



NINGALOO COAST

WORLD HERITAGE

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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Celebrating 10 years

In 2021 we are celebrating 10 years of World Heritage. This is a huge achievement for the Ningaloo Coast community and one we should all be proud of. Recognised as one of the most natural places on earth, the Ningaloo Coast is an irreplaceable legacy.

World Heritage properties represent the most significant and unique examples of the world's cultural and natural heritage. These places are considered to be of *outstanding universal value*, which is expressed through attributes, more commonly called features. Attributes are those elements and processes of features that convey the *outstanding universal value*. Identification and understanding of attributes and their interrelationships are crucial to understanding the *outstanding universal value* of the Ningaloo Coast.

Above: Logo Photos - Blue Media Exmouth; Design - Creative Tones



Cape Range Peninsula belongs to an arid ecoregion, recognised for its species richness and endemism, particularly for birds and reptiles. Photo - Blue Media Exmouth



Above: Cape Range stone gecko (*Diplodactylus capensis*). Photo - Blue Media Exmouth



Above: Ashby's Banksia. Photo - Grant Griffin

Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area

Diverse terrestrial, coastal and marine habitats form interconnected aesthetically striking landscapes and seascapes and support species diversity and abundance.

There are many unique attributes that contribute towards the *outstanding universal value* of the Ningaloo Coast including, but not limited to:

The Ningaloo Reef and directly adjacent Cape Range Peninsula and limestone karst system - wave cut terraces, gorges, rocky ranges, sandy ridges, acacia shrublands, spinifex and alluvial plains, sandy beaches, estuaries, mangroves, intertidal systems, the lagoon, continental slope and shelf and the open ocean, all of which sustain species richness, endemism, and diversity. Below ground habitats include caves, dolines and subterranean water bodies supporting a rich diversity of highly specialised subterranean species.

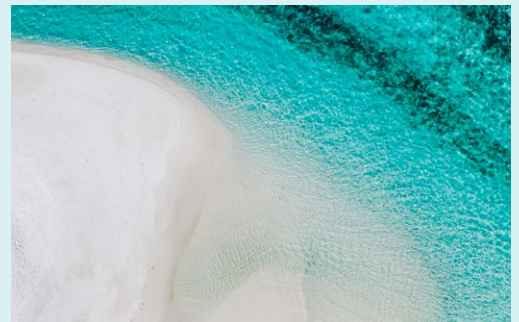
In the Baiyungu language, the lands and waters of the Ningaloo Coast are known as 'Nyinggulu'. We acknowledge the Nyinggulu Ganyarajari (the people who belong to the Ningaloo Coast) and the inherent link between the immense cultural heritage and unique ecological values along the Ningaloo Coast.

Many species found along the Ningaloo Coast are at the edge of their location range. The Ashby's Banksia (*banksia ashbyi*) is the most northern variety of banksia in Western Australia and one of many species of plant that contribute to the remarkable diversity in Cape Range.

IUCN World Heritage outlook

A recent assessment of World Heritage properties identified several significant threats for the Ningaloo Coast - climate change, oil and gas exploration and development, increasing visitation, recreational fishing, and invasive species. While many of these threats were identified at the time of the World Heritage listing in 2011, over the past decade we have seen an increase in severity of these threats to the *outstanding universal value*.

Right: Coastal biological communities and intertidal reef communities are crucial attributes in conveying the *outstanding universal value*. Photo - Blue Media Exmouth



Above: The Short-Nosed Sea Snake (*Aipysurus apraefrontalis*), listed as critically endangered had not been recorded on the Ningaloo Reef prior to 2013. This was the first live sighting of the species since it's disappearance from the Ashmore and Hibernia Reefs between 1998 - 2002. Photo - Grant Griffin

Managing World Heritage

Covering 604,500h, the World Heritage area includes Cape Range National Park; Learmonth Air Weapons Range (jointly managed with the Department of Defence); Ningaloo Marine Park (co-managed with Parks Australia); and Bundegi and Jurabi coastal parks (jointly managed with the Shire of Exmouth).

Over the past decade the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) has supported the Australian Government in meeting management obligations for the Ningaloo Coast under the World Heritage Convention. To ensure the protection and conservation of the *outstanding universal value*, DBCA works in partnership with traditional owners, community and stakeholders. We manage the World Heritage area to protect natural and cultural values and achieve wildlife conservation. We provide world recognised nature-based tourism opportunities and sustainable recreation experiences for the community.

Indicator species

Rock-wallabies on the North West Cape are an indicator species for monitoring introduced predator control. DBCA's Western Shield program has been conducting landscape baiting for foxes in Cape Range National Park since 1996. The introduction of additional baiting for feral cats in 2014 has seen the virtual eradication of foxes, a significant reduction in feral cat numbers and a boom in rock-wallabies.

Monitoring baiting impacts on introduced predators was initially assessed solely through prey response of black-flanked rock-wallabies and nesting sea turtles. This evolved to also include monitoring introduced predators through track counts and remote camera traps. Cat and fox trapping at strategic locations across the North West Cape has complimented baiting. Trapping over the last seven years has had a noticeable decline in capture success rate indicating that the baiting is successful.

Visitation numbers in Cape Range

Visitation to Cape Range National Park has more than doubled over the past 10 years since the Ningaloo Coast became World Heritage listed in 2011. DBCA commenced recording visitor entry to the national park in 2004.

