



The gamification of exploring and the learning about the outdoors, spending time in nature and staying healthy is increasing in popularity. Apps like Nature Play's Nature Passport, Seek and iNaturalist encourage discovery and learning about nature. Fitness apps such as Strava and Peloton promote friendly competition between runners and cyclists, fueled by quantifiable statistics and data. Making a game out of exploring and learning about nature and achieving fitness goals has now made its way to trail users, with the launch of Trails WA new website.

by Mike Wood and Katie Stevens

GAME ON

Explore and score
on WA's trails



There was a time when video games were thought to perpetuate a sedentary lifestyle—they were seen to be addictive and were discouraged, especially among the younger people. Over the years, games have evolved and how we interact with technology has also evolved. Today, games and apps use gamification to motivate users with badges, leaderboards, rewards and challenges—and draw on our love for competition to help us spend more time outdoors, learn more about nature and achieve our fitness goals.

The latest generation of websites, apps and games can help connect people with nature, inspire you to learn more and to help keep users fit and healthy.

Over the past three years there has been a massive increase in investment by the State Government to develop and improve trails in Western Australia and Trails WA recently launched a new website, hosting information on nearly 800 trails.

GAME ON

Utilising the experience of apps like Seek, iNaturalist, Fitbit and Strava, the Trails WA website has a ‘gamification’ component, where users can create their own profile and earn points and badges after completing trails in WA.

Badges such as ‘Tall Peak’ or ‘Bluff Knoll’ are earned by completing trails to get to the ‘Weekend Warrior’ or ‘Trail Blazer’ status, encouraging trail users to spend more time outdoors on the trails.

The intuitive website assists users to explore trails by type, region, difficulty, duration or experience and importantly allows maps to be downloaded that can be used offline as well as create a list of favourite trails and a corresponding ‘to-do’ list.

The most popular filters are ‘Dog Friendly Trails’ and ‘Wheelchair Accessible Trails’. It’s important to note that dogs are not allowed in national parks and some other conservation reserves so it’s always a good idea to check first.

WHICH TRAIL

Just over half the trails on the website are managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, with the rest managed by local government or private trail providers.

WA is the only state that has a one-stop-shop for trails on one website. Other states have trail information on state- and-local government and private sites separately, which makes for a challenging planning experience.

WA trail experts have selected the ‘Top Trails’ on the site.

Trails are a sustainable way to encourage active nature-based recreation and tourism and WA has an incredible array of trails.

Some trail destinations are grouped as networks so you can search for trails in places like the Dryandra Woodlands, Margaret River, Murray Valley Trails near Dwellingup or the Wambenger Trails in Collie.



Previous page
Main Charles Knife Gorge, Cape Range National Park.

This page
Top Rewarding views from Bluff Knoll in Stirling Range.
Photos – Tourism WA

Inset Badge icons—waterfalls, gorge, tall peak—trail users can earn on the new site.

Above Cycling on Boonara Road as part of the Munda Biddi Trail.
Photo – DBCA

While hiking and mountain biking trails are quite well known, there are 11 different types of trails for visitors to enjoy.

You can explore by ‘Trail Type’ on the Trails WA site, to find the adventure that best suits you.



4WD trails

The Gibb River Road in the Kimberley is an incredible 4WD experience.

Wyndham

Kununurra

Derby

Broome

Fitzroy Crossing

Port Hedland

Karratha

Onslow

Exmouth

Karijini



2WD trails

The stunning Karijini can be explored by two-wheel drive.



Snorkel trails

Ningaloo Marine Park has four snorkel trails around the reef.

Shark Bay



Urban walk trails

Urban walks near Geraldton include the Old Victoria Hospital Heritage Trail.

Geraldton



Trail running trails

The Perth Hills are a must for trail runners.

Kalgoorlie



Trail bike trails

Pinjar has family-oriented trail bike trails for beginners.

Perth

Perth Hills



Cycle trails

Perth has an extensive bicycle network for all levels.

Dwellingup



Mountain bike trails

Collie is an outdoor adventure playground with an incredible network of mountain bike trails.

Collie

Esperance



Bush walk trails

Charming Dwellingup with its rivers and forests makes for idyllic bush walking.



Bridle trails

Shannon National Park is renowned for its bridle trail.



Paddle trails

The waters in and around Esperance provide a diverse range of paddling.

Trail destinations

Trails bring us together, but destinations bring us to the trails. Based on the number of nearby trails, number of visitors and high trail rating, there are a few areas in Western Australia that are being recognised as 'Trail Destinations'. Dwellingup, Collie, Albany and the Perth Hills are getting a name for themselves as the places to go for trail lovers. Learn more about Trail Destinations by scanning the QR code.



