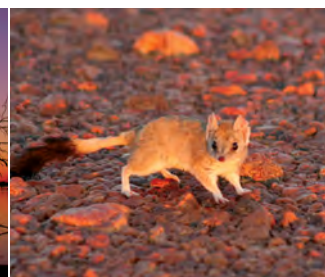
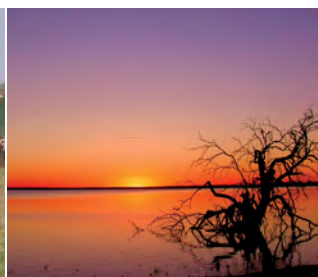


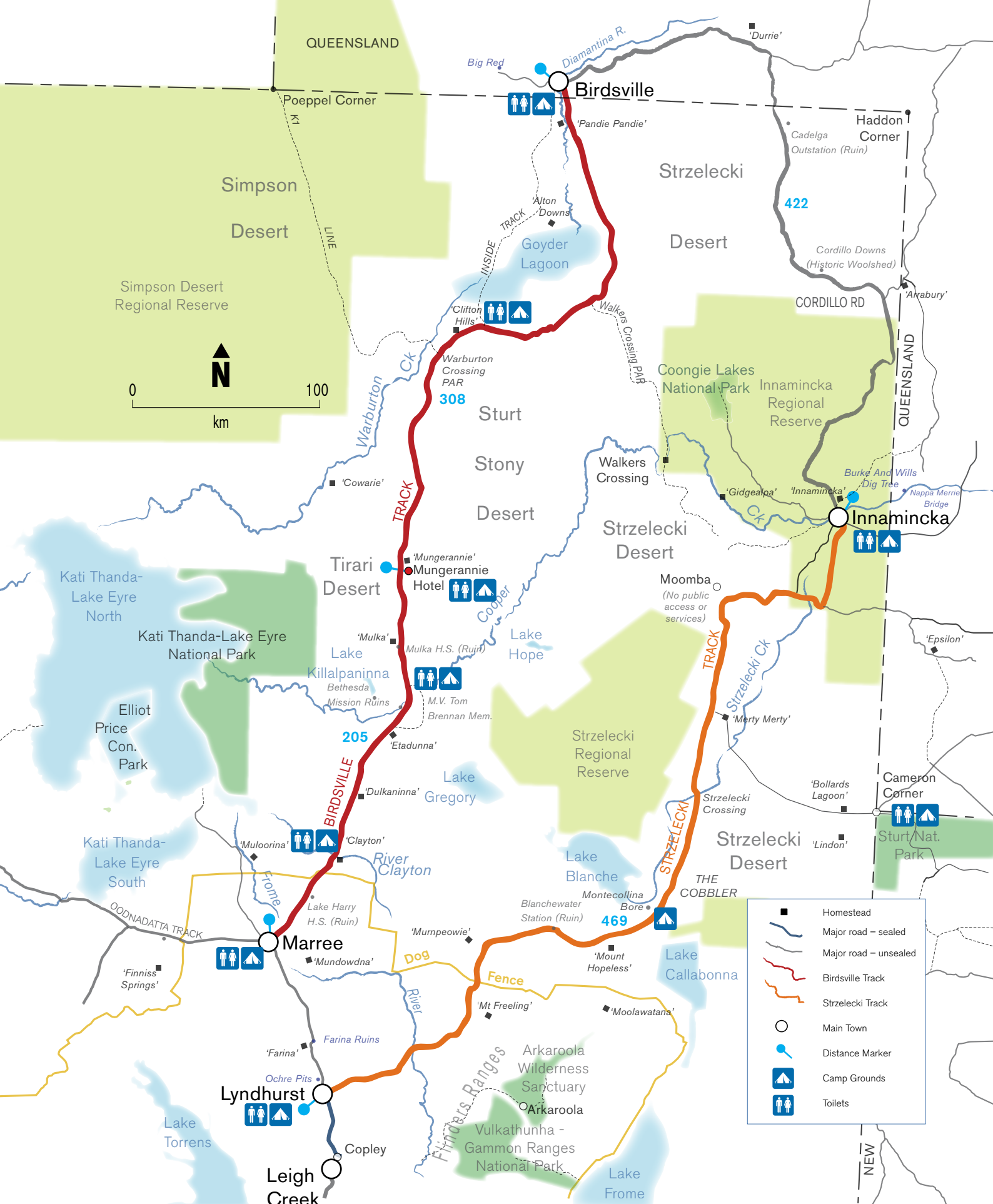
Birdsville Strzelecki

Legendary tracks of the Marree-Innamincka District



Created by the local
Marree-Innamincka
NRM Group





NATIONAL PARKS: Areas considered to be of national significance due to wildlife, natural features of the land, or Aboriginal or European heritage.

CONSERVATION PARKS: Areas protected for the purpose of conserving wildlife or the natural or historic features of the land.

REGIONAL RESERVES: Conservation areas which allow for multiple use including pastoralism, mining, and tourism.

Birdsville Strzelecki

Legendary tracks of the Marree–Innamincka District

Travellers Welcome to Country. We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians whose ancestral lands we are travelling on today. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal peoples to country. We also pay respect to the cultural authority of other Aboriginal groups whose country we may travel on during our journey in this region.

THE BIRDSVILLE TRACK, THE STRZELECKI TRACK

The Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks became legendary stock routes in the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th century as pastoralism established itself in the arid centre of Australia. Long before that, however, they were part of ancient Aboriginal trails for trade, custom and their existence. In a land where all human activity depends on the presence of water, both routes have been defined by a succession of watering places.

