

Come Travel Australia

Welcome to the December 2008 Newsletter



What's Happening at Come Travel Australia ...

- The fun never stops around here. We've covered a few miles this month, and our new wheels are a great asset. About two months ago we bought a campervan, an ex-rental with one private owner. After years of caravans, tents, swags and four wheel drives, this is a new experience again! So after the trip to the [Lockyer Valley](#) and [Laidley](#) last month and a trip to [Coochin Creek](#) and [Mount Tibrogargan](#) in the [Glasshouse Mountains](#) this month we are pretty happy. If You've ever thought about it, hire one, try it, and keep a look out for good second hand ones, there are plenty out there for a good price.
- If You like to climb mountains, get great views and you don't mind a bit of medium level rock climbing, then We can recommend [Mount Tibrogargan](#) in the [Glasshouse Mountains](#). The climb is very steep, classified as a grade 5, and dry weather only, there is some minor rock climbing and is best suited to people of medium to good fitness. The result is great views of the [Glasshouse Mountains](#) including [Mount Ngungun](#), [Coonowrin](#) and [Mount Beerwah](#). [Mount Ngungun](#) is also a very good climb with a slightly easier track, although there is one section that is very steep and somewhat slippery. Check out the pictures on our [Photo Gallery](#).



- This month we have added several new pages covering the [Arkaroola](#) and [Gammon Ranges National Park](#) in [South Australia's](#) Northern [Flinders Ranges](#) . Some of the interesting and beautiful spots in the area include [Barraranna Gorge](#) and [Nooldoonooldoona Waterhole](#). [Outback South Australia](#) is as visually stimulating as the Red Centre, and is well worth spending a few days or a week exploring. The [Flinders Ranges](#) are a photographers and artists paradise, a bush walkers desert Eden, a four wheel drivers mecca, and as a travelling mate of mine repeatedly told me... "It's a bloody good place to be!"
- New Year's Eve is rushing at us very quickly, have You planned anything yet? Well, why not spend an evening of great music, fine food and excellent wine at [Warrego Wines](#) at [Marburg](#) in Queensland. Join Kevin and Cathy for a wonderful evening to see in 2009.

This Month's Added Pages

Arkaroola - South Australia	Arkaroola Waterhole - South Australia
Nooldoonooldoona Waterhole - South Australia	Bolla Bollana Springs - South Australia
Barraranna Gorge - South Australia	Gammon Ranges National Park - South Australia
Paralana Hotsprings - South Australia	Peterborough - South Australia

Upcoming Events Calendar December 2008

- 29th - 7 Dec - Adelaide Guitar Festival
Starts with a free concert and guitar band world record attempt at Elder Park
Then:
Adelaide Festival Centre
King William Road
Adelaide
South Australia
www.southaustralia.com/9006470.aspx
- 28th - Holden's 60th Birthday + 19th FX - FJ Nationals
Beenleigh Showgrounds
Queensland.
Gold Coin Entry.
www.fxjholdenclub.com
- 31st - Warrego Wines New Year's Eve Party
Warrego Wines
Marburg
Queensland
www.warregowines.com.au
- 24- 26th Port Lincoln Tunarama Festival
Tasman Terrace
Port Lincoln
South Australia
<http://www.tunarama.net/>
- 19 - 22 February - Chinchilla Melon Festival
Chinchilla
Queensland
<http://www.melonfest.com.au/>
- 21st - Annual Yongala Ball - 8pm
Yongala
South Australia
- 3rd - 13th - Annual Peterborough Art and Cultural Festival
Peterborough
South Australia
- 21st - Annual Yongala Ball - 8pm
Yongala
South Australia

Featured Location

Cape Le Grand - Western Australia

By Terry Jackson

This is another one of our favourite places! With white squeaky clean beaches, azure blue waters, rounded granite tors and some of Australia's most beautiful flora, Cape Le Grand National Park is one of Australia's must see locations.



Thistle Cove

With its wild coastal scenery, rugged granite peaks, and plentiful sandy heathlands, Cape Le Grand National Park is a place to relax on a beach, or take a walk, swim in crystal clear waters, go fishing and admire the beautiful scenery. There are delightful bays with wide sandy beaches set between rocky granite headlands, that will inspire the painter and photographer alike. The local kangaroo population has a liking for the beaches, especially at Lucky Bay, and the multitude of avian life makes this a bird watchers paradise.