Above Ocean paddling in the south-west.

Inset Joffre Falls, Karijini National Park. Photos – Tourism WA

Below Sandford Rocks Nature Reserve. Photo – TrailsWA

TRAIL TYPES



BUSH WALK TRAILS

The south-western corner of WA is the most outstanding wildflower region and great for bush walks. Stirling Range National Park, about 400 kilometres south of Perth, is home to more than 1500 species of wildflowers, many of which are found nowhere else on the planet.

The world-class Bibbulmun Track runs from Perth to Albany through some unique and beautiful sections of the state. This 1000-kilometre bush walking track can be tackled in sections or as one big adventure from end-to-end. For a shorter multi-day challenge, try the Cape to Cape Track, which runs from Cape Naturaliste to Cape Leeuwin in the south-west of WA.

North of Perth, the distances are huge and the scenery spectacular, as you walk through gorges or climb Mount Augustus—Australia's largest rock—or discover Aboriginal rock art. In the far north, there is some excellent walking in Karijini National Park and also in the Kimberley.



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TRAIL RUNNING

Western Australia offers an amazing mix of suitable trails for novices right through to the most experienced trail runners.

Due to the heat in Western Australia, some of the best spots to go trail running are around Perth, and in the south-west and Great Southern regions.

Pemberton, about 300 kilometres south of Perth is a popular area due to the stunning karri forests that are unique to the region. Perth Hills, east of the city, is another great place to hit the trails, with everything from challenging climbs to easier flat forest paths.

Rottneet Island is just a short ferry ride from Perth and is home to the fantastic Wadjemup Bidi Trail Network. The trails within this network are an absolute must for trail runners, and the bonus is for most of them you get to go for a dip as you pass through some of the stunning beaches on the way.



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URBAN WALK TRAILS

The pleasures of urban walking are inevitably different from those of rural walking: you'll find plentiful features of historic interest, public transport, refreshments and other facilities near at hand and, sometimes, a surprising sense of solitude.

Urban walk trails are common in most major towns across Western Australia and will often provide insights into the history, local culture and Aboriginal heritage within the area.

Kings Park, located on the west side of Perth city, is a wonderful escape and is home to a huge number of thoughtfully curated regional flora displays. Aboriginal Cultural Tours are available at Kings Park where you can be guided by a Traditional Owner and learn about their connection to Country.



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MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Adventure and riding come naturally in the south-west of WA, with an outstanding network of trails that take casual riders and serious mountain bikers into the heart of the region's wildflower country and stunning forests.

Over recent years, WA has developed world-class mountain biking trails and networks. Dwellingup (100 kilometres south of Perth) and Collie (200 kilometres south of Perth) are home to some of the best including the Murray Valley Bike Trails in Dwellingup and the Wambenger Collie Trails.

If it's a long-distance adventure you're after then you can't beat the Munda Biddi Trail, which stretches over 1000 kilometres from Mundaring to Albany.



TRAIL BIKE TRAILS

Recreational trail bike riding takes many forms from riding on motocross-style circuits, to long-distance off-road touring. Trail riding opportunities in WA are available in designated off-road vehicle areas (ORVs), on private land and on roads and trails in state forest and other public land.

Pinjar ORV area is a popular spot to explore. It's just 45 minutes north of Perth and provides family-oriented trails for beginners through to advanced.

Trail bikes are not allowed in national parks or on walk or mountain bike trails, and riders are asked to respect the environmental and management reasons for this.



CYCLE TRAILS

Western Australia is a great place to explore by bicycle. The climate is temperate and much of the terrain is flat. Perth and some of the larger regional centres have excellent networks of paths and on-road facilities for cyclists.

Perth has an extensive bicycle network for all levels—easy, scenic family rides up to more challenging long-distance routes around the river or up through Perth Hills.

The PSP (Principal Shared Path) will take you around most of Perth from Joondalup all the way to the city and around the Swan River to Fremantle. Many of the trails can be connected to form longer routes, and often pass cafes, pubs and restaurants.



Opposite page

Main above Lions Lookout, Korung National Park.