The region resonates with images of the colourful and legendary tales of explorers, adventurers and pastoralists who pioneered this country.

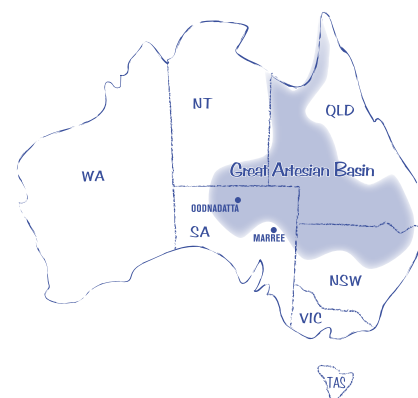
THE GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN

Beneath the inhospitable surface lies an ancient water source that sustains wildlife, a significant pastoral industry, a strong mining industry, Australia's largest inland oil and gas field, towns like Birdsville and Marree, and a thriving tourism industry.

The Great Artesian Basin (GAB) is one of the largest groundwater basins in the world, underlying 22% of the Australian continent. Groundwater naturally discharges from the basin via diffuse upward leakage and spring discharge.

Pumping and discharge from bores over the last 100 years has also added a significant level of discharge. Recharge occurs around the margins of the basin with most of the current recharge occurring on the eastern margin. The western margin currently receives very little local recharge and only partial recharge from the east. However, the basin is vast and it is this reserve of water that maintains the springs through these dry periods.

The springs have been discharging GAB water for at least one million years during which the climate has changed dramatically around them. They occur in the driest parts of Australia and provide oases for unique aquatic life forms. The ecological communities dependent on natural GAB discharge are listed as 'endangered' under the *Australian Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. These communities include the amazing diversity of unique and relict flora and fauna that are found in the springs of the Oodnadatta track.



THE LAKE EYRE BASIN

Lying over the GAB is yet another basin... the Lake Eyre Basin, which covers approximately one sixth of Australia. To the south is a long stretch of dry salt lakes dominated by Lake Eyre lying 15 metres below sea level.

This basin also contains one of the world's last unregulated great river systems where there is no significant intervention by dams, weirs or other man-made structures. Rivers are filled with water from peak monsoonal rains in Queensland and drain towards Lake Eyre. The passage of water into Lake Eyre takes many months, rarely filling it completely; although on average some water reaches it every eight years.

GAB SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE (GABSI)

Most open bores similar to this one have now been replaced by pipes.

The first artesian flowing bore was drilled into the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) in 1878, and at one stage there were some 4700 of these bores, many flowing openly into drains. Flows peaked at more than 3000 megalitres per day in 1915.

In 1999 Australian and State Governments began a 15-year program known as the GAB Sustainability Initiative (GABSI) to cap free-flowing bores and replace open drains with pipes.

As this program heads towards completion, it has achieved by mid-2013, the capping of over 1,143 wells, the removal of more than 24,843km of bore drains that have been replaced by around 27,000km of piping. This has resulted in an annual water saving of 191,862 megalitres.

Apart from conserving water the program has delivered many benefits to the environment, pastoralists and the broader community.



THE BIRDSVILLE TRACK



Marree Hotel

1 Marree is a town where three cultures have grown together bound by transport and travel. It has the most multi-cultural heritage of all outback towns hosting Aboriginal, Muslim Cameleer and European communities during the latter part of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth. Teamsters, cameleers, stockmen, hawkers, railway workers and explorers passed through here to travel the Overland Telegraph line, the Oodnadatta and Birdsville Tracks and the Ghan railway.

2 Lake Harry Homestead ruins are the lingering reminders of the failed, labour-intensive experimental plantation of 2,000 irrigated date palms planted in the late 19th century.

3 The Dog Fence crosses the track here.



Dingo

It was built to protect sheep from wild dog attacks, extends for more than 5,600km from Jimbour in Queensland to the Great Australian Bight and is the longest man-made structure

in the world. In spite of the fence wild dog control is still needed and occurs in many parts of South Australia south of the fence to protect livestock.

4 Clayton spa and wetlands Here you can enjoy a walk, a dip in the warm spa or bush camp in the designated area.



Clayton Spa

5 Dulkaninna Wetlands Artificial artesian bores flowing freely along creek lines supplement surface water collected in waterholes after rains, creating artificial wetlands. These provide a permanent habitat for many bird species and are a welcome surprise for travellers in this dry part of the continent.



Brolgas

Graeme Chapman

6 Grave at Lake Killalpaninna Pastor Vogelsang's grave is one of the few remaining reminders of the Lutheran Bethesda Mission, its 21 buildings and handsome mud brick Church that once occupied this site. Although Vogelsang tried to give the Mission a commercial backing to help it survive by running sheep and cattle, drought and wild dogs continually took their toll, and by 1920 the Mission was effectively closed. The Dieri Aboriginal people dispersed. Some went to Marree, some to Hermannsburg and others went to the mission at Finniss Springs established by Francis Dunbar Warren to provide a refuge for his family and other displaced Aboriginal people.



Grave at Bethesda Mission

7 Dalgety & Co Ltd provided this punt to ferry supplies and mail across the Cooper Creek when it flooded in 1949. Now when the waters from Queensland's Channel Country reach the Cooper Creek and cut the Birdsville Track, a detour leads you to a ferry that operates during daylight hours.



