

# CAMEL TREKS AUSTRALIA

RIDE OR WALK WITH RESCUES  
ON JOURNEYS THAT RENEW, RECHARGE  
AND INSPIRE



THE CAMEL SANCTUARY TRADING AS  
CAMEL TREKS AUSTRALIA PTY LTD



FIND INSPIRATION IN OUTBACK SOUTH AUSTRALIA

## CAMEL TREKS AUSTRALIA



ECO  
GUIDE   
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**SAVANNAH GUIDES**



*Protectors and Interpreters of the Outback*



Vistas

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre

Salt & Sand



## **Trekking Location**

Camel Treks are located in Outback Australia, off the famous Birdsville Track, encompassing the Clayton Station Wetlands, Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, and the Tirari Desert.

Clayton Station's waters are sourced from the Great Artesian Basin, allowing us to observe the diverse birdlife attracted to the surrounding wetlands.

The Great Artesian Basin is recognised as one of the world's largest underground freshwater resources and the largest groundwater basin in Australia.

**[Read More - Trek Location](#)**



Bushwalking

Exploration

Riding



## Ride, Walk or Cameleer

Three Separate Booking Options in Australia:

**Riding Seat:** Riding atop a camel.

**Bushwalking:** Desert walking with camels.

**The Cameleer Experience:** A hands-on experience.

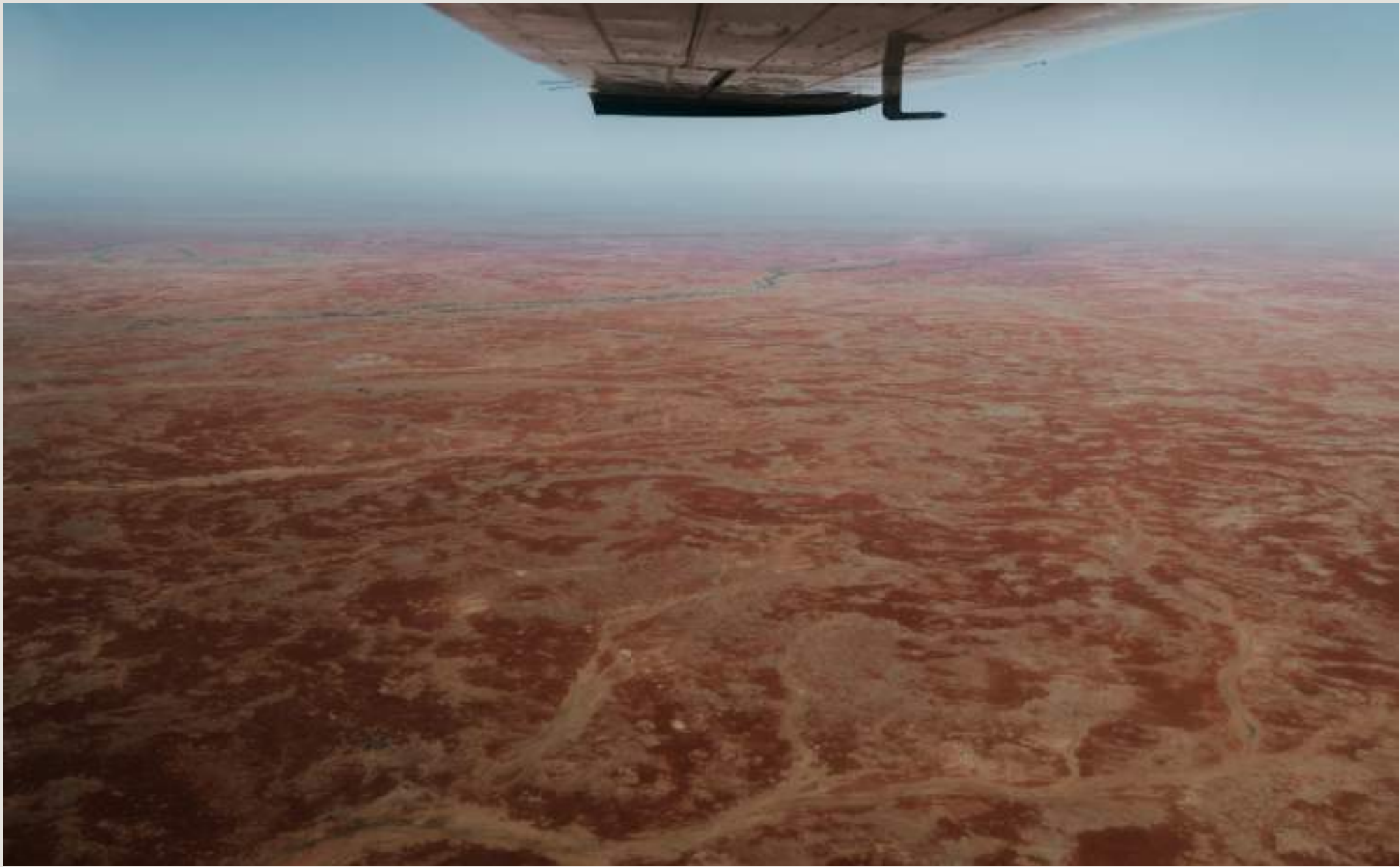
[Read More - Walk, Ride or Cameleer!](#)



Coach

Four-Wheel Drive

Self-Drive



## **Arriving and Departing**

Optional Extra: Premier Stateliner Coach Service from Adelaide City to Port Augusta Regional City.

Seamless Integration: Complimentary Camel Treks Australia Service from Port Augusta Regional City to Camel Treks Australia's Base at Clayton Station.

**[Read More - Arrival & Departure](#)**



Wetlands

Clay Pans

Gibber Plains



## **Trekking Questions**

Our team has compiled a comprehensive list of the most common queries related to attending Camel Treks. We trust that you'll not only discover the answers you seek but also gain valuable insights into who we are and what to anticipate when embarking on a trek with us.

**[Read More - Trekking Questions](#)**





## **Book Now**

Explore the Camel Treks Australia 2025 Camel Trekking Calendar, designed for an authentic Outback experience. Our calendar presents journeys of 5, 7 and 9 days duration, providing a unique exploration of the South Australian Outback landscape.

**Book Now - 2025 Trekking Calendar**



Camelers

Landscapes

Milky Way Nights



## **Camel Treks Australia Pty Ltd**

BOOKING TERMS & CONDITIONS  
Privacy Policy | Refunds Policy | Terms of Use

In order to operate responsibly in the tourism industry, it's necessary for us to lay out our booking conditions clearly.

