

# Birdsville Strzelecki LEGENDARY TRACKS OF THE MARREE-INNAMINCKA DISTRICT



Created by the local  
Marree-Innamincka  
Landscape Group





Golden hour at the Lake Harry Ruins on the Birdsville Track.  
Photo by Julie Fletcher Photography.

## Welcome to Country

We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians whose ancestral lands we are travelling on. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal peoples to country – the Adnyamathanha, Arabana, Dieri, Kuyani, Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi, Yandruwandha/Yawarrawarrka and Malyangapa people.

We also pay respect to the cultural authority of other Aboriginal groups whose country we may travel on during our journey in this region.

## Be prepared for the Outback

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. For a safe journey, it is essential to plan carefully, have a well maintained and equipped vehicle, and be well-prepared and well-provisioned.

[www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/get-involved/visiting-our-region](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/get-involved/visiting-our-region)







**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.

# The Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks

Long before they became legendary stock routes, the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks were part of ancient Aboriginal trails for trade and custom.

In a land where all human activity depends on the presence of water, both routes have been defined by a succession of watering places. It is these watering places that allowed the tracks to become stock routes in the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th century as pastoralism established itself in the arid centre of Australia.

## HISTORY OF THE TRACKS

The Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks were important Aboriginal trade routes, connecting the groups of central Australia to the Flinders Ranges and its highly prized red, brown and white ochre.

In the early days of pastoralism (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.

Mobs of 1000 head were commonplace and the feats of the men and women driving these mobs has become legendary. They include 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 – with the track he took forming the basis for today's Strzelecki Track.

Over time, the tracks have shifted, wavered and at times disappeared to revive again later. The 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 more recently 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 about 520km from Birdsville to Marree (historically known as Hergott Springs) where the rail formally terminated. It follows a string of artesian bores drilled roughly 50km apart by pastoralists and government to provide a reliable water supply.



The Birdsville Track





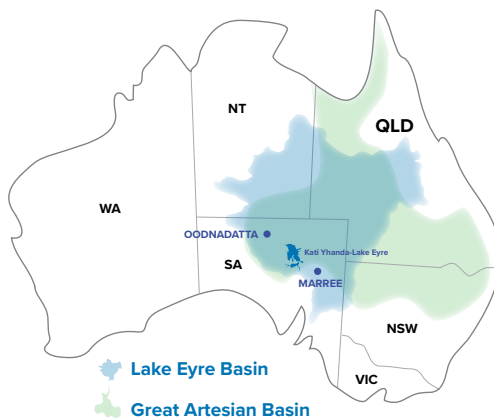
# GroundWater

## 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 past 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 covers approximately one sixth of Australia. To the south is a long stretch of dry salt lakes dominated by Kati Thanda-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 Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre. The passage of water into Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre takes many months, rarely filling it completely; although on average some water reaches it every eight years.

## Funding to control free-flowing bores

The first artesian flowing bore was drilled into the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) in 1878 and at one stage there were more than 50,000 bores, many flowing openly into drains. Flows peaked at more than 3000 megalitres per day between 1915 and 1928.

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.

It was followed by the Interim GAB Infrastructure Investment Program (IGABIIP), Improving Great Artesian Basin Drought Resilience Program (IGABDR) and now the Great Artesian Basin Water Security Program (GABWSP). Together they have controlled 82 bores, eliminated 215km of bore drains and installed 920km of piping in South Australia.





# THE BIRDSVILLE TRACK



Marree

**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. 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. Despite of the fence wild dog control is still needed.



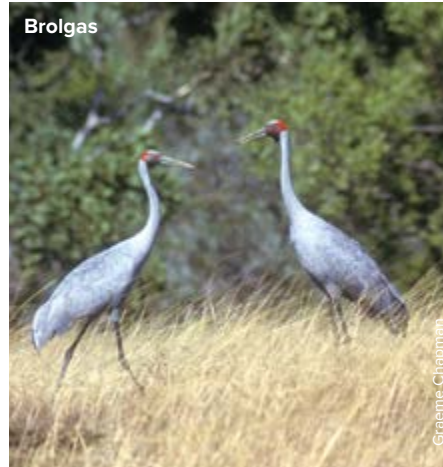
Wild dog

**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

Greene 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



Grave at Bethesda Mission

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 Finnis Springs established by Francis Dunbar Warren to provide a refuge for his family and other displaced Aboriginal people.