Tom Brennan's Ferry

8 Naterannie Sandhills The Tirari and Strzelecki Deserts meet in this 10km stretch of long and narrow sand dunes.

9 Mungerannie is where three deserts meet – the Tirari, the Strzelecki and southern reaches of the Simpson Desert. Take a stroll around the Derwent wetlands; the bird watching is good, as is a dip in the local pool.



The Warburton River



Mirra Mitta Bore

10 Mirra Mitta Bore was sunk in 1901 and is 1,076m deep. As you can see, the water is HOT! You might see the endangered Grey Falcon here.

11 Mount Gason Bore Look here for Mt Gason Wattle, Australia's rarest acacia.



Mt Gason Wattle

12 Warburton Crossing Public Access Route (PAR) 4WD This PAR leads to the Simpson Desert and is closed in summer in line with the summer closure of the Simpson Desert.

13 The Inside Track Monsoonal rains in Queensland can bring floodwaters down the Diamantina River and across Goyder Lagoon, closing this track for weeks at a time. Here you can see the shy elusive Grey Grass Wren hiding or flying low, or running along the ground between dense Lignum clumps or among Old Man saltbush. Listen carefully, you may hear their soft calls – a high pitched cricket or insect sounding 'tsit-tsit'.



Grey Grass Wren

Graeme Chapman

14 Walkers Crossing Public Access Route (PAR) 4WD This track may be closed due to sand drifts or flooding.

15 Birdsville The town with a well known name and well known pub in the outback. When Matthew Flynn established a depot there to supply surveyors working in the Simpson Desert and local pastoralists the settlement was called Diamantina Crossing. In the 1890s it became a major service centre for the pastoral industry with a population of about 270 and was renamed Birdsville.

The Birdsville Track





Male Orange Chat



Gibber country is home to the delightful crimson and orange chats. You might see small flocks of them darting over the low bluebush and saltbush.

Kowari, Ampurta These dynamic little animals belong to the Dasyurids, a family of carnivorous marsupials that includes the larger Tasmanian Devil and Quoll. Although only about the size of a guinea pig Ampurtas are ferocious carnivores, eating just about anything that moves. This includes insects, spiders, scorpions, mice and other small mammals, geckoes, skinks, dragons, even small birds if they can catch them! Look out for them in your headlights at night when they come out to feed, after spending the day in their burrows. Or, if you take a stroll on Cowarie Station, you may see Ampurta tracks on the dunes.



Ampurta

Gibber pavement Gibbers are fragments of the original duricrust, a layer of silica formed by the deposition of silica, iron oxide or calcium carbonate that capped these plains some 65 million years ago. Fine abrasive material has swept past wearing them down and rounding them off during wind and rain scour. Today they remain as surface lag protecting underlying soils from water and wind erosion. You need to get out and pick up a few to appreciate their smoothness and the intensity and range of their wonderful colours.

Dead Finish This extremely slow growing spiny tree, which is common along the track, has one of the hardest of Australian native timbers, after the endangered Waddy Tree and the Red Mulga (or Mineritchie) found further east. Its dense prickly branches provide excellent refuge for small birds such as nesting Zebra Finches. One Dead Finish bush might host up to 20 separate Zebra Finch nests. Except in extremely dry times stock generally stay away from the spiny foliage, whereas camels are not so choosy. The seeds were ground and eaten by Aboriginal people who also used its colourful timber for artifacts.



Dead Finish

Why is the Simpson Desert so red... yet the dunes closer to Lake Eyre are white? Dunes vary in colour from brilliant white to brick red with many variations in between. The lighter shades are found closer to the source areas of the sand. Dunes a long way from the primary sources of quartz sand and sediment, are deep orange to dark red in colour.



Gibber pavement



Goethite Gibber pavement

Sand Dunes



THE STRZELECKI TRACK

1 Lyndhurst – if you are travelling north this is the first stop before the long run into Innamincka along the Strzelecki Track. Fill up your fuel tanks.

2 Lake Callabonna (restricted access) is a fossil reserve of inestimable scientific value, containing fossilised skeletons of megafauna such as the giant marsupial Diprotodon and Dromornithids, gigantic flightless geese-like birds that, prior to their extinction about 25,000 years ago, had co-existed with Aboriginal people for thousands of years.

3 Montecollina Bore is located on Lindon Station and was sunk in 1903. It was the only flowing artesian bore drilled along the route. It is a good picnic and camping spot. Please refer to the

back of this brochure for information relating to camping on pastoral properties.

4 The Cobbler These white lumps and bumps of sand, mostly held together with Nitrebush, are really part of one huge sand dune – and were a daunting prospect in the early days for those making the trip between Farina and Innamincka. When Edward John Eyre stood on a small hill near Lake Blanche looking north over The Cobbler sandhills, he named his view point Mount Hopeless to sum up what he thought of the region's prospects. Located on Lindon Station, they say the name goes back to early sheep shearing days. The Cobbler was the most troublesome sheep in the shed – the one everyone left till last, in the hope that someone else would shear it.

6 Moomba Processing Plant A lookout bay at this point provides information about the Moomba operations and a good vantage point for photographs.

7 King's Marker – Burke and Wills

Several sites along the Cooper Creek within the Reserve and across the border in Queensland are associated with the ill-fated expedition of Burke and Wills.

8 AIM Building The present Australian Inland Mission building was rebuilt over the ruins of the original Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home. It is now the headquarters of Natural Resources SA Arid Lands and displays interesting stories about Innamincka's early days.



