

Return to 1616

Dirk Hartog Island National Park
Ecological Restoration Project



Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



RETURN TO 1616
DIRK HARTOG ISLAND
NATIONAL PARK

Download this guide and take it with you.



Above The introduction of feral animals and weeds degraded the island over time causing the local extinction of many native animals like the Shark Bay bandicoot.

Dirk Hartog Island National Park

Known as Wirruwana to the Malgana traditional owners, Dirk Hartog Island is Western Australia's largest island.

When visited by the Dutch sea captain Dirk Hartog in 1616, the island was pristine. Since this time, the island's environment has been gradually degraded by the introduction of:

- sheep and feral goats that overgrazed native vegetation causing loss of habitat and food for native animals;
- feral cats that hunted native animal species to extinction on the island; and
- weeds that proliferated and smothered native vegetation.

Together, these changes devastated the island's ecosystem and caused the local extinction of many native animal species.

In 2009, the privately held pastoral lease was purchased by the Western Australian Government to convert most of the island to National Park. The original homestead from the island's pastoral days remains freehold land in private ownership and currently operates as an ecotourism business. The national park is managed by the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

Restoration

DBCA's Dirk Hartog Island National Park *Return to 1616* Ecological Restoration Project began in 2012 with the aim of restoring the island's ecology to a condition more closely resembling that experienced by early explorers in 1616.

Groundbreaking work by DBCA scientists and staff to remove pest animals has now made Dirk Hartog Island the World's largest island to be cleared of feral cats, goats and sheep. In combination with controlling high priority invasive weeds, this has enabled DBCA to restore native vegetation and create the conditions to reintroduce the island's native animals.

The eradication of feral cats has made the island safe for native animals to be returned.

Photo – Ray Smith



The restoration project also aims to control and manage pests and weeds as well as prevent the establishment of new weeds like golden crownbeard (*Verbesina encelioides*).

Scan this code to find out more about the project and keep up to date with all the latest restoration news.





Before



After

Above With the removal of feral goats and sheep, native vegetation is growing back, providing food and homes for native animals. Photographic monitoring shows plant regrowth **before** and **after** the removal of sheep and feral goats. *Photos – Ricky Van Dongen*

Reintroduction roll call



Banded hare-wallaby



Dibbler



Greater stick-nest rat



Rufous hare-wallaby



Shark Bay bandicoot



Shark Bay mouse



Western grasswren

Above Seven species of native animals have been returned to date, with more to follow. *Photos – Babs and Bert Wells, Brett Fitzgerald, Perth Zoo, Steve Reynolds, Aline Gibson Vega*

You can help!

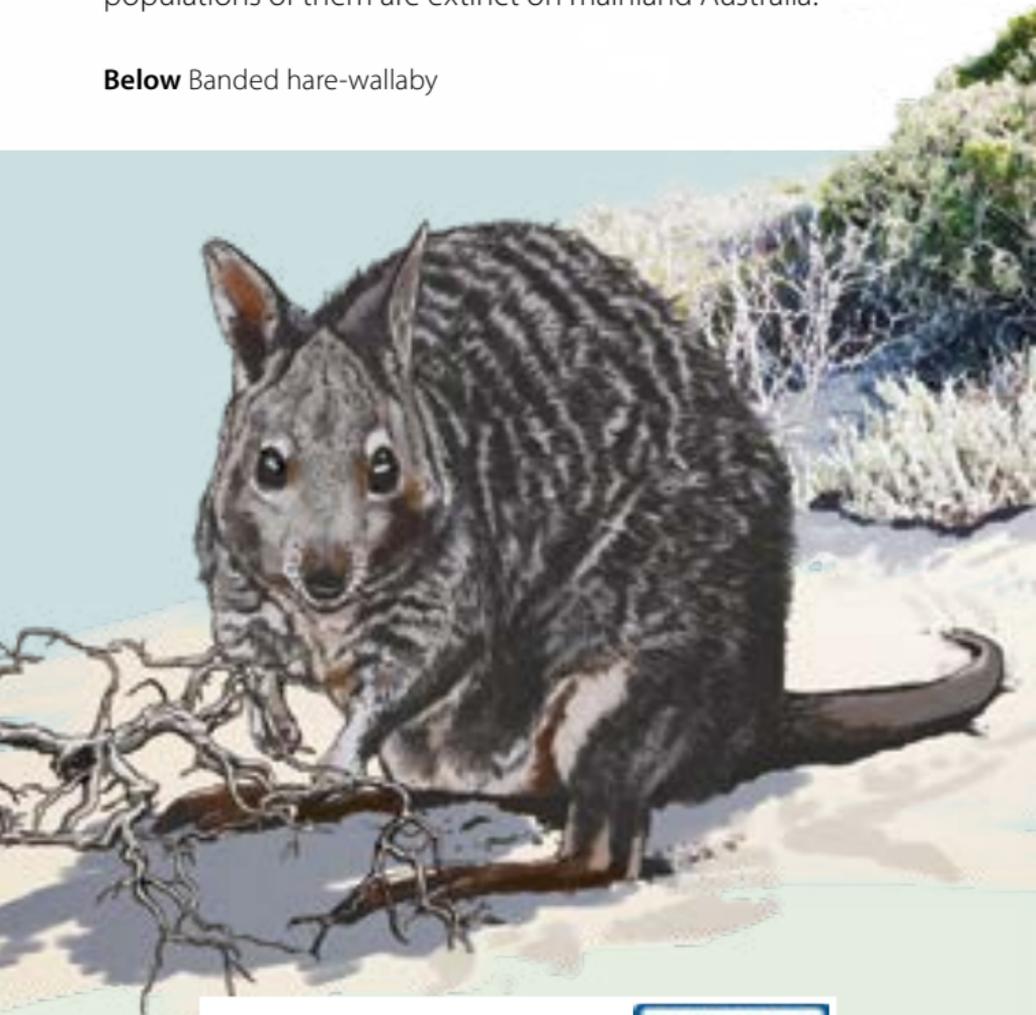
With your help Dirk Hartog Island National Park will be one of the world's most important islands for mammal conservation.

Anyone visiting the island can be part of these amazing restoration efforts. For tips that will help you pack and prepare your vehicle and equipment in a way that will help to protect the island's reintroduced native animal populations, check out the Island Protection brochure. Every small 'island protection' step you take, will add up to a big leap towards safeguarding the island's native plants and animals.

What – no kangaroos?

Did you know there are no kangaroos on the island? Any 'kangaroo-like' animal that you see is a threatened hare-wallaby species. Take care – these animals are so rare that wild populations of them are extinct on mainland Australia.

Below Banded hare-wallaby



Before you leave home, scan this code for some great 'island protection' tips on how to prepare for your visit.





Driving on the island

These unique animals roam freely across the island and they frequently use the same tracks you drive on. It's early days and while *Return to 1616* animals are still establishing their home on the island, their numbers are low. How you drive is critical to their success. Even one animal hit by a car can have a big impact on the successful repopulation of that species on the island. Plan your island driving to:

- Avoid driving from dusk to dawn.
- Slow down to 40km/h if driving between dusk and dawn.



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More information

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Dirk Hartog Island National Park *Return to 1616* Ecological
Restoration Project:

sharkbay.org/restoration

This project is funded by the Gorgon Barrow Island Net
Conservation Benefits Fund.

Check for alerts and updates directly related to parks and
major trails at alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au and for all emergency
information in Western Australia at emergency.wa.gov.au.

Find more park visitor information, book campsites and share
your experiences at exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au.

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Publication available in alternative format on request.