



D'Entrecasteaux National Park

A beautiful but unforgiving landscape, D'Entrecasteaux National Park is one of the most remote and pristine natural areas on Western Australia's south coast. With 130km of coastline, a rich cultural heritage, fascinating geology and a patchwork of vegetation types, it has long been a significant place for those who live in its embrace. Now it is gaining popularity among visitors who are seeking a rugged, hassle-free holiday.

Above The beautiful Windy Harbour beach.
Photo – Alicia Dyson

Above right Kite flying at Yeagarup Beach.
Photo – Wendy Eiby

Opposite page

Top The spectacular coastal cliffs.
Photo – Damon Anison

Left Black basalt columns at Black Point.
Photo – Jiri Lochman

Right Bushwalking is a great way to explore the diverse vegetation types within the park.
Photo – Alicia Dyson

D'Entrecasteaux National Park is steeped in rich history. Aboriginal people are believed to have lived in the area for at least 6000 years as it provided an abundance of food and fresh water. The park contains a number of culturally significant sites, including quarry, mythological and burial sites, as well as stone artefacts and fish traps. Lake Jasper, on the park's western side, is particularly important as there is evidence that the area was used as a major camp site. The place remains significant to the Piblemen Noongar people and a number of sites are listed on the National Register of Aboriginal Sites.

The area claimed a leaf in the European history books when, in 1792, Admiral Bruny D'Entrecasteaux led the largest scientific expedition of the 18th century

to explore Australia. His party consisted of two ships – *La Recherche* and *L'Esperance* – which carried 16 scientists from the French Society of Natural History. The party was uninterested in the area and it remained undeveloped, until the first farmers began settling there in the 1850s. The area had a number of uses, including pastoralism and mining before being gazetted as a national park in 1980. The gazettal came after local Forest Department staff developed the initial proposal for a coastal park.

MODERN-DAY TREASURE

Since being declared a national park, D'Entrecasteaux has become entrenched in the itineraries of people travelling to the south coast. A new development at Black Point in the park's far-west offers an expanded camping area and facilities



such as toilets, parking and a shelter. This has been made possible thanks to the State Government's \$21 million *Parks for People* investment. The area is famed for its magnificent black basalt columns which originated from a volcanic lava flow some 135 million years ago. Upgrades to the lookout at Surfers Cove provide spectacular views across the Southern Ocean where

you might spot a whale passing on its migration north to warmer waters or south after calving, or seals and sea lions playing in the water off the point. This is a much-loved spot for fishers who are hoping to catch local salmon, and surfers chasing some waves.

Camping on the coast is possible at Banksia Camp, while more sheltered sites

are available inland at Carey Brook, Crystal Springs and Leaning Marri camp sites. A number of informal sites are also available within the park – perfect for people who are looking for a truly remote experience.

Local people have a long-held affection for this special place that surrounds their lives literally and figuratively. While many visitors to the park battle city traffic on their

Parks for People D'Entrecasteaux National Park



way to and from their homes, members of the community of Windy Harbour drive through the spectacular national park. They have an affinity for the park and are involved in a partnership with Parks and Wildlife to manage it.

EXPLORING THE PARK

One of the most special features about D'Entrecasteaux National Park is its diversity of vegetation types; in the space of a few kilometres, visitors transition between tall karri forest, to sections of jarrah and healthlands, before reaching coastal scrub. If you visit in spring and early summer, you will be treated to a spectacular wildflower display of species such as tree hovea (*Hovea elliptica*), coral vine (*Kennedia coccinea*) and clematis (*Clematis pubescens*). Visitors to the park can explore this natural phenomenon on foot or on one of the many walk trails – including the Bibbulmun

Track – which winds through the park on its way to Denmark. For four-wheel-drive enthusiasts, a network of tracks offers a more adventurous experience. Much of the park is limited to four-wheel-drive access and some tracks may be closed in wetter months to reduce the spread of dieback or in the warmer months due to bushfire management. A number of tour operators offer activities in the park, including boat cruises and eco-tourism experiences. Details of these operators can be found through local visitor centres.

Top right Camping at Broke Inlet.
Photo – Cliff Winfield

Above right Lake Jasper, in the western side part of the park.
Photo – Bron Anderson/Parks and Wildlife

Do it yourself

Where is it? The park stretches 130km from Black Point, 35km east of Augusta to 10km west of Walpole. It lies 8km from Northcliffe and 40km from Pemberton.

What to do: Camping, bushwalking, nature observation, boating, fishing, surfing, beachcombing.

Facilities: Camp shelters, toilets, lookouts, four-wheel-drive tracks, walk trails.

Nearest Parks and Wildlife offices: Donnelly District Office, Kennedy Street, Pemberton, phone (08) 9776 1207. Frankland District Office, South Coast Highway, Walpole, phone (08) 9840 0400.

parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au