Montecollina Bore

Dig Tree



The Cobbler

5 Strzelecki Crossing The original Track used to follow the Strzelecki Creek into Innamincka. Now you'll only see the Creek at this crossing whilst travelling on Lindon Station. At times the Creek is a deep channel, at others it's a number of braided channels across a watercourse up to 6km wide. In floods it can cut the Strzelecki Track for many weeks.



AIM Building

9 Innamincka Three police troopers set up a 'police station' in a tent on the banks of the Cooper Creek in 1882. A store, hotel, and the Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home followed with the population of this little settlement called 'Innamincka' doubling when its two nurses arrived. But by 1954, the dwindling population along the Strzelecki Track and its decreased importance as a stock and mail route saw Innamincka's facilities close and lie dormant until a new band of explorers – tourists in their 4WD vehicles – led to the town's revival in the 1970s.



Burke's grave, Innamincka Regional Reserve



Sleepy lizard tracks



Cooper Creek – Innamincka



Nardoo

Nardoo is a perennial fern to 30cm high that can withstand long periods of inundation and dominate the understorey of a flood plain after floods. When the water dries up Nardoo dies back leaving behind spores that will germinate following the next sufficient rainfall.

Aboriginal people gathered the spores from small fruiting bodies called sporocarps found at the base of the stems. They roasted the spores, discarded the cases then ground them into flour to make edible cakes. Burke and Wills tried but failed to survive on Nardoo because they did not learn how to prepare it from the local inhabitants. Burke starved to death where Aboriginal people had survived along the Cooper for thousands of years.

Sandhill Canegrass and Spinifex help stabilise the dunes and also provide habitat for small marsupials and other fauna. In dry times the very drought tolerant Sandhill Canegrass dies back on the surface but below ground the roots can lie dormant for many years ready to re-sprout after rains.



Spinifex

Flora in the Strzelecki A wonderful array of flowers adorn the dunes along the Strzelecki Track after rains.

Nitrebush is the extremely drought resistant dark green shrub you see growing atop the mounds of The Cobbler. Stock tend to leave it alone, but hopping mice use it as cover. Its fruit can be made into jam in a good year.



Nitrebush



Prickly Wattle is common along the track and like many Acacias performs an important role in soil nutrition, absorbing nitrogen from the air and fixing it in the soil where it can be used by other plants. It is a short lived plant lasting 10-15 years and occurs over a range of habitats including sand dunes and sandplains, along creeklines and around waterholes. Local Aboriginal people ate the edible gum.

Native Apricot A hardy drought resistant tree with a drooping habit that is common on gibber plains and along watercourses in this area. It produces bitter, inedible, orange, olive-shaped fruits. Aboriginal people ground the seeds into a poultice and applied it externally to relieve stomach pains or cramps. The oil from the seed is said to be useful for rubbing into sore muscles and sprains. From a distance you might confuse it with the Native Plum which grows in the same habitats and has a similar shape and drooping foliage.

Prickly Wattle



Native Apricot



CLIMATE AND OUR PLANTS AND ANIMALS

It doesn't rain very often out here. The region has an annual average of 200mm or less. It can be scorchingly hot – the maximum summer temperature can reach above 50 degrees but in winter temperatures may drop to below zero degrees.

Rainfall patterns are seasonal, erratic and often dramatic. The abundance of life you see as you travel these tracks will depend on the season the region is currently experiencing. The best rains occur in the summer when monsoonal depressions from the tropics push down deep into the region. Plants then flourish, stock numbers increase and native animal numbers boom. In dry times, this country is lean and all life keeps a low profile. Vegetation and wildlife concentrate around refuges, such as waterholes, drainage lines and in those wetlands maintained by flowing bores.

OUR PLANTS

Grasses and some wildflowers usually germinate after summer rains – winter rains bring the best displays of wild flowers and herbage. Timing and temperature affect germination.

Plants have evolved to survive long periods of drought until the right conditions return to trigger germination and growth. When this happens this country can be transformed with vast spreads of ephemeral annual flowers adorning the dunes of the Tirari, Strzelecki and Simpson Deserts.

Lush stands of Showy Groundsel and Verbena make an unexpected splash of colour along drainage lines and are often accompanied by masses of colourful Pop Saltbush lining the roadside verges.

Frankenia This hardy sea-heath grows well on the areas between sand dunes.



Saltbush

Saltbush

Saltbush can grow in saline soils. There are many perennial and annual saltbushes found in a variety of habitats, from dunes to claypans to watercourses. You'll see it often along the tracks.

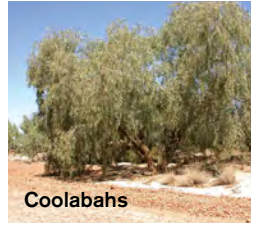


Bauhinia

Bauhinia

Queensland Bean Tree. These drought resistant trees are common along the Cooper and Strzelecki Creeks. Aboriginal people mixed the blossom and nectar to ferment

into a drink. Burke and Wills boiled the distinctive seed pods describing their taste as being similar to chestnut.



Coolababs

Coolababs

grow along most of the watercourses in the region. They are slow growing and fire and drought tolerant. The timber was used extensively

for fences and yards. Coolabah bark is distinctive – look for scars on the trunks where Aboriginal people cut out bowls with stone chisels.