**[Read - Booking Terms & Conditions](#)**



# SAFARI



**BOOKED AND READY TO ARRIVE,  
WHAT ELSE?**



LIFE IN THE TIRARI DESERT

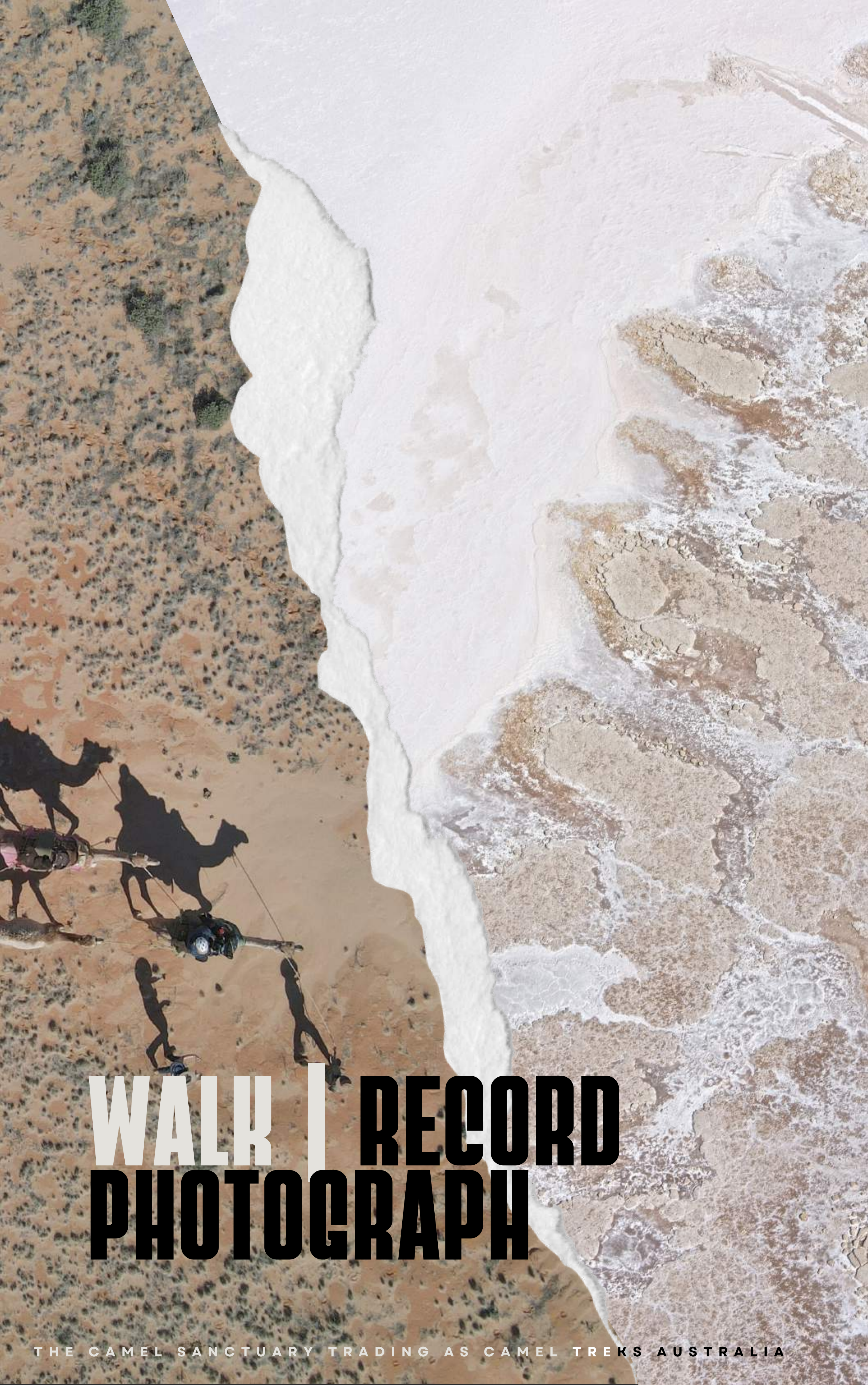


*for*

# MINDFULL WANDERING

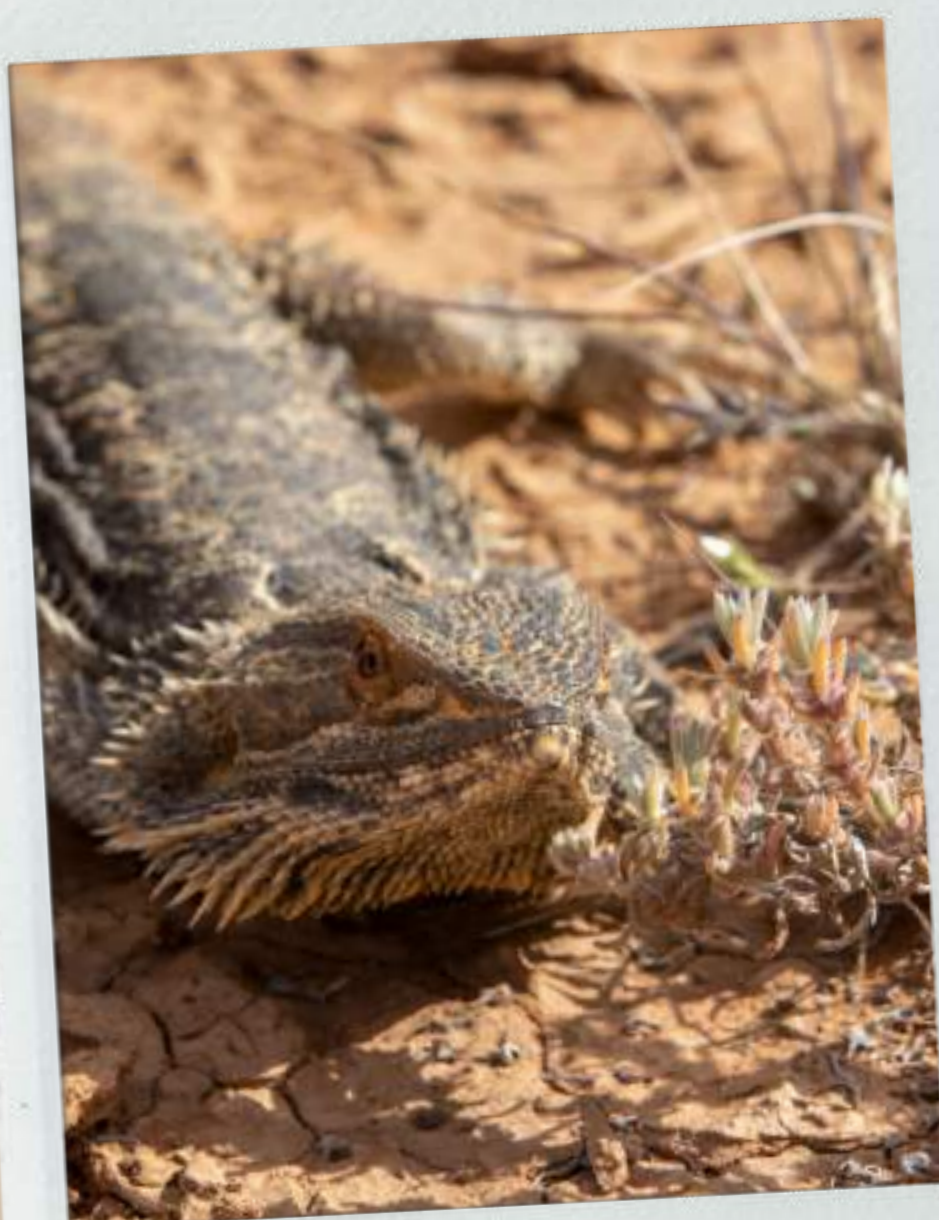
The Tirari Desert falls within the  
Simpson–Strzelecki Dunefields bioregion.