**7 Dalgety & Co Ltd** provided the 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.



Mungerannie Hotel

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



Mt Gason Wattle

**11 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. It can also be closed due to weather conditions.

**12 The Inside Track** Monsoonal rains in Queensland can bring floodwaters down the Diamantina River and across Goyder Lagoon, closing this track for months 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



Walkers Crossing PAR

**13 Walkers Crossing Public Access Route (PAR) 4WD** This track may be closed due to sand drifts or flooding. Check road conditions before you travel in this area.

**14 Birdsville** This well-known town and pub is famous 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.



Birdsville



The Birdsville Hotel

**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.

**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 (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.

**Why is the Simpson Desert so red...** yet the dunes closer to Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park 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.



Male Orange Chat



Graeme Chapman

Ampurta



Gibber pavement



Goethite Gibber pavement



Dead Finish



Sand Dunes





# THE STRZELECKI TRACK

**1 Lyndhurst** Travelling north this is the first stop before the long run into Innamincka along the Strzelecki Track. Fill up your fuel tanks.



North of Lyndhurst

**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 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.



The Cobbler

**4 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.

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



Innamincka

**6 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. 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.



Cooper Creek – Innamincka

**7 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 National Parks and Wildlife SA staff and displays stories about Innamincka's early days.



AIM Building

**8 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.



Dig Tree



Kings Marker, Innamincka Regional Reserve



### Heading to Lyndhurst from Innamincka?

Make sure you fill up your fuel tanks, and stock up on water and provisions – it's a long run to Lyndhurst with no services available along the way.

### 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.

**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 Yandruwandha people. 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.

**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.

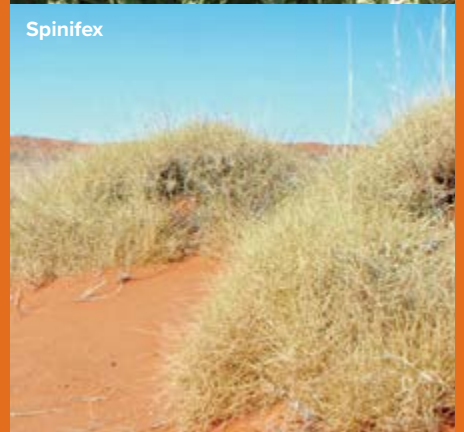
**Native Apricot** A hardy drought resistant tree with a drooping habit that is common on gibber plains and along watercourses in this area. It produces bitter, inedible, orange, olive-shaped fruits. Aboriginal people ground the seeds into a poultice and applied it externally to relieve stomach pains 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.



Nitrebush



Nardoo



Spinifex



Prickly Wattle



Native Apricot



Keep a look out along the way for this skeleton made from cow bones



Old cattle yard, south of Innamincka



# CLIMATE, PLANTS AND ANIMALS

It doesn't rain very often in this area. 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 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 and drainage lines.

## 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.



Annual flowers



Frankenia



Saltbush



Bauhinia



Coolabahs

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.



Gibbers and Red Gums

**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** 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.

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

## 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.



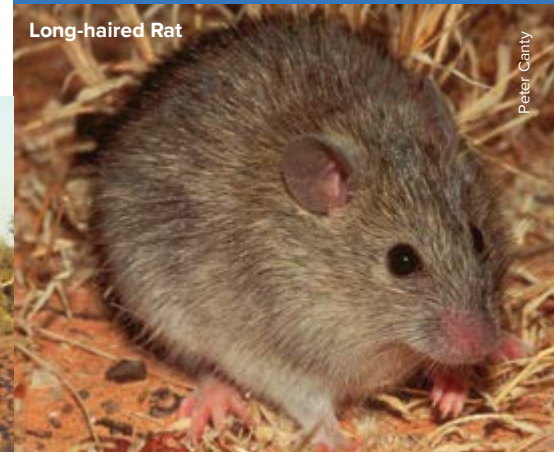
Budgies

Graeme Chapman

## Water in the outback

When 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.