Northern River Red Gums can survive floods, bushfires and droughts. Aboriginal people used its timber for digging tools and used the red sap as a medicine for sores or as a mouthwash. The flowers were a sweet treat and the seeds could be ground and eaten as a paste or cooked into cakes.

OUR EXTRAORDINARY WILDLIFE

The country around the Tracks supports a wide diversity of fauna – species that are superbly adapted to an unpredictable climate of 'boom and bust' cycles. Like plants, some animals use amazing strategies to survive in such an erratic climate, to take advantage of the good times and to survive the tough times.

Birds are made for travelling – many cope by moving on when times get tough only to reappear suddenly when conditions change. After big rains Budgies, Cockatiels, Chats, Songlarks, Pelicans and many other water birds turn up – seemingly out of nowhere.



Budgies

Graeme Chapman

Camping next to waterholes – be aware that you have an impact.

Driving your vehicle causes compaction of the soil and loss of vegetation – when it rains the soil is washed into the waterhole, silting it up over time.



Annual flowers



Frankenia

Gibbers and Red Gums



Long-haired Rat



Peter Cauty



Desert Trilling Frogs



Flock Pigeon

Flock Pigeon

These nomadic birds can turn up in flocks of dozens when grasses appear after good rains.

Graeme Chapman

Many of our small native rodents are experts at existing in low numbers in dry times – erupting in their hundreds and thousands when rain brings flushes of new growth and seeds. Other species sit out the dry times by lying dormant. Desert Trilling Frogs bury themselves beneath the surface. They shut their bodies down sometimes for years at a time, only emerging when rain penetrates deep into the soil to wake them up.

Shield Shrimps The eggs of these prehistoric looking crustaceans and their cousins Brine Shrimps lie dormant in dry mud for years.

Inland Taipan It's a good idea to keep away from this one. It is the most venomous of any land snake on earth; fortunately it is shy and placid unless provoked.



Shield Shrimps



Inland Taipan

The Dusky and Fawn Hopping Mice

are regarded as rare species but they can be present in big numbers after good rains. The Dusky Hopping Mouse prefers sandy country and the Fawn Hopping Mouse the open gibber plains. Both live in burrow complexes in a family group and emerge at night to feed on seeds, shoots and small insects.

Woma Python These non-venomous snakes grow to over 2m long and live for many years (possibly decades). They are mostly nocturnal – hunting lizards, other snakes and small mammals. They have declined in recent years and little is known about their lives.



Grey Falcon

Graeme Chapman

Grey Falcon This rare and elusive raptor species feeds mainly on other birds, including parrot and pigeon species. It can often be seen near wooded watercourses where it perches high in the branches.

Cooper Creek Catfish One species of fish in the region, the Cooper Creek Catfish, is considered to be very rare and even under threat, because it is found only in the large permanent waterholes of the Cooper Creek catchment.

OUR RIVERS AND WETLANDS

The mighty Cooper Creek After floods, the waters of the Cooper Creek meander for hundreds of kilometres across Queensland in a multitude of channels before coming together in a single deep channel between rocky slopes about 60km from Innamincka. From Innamincka



Cooper Creek

the Cooper Creek once again spreads out into Coongie Lakes then continues its path through a complex myriad of lakes and waterholes, crossing the Birdsville Track, until finally reaching Lake Eyre. Floods of the magnitude to fill or partly fill the Cooper catchment are rare. When they occur the results are astounding. Freshwater lakes like the enormous Lake Hope on Mulka Station come alive with native fish and migratory bird species.

Coongie Lake Not all lakes out here are salty or dry. Coongie Lakes National Park is a series of shallow freshwater lakes that are abundant in water birds, frogs, fish and much more. More than 350 species of plant life provide rich habitat for a great variety of fauna. They are part of the Cooper Creek catchment that, with its ephemeral and semi permanent fresh water wetland habitats and wildlife, is so significant it has been listed as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance.

These lakes last a long time and thus provide an important refuge for migrating birds, some having travelled from Russia and China.

Give yourself time to experience the magic of Coongie Lakes – you will be well rewarded. This area is for 4WD vehicles only. Camping and canoeing are permitted – but fishing and fires are not.

Part of the Cooper Creek catchment in flood



HISTORY OF THE TRACKS

In the great droving era of our pastoral history (1867 to 1960), drovers walked sheep and cattle down the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks from Queensland to Marree or Farina to meet the railhead, bound for markets in Adelaide and Melbourne.

Over time the Tracks have shifted, wavered and at times disappeared to revive again later. These two stock routes became transport corridors as supplies, wool, stock and mail were moved about by those great pioneers, the cameleers, drovers and station personnel. Almost every item that made up the stations and towns along these tracks was laboriously carted up by various means – camel, donkey or bullock teams and later by motorised vehicles.

These tracks provide the principal link with civilisation for those who work and live in the area. The Birdsville Track extends for approximately 520km from Birdsville to Marree (formally called Hergott Springs) where the rail formally terminated. The Birdsville Track follows a string of artesian bores which are drilled roughly 50km apart by pastoralists and government to provide a reliable supply of water. Originally the track was an ancient Aboriginal trading route that followed the waterholes of the Diamantina River and Goyder Lagoon.

The Birdsville and the Strzelecki Tracks have become famous for the droving of cattle from the northern stations to the rail head to access the markets in far away Adelaide. Mobs of 1000 head were commonplace. The feats of the men and women droving these mobs has become legendary including the brazen cattle duffer Harry Redford who stole a mob of 1000 head of cattle from Queensland in 1870 and drove them through uncharted territory between Innamincka and Mount Hopeless – the track he took formed the basis for the Strzelecki Track.