The park is situated 50 km south east by sealed road from Esperance, in Western Australia. From Esperance take Fisheries Road to Merivale Road and then Cape Le Grand Road. The route is well signposted from Fisheries Road. Cape Le Grand is a National Park and so the usual National Parks rules apply. Entry is \$10 per person, payable at the gate, and there are two camping areas, one at Lucky Bay and the other at Cape Le Grand Beach. Both have amenities with showers and there are bbq areas as well.

You can also access Cape Le Grand from Esperance along the beach, it is a 25km beach drive and is very much controlled by the tides. Sand driving experience is recommended as there are several creek outlets that are very soft and can easily trap a vehicle.

The Park itself extends from Cape Le Grand to Cheyne Point just west of Orleans Bay. Other than the main part of the Cape Le Grand National Park there are two other access points to the Park. Instead of turning off Merivale Road at Cape Le Grand Road, You can continue on straight ahead onto the dirt road and then take the Dunns Rock Road to Dunns Rock. Further east is Hammer Head and the village of Wharton at the western end of Duke of Orleans Bay. The eastern boundary of Cape Le Grand National Park is just west of here and is accessible by foot or by boat.

A Brief History of the Cape Le Grand and Esperance Region

It is believed the first Europeans to visit this part of the south western coast of Australia were the crew of the dutch ship Gulden Seepaert (Golden Seahorse), captained by Francois Thijssen and Supercargo Pieter Van Nuyts in 1627. They sailed along the south western Australian coastline, from Cape Leeuwin to offshore islands near present day Ceduna, in South Australia.

In 1792 the french ships L'Esperance and La Recherche were surveying the coastline around what is now Esperance, under the command of Captain Bruni D'Entrecasteaux, whilst also searching for a long vanished explorer named La Perouse. These searches proved to be in vain but valuable scientific discoveries were made, including compiling the world's first major collection of unique Western Australian flora. Whilst running before a storm the two ships were guided safely through the numerous islands now known as the Recherche Archipelago, by a sailor by the name of Le Grand who was at the masthead as lookout. D'Entrecasteaux named the cape and the highest peak, 345m high Mount Le Grand, after him.

The first accurate charts of the Recherche Archipelago were made by Lieutenant Matthew Flinders in 1802. He charted the coast so thoroughly that most maps of this area are still based on updates of his own charts. Whilst running before a storm that came on them suddenly, Flinders discovered a well sheltered bay that gave protection to his small ship the Investigator. This beautiful bay he named Lucky Bay. When the storm cleared he sent his Boats Master, John Thistle, and a small whale boat crew to find fresh water. They found fresh water behind the dunes at the next bay to the east, and this was duly named Thistle Cove.

Within a few years the Esperance region had become a regular hunting ground for whalers and sealers. The islands of the Recherche Archipelago were a prime slaughterhouse for men against the Southern Right Whale and the Australian Sealion. This was possibly a lucky thing for the next explorer to visit the Cape Le Grand area.

After a gruelling journey across the Nullabor Plain and the coastline of the Great Australian Bight in June 1841, explorer Edward John Eyre and his remaining aboriginal companion, Wylie, suffering from starvation and exposure, reached the Cape Le Grand area. Eyre and Wylie were fortunate to come across a French whaling ship named the "Mississippi" and the whaling crews that worked from it, and whose English master, Captain Rossiter, helped them to recover and provided them with supplies to get them through to the settlement of Albany. For more of the story of Eyre's tragic and heroic journey visit [Project Gutenberg Australia - Eyres Journal](#). Eyre named the bay where the fortunate encounter occurred, Rossiter Bay and the nearby headland Mississippi Hill.

The permanent European settlement of the Esperance area commenced with the arrival of the Dempster family from Northam in 1863. The Dempster brothers were granted vast grazing leases encompassing all of present day Esperance, where they ran their 500 sheep and 200 horses. The Dempster family prospered and were joined in the area within a few years by other pioneering graziers, who opened up the Salmon Gum country to the north, and later further out onto the arid lands of the Nullabor Plain.

The 1890s Western Australian Goldrush saw a rise to prominence of Esperance as a commercial port with strong sea links to the eastern states. Esperance became a major transit point for thousands of gold diggers. Many of the towns 1000 permanent residents were said to have originated from Adelaide. The decline in production from Western Australia's Goldfields declined, and the construction of the rail link between Perth and Kalgoorlie in 1897, helped to decrease Esperance's importance as a port.

