



Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve

Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve, on Western Australia's south coast, provides a haven for 12 threatened fauna species as well as a range of other land and sea-dwelling animals, and a wealth of native flora.

Above Little Beach, at the north-eastern side of Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve.
Photo – David Bettini

Opposite page

Above right Noisy scrub-bird, one of the reserve's special residents.

Above far right Fairy Rocks, at the southern end of Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve.

Photos – Jiri Lochman

Right Cape Vancouver.
Photo – Bill Belson/Lochman
Transparencies

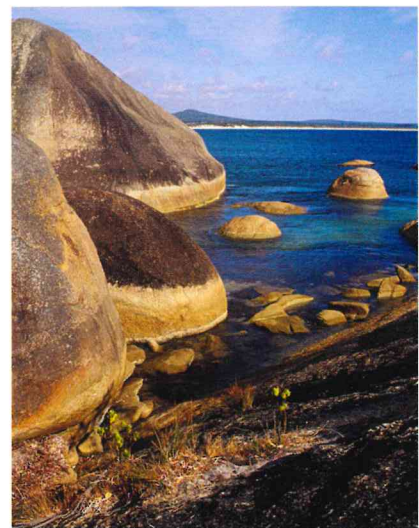
Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve lies between the granites of Mount Gardner and Mount Manypeaks. The high, rocky hills around Mount Gardner form a headland on the south side of the bay, protecting it from the heavy Southern Ocean swells. The area has unspoilt scenery and was gazetted to protect a special colony of noisy scrub-birds (*Atrichornis clamosus*) which were presumed extinct until 1961 when they were rediscovered in the area. Another exciting rediscovery was made in 1994 when Elizabeth Sinclair and Adrian Wayne set traps for quokkas (*Setonix brachyurus*) and caught a Gilbert's potoroo (*Potorous gilbertii*) (see 'Lost and Found', *LANDSCOPE*, Autumn 1995).

There are currently fewer than 100 known Gilbert's potoroos in two wild populations—one on the slopes on Mount Gardner and the other on nearby Bald Island. The Bald Island population was established as part of the Department of Environment and

Conservation's (DEC's) translocation program to protect the species against being wiped out from a single catastrophic event such as a bushfire. DEC has also fenced off a 380-hectare enclosure for potoroos near Mount Manypeaks, outside the reserve, to exclude foxes and feral cats.

Other natural residents

As well as the noisy scrub-bird, Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve is home to nearly 190 other bird species. Seabirds include great-winged petrels (*Pterodroma macroptera*), flesh-footed shearwaters (*Puffinus carneipes*) and little penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) that breed on Coffin Island. Others include the trans-equatorial waders and some nomadic species of honeyeaters, lorikeets and paradelotes, which appear in response to seasonal blossom. Most, however, are residents that breed within the reserve. The threatened Australasian bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*), the western heathy subspecies of the western whipbird (*Psophodes nigrogularis*)



and the western bristlebird (*Dasyornis longirostris*) also occur in the reserve, further increasing its importance for bird conservation.

Mammal life is also abundant, with 28 species recorded in the reserve. The animals that occur there are typical of the wetter areas of the south coast with many species at or near the eastern limit of their range. In addition to the Gilbert's potoroo, the reserve is home to the quokka, honey possum (*Tarsipes rostratus*), quenda (*Isoodon obesulus*) and western ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirus occidentalis*). DEC's Western Shield fox baiting is playing a vital role in protecting these species.

Sea life is also prolific, with marine mammals such as the common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*), striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*) and bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*) all occurring in the nearby waters. Southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) are regular visitors and are renowned for the tendency of females to remain close to shore with their calves during calving season. Regularly seen are New Zealand fur seals (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) and Australian sea lions (*Neophoca cinerea*), which often haul out on Coffin Island. Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) are frequent visitors.

The variety of landforms and soils found on the reserve supports a diversity of vegetation. At least 33 plant communities have been identified, including 622 vascular plant species. In addition, 441 species of fungi have been recorded. Gilbert's potoroos are heavily reliant on underground fungi for food and produce prolific diggings in their hunt for truffles.

Exploring the park

There is a visitor centre in the park, complete with interpretive material on the park and its flora and fauna, particularly Gilbert's potoroo and the noisy scrub-bird. Toilets are available at the centre, and a picnic area and gas barbecues are nearby.

Walk trails leave from the visitor centre, including one via a coastal lookout to Little Beach. Those with four-wheel-drive vehicles can set out on Sinker Reef Track to Sinker Reef Beach.



park facts

Where is it? 35 kilometres east of Albany.

Total area: 4,745 hectares.

What to do: Sightseeing, nature study, swimming, bushwalking, fishing.

Facilities: Toilets, visitor centre, gas barbecues, picnic area. There is no drinking water available in the reserve.

Nearest DEC office: South Coast Regional Office, 120 Albany Highway, Albany, phone (08) 9842 4500.

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