# WALK | RECORD PHOTOGRAPH





# DESERT LIFE



Cameleers

Landscapes

Milky Way Nights



## Recording Desert Life

Species of particular interest include:

- Ampurta/Crest-tailed mulgara (*Dasyercus cristicauda*)
- Wilkiniti/dusky hopping mouse (*Notomys fuscus*)
- Fawn hopping-mouse (*Notomys cervinus*)
- Grey falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*)
- Woma python (*Aspidites ramsayi*)

Suspected and located in the region:

- Marsupial Mole

Please arrive with pencil, pad, camera and a willingness to observe especially at sunrise and sunset when the light assists, checking tracks on dunes. You'll find our Tracks, Scats and Other Traces books, plus other Flora and Fauna titles in the mobile Camel Treks Australia Nature Library.

Airdrop or email us with images post trek for our developing Nature in the Desert Blog.

**[Read More - via Trek Location](#)**



# Vulnerable species recorded in the Tirari Desert



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

## BIODIVERSITY

### FACT SHEET

## WILKINTI OR DUSKY HOPPING MOUSE *Notomys fuscus* AND OOARRI OR FAWN HOPPING MOUSE *Notomys cervinus*

Text by Harald Ehmman and Michelle Watson.

Both the Dusky Hopping Mouse and Fawn Hopping Mouse are found in the northern parts of South Australia and adjoining states. Populations of both species can fluctuate greatly depending on seasonal and other factors.

Both species live in small groups in burrow complexes with a series of "pop hole" entrances leading to chambers and tunnels up to one metre below the surface.

#### IDENTIFICATION

The Dusky and Fawn Hopping Mice are nocturnal, have long back legs, a tufted tail end and, when travelling at speed, move with a distinctive hopping gait trailing their long tail behind them.

Both species are white below and usually a reddish orange colour above but may be from light fawn to a russet orange. Both reach a head and body length of about 12 cm with a tail length of about 15 cm. Their similar shape, colour and size can lead to confusion between the two species.

Both female and male Dusky Hopping Mice have a well-developed throat pouch with a prominent fleshy margin covered with stiff white hair. A small hairless pigmented patch

is present on the chest of all male Fawn Hopping Mice and some females, particularly during pregnancy and lactation.

Dusky and Fawn Hopping Mice can be confused with the more common Spinifex Hopping Mouse, which also has a small throat pouch in both sexes. However, this species is usually more grayish in colour, is smaller in size and generally inhabits spinifex covered sandflats and stabilised sandhills. It can however be found in other habitats, particularly after good rains.

#### HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION

Dusky Hopping Mice inhabit soft sandy habitats, preferring dunes with Sandhill Canegrass, Sandhill Wattle, Nitrebush, Sticky Hopbush and other ephemeral plants. The Fawn Hopping Mouse usually inhabits gibber plains with low chenopods and ephemeral plants, often venturing onto adjacent claypans. Both species were formerly widespread but are now thought to be restricted to areas east of Lake Eyre.



Fawn Hopping Mouse. Photograph by Harald Ehmman.

Dusky Hopping Mouse. Photograph by Peter Canty.





# Hopping Mouse

## CONTACT US

South Australian Arid  
Lands Natural Resources  
Management Board

[www.saalnm.sa.gov.au](http://www.saalnm.sa.gov.au)

P. (08) 8648 5977

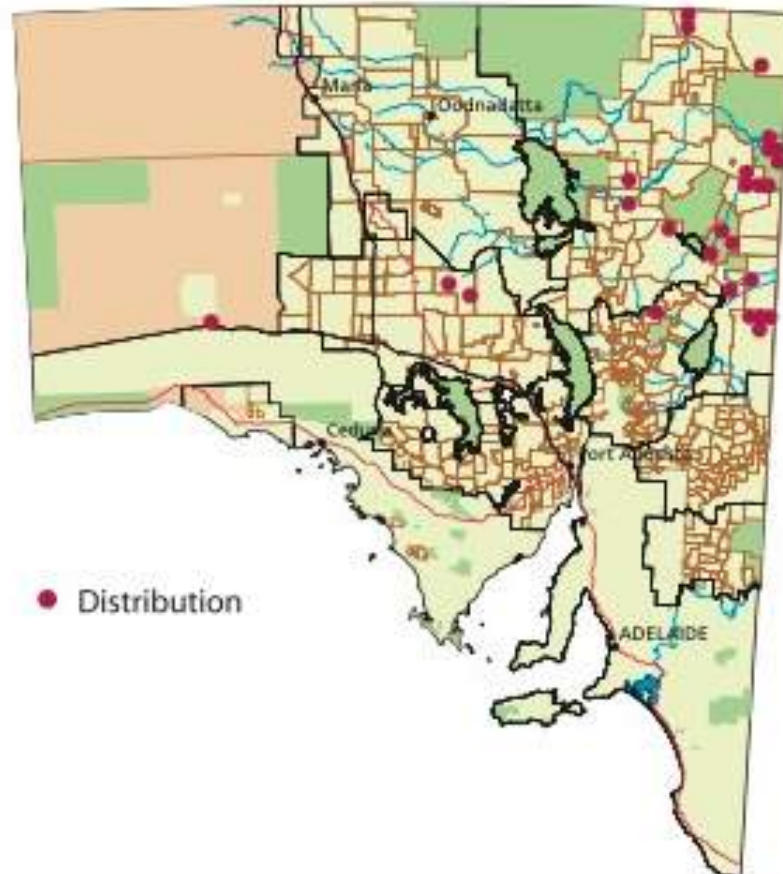
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sa.gov.au](mailto:aridlands@saalnm.sa.gov.au)



