

# Ningaloo Coast

## World Heritage area

### fact sheet

## Wildlife & Wildflowers

### Wild and Wonderful

Cape Range is a diverse landscape composed of rugged limestone ranges, deep canyons, a flat coastal plain and sand dunes. The area is rich in wildlife including a high proportion of reptiles, birds and flowers that are found nowhere else in the world. This diversity is a result of an overlap of tropical, temperate and desert regions.



Credit: Adam Thompson

### Cape Range Wildlife

#### Black-flanked rock wallaby

The black-flanked rock wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis lateralis*) lives in the steep rocky faces of gorges in the Cape Range and is commonly spotted in Yardie Creek Gorge and Mandu Mandu Gorge.



Black-flanked rock wallaby at Yardie Creek Gorge, Cape Range National Park

Credit: Tony Howard

The rock-wallaby is a shy, wary mammal that only moves from the protection of rocky outcrops to open areas in the early evening and at night to graze on grasses, herbs, leaves and fruit. This time is both safer and cooler for them to feed. They do not need to drink, and conserve water by sheltering from hot daytime temperatures in caves and under ledges.

Black-flanked rock wallabies pair for life, although females will mate with other males. Like other marsupials, the young suckle and are protected inside the mother's

pouch until they are ready to leave. Unlike other kangaroos and wallabies, mothers leave their young in a sheltered place while they feed.

Introduced animals have caused a decline in populations. Foxes and cats prey on black-flanked rock wallabies and goats cause habitat damage and outcompete them for food. They are listed as vulnerable and are a protected species.



Other mammals occurring in the area include:

- Euro (or wallaroo)
- Red kangaroo
- Lesser hairy-footed and stripe-faced dunnarts
- Short-beaked echidna

#### Perentie

The perentie (*Varanus giganteus*) is the largest monitor native to Australia, and the fourth-largest living lizard on earth. It is found throughout Cape Range on rocky ground, deep crevices, around camp sites and is often



Perenties are egg laying reptiles and lay around six to twelve eggs in termite mounds where the activity of the insects provides constant warmth for the offspring and protection from predators

Credit: Kevin Coate

seen crossing the road. For defence, perenties either freeze, run or attack. They are fast sprinters, and run using either all four legs or just their hind legs, using their claws to climb trees. Perenties can attack using their claws, teeth and tail in aggressive displays. Their bite can cause much damage, not only from teeth, but also because of venom in their mouths.

## More on Wildlife & Wildflowers

There are over 100 reptile species on the Ningaloo Coast, including:

- Exmouth spiny-tailed gecko
- Western netted dragon
- West coast banded snake
- Splendid blind snake



### Osprey

The osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is one of the many majestic birds of prey found here. There are over 200 bird species along the Ningaloo Coast and Exmouth Gulf including: the western bowerbird, rufus-crowned emu-wren and painted finch. Shorebirds include the grey-tailed tattler, pied oystercatcher and threatened species such as the eastern curlew, beach stone-curlew and fairy tern.

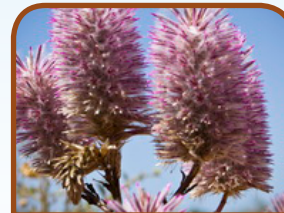


An osprey carrying sticks for its nest. Osprey nests are huge structures made of sticks, driftwood and seaweed that accumulate over time and can be up to 2m across and tall

Credit: Will Laufman

### Cape Range Wildflowers

The dry and harsh landscape presents a surprising array of flora during the wildflower season with over 600 plant species recorded along the Ningaloo Coast. Some are endemic to the area.



Ningaloo Coast's wildflowers: The purple mulla mulla (above) and the sturt desert pea (right)



Other endemic wildflower species include the Cape Range grevilleia, Yardie Creek morning glory and Cape Range kurrajong

Credit: Parks and Wildlife

This diversity is unusual for an arid limestone environment and is attributed to the area being an overlap zone between the tropic, temperate and desert regions. The wildflower season is usually around June to October but can be dependent on rainfall.

### You can help

Remember to be on the lookout for wildlife at all times, and especially between dusk - dawn and at night. Speed limits exist in the National Park to protect wildlife. Please let wildlife find their own food and refrain from feeding them.