Cape Le Grand National Park to experience all it has to offer. Despite its unappealing name, Hellfire Bay is

**I** The bobtail skink is common in the areas covered by *Wild Places, Quiet Places*.

Photo - Jiri Lochman

exceptionally pretty and is worth a visit and at least a short walk. Almost obligatory is the hard, two-hour walk up Frenchmans Peak. This peak, in the western part of the park, was named by surveyor Alexander Forrest in 1870, because its shape was said to resemble a man wearing a Frenchman's cap. The views from near the top are outstanding. Serious hikers may undertake a 15-kilometre (one-way) Coastal Trail from Le Grand Beach to Rossiter Bay, via Hellfire Bay, Thistle Cove and Lucky Bay.

## TREADING IN OLD FOOTPRINTS

Perhaps you've been to some of the tourism icons mentioned at the beginning of this article. You might be surprised if you revisited them today. Years ago, people would go to the forest near Nornalup to see a giant hollowed-out tingle, then follow a path to see another dozen or so big tingle trees. Opened in 1996, the award-winning Valley of the Giants development includes a Tree Top Walk

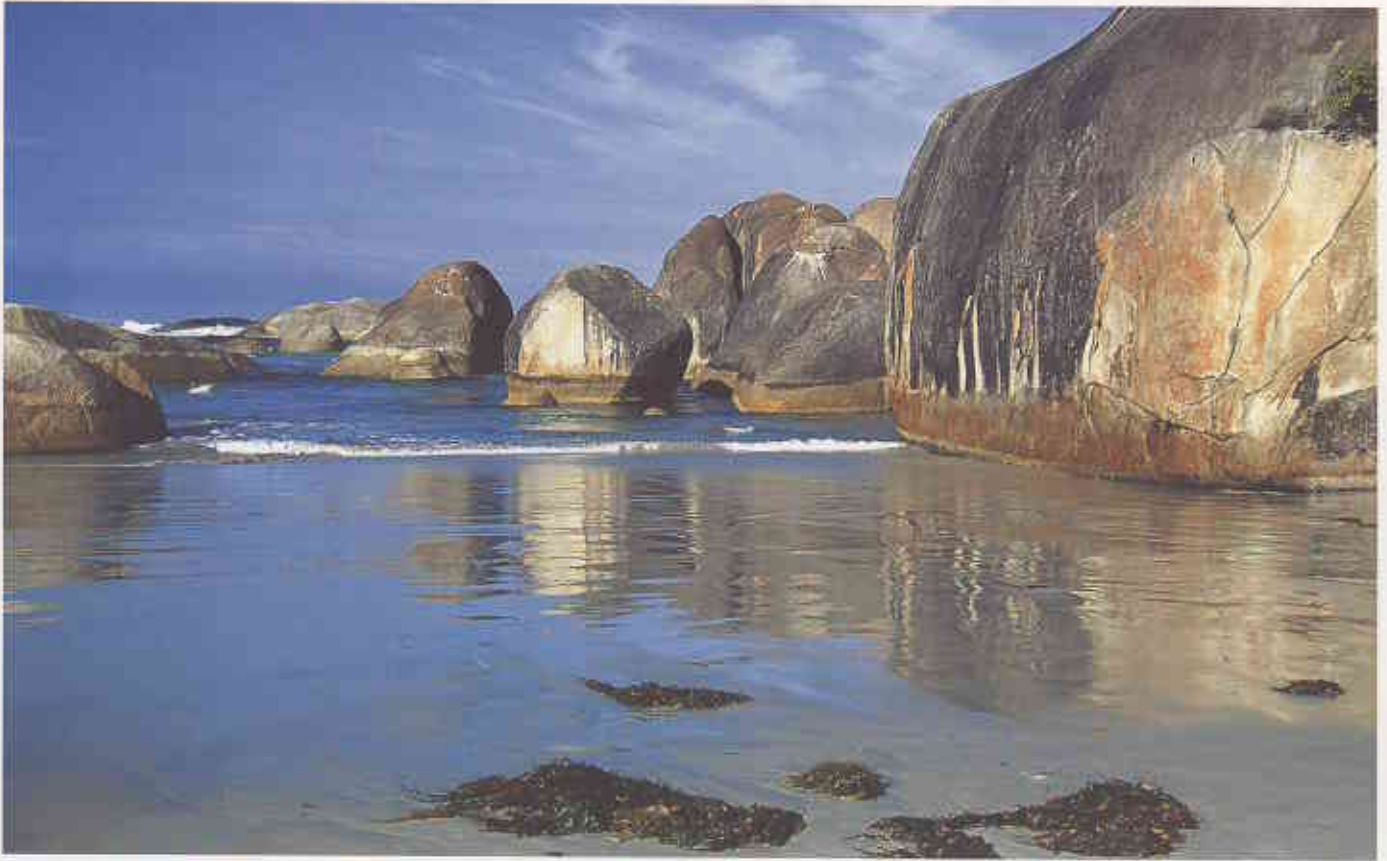
rising almost 40 metres above the forest floor and a walktrail that travels right through some of the natural hollows of the old tingle trees.