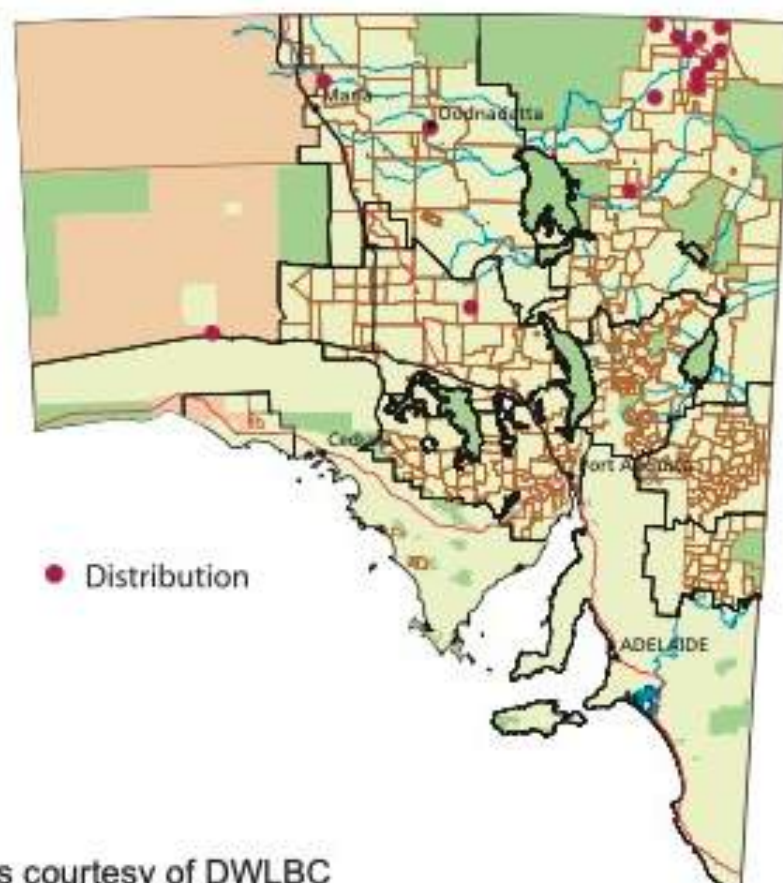
Australian Government

Updated July 2011

## DUSKY HOPPING MOUSE DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA



## FAWN HOPPING MOUSE DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Maps courtesy of DWLBC

## POTENTIAL THREATS TO DUSKY AND FAWN HOPPING MICE

Following European arrival the distribution and abundance of the Dusky Hopping Mouse has been greatly reduced, probably as a result of competition with rabbits and house mice. Studies have shown that house mice populations initially respond more rapidly to good conditions than Dusky Hopping Mice. However, when house mice start to decline, the hopping mice numbers continue to increase relatively slowly for some time. It is suspected that the rapid increase in house mice numbers after rain has a dampening effect on the recovery of Dusky Hopping Mice.

The Fawn Hopping Mouse's distribution has not had such a marked reduction, possibly because it inhabits the more extensive and harder soils of gibber plains, where it is less likely to be so heavily impacted by competition from rabbits and hunting by foxes.

## CURRENT RESEARCH

Ongoing surveys, using track counts and trapping to indicate the presence of Hopping Mice are being undertaken across the region to clarify the current distribution of both species in relation to predators, competitors like House Mice, and in response to seasonal conditions.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you have seen any hopping mice within or beyond the locations shown on the distribution maps please let us know. Please note the location (a GPS or map reference would be most helpful) to assist the relocation of the site. A description of the habitat would also be helpful. We will follow up all possible sightings as part of this study. You can also assist by participating in ongoing monitoring of potential habitat using track surveys. Training and resources are available to assist with these surveys.

To report observations or for further information about Dusky or Fawn Hopping Mice or this study please contact the South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board 8648 5977.

## RESOURCES

Ehmann, H. (2006). South Australian Rangelands and Aboriginal Lands Wildlife Management Manual: a resource handbook. Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, South Australia.

Moseby K. E., Brandle R. and Adams M. (1999). Distribution, habitat and conservation status of the rare dusky hopping-mouse, *Notomys fuscus* (Rodentia: Muridae). *Wildlife Research* 26 (4): 479-494.

Watts C. H. S. and Aslin H. J (1981). *Rodents of Australia*. Angus and Robertson, Sydney.



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# Woma Python



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

BIODIVERSITY

## FACT SHEET

### WOMA PYTHON *Aspidites ramsayi*

Text by Harald Ehmann and Michelle Watson.

The Woma Python is a nocturnal snake that is usually quiet and shy. It is rarely seen and has a patchy distribution in South Australia, with most recent sightings recorded from the north-east of the state. It eats lizards, snakes, birds and small mammals (including dingo pups and young rabbits). Woma Pythons wiggle their tail to distract initially cautious prey and then attract it to within striking distance. The python then coils around the prey, constricting it until it finally dies.

#### IDENTIFICATION

The nocturnal Woma Python is rarely seen moving about by day except in warm and heavily overcast weather. It is mostly seen from a vehicle at dusk or during warmer nights. In cooler weather it is sometimes seen basking in or near a rabbit burrow entrance.

This python can grow to 2.7 metres in total length and weigh up to 5.8 kg. It is thick set and muscular with a smoothly rounded snout when viewed from above. The body is a yellowish brown to yellowish white with many wavy brownish bands that join along the back into an irregular brown midline. Juveniles are more prominently patterned and coloured than older animals. It may hiss if provoked.

Woma Pythons can be confused with the dangerously venomous Mulga (King Brown) Snake or Western Brown snakes. The Mulga snake lacks the body banding or darker midline possessed by the Woma Python but some other Brown Snakes may have distinct dark cross banding. Woma Pythons can be distinguished from all of these species by the shape of the head which when viewed from above is rounded around the eyes but narrower at the snout.

#### HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION

Woma Pythons are found in desert dunefields and on sandy plains, usually with hummock grasses but also other natural vegetation. They often inhabit rabbit burrows but may also use their head and neck to excavate shelters under hummock grasses or dense bushes. The majority of recent sightings of Woma Pythons in South Australia have come from sandy areas in the north-east of the state, predominantly along the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks. However, there have also been some sightings in the Simpson Desert and in the Anangu-Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara Lands, indicating that Woma Pythons may be quite widespread in suitable habitats across the northern half of South Australia.



Woma Python. Photograph by Harald Ehmann.

Woma Python. Photograph by John Read.





# Woma Python



## CONTACT US

South Australian Arid  
Lands Natural Resources  
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[www.saalnm.sa.gov.au](http://www.saalnm.sa.gov.au)