Years	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021
Visitor Numbers	242,516	291,490	242,054	230,558	260,205	286,592	328,211	359,237	328,827	517,318

Note changes in visitation from March 2020 onwards due to changes in international, interstate and intrastate visitation demographics due to border restrictions and other COVID-related impacts.



Above: Black-flanked rock-wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis*). Photo - Lochman Transparencies



Above: Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*).
Photo - Blue Media Exmouth

Sustainable tourism

DBCA has managed sustainable commercial whale shark tourism at Ningaloo since 1993, through licensing of a limited number of operators providing whale shark interaction tours. We continue to work closely with commercial whale shark operators to manage a world-class and sustainable tourism industry, maintain a healthy and natural whale shark population and provide community with an appreciation and understanding of whale sharks. The rare and large aggregations of whale sharks is an important attribute in conveying the *outstanding universal value*.

Over the past decade close to 265, 275 tour participants have successfully interacted with whale sharks during a licensed tour in Ningaloo Marine Park. Passenger numbers recorded have also doubled when comparing 2011 (17,541) to 2021 (35,615).

World Heritage in the community

The Ningaloo Coast community has many respected volunteers and community groups that value, appreciate, share and protect our surrounding natural and cultural environment. The longstanding Ningaloo Turtle Program assists DBCA with the conservation and management of turtle populations along the Ningaloo Coast. Volunteers actively participate in monitoring of turtle nesting activity.

Long term data collection shows between 15,104 – 33,721 green turtles, 991 – 2,763 loggerhead turtles and 351 – 791 hawksbill turtles are in the breeding population along the Ningaloo Coast. These figures represent globally significant populations for all species. The intact coastal dune and intertidal habitat found along the Ningaloo Coast is essential to support turtle populations.

Last year's turtle nesting season had the highest amount of nesting activity in the 19 years of the program, with over 5,800 turtle nests recorded within monitoring sections along the Ningaloo Coast. Understanding patterns of turtle nesting enables targeted management actions such as carpark relocations, introduced predator control and turtle rescues. Over 330 breeding age turtles have been rescued by volunteers since the program began in 2002.



Above: Ningaloo Turtle Program volunteers 2020/2021 season.

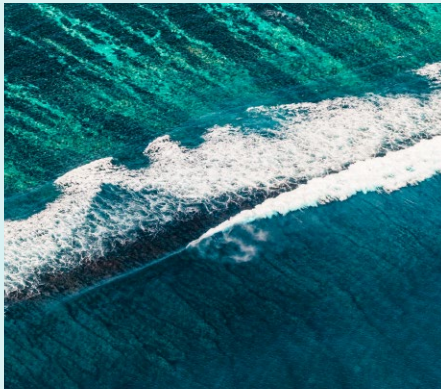


World Heritage Advisory Committee

Over the past decade the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee has played an integral role in identifying and addressing potential impacts to the *outstanding universal value* from activities and development proposals within and adjacent to the World Heritage property. We are extremely grateful for the effort of the Advisory Committee to ensure World Heritage values and obligations are acknowledged in the community, through current management policies and assessment processes.

The Advisory Committee provides advice to Environment Ministers and management agencies on the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the *outstanding universal value*. DBCA will be seeking expressions of interest from the community for membership to the Advisory Committee over the coming months. Keep an eye out for more information.

Left: Mangroves represent a unique community within the Ningaloo Reef system, a key attribute in expressing the *outstanding universal value*. Photo - Blue Media Exmouth



A resilient Ningaloo Coast

The Resilient Reefs initiative is developing resilience-based approaches to management of the Ningaloo Coast. In consultation with the community and with support from technical experts Australia-wide and globally, we are in the process of finalising a Resilience Strategy for the Ningaloo Coast. Resilience seeks to strengthen the capacity of reef and coastal ecosystems, and the communities which depend upon them, to recover from and adapt to local and global pressures while continuing to thrive.

Left: More than 50 percent of the Indian Ocean coral species (over 300 species in 54 genera) are found at Ningaloo. Photo - Blue Media Exmouth

Joint management

Native Title has been achieved for the Yinggarda, Baiyungu and Thalanyji people, 22 years after their initial claim was lodged. The signing of the Nynggulu Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) between the Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC) and the WA government has formalised the joint vesting and ongoing joint management with traditional owners of the Nynggulu Coastal Reserves, Ningaloo Marine Park and Cape Range National Park. Joint Management with traditional owners provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of traditional knowledge and foster opportunities for integration of traditional knowledge with contemporary conservation science and management.

The creation of additional conservation reserves adjoining the World Heritage property provide greater protection and conservation for the significant cultural heritage and countless natural attributes of the Nynggulu (Ningaloo Coast), all of which contribute to the *outstanding universal value*.



Above: Sharing knowledge on country with traditional owners.



Above: The Cape Range karst system is essential habitat for the existence of subterranean fauna. Cape Range has the highest cave fauna (troglomorphic) diversity in Australia. Photo - Tony Howard

Managing World Heritage into the future

Planning for the next decade of World Heritage, in partnership with traditional owners, the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee, community and key stakeholders, our mission is to:

- Identify, appreciate and conserve the significant cultural heritage and ecological values.
- Provide community with a greater opportunity to celebrate, share and enjoy World Heritage.
- Identify key priorities for research and implement monitoring programs which inform and support resilience-based management.
- Continue to develop management strategies to safeguard the *outstanding universal value*, mitigating threats to, and strengthening the resilience of, the Ningaloo Coast.