



The Flinders Ranges

Where ancient landscapes inspire and reveal the story of life

A journey through Flinders Ranges is a voyage of peaceful discovery. These ancient ranges are renowned for their spectacular geology — their rugged mountains, deep gorges and sheltered creeks. They are home to abundant wildlife and a rich cultural tradition. Their weathered canyons whisper of a time forgotten, a story begun 800 million years ago when life began.

REVEALING THE STORY OF LIFE ON EARTH

Once an ancient inland sea, powerful forces in the earth caused massive upheavals, creating giant mountain ranges. Today's landscape is the result of these ranges eroding over hundreds of millions of years.

The Flinders Ranges contain one of the most intact and rich Ediacara fossil sites in the world. The fossils provide the earliest known evidence of multicellular animal life — over 540 million years ago. So important are these fossils that the Ediacara period has been named after them.

Ancient lands, new discoveries

A recent discovery of primitive sponge fossils in the Flinders Ranges suggest animals may have been on Earth for at least 650 million years — 70 million years earlier than previously thought.

ANCIENT CONNECTIONS

The Adnyamathanha are the Indigenous people of the Flinders Ranges. The name, meaning rocks or hills, describes the five traditional groups who live in the ranges. Their

connection with the land remains strong to this day and enmeshed in the landscape are songlines, rock art and sacred sites.

The Adnyamathanha tell the story of how Wilpena Pound was formed by two giant Akurra serpents which circled and ate a group of people attending a ceremony. Occasional earth tremors are said to be the rumblings of the Akurra's belly after their feast.

WHAT ARE SONGLINES?

Also called dreaming tracks, songlines are paths across the land which mark the route followed by 'creator beings'. The paths of the songlines are recorded in traditional songs, stories, dance, and paintings. Indigenous people use them to navigate across the land by repeating the words of a song which describe locations, waterholes and other natural features.

Although songlines may cross several different language groups, it is said that the landscape is encapsulated in its rhythm and melody and can be understood by those who know how to interpret them.

Nantawarrina conservation work brings global awards

The first declared Indigenous Protected Area in Australia, Nantawarrina spreads across 58,000 hectares of rugged terrain between the Flinders Ranges and Gammon Ranges National Parks.

The Adnyamathanha people have revitalised their community, created a sense of purpose and renewed cultural connections through activities such as growing bushfoods, running cultural tours, land rehabilitation and providing facilities for sustainable tourism.

In 2000, these achievements were recognised through a United Nations Environment Program award, and Nantawarrina joined the Global 500 Roll of Honour for Environmental Achievement. The success of Nantawarrina inspired the creation of Indigenous Protected Areas, with 43 sites now declared across Australia.

A LIVING LANDSCAPE

Wildlife abounds in the landscape, from red kangaroos and flightless emus to the brilliant flashing wings of parrots, lorikeets and rosellas and magnificent wedge-tailed eagles soaring through vast blue skies.

The ranges are home to more than half of South Australia's 3,100 plant species. Ancient river red gums dominate the dry creek beds, ferns shelter amongst moist shaded spots along the rocky slopes protected from the wind and the sun, and remnant orchid pockets can be found throughout the area.

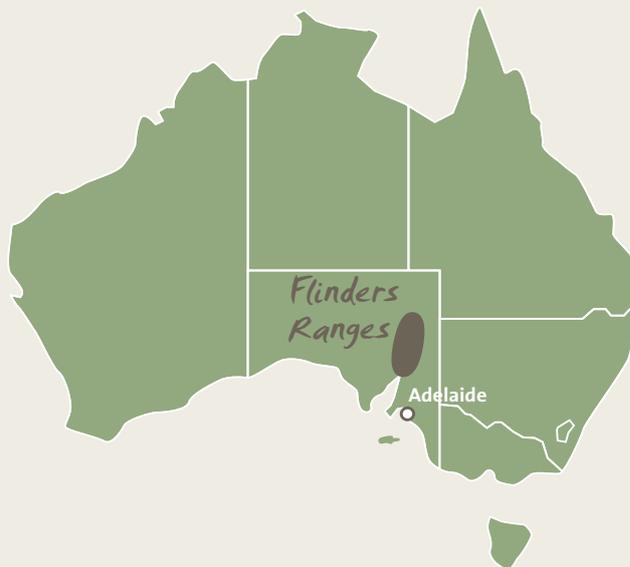
Yellow-footed rock-wallaby

The striking ochre, grey, black, brown and white markings of the 65 centimetre high yellow-footed rock-wallaby are synonymous with the Flinders Ranges where they inhabit cliff lines that provide vegetation, moisture and shelter from the harsh Australian sun.

In the past, hunting for their fur, competition with sheep and cattle and predation by invasive species such as cats and foxes saw their numbers decline. Today habitat protection and control of predators are seeing numbers slowly start to recover.



Yellow-footed rock-wallaby



FLINDERS — PART OF A BROADER CONSERVATION EFFORT

The Flinders Ranges, with its extensive network of public, private and Indigenous parks and reserves, form part of NatureLinks, a South Australian program that manages and restores large areas of habitat across the state. By providing vital links so animals and plants can move large distances, the program helps reduce local extinctions and improves species stability.



Wilpena Pound

HELP PROTECT THIS ANCIENT ENVIRONMENT

You make your own contribution to conserving our natural world when you visit the Flinders Ranges. Low-impact activities such as bushwalking and cycling all provide fantastic opportunities to get off the beaten track and discover new worlds that are like nothing else on earth

Help us conserve Australia's natural areas for future generations. When camping leave logs and sticks in the bush, where they provide important habitat for native animals — bring a portable stove instead.

- Experience the world's most ancient living culture and work in the bush tucker garden with local Indigenous groups through a twice-yearly camping trip. For more information go to: www.foe.org.au
- See conservation in action and take part in yellow-footed rock wallaby surveys, run by Conservation Volunteers Australia. For more information go to: www.naturewise.com.au

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