P. (08) 8648 5977

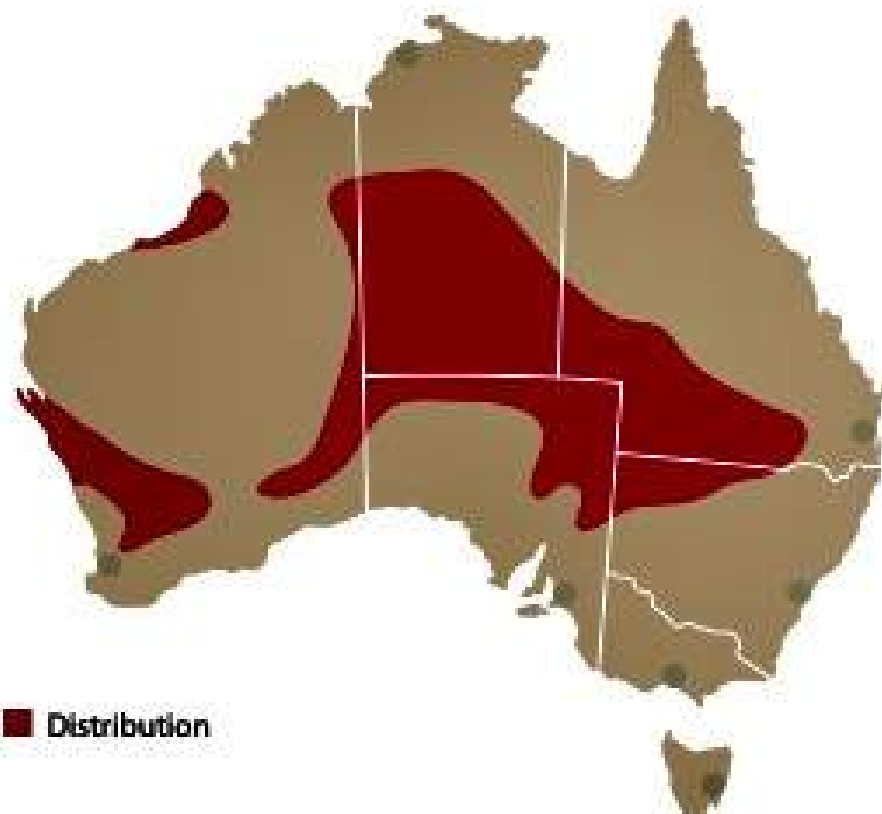
E. [aridlands@saalnm.  
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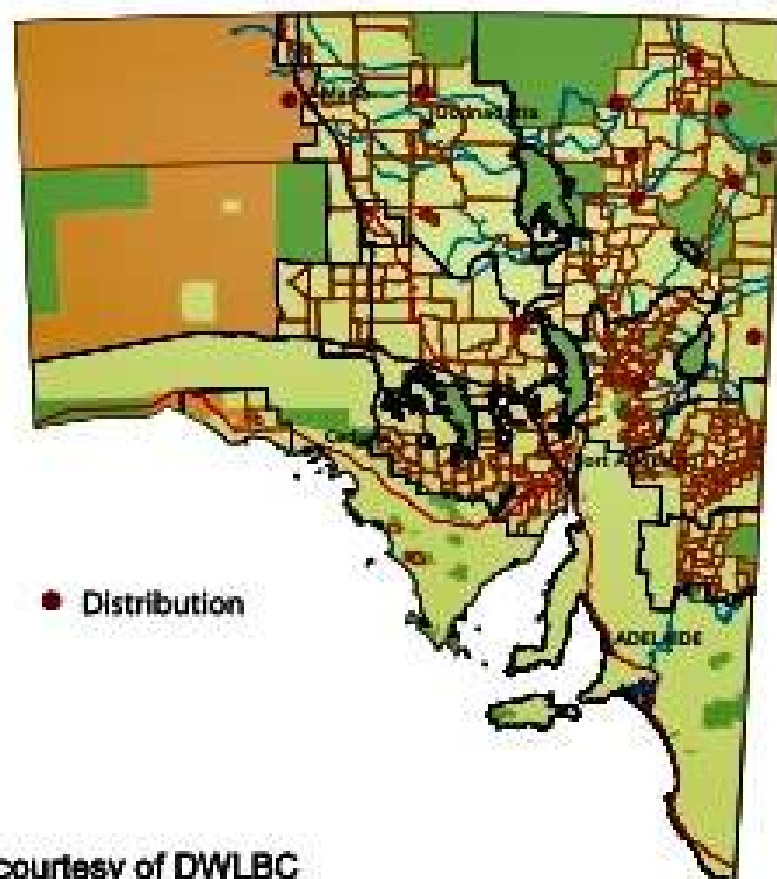
Australian Government

Updated July 2011

## WOMA PYTHON DISTRIBUTION ACROSS AUSTRALIA



## KNOWN DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Map courtesy of DWLBC

## POTENTIAL THREATS TO WOMA PYTHON

Land clearance and introduced predators have resulted in significant declines of the Woma Python in central northern New South Wales and the south east of Queensland, and its near extinction in southwestern Western Australia. It is thought that local declines and extinctions of native prey including reptiles and mammals may have contributed to the Woma Python's present-day patchy and fragmented distribution. Woma Pythons compete with cats and foxes and may also be eaten by these species, particularly when the snakes are still young and small. Their tendency to shelter in rabbit burrows may lead to them being unintentionally killed by warren ripping and fumigation.

## CURRENT RESEARCH

Further research into the essential ecology of the Woma Python is needed. An up-to-date assessment of the distribution, density and age structure of the Woma Python population(s) is being made to ascertain the species conservation status and risk. As this species behaves in relatively predictable ways, uses easily recognised shelter sites, and leaves distinctive tracks in the sand individuals can be easily tracked once located. Should you have one of these rarely-seen pythons living nearby you may be interested in monitoring its movements for one or two seasons to aid this research.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you have seen a Woma Python within or beyond the locations shown on the distribution map please let us know. Please note the location (a GPS or map reference would be most helpful) to assist the relocation of the site. A description of the habitat would also be helpful.

To report observations or for further information about Woma Pythons or this study, please contact the South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board 8648 5977.

## RESOURCES

Ehmann, H. (2006). South Australian Rangelands and Aboriginal Lands Wildlife Management Manual: a resource handbook. Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, South Australia.



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# Chestnut-Breasted Whiteface



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

## Biodiversity Studies

### STUDENT FACT SHEET

## CHESTNUT-BREASTED WHITEFACE

### *Aphelocephala pectoralis*

The Chestnut-breasted Whiteface is one of only two species of bird that is found only in South Australia. Most of its distribution is in stony deserts where it can be difficult to detect as it forages on the ground for seeds and insects.

#### IDENTIFICATION

The tiny Chestnut-breasted Whiteface measures only 10cm in length and is seen mostly in pairs or small groups or in mixed flocks of other birds including Banded or Southern Whitefaces, Wrens or Cinnamon Quail-thrushes. When disturbed they fly off in low rising and falling flight before dropping to the ground where they closely match the colour of surrounding soil and stones.

The birds' upper back is chestnut-brown and the flight feathers and tail are dark grey. The white face and eye are sharply bordered above with black that pales to grey on the crown. A wide chestnut band across the chest is sharply defined below but pales towards the throat. The belly is white with large reddish brown blotches along the side.

#### DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

The Chestnut-breasted Whiteface inhabits stony hills, tablelands, breakaways and rises

#### FOCUS QUESTION

Why is the Chestnut-breasted Whiteface hard to find?

Sparse chenopod shrubland with Low Bluebush.  
Photograph by Michelle Watson.



associated with stony plains. It has been recorded from as far west as Coober Pedy and Tarcoola, through the Marla-Oodnadatta area and the south-east to Marree, around the Birdsville Track and Leigh Creek districts.

Vegetation is usually low and very open constant shrubland of low bluebush, saltbush and a variety of grasses.

#### POTENTIAL THREATS TO CHESTNUT-BREASTED WHITEFACE

The Chestnut-breasted Whiteface is listed as rare in South Australia. Overgrazing by rabbits (and in some cases livestock) in some areas has resulted in reduction or loss of some of the low perennial shrubs such as Low Bluebush that this species requires. Opal mining also destroys suitable habitat.

Chestnut-breasted Whiteface. Photographs by Lynn Pedler.



Australian Government





# Ampurta or Crest-tailed Mulgara

## Ampurta or Crest-tailed Mulgara

*Dasyercus cristicauda*

The Ampurta is a charismatic carnivorous marsupial found in arid sandy areas of northern South Australia and adjacent areas of the Northern Territory and Queensland. What it lacks in size, it makes up for with attitude as it has a similar personality to its larger relatives (Dasyurid family) such as the Tasmanian Devil and Quoll (Native Cat).

