



The Great South West Edge

A diverse sensory experience.

Nature's paintbrush has sculpted a landscape of extraordinary beauty hidden on the south western edge of this vast continent. Spectacular wildflowers create a breathtaking backdrop to some of the world's whitest beaches, cleanest blue waters and most diverse marine ecosystems.

One of the world's biodiversity hotspots, Australia's Great South West Edge stretches 700 kilometres between Busselton and Esperance taking in breathtaking coastal scenery, ancient mountain ranges and vast swaths of natural bush. It is home to some of the rarest plants on earth — around 80 per cent of the plants found in this region can't be found anywhere else in the world.

DIVERSITY ON A GRAND SCALE

The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve-listed Fitzgerald River National Park covers 329,000 hectares and is one of the most botanically significant parks in Australia containing more than 1,800 known plant species — more than all the plants found in the United Kingdom! The park is also home to 22 mammal, 41 reptile, 12 frog and over 200 bird species including the endangered ground parrot.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE RADIANCE OF SOUTH WEST EDGE FLORA

Named after the Greek God Proteas, who was capable of changing his form at will, Australian members of the Proteaceae family range from small shrubs and striking bushes through to imposing trees, with colours of startling reds, pure apricots and mottled whites.

A family thought to have originated in South Africa when the earth's southern lands formed the giant supercontinent

of Pangea; the Proteaceae family has been in existence for over 140 million years. Ninety-six per cent of all Proteaceae species in the Great South West Edge are found nowhere else in the world.

FORESTS OF THE SOUTH WEST EDGE

Some of the world's tallest forests contemplate the sky in the Great South West Edge. Spectacular tuart trees grow up to 33 metres high with their trunks reaching 10 metres in circumference. These trees form part of the tuart forest — one of the rarest ecosystems on earth.

The beautiful rich red timbers of the 40 metre high jarrah trees around Nannup were once extensively harvested. Now protected, jarrah trees live for up to 500 years and the forest is home to more than 150 bird, 29 mammal, 45 reptile and 1,200 plant species.

With multi-coloured trunks of pink, orange, grey and white, majestic tall karri forests grow between Manjimup and

Denmark, while the unique red tingle tree boasts a trunk reaching up to 26 metres in circumference, hollowing over time to provide important wildlife habitat.

Climb Australia's tallest trees

Experience life in the canopy — meet the challenge of climbing the spiral staircases of the 61 metre Gloucester Tree, the 75 metre Dave Evans Bicentennial Tree or the 51 metre Diamond Tree. Or take the Valley of the Giants tree top walk to see the world from 38 metres above the ground.

Walk the Bibbulmun track

The Bibbulmun Track stretches almost 1,000km and provides an opportunity to undertake a series of day walks or experience the full end-to-end adventure. The walk traverses a variety of jarrah, marri, wandoo, karri and tingle forests as well as internationally significant wetlands. Depending on the journey, visitors can choose a range of accommodation from bush camping on the track through to five-star accommodation in adjacent towns. For more information go to www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au



WETLANDS OF THE EDGE

Wetlands in the Great South West Edge provide an important lifeline for local and migratory bird species, who take advantage of seasonal abundance — some travelling from as far as Japan, Russia and China each year. These wetlands form an important chain of connecting habitats for the world's waterbirds.

As well as being home to more than 75 bird species, the Vasse-Wonnerup wetlands also support the largest remaining tuart forest in the world. The spectacular Lake Gore and Lake Warden wetlands are home to nearly 30,000 waterbirds, including pelicans, hooded plovers, grey teals and yellow-billed spoonbills.

REMOTE ISLAND ARCHIPELAGO

Stretching for more than 230 kilometres, over 100 islands and 1,200 islets and rocky outcrops make up the spectacular Recherche Archipelago. On the larger islands you'll see an array of wildlife including wallabies, bandicoots, snakes, frogs, sea eagles and Cape Barren geese.

One of the best diving spots in Australia, the sea floor is covered with extensive sea-grass meadows, spectacular reefs of soft corals and over 450 species of sponges — 150 of which have only recently been discovered. The Australian fur seal, penguins, dolphins, migratory whales, stingrays and Port Jackson sharks can all be found in these waters.

HELP CONSERVE AUSTRALIA'S GREAT SOUTH WEST EDGE

Biodiversity is life — conserving our natural world means clean water, clean air and fertile soil for us all.

Create experiences that last a lifetime in the Great South West Edge, but leave only footprints in the sand. Logs, sticks, rocks and shells should stay in their natural place, where they provide important habitat for some of the world's rarest and threatened creatures. Take your rubbish away with you.

- You can contribute to the conservation of this diverse landscape by donating to the Australian Wildlife Conservancy's projects in the region at www.australianwildlife.org to leave a lasting legacy for our natural world.
- Getting involved in Gondwana Link - a landscape scale vision involving all stakeholders working together to reconnect country across south-western Australia. You can find out more at www.gondwanalink.org



Capes wattle



Boranup forest

For more information on this landscape or to learn about other naturally beautiful places which offer a different but uniquely Australian experience. Visit www.australia.com/nl