As with the Birdsville Track, the Strzelecki Track was an important Aboriginal trade route connecting groups in central Australia to the Flinders Ranges and its highly prized red, brown and white ochre. Stop in at the Ochre Pits, just north of Lyndhurst.

Also north of Lyndhurst, a major volunteer project is underway at Farina to restore the historic buildings that remain from the days when Farina was a key stop on the old Ghan railway and the site of a failed wheat cropping venture. Named after the latin word meaning 'flour', Farina was abandoned by the 1960s and is another example of the ever changing nature of settlements on the Outback tracks.



Moomba Processing Plant

COOPER BASIN OIL AND GAS FIELDS

The Cooper Basin is Australia's largest onshore oil and gas producer and is now being explored for geothermal (hot rock) energy – a possible source of renewable energy.

The Cooper Basin is a thick (up to 4km deep) sequence of sedimentary strata deposited over 500 million years. Approximately 300 million years ago, this desert region was covered by glaciers and icy lakes, then the climate warmed and vast coal swamps, rivers and lakes deposited sediments which were deeply buried over millions of years and generated the oil and gas being produced today.

Oil and gas exploration in the region was led by Santos, which was established in 1954 and drilled their first well searching for oil near Innamincka in 1959. Gas was discovered by Santos on New Years Eve, 1963 and more discoveries followed justifying construction of a gas pipeline to Adelaide which received its first Cooper Basin gas in 1969. The Cooper Basin project has grown since with more oil and gas discoveries. Oil is piped to Port Bonython for processing and export, and Cooper Basin gas supplies Australia's largest cities.

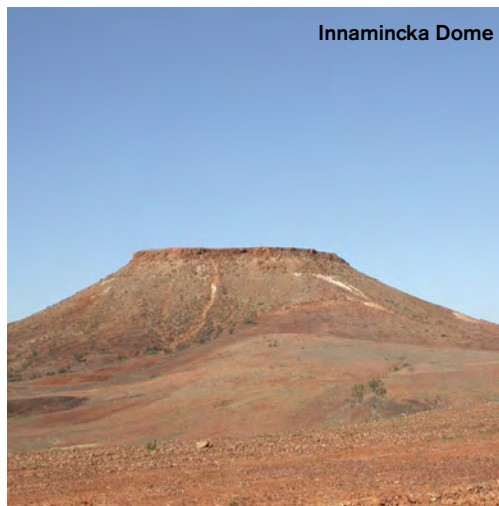
Geodynamics started exploring the Innamincka region for renewable geothermal (hot rock) energy in 2003 and have since drilled five deep wells for their project.



PUBLIC ACCESS ROUTE (PAR)

Once you leave the main tracks you are travelling across someone's land and you need permission from the landholder – unless you are heading for a signposted camping site or are on a designated PAR. There are two PARs in the region (Walkers Crossing and the Warburton Crossing (K1)). You may camp within 250m of a PAR provided you are not within 500m of any station infrastructure (waterholes, troughs, yards, sheds or homesteads).

Contact the Public Access Officer, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands on 8648 5300 for more information.



Innamincka Dome



PAR Innamincka

THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY



THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY

These big wide open spaces you are driving through are mostly pastoral properties grazing cattle or sheep. This is station country where much of the land is held under long term pastoral lease.

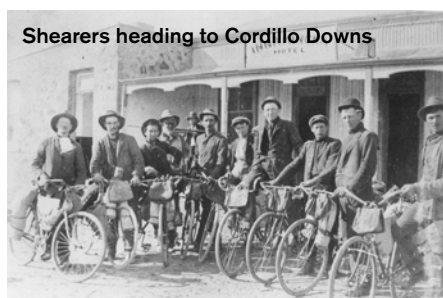
Clifton Hills Station, Cordillo Downs Station, Innamincka Station and Murnpeowie Station are some of the largest holdings you'll travel through. Some families have lived and worked on their properties for generations. All have experienced the heartbreak and joy brought by the erratic climate and rainfall. They live here because they love and respect the land, they love the way of life and the challenges of managing stock and the vast tracts of land they are responsible for.

The early colonists believed the land was suitable for grazing stock and the graziers moved steadily north in the footsteps of the explorers from 1839 onward. At that time most preferred to raise sheep rather than cattle because growing wool was more profitable and a durable commodity not vulnerable to spoilage on the long trip to Port Augusta and then on to London. In the end drought, rabbits, wild dogs and The Depression all contributed to properties north of the Dingo Fence shifting from sheep to grazing cattle for beef production.

WHAT DO THE STOCK EAT OUT HERE?

Stock have a greater choice of feed in pastoral country than in the higher rainfall areas, with native grasses and shrubs providing excellent fodder. The region is renowned for fattening cattle – many of the native plant species are surprisingly high in nutrition. When the waters recede, the channel country has vast areas of pasture made up of Nardoo, Cooper Clover, Verbena, Lignum and a myriad of grasses.

A thriving organic beef industry has grown out of this region. Common pests and diseases do not affect the cattle grazing here, so the beef produced is chemical free. This together with the sustainable grazing of the native vegetation has allowed the properties to become organically accredited and they now sell high quality beef both to the domestic market and around the world.