### IDENTIFICATION

Ampurtas are about the size of a small guinea pig, with a short fat tail. Their fur ranges from pale blonde fawn to a rufous brown, with dark black hair along their tail forming a crest-like 'mohawk' along the top.

### DON'T CONFUSE ME WITH...

Some closely-related species may be confused with Ampurtas. The Brush-tailed Mulgara (*Dasyercus blythi*) is found mainly in the southern Northern Territory and Western Australia, but may overlap with Ampurtas in part of their range. Brush-tailed Mulgaras can be distinguished from Ampurtas by their lack of tail crest and number of teats (Ampurtas have eight, whereas Brush-tailed Mulgaras have six). The Kowari (*Dasyuroides byrnei*) lives on gibber plains and has a longer, lankier body, with grey fur and a larger bottlebrush-like tuft of hair on the end of the tail.

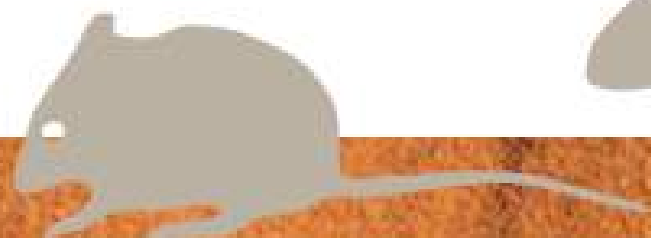
Natural Resources  
SA Arid Lands

FACT SHEET | Threatened Fauna

**Ampurta or  
Crest-tailed Mulgara**  
*Dasyercus cristicauda*



Silhouette: adult size  
Ampurta (right) compared  
with a House Mouse



*Ampurta tracks (with a matchbox for scale). The Ampurta has run across from left to right. The two tracks together are the back feet and the two tracks apart are the front feet. Ampurta tracks are distinguishable from baby rabbit tracks by their small size and more distinct toe marks.*



# Ampurta or Crest-tailed Mulgara



LEFT: Don't confuse Ampurta tracks with those of the Long-haired or Plague Rat (*Rattus villosissimus*) – these have four long toes on the front feet, creating a flower-like pattern, compared to Ampurta's five short, stout toes.

RIGHT: Size comparison between adult rabbit tracks (bottom of photo) and Ampurta (top of photo).

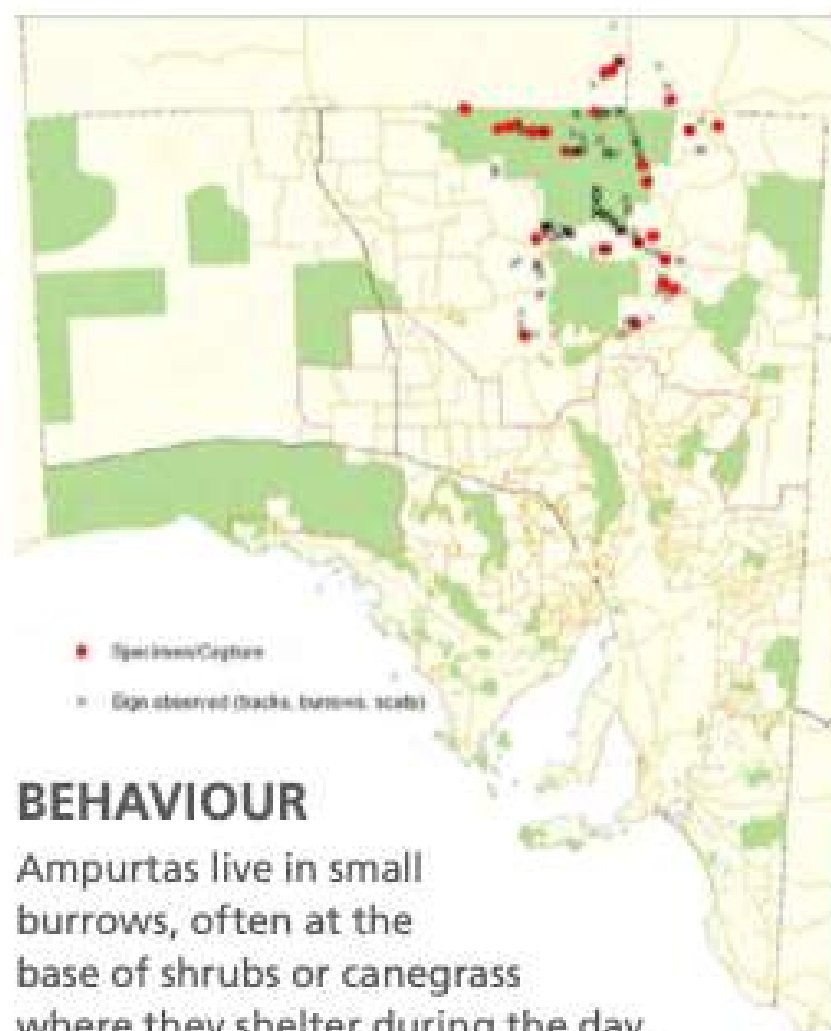
Ampurta tracks may be confused with other species at times. They closely resemble baby rabbit tracks in size but their feet are much less hairy than rabbits so their toe prints can be seen clearly in fresh tracks. Their hind foot tracks are also more rectangular compared with rabbits. Long-haired or Plague Rat (*Rattus villosissimus*) tracks may also be confused with Ampurta tracks, but their front feet have four long toes which are distinct from the five short stout toes of Ampurtas.

## DISTRIBUTION

In South Australia, Ampurtas are known from the Simpson Desert, Tirari Desert and western margin of the Strzelecki Desert. In recent years they have also been found on the western side of Lake Eyre and as far south as the William Creek area and southern Birdsville Track. The species once had a wider distribution in South Australia, with historic records from as far west as Ooldea.

## HABITAT

Ampurtas are found mainly in sandy habitats, including sandhills with Canegrass (*Zygochloa paradoxa*). They may also inhabit sand plain or sand mound areas (often with Nitrebush, *Nitraria billadierei*) or even sandy watercourses.



## BEHAVIOUR

Ampurtas live in small burrows, often at the base of shrubs or canegrass where they shelter during the day, emerging at night to capture their prey. Unlike reptile burrows which have low, wide entrances, Ampurta burrow entrances have a similar height and width and often have elongated curved scats outside. On sunny winter days Ampurtas may sometimes be spotted basking outside their burrow entrances.

Ampurtas' voracious appetite includes a range of insects and arthropods including beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, centipedes, spiders and scorpions. They also prey on geckoes and skinks, small birds, even small rodents and marsupials – in fact, they are able to tackle most animals that are smaller than them. At times, they are also known to eat carcasses of larger dead animals such as rabbits.

## POTENTIAL THREATS

Threats to Ampurtas are poorly understood. However, it is likely that their decline is linked to the introduction of predators such as foxes and cats. Rabbits are also thought to have had a major impact on this species by impacting vegetation which is important for the insects and other small reptiles and mammals that are part of Ampurta diet. In recent years it is thought that Ampurtas may have reoccupied parts of their former range following the introduction of Rabbit Calicivirus Disease which lowered rabbit numbers for over a decade.



## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you think you have seen an Ampurta (or their tracks) within or beyond the locations shown on the distribution map please let us know. Note the location so that your written record can be used to find the same place again. A GPS fix or map reference would be very helpful, as would notes on the habitat or any other relevant information.

## HOW CAN YOU CONTACT US?

To report your observation or for further information about Ampurtas contact the Community Fauna Officer, Natural Resources, SA Arid Lands.

## RESOURCES

Ehmann, H. (2006). South Australian Rangelands and Aboriginal Lands Wildlife Management Manual: a resource handbook. Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, South Australia.



Natural Resources SA Arid Lands  
8648 5300  
SAAridlands@sa.gov.au  
www.saainrm.sa.gov.au

March 2013



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



# Southern Marsupial Mole



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

# BIODIVERSITY

## FACT SHEET

## SOUTHERN MARSUPIAL MOLE *Notoryctes typhlops*

Text by Harald Ehmann and Michelle Watson.

The mysterious Southern Marsupial Mole is a unique Australian animal of immense interest. Marsupial moles spend almost all of their time underground, making capture and study of this curious mammal rare. They have been kept in captivity on only a few occasions and never for more than a few months.

### IDENTIFICATION

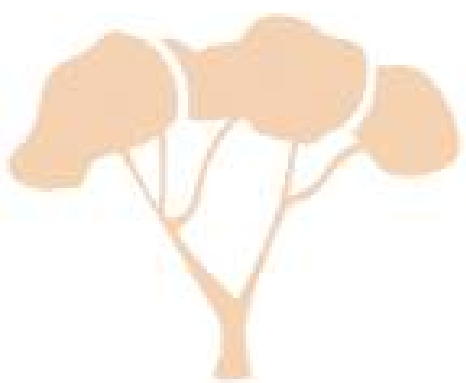
This unique and unmistakable mammal's golden fur is thick short and lustrous, it has no eyes, the ear openings are completely hidden by fur, the snout is leathery, and the finger nails are greatly enlarged to enable it to dig through the compacted sand of its preferred habitats.

Southern Marsupial Moles most likely only come to the surface when underground conditions become difficult, such as when they encounter excessively compacted sands, gravels (especially lime) or rock when burrowing, and also when oxygen levels in the sand become too depleted due to heavy rains (Ehmann 2006). In wet and crusty sand, the progress of moles just below the surface leaves a ridge of small cracked "tiles" of sand that slope equally in opposite directions like a simple roof. On dry, sandy surfaces, the "swimming" strokes of their arms and legs leave a distinctive track, with the tail dragging between.

Because of their subterranean existence, the most reliable way to detect the presence of moles in an area is to dig trenches in sandy habitats and look for the characteristic tunnels that the moles excavate as they move through the soil. The trenches need to be dug to a depth of about one metre and the walls need to be smoothed to reveal the "mole holes" that form when the back-filled sand from a mole tunnel is dislodged. The tunnels are from 15 to 60 mm in diameter and are usually circular or elliptical in shape.

### HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION

In South Australia Marsupial Moles have been recorded in the Anangu-Pitjantjatjara Lands, the Maralinga Lands, Yellabinna Regional Reserve and in the western Simpson Desert. There are also unconfirmed historical records from near Innamincka and the Tirare Desert. Within these areas, sand dunes, swales, sand plains, and some sandy inland river flats are the preferred habitats of Marsupial Moles. There is usually a reasonably complex overstorey vegetation of woodlands including mallee or Acacia shrubs with a diversity of understorey shrubs and grasses including spinifex or canegrass.



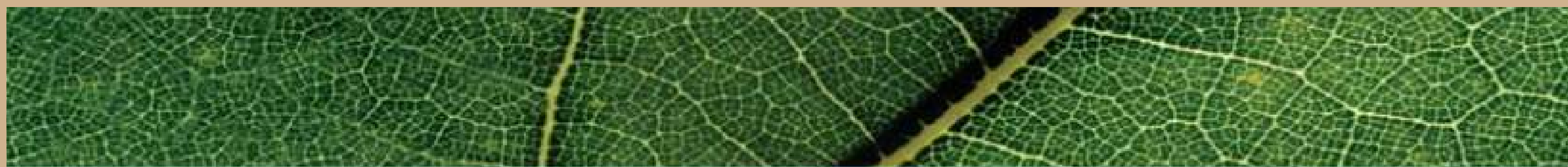
Southern Marsupial Mole. Photograph by Harald Ehmann.

Friends of Simpson volunteer Ian Jackson measures a mole hole in a trench. Photograph by Michelle Watson.





# Grey Falcon



## CONTACT US

South Australian Arid  
Lands Natural Resources  
Management Board

[www.saalnm.sa.gov.au](http://www.saalnm.sa.gov.au)

P. (08) 8648 5977

E. [aridlands@saalnm.  
sa.gov.au](mailto:aridlands@saalnm.sa.gov.au)

## GREY FALCON

### *Falco hypoleucos*

The Grey Falcon is one of Australia's rarest raptors. It feeds mostly on parrots and pigeons but also takes reptiles, as well as small mammals and large insects particularly when these become very abundant. It does not build its own nest but rather uses and modifies the stick nests of other large birds.

### IDENTIFICATION

The Grey Falcon is usually seen singly or in pairs, occasionally in small family groups. The Grey Falcon tends to perch within cover and can be very approachable. The Grey Falcon is a relatively uniform pale grey bird. It has a grey head, back, wings and tail. The underside is whitish with some small brownish spots. The upper side of the outer half of the large wing feathers are blackish grey. It grows to 43 cm and you can generally see its orange-yellow legs and feet in flight.

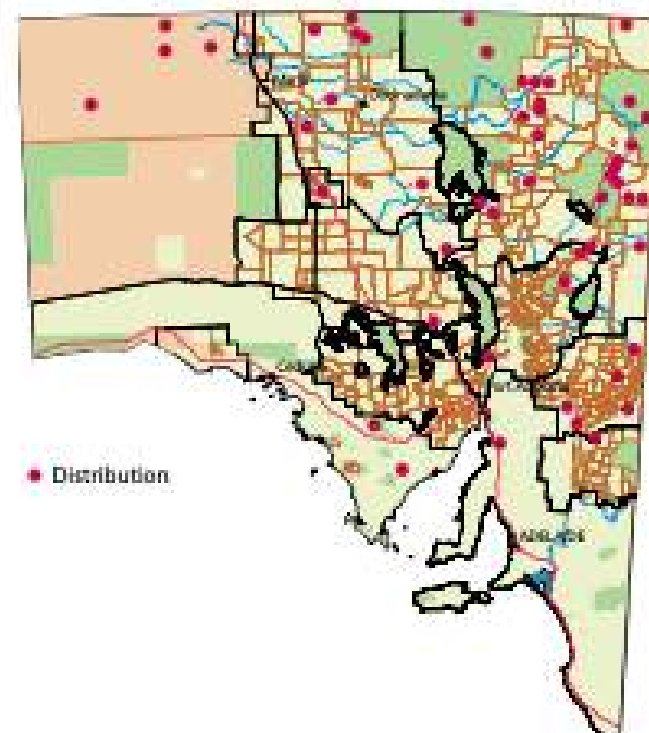
### HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION

The Grey Falcon occurs very sparsely in a wide variety of arid habitats including open woodlands and open Acacia shrublands particularly on stony and sandy plains, grasslands and wooded watercourses. Also around swamps, waterholes and bore drains that attract prey.

