Stay safe when rock fishing

• Take care by the sea
  • Stay alert for boat traffic.
  • On entering or exiting a boat, remain near the stern and do not
  • Always fish within sight of the boat or in an area where other
  • Do not jump in to rescue someone – throw them a rope or
  • Plan an escape route in case you fall in.
  • Check the marine weather forecast and tides.

• Above

• Have the right safety gear – wear a life jacket and rock-
  • Avoid anchoring close to cliff edges or on fragile corals.

• Plan your trip well and observe standard safety precautions.

• Keep an eye on the weather and the water at all times while
  • Keep food and general supplies on board.
  • Keep your boat clear of non-native plants and animals.
  • Keep at least 50m clear of dive flags.
  • Keep at least 200m from the shore.

Access and camping

Things to see and do

Take care by the sea

• When near the water or at cliffs, watch the water for large
  • Please keep well clear of cliff edges.
  • Be prepared for sudden wind gusts.
  • Supervise children at all times.

Stay safe when rock fishing

• Check the marine weather forecast and tides.
• Watch the sea conditions for at least 30 minutes before
• Never fish where waves and spray have been washing over
• Plan an escape route in case you fall in.
• Always fish with at least two other people so that if one
• Do not jump in to rescue someone – throw them a rope or
• Make sure someone responsible knows where you are going
  • Have the right safety gear – wear a life jacket and rock-
  • Display a dive flag when diving, Dive flags should be at least
  • It is recommended that a dive flag is displayed when
  • Interaction with marine plants and animals is both a

Boat safely in Shark Bay Marine Park

• Plan your trip well and observe standard safety precautions.
• Always check the weather forecast before you leave.
• Boat according to your skills, experience and the conditions.
• Keep an eye on the weather and the water at all times while
• Keep enough water, food supplies and sun protection for
• Carry the safety equipment relevant to your vessel and
• Ensure your boat is in good working order and has extra fuel.
• Carry enough water, food supplies and sun protection for
• Take a responsible attitude and enjoy your trip.
• Keep at least 50m clear of dive flags.
• Avoid anchoring close to cliff edges or on fragile corals.

Take care when diving or snorkelling

• Only dive and snorkel on a slack tide.
• Stay alert for boat traffic.
• Display a dive flag when diving, Dive flags should be at least
• It is recommended that a dive flag is displayed when
• Interaction with marine plants and animals is both a

More information

Department of Parks and Wildlife – for information and payment of camping fees
Shark Bay District
61-63 Knight Terrace, Denham WA 6537
Ph: (08) 9948 2226 Email: sharkbayqueries@dpa.wa.gov.au
www.sharkbay.org
www.dpaw.wa.gov.au
Steep Point Ranger Station
Ph: (08) 9394 3993 Email: ranger@steeppoint.com.au
Dirk Hartog Island Lodge – for ramp site, barge and accommodation bookings
PO Box 62, Denham WA 6537
Ph: (08) 9394 1211 Email: info@dirkhartogislodge.com
Stay safe when rock fishing

• Have the right safety gear – wear a life jacket and rock shoes and a torch.
• Make sure someone responsible knows where you are going and when you plan to return.
• Plan an escape route in case you fall in.
• Never fish where waves and spray have been washing over rocks.
• Please keep well clear of cliff edges.

Things to see and do

Access and camping
Dirk Hartog Island can only be accessed by private boat (about 35km from Denham), a commercial barge service from Steep Point, or light aircraft charter. A high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle is required to drive on the island. Accommodation and catering are available through the privately-operated Dirk Hartog Island Lodge. A number of Parks and Wildlife camp sites can also be booked through the lodge including The Block, Urchin Point, Sandy Point, and Sammy’s Camp at Louisa Bay. Camping is basic with no facilities. If you are camping, make sure you have enough food, water and fuel as there is nowhere to purchase supplies. Please take your rubbish off the island with you.

Camping fees apply. Camp sites can be booked through Dirk Hartog Island Lodge’s bookings web page isharkbay.org

More information

• The national park contains a good range of marine flora and fauna, including many species not found elsewhere in the world. • The island offers good walking opportunities and a chance to see many plants, birds, and reptiles that are unique to the island. • The island has a rich Aboriginal heritage and is home to the traditional Wirruwana language groups: Malgana, Nhanda and Yingkarta. Dirk Hartog Island is part of Malgana country and is known as Wirruwana, while Shark Bay is called Gutharraguda, meaning ‘two bays.’