Main below Karijini National Park. *Photos – Tourism WA*

1) Canning River. *Photo – DBCA*

2) Bungle Bungle Range, Purnululu National Park. *Photo – Tourism WA*

3) Trail running. *Photo – Lauren Cabrera*

4) Accessible boardwalk, Yalgorup National Park. *Photo – Cliff Winfield*

5) Bibbulmun Track, Waugul. *Photo – Katie Stevens*

This page

Main above Murray Valley trails. *Photo – Josh Cowling*

1) Elizabeth Quay. *Photo – Tourism WA*

2) Mount Lennard, Wellington National Park. *Photo – Perth Enduro*

3) Bramley National Park. *Photo – DBCA*

TRAIL TYPES



PADDLE TRAILS

Explore Western Australia's spectacular waterways and coast on a kayak or canoe. Float lazily down tranquil rivers, paddle into secluded coves or hurtle down wild whitewater rapids.

There are plenty of fantastic areas to explore with a canoe or kayak in WA—from Swan River in Perth through to the Frankland River in the South or Murchison in the North.

The Swan River extends upstream to Upper Swan and is a wonderful way to take in the city and its surrounds from the water. There are many inlets to explore in Peel, Mandurah and Rockingham and further south in Denmark, Walpole and Albany.

For a strictly freshwater adventure, try Honeymoon Pool in Wellington National Park or the Avon River just east of Perth Hills.



SNORKEL TRAILS

Western Australia's coastline is famously beautiful and dotted with extensive reefs, azure pools, historic wrecks and world-class snorkeling areas.

Rottneest Island lies off the coast of Perth and is a quick trip via ferry from the mainland. The island is surrounded by spectacular snorkelling areas and wrecks, including Parker Point, Little Salmon Bay and Kingstown Reef, which is lined with underwater plaques to explore.

The Ningaloo World Heritage Area, about 1300 kilometres north of Perth, is home to the award-winning Turquoise Bay. This famous little section of Ningaloo Reef is abundant with marine life, and as its namesake states, lies in clear bright turquoise water.



BRIDLE TRAILS

Immerse yourself in the Australian bush and experience the

Kimberley by horseback, following the ancient river systems and old stock routes used by drovers of yesteryear. Or head south and ride through tall timber country or along the beaches.

There are plenty of scenic equestrian or bridle trails to choose from around Perth and further afield. For a longer journey try the Railway Reserves Heritage Trail, a 41-kilometre loop that follows railway formations in the Perth Hills.

Escape to the towering karri forests of the southwest or the tuart forests just out of Perth, and take advantage of the many pubs, cafes and restaurants that are often close to these trails.





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TWO-WHEEL-DRIVE TRAILS

Driving holidays are one of the best ways to experience the wide open spaces and unique landscapes of Western Australia. The drive trails on the Trails WA website link up with many walk and bike trails, and present lots of opportunities to stop and stretch your legs.

Remember, this is a large State to explore so be sure you've factored in travel times to your itinerary when visiting various regions in WA, especially when travelling north.



FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE TRAILS

Western Australia has some of the best four-wheel driving in the world. Whether it's mud running, rock crawling, exploring sand dunes or just looking for the ultimate drone shot of your four-wheel drive set up, WA has it all.

If you're travelling north, there are so many areas to explore, including the famous and seasonal Gibb River Road and West Kimberley Crossing, but remember, distances are huge so calculate carefully before embarking.



Do it yourself

Where is it? visit www.trails.wa.com.au

How can I find a trail? Trails can be searched by

- Trail type
- Region
- Trail networks
- Experiences
- Top trails



Top trail tips:

- Local Parks and Wildlife Service rangers have the most up-to-date information on track conditions, so always a good idea to check in with them first.
- The Explore Parks website explore.parks.dbca.wa.gov.au has great information relating to trail safety as well as current park, trail and road closures.
- If you're planning a long trip out on the trails, the local 'friends of' groups are a wealth of information and tips.
- The weather in WA can change rapidly, so always check local conditions and plan for all weather types.

Know before you go: Always be sure to check bushfire and smoke alerts at emergency.wa.gov.au and alerts related to parks and major trails at alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au



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Opposite page

Main Snorkelling in Ningaloo Marine Park. Photo – Tourism WA

1) Canoeing in Kalbarri National Park. Photo – Samille Mitchell 2) Marmion Marine Park snorkel trail. Photo – DBCA 3) Kayaking on Canning River. Photo – Rhianna King 4) Cowbells Loop bridle trail in Shannon National Park. Photo – DBCA 5) Horseshoeing at Jesters Flat near Margaret River. Photo – Frances Andrijich

This page

Main Indian Ocean Drive. Photo – Tourism WA

1) Wildflowers at Coalseam Conservation Park. Photo – Tourism WA 2) Tagalong four-wheel-drive tour. Photo – Global Gypsies 3) Bluff Knoll, Stirling Range National Park. Photo – Tourism WA

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