The development of cereal growing from around 1912, promoted by successive Western Australian governments, brought a new potential industry to the Esperance area. However, the poor soils of Esperance's wheatbelt caused it to be a marginal economic proposition for many years.

The 1930s depression years left Esperance's farming community to endure staggering bankruptcy rates approaching 75%. It wasn't until 1949 when the Esperance Plains Research Station discovered the wheatbelt was deficient in phosphorous, and copper and zinc trace elements. By top dressing the soil with superphosphate and other trace elements, the situation was remedied, and cereal farming became profitable. The land around the boundaries of Cape Le Grand National Park are predominantly used for grazing and cereal farming.

Plants, Rocks and Animals

Cape Le Grand is a natural wonderland because of its natural heritage value as well as its scenic value. The granite and gneiss rocks that dominate the coastline are the eroded remnants of igneous intrusions formed during the Proterozoic. In the Eocene, around 40 million years ago, the sea levels were upwards of 300m higher and these rocks were beneath the sea. The large holes and fissures in the exposed granite and gneiss outcrops are the result of water action at that time. As the land surface was exposed as the sea level dropped, fine sands and silts were deposited, leaving a reasonably good, though nutrient poor, soil profile which has allowed for a great diversity of plant species to take hold. The south coast of Western Australia is dominated by these nutrient poor soils, which strangely enough have been the cause of a great species diversity. Fitzgerald River National Park, about 100km to the west of Esperance has approximately 20% of the total plant species recorded in Western Australia inside its boundaries. The flora at Cape Le Grand is dominated by Melalucas, Banksias, Grevilleas and Sheoaks. The wildflowers in Spring are a sight to behold, and for the botanist, amateur or learned, this is a place to spend hours just wandering through nature's own botanic garden.

For the keen natural history enthusiast - [Surveying Western Australia's Land Edge](#), is a very interesting document. With the large amount of plant diversity comes a quite large avian diversity. There are over 240 recorded bird species for the Esperance region, some of which are endemic to this region alone. For a comprehensive bird list visit [BIRDS OF THE ESPERANCE SHIRE](#). Bird watchers and wildlife enthusiasts alike will find Cape Le Grand a pleasure to enjoy. There are quite a few marsupial species found in the Cape Le Grand National Park, including the nectar and insect eating tiny honey-possum, the quenda, or southern brown bandicoot, which forages in the understorey for grubs and worms and can often be seen at the campgrounds in the evening, black-footed rock wallabies and tamar wallabies are also sometimes seen. There are also possums and the most commonly seen marsupial is the Western Grey Kangaroo, these are often found on the beach at the southern end of Lucky Bay, sunbaking, feeding and sometimes swimming, I kid You not!



The Roos at Lucky Bay are Beach Bunnies!

Where to Stay At Cape Le Grand

The Esperance and Cape Le Grand areas have a great variety of accommodation options. From caravan parks and cabins, hotels, motels, guesthouses and bed and breakfasts in and around Esperance itself, to bed and breakfasts and farmstays nearer to Cape Le Grand. Then at Cape Le Grand National Park there are two campgrounds. The Cape Le Grand Beach campground is closer to the entrance to the park and has a beach frontage, excellent amenities and a bbq area. The Lucky Bay campground is further east of the park entrance and also has excellent amenities and a bbq area. There is no power at either camp site.

What to See and Do at Cape Le Grand

Bay For all of the good information about the Esperance and Cape Le Grand area, drop in to the Esperance Visitor Centre on the corner of Dempster and Kemp Streets.

They can be contacted by telephoning (08) 9071 2330 or faxing (08) 9071 4543, or by Email at visit.esperance@bigpond.com.

Their website is www.visitesperance.com.

An excellent [Map](#) of the Cape Le Grand and Esperance area is available through the Visit Esperance Site.

You can also contact the Esperance District CALM office, at Dempster Street, Esperance. Phone (090) 71 3733

The Cape Le Grand National Park has two resident rangers near the main entrance on Cape Le Grand Road, and a mobile ranger is based at Lucky for much of the year.

The Good Places

Cape Le Grand Beach

Cape Le Grand Beach is at the furthest western end of the Cape Le Grand National Park, and faces out into Esperance Bay. There is a well laid out campground here with good amenities, bbqs and shelter sheds. Cape Le Grand beach is a long open beach with generally largish rolling waves, perfect for body surfing and sometimes surfing. When the weather is calm the beach is a good swimming spot. The 15km Coastal walking trail starts here at the Carpark. There is good fishing from the rocks and along the beach and boats can be launched on calm days, although Lucky Bay is the recommended boat launching spot.