Wirruwana

Shark Bay is the traditional country of three Aboriginal language groups: Malgana, Nhanda and Yingkarta. Dirk Hartog Island is part of Malgana country and is known as Wirruwana, while Shark Bay is called Gutharraguda, meaning ‘two bays.’

There is evidence of past Aboriginal occupation of Wirruwana and Malgana people still regularly visit and fish its waters.

Recent history

In 1616 Dirk Hartog made the first recorded landing by a European in Western Australia. He was followed in 1699 by Willem de Vlamingh. In 1772 St Awoam landed on Dirk Hartog Island and claimed the western half of New Holland for France, but his claim was never enacted.

Voyages of scientific discovery were conducted by Nicolas Baudin in 1801-03 and Louis de Freycinet in 1818, while Henny Mangles Denham surveyed the island in 1858, producing charts that were used into the 1960s.

Settlement and industries followed these voyages of discovery. Guano (seabird droppings) was mined from Shark Bay’s islands in 1850, but the industry was short-lived as the islands were quickly stripped bare. PEARLING also began around 1850 and little was left of Shark Bay’s pearl beds by the 1930s.

Sheep were introduced to Dirk Hartog Island in the 1860s, while goats and the remaining goats have been removed, the project will then return 10 small native mammals—the boodie, woylie, western barred bandicoot, mulgara, brush-tailed mulgara, dibbler, greater stick-nest rat, tawny antechinus, a skink found only on the island and nearby Edel Land.

Among the 48 reptile species living on Dirk Hartog Island are 11 that are threatened western spiny-tailed skink and the Shark Bay scops owl, a skink found only on the island and nearby Edel Land.

While many of the 13 native mammal species originally found on the island are now locally extinct, they will be reintroduced as part of an ecological restoration project to secure their futures.

Mulgara is a species planned for re-introduction to the island.

Boat safety in Shark Bay Marine Park

• Keep at least 50m clear of dive flags.
• Let a responsible adult know about your trip.
• Carry enough water, food supplies and sun protection for unexpected waves.
• Ensure your boat is in good working order and has extra fuel.
• Carry the safety equipment relevant to your vessel and enough life jackets for each person on board.
• Always leave someone on board when you are diving or snorkelling from a boat.
• Make sure your diving gear is secured, not dangling, and watch where you kick.
• Keep your boat clear of anything that may impede your ability to get away from wrecks undisturbed.
• Never fish where waves and spray have been washing over rocks.
• Please keep well clear of cliff edges.

Ecological Restoration

In 2008 major destocking efforts began in preparation for the removal of the feral cats and the remaining goats. Once the island’s vegetation and, combined with feral cats, exacted a toll on the natural environment, the project will then return 10 small native mammals—the boodie, woylie, western barred bandicoot, mulgara, brush-tailed mulgara, dibbler, greater stick-nest rat, tawny antechinus, a skink found only on the island and nearby Edel Land.

In 2007, more than 10,000 goats and 5000 sheep have been removed and the island’s vegetation is showing strong signs of recovery.

Access and fishing

• Keep alert for boat traffic.
• Stay alert for boat traffic.
• Keep at least 50m clear of dive flags.
• Let a responsible adult know about your trip.
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• Ensure your boat is in good working order and has extra fuel.
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• Never fish where waves and spray have been washing over rocks.
• Please keep well clear of cliff edges.

Tips when diving or snorkelling

Many marine animals use venom or toxins for catching prey or as a defence mechanism. Always leave the wrecks undisturbed.

Remember when diving or snorkelling:
• Take care when diving or snorkelling over 200m from the shore.
• Keep alert for boat traffic.
• Keep at least 50m clear of dive flags.
• Let a responsible adult know about your trip.
• Carry enough water, food supplies and sun protection for unexpected waves.
• Ensure your boat is in good working order and has extra fuel.
• Carry the safety equipment relevant to your vessel and enough life jackets for each person on board.
• Always leave someone on board when you are diving or snorkelling from a boat.
• Make sure your diving gear is secured, not dangling, and watch where you kick.
• Keep your boat clear of anything that may impede your ability to get away from wrecks undisturbed.
• Never fish where waves and spray have been washing over rocks.
• Please keep well clear of cliff edges.