Shearers heading to Cordillo Downs

INNAMINCKA REGIONAL RESERVE

The Innamincka Regional Reserve is a multiple use reserve based on a partnership between conservation, tourism, pastoralism, the oil and gas industry and a potential thermal energy industry. In what was an Australian first, the Reserve was established in 1988 under an amended *National Parks and Wildlife Act* to assure the integrity of the wetlands and allow for continued commercial use and better management of the Reserve's recreation areas.

THE CORDILLO WOOLSHED

Most stations in the region now carry cattle, but sheep played an important role in the early history of the district. At Cordillo Downs in the 1880s a record 85,000 sheep were shorn in the huge heritage listed woolshed. It was built of local stone and with a curved roof due to the lack of local timber.

Shearers came first on foot then in teams of up to 25-30 by bicycle. As they moved between shearing sheds their stopovers in Innamincka were boisterous affairs as the men transferred the spoils of their labour to the publican.

Cordillo Woolshed

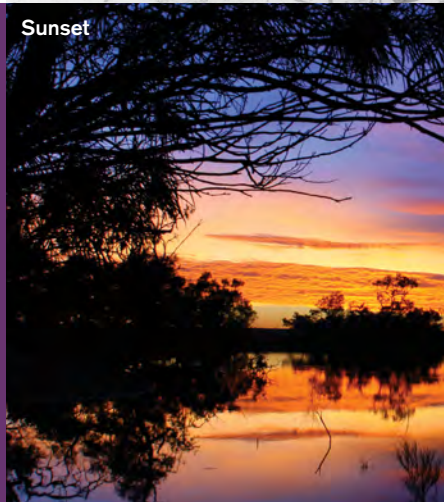


FENCES AND GATES

Fences and gates are a necessary part of stock management – sometimes they cross public roads.

- Please leave gates as you find them – either open or closed
- Few roads are fenced – be aware of stock especially at night
- Waterholes and troughs – please don't camp within 500m of these stock water points unless otherwise sign posted

Sunset



REMOTE AREA TRAVEL

Arid landscapes are incredibly fragile. Whilst they may appear barren and isolated they support a wide range of truly unique and amazing plants and animals. Every step you take off the path and every wheel you take off the track will have a lasting impact. If you are not travelling through a national park or conservation reserve, then you are most likely travelling through a pastoral property, someone else's backyard. Please consider your actions carefully.

- Stay on the tracks.
- Camp only in designated areas or with the permission of the appropriate land manager in other areas.
- Use public toilet facilities if you can. If a public toilet is unavailable, dig a deep hole, burn any toilet paper and fill in the hole.
- Take your rubbish and waste cassettes to the nearest town facilities for disposal in identified waste bins. Do not empty cassettes into public toilets.
- Camping close to stock watering points can affect grazing stock and because of this, you are not permitted to camp within 500 metres of these areas. Please don't use soap or detergents in or near waterholes, stock watering points or artesian springs.
- Pastoral homesteads and out-buildings are people's homes and businesses. Please respect their backyard and don't camp within one kilometre of a homestead or other buildings.
- Bring your firewood with you and check fire restrictions with the Country Fire Service on 1300 362 361. Some National Parks do not allow wood fires and we ask you not to collect wood in outback areas as it is so limited.

Travelling in remote outback South Australia can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. It can also be very hazardous with rapid onset of extreme weather conditions, challenging terrain, and isolation from services.

You are responsible for your own safety and planning. Don't forget to keep in agreed regular contact with a responsible person and advise them of your travel plans.

OUTBACK ROADS AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

Be aware of weather forecasts as you are travelling. Always check road and weather conditions before you leave. Severe penalties apply for driving on closed roads and these are enforced.

Call the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure on 1300 361 033 for information about road closures and conditions in the Outback.

Tracks within National Parks and on pastoral properties may also be subject to closures and advice on road conditions via the Desert Parks Bulletin. Call (08) 8648 5300 for further information.

Only signposted Public Access Routes on pastoral stations can be used without first seeking landholder consent. All other station tracks are considered to be private tracks. Contact the Public Access Officer on 1800 678 447 or (08) 8648 5300 for further information.

OUTBACK COMMUNICATIONS

Only about 5% of the outback has mobile phone range with the majority of coverage in townships on main sealed roads. Coverage is sporadic on the unsealed road network. Satellite telephones provide alternative communications to almost anywhere in Australia and around the world and some outback locations (such as Birdsville and Mt Dare) hire satellite telephones to travellers.

UHF radios are also a popular means of communication in the outback. To prevent confusion and ensure satisfactory communications for everyone using this part of the radio band frequency, protocols are in place. Please familiarise yourself with UHF use prior to departure on a long outback adventure.

Travellers can use channels 9 to 30 and 39 for conversations as well as channels 49 to 70, but should be aware that anyone within range (line of sight) can hear your conversation.

Channels 5 & 35 are for emergency use only. Be aware that emergency channels are monitored by volunteers and may not always be available in outback regions. (Fines and imprisonment can apply for misuse.)

Channels 1 to 8 and 41 to 48 are repeater channels, and as such broadcast over a longer distance (up to 100 km). They should only be used to seek assistance when required. Channel 40 is the Road or 'truckies' channel. Channels 22 & 23 are for data only. Channels 31 to 38 and 71 to 78 are repeater inputs. (Do not use these channels for simplex transmissions as you will interfere with conversations on channels 1 to 8 and 41 to 48.)

FUEL

Your fuel economy will vary greatly on the tracks you take. Make sure you plan ahead and carry enough fuel between all stops. Be aware that heavy track conditions such as soft sand, muddy tracks and slow, hilly terrain will increase your fuel consumption.