### FOCUS QUESTION

Why are there two names for the bird?

Why might Latin be used to name birds, animals and plants?



Grey Falcon Distribution in South Australia  
Map courtesy of DWLBC

### POTENTIAL THREATS TO GREY FALCON

The Grey Falcon is listed as Vulnerable in Victoria and Rare in all other states including South Australia. The estimated total population is fewer than 5000 individuals including about 1000 pairs. Breeding successes have been reduced by persistent DDT-related thinning of egg shells.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you think you have seen a Grey Falcon within or beyond the locations shown on the distribution map please let us know. Please note the location so that your written record can be used to find the same place again.



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Creepline habitats are often used by Grey Falcons.  
Photograph by Rachael Young.



Grey Falcon. Photograph by Nick Birks.





# The Dieri People

## The Dieri People of the Lake Eyre Basin

Aboriginal people have been on the Australian continent for at least 65,000 years. They explored and eventually occupied all areas, developing an intricate connection to the land, even in its most inhospitable regions. They adapted and survived major climatic and environmental changes over that time.



Four decades of archaeological field work has placed Aboriginal occupation of the Lake Eyre Basin at around 40,000 years ago.

There were 250 distinct language groups and over 700 dialects in this vibrant, diverse mosaic of lifestyles, practices and beliefs. There were around 72 distinct Aboriginal language groups spread over the one million square kilometers of the Lake Eyre Basin.

The dunefields and gibber plains, waterholes, floodplains and lakes along Cooper Creek from south-west of the Coongie Lakes to Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre is Dieri country and an area continually associated with Dieri the people. They are neighbours with, among others, Arabunna, Wangkangurru, Yandruwandha, Yawarrawarrka, Kuyani and Adnyamathanha – a group of peoples who share similar (but distinct) languages and culture. They are linked through kinship, trade and ceremonial connections.

The eco-systems in the Lake Eyre Basin comprise salt lakes, claypans, gibber plains, rivers, sand dunes, and a chain of mound springs, fed from the deep artesian basin. Those living here, estimated to have been between 1,000 and 3,000 people, contended with one of the hottest and driest landscapes on the continent. Yet despite this and the extreme fluctuations between flood and drought, Dieri knowledge and management of their country ensured them rich and sustainable lives.

Anthropologists, Jones and Sutton state:

... the relative simplicity of traditional material culture in the region is in startling contrast with the complexity of Aboriginal culture and social organization. Understandably, it was this 'invisible' culture which was so seldom grasped in any depth by the Europeans with whom the Lake Eyre people came into early contact.

(Art and Land: Aboriginal Sculptures of the Lake Eyre Region. South Australian Museum and Wakefield Press. 1986:23)

Comprehensive knowledge of the locations of water and food resources was transmitted through recounting the deeds of Ancestral Beings, Dieri mura mura, in ceremonies, stories and songs. The mura mura emerged from the ground, creating the landscape as they travelled, organising and naming all life, both natural and cultural, into complex systems of relatedness before sinking back into the earth or inhabiting, for example, rocks, trees and waterholes.

Relatedness between people and between people and country was defined by their inheritance of a murdu (totem) from their mother and their rights to particular country by descent from a mura mura from their father (pinthara). An individual, therefore, would inherit their Dieri identity from their mother and their country from their father. Both demanded social, ceremonial and ritual obligations, which were inter-dependent.



Six Dieri performing corroboree, Killalpaninna

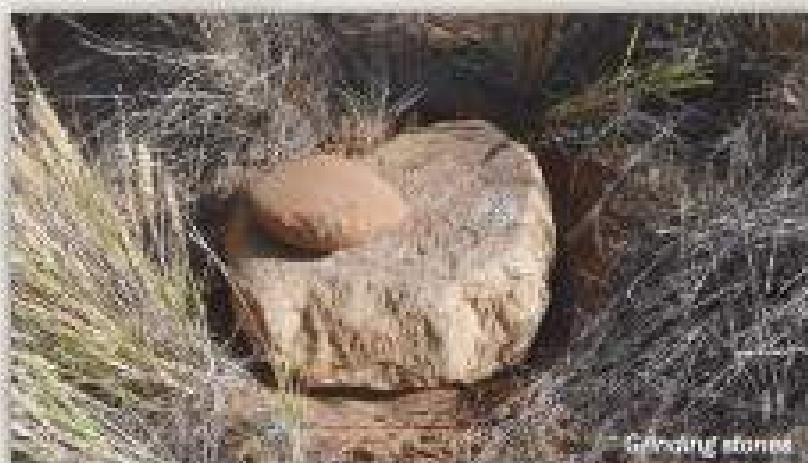


Lake Killalpaninna

In traditional Dieri society, people lived for most of the year in local groups centred around permanent water supplies (such as wells/soaks and waterholes). Such sites are often marked by large items of material culture (such as grindstones) as well as fireplaces, stone tools such as pirri points and middens. In wetter times small family groups would disperse from these camps, obtaining food and water across the dune fields. Winter was also when the five Dieri local groups contacted each other (as well as other tribes) for the purpose of ceremony and trade.



Stone axe heads



Grinding stones

Kopperamanna adjacent to Killalpaninna was a major centre of trade. Dieri were known as important traders. At Kopperamanna, pitjuri (native tobacco) from Birdsville, grinding stones from Innamincka and the Flinders Ranges, baler and pearl shells from the Gulf of Carpentaria and Arnhem Land as well as greenstone axe heads from Mt Isa and Cloncurry, and red ochre from Parachilna, were traded.

Today, Dieri people retain strong links to their country and take an active interest in its management.



# Outback Map







## **Debbie & Shane Oldfield Clayton Station**

The Directors and staff of Camel Treks Australia extend their gratitude to Shane and Debbie Oldfield of Clayton Station, a pioneering fifth-generation family along the 'Birdsville Track', for graciously allowing us to share their home.

We also acknowledge the Dieri Aboriginal people, the traditional owners of the Dieri lands. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging, recognising and honouring the profound spiritual connection that Aboriginal people hold with the Country.





## Connect with the Outback

Australia M: 0432 236 131 - April - October

International & WhatsApp: +61 432 236 131 - November - March

POSTAL: Suite 608, 50 Commercial Road Pt. Augusta SA 5700

**Contact Us:** Email - [cameltreksaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:cameltreksaustralia@gmail.com)

Created by Karen Jane Elliss  
With South Australia Media Gallery 2024  
Bobby Tamayo - Crest-tail Mulgara  
P Canty - Fawn hopping-mouse  
D. Portelli - Grey falcon

Ken Griffiths | Credit: Getty Images - Echidna and Red Kangaroo

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