Frenchmans Peak

Frenchmans Peak is a weathered and waterworn outcrop of granite and gneiss 5km north east of Cape Le Grand. The turn off into the carpark is about 1km east of the Lucky Bay turnoff from the Cape Le Grand Road. The climb starts with a gentle walk along a well maintained path around the eastern side of the base of the mountain. The path then starts uphill following a ridge of the north eastern corner of the peak, the rock surface is very exposed and though offering fairly good grip when dry, this changes instantly to a quite slippery surface with the smallest amount of rain. The ridge is also exposed to wind and on days with strong winds the climb is not recommended. The climb up the steep exposed face brings you to a rock shelter, just beyond which is an open cavity that cuts a hole right through the peak. This hole was originally eroded out by the movement of water when the peak was submerged beneath the sea, and has been slowly enlarged more over time by wind erosion.

The final part of the ascent to the peak requires a small amount of rock climbing over eroded and fissured rocks and boulders. Take care at the summit as there are several large drops and the peak is often quite windy. The view from the bare 262m high peak gives a 360 degree panorama of the coast and sand plains from Esperance to the west through to Rossiter Bay and beyond to the east.

Hellfire Bay

Hellfire Bay is one of the most beautiful beaches on the Australian coast. With its turquoise blue waters washing with often pounding surf over the equal second whitest sand in Australia, (Lucky Bay has the official whitest sand of any Australian beach!), and swirling around the granite and gneiss headlands, Hellfire Bay is one of those places once visited You'll declare You'll have to return to someday. Even in bad weather this bay is spectacular. For those that like a swim Hellfire Bay is a good opportunity, but do take care as there are rips and the surf does tend to get up even on pretty flat days. There are toilets, bbq's and a shelter shed at the carpark and a paved walkway almost to the edge of the beach.

Thistle Cove

Thistle Cove was named after John Thistle, Master on Lieutenant Matthew Flinders sloop HMS Investigator, who found the Bay and the fresh water lake behind the sanddunes on the 11th of January 1802. It is another of the beautiful white sand beaches with turquoise blue waters that are the glory of this coastline. The bay curves in a beautiful sweeping arc before rejoining the rounded granite and gneiss headlands. The walk to Thistle Cove from the Lucky Bay Campground is a short half hour one or You can drive to within 50m of the beach. At the carpark is a large rock mass known as Whistling Rock, on a windy day there is no need to imagine why. Swimming at Thistle Cove is generally fairly safe unless the surf is up, there are a few rips and as with any beach it is wise to take care.



Lucky Bay at Sunset

Lucky Bay

Lucky Bay was named by Lieutenant Matthew Flinders after he had to seek shelter from a storm on the 9th of January 1802 with his Sloop the HMS Investigator. Lucky Bay was scientifically determined as having the whitest sand in Australia and with the beautiful Turquoise Blue of the waters and the 4km sweep of the beach, this is a haven that Matthew Flinders should be proud of having discovered. At the south western end of the bay is the carpark and camping area with amenities and bbqs. There is a very good walk up to the point with an excellent view over the whole bay. Swimming is best near this western end as it is sheltered from the weather, this is also an excellent spot for snorkelling as there are a great variety of brightly coloured fish and numerous other sea growths. This end of the beach also has a near permanent kangaroo population who spend most of their time grazing and lazing around in the seaweed and drinking from the fresh water that runs out of the bush onto the beach. Lucky Bay is the safest place in Cape Le Grand National Park to launch a boat as the sand is generally harder and the surf less.

Further around the bay the waves pick up and roll in with more power. Often dolphins are seen along the bay and in the winter months it is not unusual to see Southern Right Whales even quite close to shore. At the furthest eastern end of Lucky Bay, amongst the rocky headlands is a monument to Matthew Flinders and his crew of the HMS Investigator.

Rossiter Bay

Rossiter Bay is approachable from Lucky Bay by a gravel road and is generally not as scenic as Hellfire Bay, Thistle Cove or Lucky Bay, but is still worth the few minutes drive. The beach is quite open with low sandplains covered with native heath and low banksias. Swimming at Rossiter Bay is best left to calmer days as there can be very large waves at other times. The 15km Coastal Walking Trail can be started from Rossiter Bay heading back towards Lucky Bay. There is a bird sanctuary 400m to the west of the beach entrance, this is a protected nesting site for several bird species. Also tucked in under the trees near the bird sanctuary is a memorial to commemorate Edward John Eyre and his guide Wylie, who luckily came across Captain Rossiter and his whaling crew, here in 1841 after having made a very gruelling and tragic crossing of the coastline of the Great Australian Bight. Rossiter Bay is a good fishing spot from both the beach and the rocks. Boats launching is not recommended as the sand can be quite soft and the waves large. Beach driving should be done with great care as the sand is often very soft. Take care with tides as the water comes right up to the dune front quite often.

