

AUSTRALIA'S WORLD HERITAGE PLACES

SHARK BAY INFORMATION SHEET



Quick Facts

- Shark Bay is at the most westerly point of mainland Australia.
- This area has the world's largest seagrass meadows; a safe haven for endangered dugongs.
- Shark Bay is larger than some European countries but has a population of less than one thousand people
- Each of Australia's 17 World Heritage Places are also on Australia's National Heritage List.

Why is Shark Bay of World Heritage value?

Shark Bay was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1991 for its natural values.

- **It contains outstanding examples of how the earth was formed**
Shark Bay contains the world's most diverse and abundant examples of individual colonies of stromatolites. These live, rock-like structures come from the oldest life form on earth. Shark Bay's stromatolites are 2,000 to 3,000 years old and are similar to life forms found up to 3500 billion years ago. Stromatolites help scientists unravel the history of life and provide insight into what the world was like at the dawn of time.
- **It has outstanding examples of significant ongoing ecological and biological processes**
Shark Bay is of major zoological importance because the habitats on its peninsulas and islands have been isolated from disturbances.
- **Contains superb natural formations and features**
Shark Bay's many bays and inlets are rich with colourful marine life and contain vast seagrass meadows covering 4,000 square kilometres. Around 10,000 dugongs inhabit the bays and you can also see many varieties of rays, marine turtles and the famous dolphins of Monkey Mia. Humpback whales and their calves also use the bay as a staging post during their annual migration along the coast.
- **Contains important habitats where a diversity of endangered animals and plants exist for conservation.**
Five of Australia's endangered mammals are found on Bernier and Dorre Islands. These are the boodie or burrowing bettong, rufous hare wallaby, banded hare wallaby, the Shark Bay mouse and the western barred bandicoot.

The Shark Bay area is the traditional country of the Malgana, Nanda (Nhanda) and Gnulli people.



Australian Government
Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts



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Challenges and Management

Shark Bay is managed by the Western Australian Government. The three management goals of Project Eden are to:

- Eradicate or reduce feral animals
- Reintroduce native wildlife that has become extinct in the area
- Improve knowledge through research and inform the public about the project.

Challenges	Management
Climate change	Rising temperatures and extreme weather are predicted to occur, affecting the habitats, lifecycles and survival of species. Improving the overall resilience of species and the ecosystem, through pest, animal and weed control, fire management and reintroducing native plants and animals, will help improve the resilience of species and ecosystems to climate change. Researching climate change and consistently monitoring data will also help measure changes over time.
Introduced animals	The removal of cattle, sheep, goats, cats and foxes has helped native plants and animals recover and thrive. Cattle, sheep and goats overgraze and cause erosion, whilst cats and foxes threaten small native animals. Fencing, shooting, trapping and baiting are some of the techniques used to control them. It is estimated that of the 2,500 foxes on the Peninsula, 95 percent have been eradicated using baits.
Native fauna	Shark Bay contains native fauna of great significance. Decreased numbers of feral animals and the regrowth of native plants have allowed the reintroduction of several native animals into the Francois Peron National Park, such as the malleefowl, bilby and southern brown bandicoot.
Tourism	Tourism contributes greatly to the local economy. With bushwalkers, fishers, four wheel drivers, sea kayakers and campers, it is important they understand their enjoyment of the environment can lead to its harm. Staff give presentations on native fauna, feral animals and conservation management to help raise awareness about Shark Bay and to appreciate the challenges that face the area.

Read more

www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/shark-bay/index.html



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