Dwellingup now boasts a Forest Heritage Centre in a unique leaf-shaped building that houses WA's only specialist woodworking school, displays that bring the forest to life and a superb fine-wood gallery. Outside, visitors can walk among the tops of trees on the forest canopy walk, wander along forest trails, or explore a traditional Aboriginal mia mia (shelter) and an early timber getter's hut. At Yalgorup National Park, a well-designed boardwalk allows visitors to view unique rock-like structures, known as thrombolites, on the edge of Lake Clifton.

Beedelup National Park has been redeveloped with outstanding boardwalks and new bridges, including a swing bridge. Dryandra Woodland now has a 25-kilometre Sounds of Dryandra Drive Trail, with signposts at which you stop your car and tune your radio to 100 FM to hear







stories about the area. These new developments have been designed by CALM to enhance the experiences of visitors to WA's national parks.

### FURTHER OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

These are just a few of the best places in the south-west that I have been to. But there is so much more to see and do. I still have a yearning to visit Lake Jasper in D'Entrecasteaux National Park, West Cape Howe National Park, Waychinicup National Park, Peak Charles National Park, Baxter Cliffs in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve and Eucla National Park. All of these places are also covered in the new book. So one day, on my next real holiday, I'll pack up the car, get a housesitter and experience some more *Wild Places, Quiet Places*.



**Above:** Elephant Rocks, at William Bay National Park.

Photo – Colin Kerr

**Above right:** Common mountain bell (*Darwinia lejostyla*).

Photo – Babs & Bert Wells/CALM

Carolyn Thomson-Dans is a Special Projects Officer in CALM's Corporate Relations Division. She has written and edited numerous CALM books and other publications (in close co-operation with many other CALM personnel and experts from other agencies) including the new version of *Wild Places, Quiet Places*.

*Wild Places, Quiet Places* is available for \$19.95 from all good bookstores, CALM offices and at our online Bookstore at <http://www.calm.wa.gov.au>



Winner of the 1998 Alex Harris Medal for excellence in science and environment reporting.

# LANDSCOPE

VOLUME FIFTEEN NUMBER 3, AUTUMN 2000



One of the best selling books from CALM has recently been fully revised. See 'The Best of the South-West' on page 10.



A new weapon against the scourge of feral cats was recently tested on Hermite Island. See 'Isle of Cats' on page 18.



In the far north of WA, there is evidence of not one, but two cosmic impacts. See 'Cosmic Impacts in the Kimberley' on page 28.



Satellite imagery is helping us to fight maritime pollution. See 'Looking Through the Surface' on page 41.



A unique network links volunteer groups and regional herbaria with the CALM flora database. See 'Name That Plant' on page 35.

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Western Australia is aptly described as the Wildflower State. Some 12,500 different species are known from the wild, with a huge range of colours, shapes and characters. But many species once found are lost again, and it's always an event when a species thought to be extinct is rediscovered. See 'Lost Jewels in the Bush' on page 23.



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