WATER

It is essential to always carry adequate supplies of water (plus a 3-4 day reserve supply). During mild weather estimate six litres per person per day. During warmer weather estimate 10 litres of water per person per day.

FURTHER INFORMATION

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

POLICE CONTACT NUMBERS

Birdsville (07) 4656 5677
Cockburn (08) 8091 1633
Leigh Creek (08) 8675 2004
Marree (08) 8675 8346
Tibooburra (08) 8091 3303
www.sapolice.sa.gov.au

ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Port Augusta (08) 8648 9555
Broken Hill (08) 8088 1188
yourhealth.flyingdoctor.org.au

REGIONAL HOSPITALS

Birdsville (07) 4656 3232
Leigh Creek (08) 8675 2018
Marree (08) 8675 8345
Tibooburra (08) 8091 3302
www.countryhealthsa.sa.gov.au

ROAD CONDITIONS

(Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure)
1300 361 033
www.dpti.sa.gov.au

DESERT PARKS HOTLINE

1800 816 078
www.environment.sa.gov.au

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE (CFS) HOTLINE

1300 362 361
www.cfs.sa.gov.au

RAA (Copley Cooke's Outback Motors)
(08) 8675 2618

RACQ
131 905

VISITOR INFORMATION

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM COMMISSION
www.southaustralia.com

FLINDERS RANGES AND OUTBACK VISITOR GUIDE
flindersrangesandoutbackvisitorguide.realviewdigital.com

WADLATA OUTBACK CENTRE

Port Augusta 1800 633 060
www.wadlata.sa.gov.au

MARREE

Marree Hotel (08) 8675 8344
www.marreehotel.com.au

Marree Roadhouse & General Store (08) 8675 8352
www.marreelakeeyreflights.com.au/oasis-cafe-bistro

Oasis Motel, Caravan Park & Campground (08) 8675 8352
www.marreelakeeyreflights.com.au/accommodation/marree-motel-caravan

MUNGERANNIE

Mungerannie Hotel (08) 8675 8317
www.mungeranniehotel.com.au

BIRDVILLE

The Wirrari information Centre (07) 4656 3300

Birdsville Hotel & Motel (07) 4656 3244
www.theoutback.com.au

Birdsville Caravan Park (07) 4656 3214
birdsvillecaravanpark.com

CAMERON CORNER

The Cameron Corner Store (08) 8091 3872

LYNDHURST

Lyndhurst Roadhouse (08) 8675 7782
Lyndhurst Hotel (08) 8675 7781

INNAMINCKA

Innamincka Trading Post Store (08) 8675 9900
www.innaminckatp.com.au

Innamincka Hotel (08) 8675 9901
www.theoutback.com.au/innamincka-hotel

Cooper Home Stay (08) 8675 9591
www.coopercreekhomestay.com

FOR ENTRY AND CAMPING PERMITS FOR THE REGIONAL RESERVE OR COONGIE LAKES NATIONAL PARK, CONTACT THE INNAMINCKA HOTEL OR INNAMINCKA TRADING POST STORE.

REFERENCES, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & FURTHER READING

THE MARREE-INNAMINCKA NRM GROUP GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES INFORMATION SOURCED FROM THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS:

Westprint maps, John Deckert

Outback – South Australia and Central Australia, Stuart Nicol 2nd Edition, RAA Tourism

Field Guide to the Plants of Outback South Australia, Frank Kutsche and Brendan Lay, (DWLBC)

Magnificent mihirungs: the colossal flightless birds of the Australian dreamtime, Peter F. Murray, Pat Vickers Rich

Making Connections – A Journey along Central Australian Trading Routes. Gen. eds. Val Donovan, Colleen Wall, Arts Queensland

Birdsville/Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey, Peter Bell (DENR)

Strzelecki Track, Lifeline to the Corner Country P & Val Donovan, Transport SA

Geodynamics Limited, Power from the Earth; Quarterly Report March 2009

Pads, tracks and water: South Australia's Pastoral Stock Routes, Leith Yelland. 2002, Department Primary Industries and Resources, Adelaide.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Reece Pedler, Alex Clarke, Graeme Chapman, Peter Canty, SAAL NRM Board, Santos and Pat Katrich

ABOUT THIS BROCHURE AND THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT BOARD

This brochure was created and developed by the Marree-Innamincka NRM Group. The Marree-Innamincka NRM Group is part of the South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, responsible for the management of natural resources in this part of the state, including the 'Legendary Tracks' area. The Marree-Innamincka district is dominated by arid desert land types and covers approximately 20% of the state, or more than 200,000 square kilometres.

The Marree-Innamincka NRM Group includes representatives with a variety of skills and backgrounds including the pastoral industry, mining/energy, parks and wildlife, and government. The group plays a leading role in developing community awareness and understanding of land management issues, promoting planning and land management best practices.

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VISIT US

The Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands provides a one-stop service where you can access services and information on National Parks and the management of wildlife, land and water.

Level One, 9 Mackay Street, Port Augusta.
SAAridlands@sa.gov.au (08) 8648 5300
www.naturalresource.sa.gov.au/aridlands

PUBLIC ACCESS OFFICER (For access to Pastoral Leases)
1800 678 447

www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/Land/Rangelands_Pastoral_Program

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CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

Government
of South Australia
South Australian Arid
Lands Natural Resources
Management Board

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