Long-haired Rat

Peter Canny





Desert Trilling Frogs



Flock Pigeon

Graeme Chapman

### Flock Pigeon

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

### 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 under threat, because it is found only in the large permanent waterholes of the Cooper Creek catchment.

## 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



Cooper Creek

about 60km from Innamincka. From Innamincka 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. Malkumba-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.



Shield Shrimps

**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.



Inland Taipan

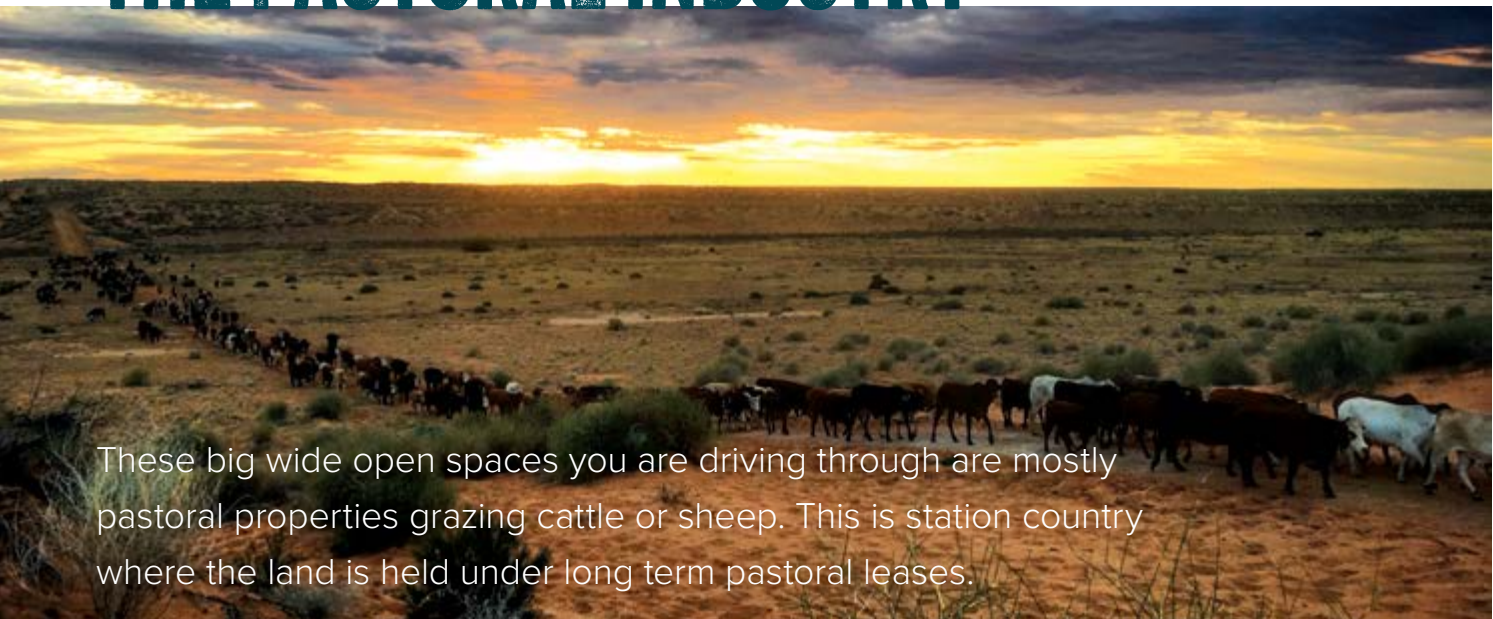
**The Dusky and Fawn Hopping Mice** are regarded as rare species but they can be present in big numbers after good rains. The Dusky Hopping Mouse prefers sandy country and the Fawn Hopping Mouse the open gibber plains. Both live in burrow complexes in a family group and emerge at night to feed on seeds,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

Part of the Cooper Creek catchment in flood





# 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 the land is held under long term pastoral leases.

## THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY

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 Dog 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 flood waters recede, the channel country has vast areas of pasture made up of Nardoo, Cooper Clover, Verbine, 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 sell high quality beef both to the domestic and international markets.