Dunns Rocks

Dunns Rocks is a popular local fishing spot with no camping or amenities and a good access onto the beach. There is a walking trail out onto the point. Instead of turning off Merivale Road at Cape Le Grand Road, You can continue on straight ahead onto the dirt road and then take the Dunns Rocks Road to Dunns Rocks. Instead of returning all the way back to Merivale Road You can take Saddleback Road which brings You out further east on Merivale Road.

Cheyne Point

Cheyne Point is only accessible by walking or by boat along the beach from Dunns Rock or by following the coast from Wharton and Hammer Head. It is a rocky headland with plenty of fishing opportunities.

Walking

If You like to walk, Cape Le Grand has some beautiful coastal scenery to take in. Try any or all of these:

☞ **The Coastal Trail** — This is 15km one way, allow 6-8 hours to traverse the complete length. Best to organise to have a vehicle at the other end or You'll have to walk all the way back again. Carry plenty of water and take care after rain as the granite slopes in places can be very slippery. Good walking shoes are essential.

This walk can be broken into the following four shorter sections.

☞ **Le Grand Beach to Hellfire Bay** — Allow 2-3 hours, hard going. This is the hardest part of the Coastal Trail, with some steepish climbs and slippery exposed rocks. The track cuts across Cape Le Grand below Mount Le Grand, there are spectacular views and delightful scenery.

☞ **Hellfire Bay To Thistle Cove** — Allow 2 hours, hard going. The Track here follows the coast, often very closely! There are some steep climbs over exposed rock. The coastal scenery through here is spectacular, a definite photographers paradise.

☞ **Thistle Cove to Lucky Bay** — Allow 30 minutes, easy. This is the easiest part of the walk by far. The track is mostly sandy and is often used as a way to get from the Lucky Bay campground to the beautiful Thistle Cove for a swim. From Thistle Cove is also the Le Grand Heritage Trail, a 1 km circuit, allow 40 minutes, easy. Starts from Thistle Cove car park along Coastal Trail to Lucky Bay.

☞ **Lucky Bay to Rossiter Bay** — Allow 2-3 hours, medium. Most of this walk is along the 4kms of Lucky Bay beach. Before You head over the dunes to Rossiter Bay, make sure You visit the Captain Matthew Flinders monument at the far end of the beach. The walk through to Rossiter Bay is reasonably good going with a couple of small climbs. There is a monument to Edward John Eyre near the Bird Sanctuary at Rossiter Bay.

☞ **The Bird Sanctuary** — 400 m return, allow 15 minutes, easy stroll from Rossiter Bay car park.

Then there's the great climb:

☞ **Frenchman Peak—3 km return, allow 2 hours, hard walk. Please follow footpath from car park to the easy angled east slope - do not attempt to short cut - the rock is deceptively steep, especially on descent. The peak is 262m and offers 360 degree views of the coast and sand plains. This climb is not recommended in wet or windy weather.**

Boating is popular around Cape Le Grand, just remember that the weather here comes straight of the Southern Ocean and can change very quickly. Boats are best launched at Lucky Bay. Small boats can also be launched from Cape Le Grand Beach. Launching at Rossiter Bay is not recommended. These beaches are notoriously treacherous for vehicles and it is easy to become bogged in the most innocent looking wet or dry sand. Ask the ranger about surface conditions and tides.

There is plenty of good fishing along the Cape Le Grand Coast, from boat, beach or the rocks. Beware of large waves when fishing off the rocks as this is the Southern Ocean and the waves can be very unpredictable. There are also strong currents along this coast.

So there You have it. Cape Le Grand National Park has a great deal to offer the Traveller for a day trip from Esperance or a few days relaxing or even longer. There are plenty of unique treasures along the Australian coastline and You'll never experience them unless You spend some time to find them. Happy Travelling!

We here at Come Travel Australia love to promote Australia

and Australian Tourism.

After all

There's So Much To See...

So Why Not?

Regards

Terry and the Team at

***Come Travel Australia
0413867380***