## Innamincka Regional Reserve

The Innamincka Regional Reserve is a multiple use reserve based on a partnership between conservation, tourism, pastoralism and the oil and gas 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.

## Fences and gates

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

- Leave gates as you find them – either open or closed
- Few roads are fenced – be aware of stock especially at night
- Troughs and tanks– camp more than 500m away from these stock water points

## 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.





# MINING



Moomba Processing Plant

## Cooper Basin oil and gas fields

The Cooper Basin is Australia's largest onshore oil and gas producer.

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 its 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.

SELF GUIDED TOUR OF BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS

# FREE LEGENDARY TRACKS APP

Image: Pridwin, Torack & WVO Training - November & Coastal Bay

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NATURAL & HISTORICAL  
POINTS OF INTEREST,  
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THE MARREE-INNAMINCKA  
LANDSCAPE GROUP



## Public Access Routes (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).

Visit [www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/landscape-sa/pastoral-leases-in-south-australia/par-sa](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/landscape-sa/pastoral-leases-in-south-australia/par-sa) for more information.

### ABOUT THIS BROCHURE

This brochure was created and developed by the Marree-Innamincka Landscape Group. The Marree-Innamincka Landscape Group is part of the South Australian Arid Lands Landscape 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 Landscape Group includes representatives with a variety of skills and backgrounds including the pastoral industry, Traditional Owners, mining/energy, conservation, 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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### REFERENCES, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & FURTHER READING

The Marree-Innamincka Landscape 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)

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[www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/landscape-sa/pastoral-leases-in-south-australia/par-sa](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/landscape-sa/pastoral-leases-in-south-australia/par-sa)

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# Top 10 Travel Tips

Arid landscapes are incredibly fragile. They support a wide range of truly unique and amazing plants and animals. Every step off the path and every wheel off the track will have a lasting impact.

If you are not travelling through a national park or reserve, you may be travelling through a pastoral property – someone else's backyard – where people manage the landscape to make a living.

Here are **10 top tips** to help enjoy your stay, and look after the landscape.

## 1 Check Road Conditions



Outback road conditions can change quickly depending on the weather. Plan for your trip and check road conditions at: [www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads](http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads) or call **1300 361 033**. Be sure to book ahead for your campsite or accommodation. Visitor Information Centres can also help with road information and bookings.



## 2 Keep on the Track

For the safety of this fragile landscape and your vehicle, please keep to designated tracks. It is an offence to drive off established tracks. Soils are fragile and prone to erosion, and plants can be very slow growing. Driving off track can also damage cultural sites.



## 3 Camp in Designated Areas

Camp only in designated areas or where you have obtained permission by the land manager. Please respect all signs and directions and remember that pastoral properties and buildings are people's homes and businesses. Please respect their backyard and camp more than a kilometre away from any buildings.



## 4 Camp Away From Waterpoints

Camping close to stock watering points disturbs grazing stock and could result in you having a few dozen noisy neighbours joining you at your campsite. Camp more than 500 metres away from these areas. Always seek permission from the land manager before camping on their property.



## 5 Bring your own Firewood

Do not collect wood in outback areas – it is in limited supply and used by wildlife for shelter. Always check fire restrictions and be aware that some National Parks do not allow wood fires.



## 6 Be Mindful of Waste Disposal

Use designated dump points for RV and caravan waste and take your rubbish to the nearest town facilities for disposal.



## 7 Use Public Toilets

When possible plan your toilet stops by checking the distance to the next amenities. If toilets are unavailable, dig a deep hole, burn any toilet paper and fill in the hole.



## 8 Keep our Water Clean

Water is scarce and our unique plants and animals depend on it. Please do not use soap or detergents in or near waterholes, stock watering points or artesian springs.



## 9 Watch for Animals on the Road

Kangaroos and emus can come out of nowhere! Avoid a repair bill or getting stranded by keeping your eyes peeled, especially after dusk or before dawn. Be mindful of sheep and cattle grazing near roads.



## 10 Stay in Contact

Many areas of the Flinders and Outback do not have mobile phone coverage so UHF radios can be a great way to stay in contact with your convoy. UHF radios are also used by people living and working in the outback. Channels **11-30** are best to use, and in an emergency, Channels **1 to 8** or **31-38**.



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