Boat safely in Shark Bay Marine Park

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• Carry the safety equipment relevant to your vessel and enough life jackets for each person on board.
• Always leave someone on board when you are diving or snorkelling from a boat.
• Make sure your diving gear is secured, not dangling, and watch where you kick.
• Keep your boat clear of anything that may impede your ability to get away from wrecks undisturbed.
• Never fish where waves and spray have been washing over rocks.
• Please keep well clear of cliff edges.
Dramatic scenery from Quoin Head, a place enjoyed by fishers. If you are taking a four-wheel drive to the island you can visit Sandy Point. You may fish from the beach at Sandy Point, but not offshore in the waters of the marine sanctuary zone, which protects a diversity of staghorns, brain and plate corals. Boats can access the beach here.

Withnell Point

Once a sheltered haven for boats, this small bay has been hit by storm surges which have made it shallower and less accessible.

Dampiers Landing

William Dampier came ashore here in August 1699, describing the vegetation and making the first scientific collection of Australian plants. He also named Shark Bay and 300 years later, a plaque was erected at this site in his honor.

Western sites

If you are taking a four-wheel drive to the island you can visit several places along the island’s west coast. From south to north:

Surf Point

Tropical fish species and coral communities occur in 3–4m of water at Surf Point. Fish include various parrotfish, wrasse, butterflyfish, angelfish and snapper. Corals include staghorns, vase and plate corals. Fishing is not permitted in the marine park sanctuary zone.

Blowholes

Ocean swells push water up through holes in the rock shelf at the base of the cliffs. Take care on the soft sandy track and sand dune.

Quoin Head/Charlies Harbour

Massive chunks of collapsed cliffs in Charlies Harbour make for dramatic scenery from Quoin Head, a place enjoyed by fishers. If fishing, take care and follow the rock fishing guidelines.

Mystery Beach

Mystery Beach is renowned for being a repository of flotsam and jetsam. Enjoy a walk along this beach to see what has washed up.

West Point (The Block) and Urchin Point

Huts at these two sites provide shelter from the wind and are popular with fishers. Giant slabs of limestone dumped by a tsunami give The Block its popular name. If fishing, take care and follow the rock fishing guidelines.

Cape Inscription

Dirk Hartog left a pewter plate inscribed with details of his voyage at Cape Inscription in 1616. Willem de Vlamingh followed in 1697 and left a new plate with his own inscription and a copy of Hartog’s. This historic site is overlooked by a lighthouse built in 1909 and lighthouse keepers’ quarters which were restored in 2012.

Turtle Bay lookout

Remnants of a tram track used to transport materials for the lighthouse buildings lead to views of Turtle Bay. During summer the beaches below are covered in the tracks of loggerhead turtles that have struggled up the beach through the night to lay their eggs.

Shifting dunes, soft sand

Vehicle tracks disappear on shifting dunes and make it difficult to find the way across.

Drive carefully

- The access road to the Steep Point barge site is long and rough (146km unsealed track – about 3 hours driving). Be prepared.
- Only high clearance four-wheel-drive vehicles are able to traverse the sandy tracks on the island and the last 30km of sandy tracks to the Steep Point barge site.
- The one lane tracks are narrow and encroached by bushes in places – vehicles may get scratched.
- Unlicensed off-road vehicles (such as quad bikes or motor bikes) are not permitted.
- Ensure your vehicle is in sound condition and has all of the recommended safety equipment.
- Normal road traffic rules apply.
- Seat belts must be worn and riding in the back of utilities is prohibited.
- Drive at a safe speed suitable to the conditions.
- Reduce tyre pressure to 20psi or lower (trailers included) to negotiate the soft sand tracks. The pressure will vary according to vehicle type and load as well as type of tyre and rim.
- Remember to inflate tyres when you are back on the Useless Loop Road.
- Drive only on existing vehicle tracks and keep four-wheel drive engaged to minimise track damage.
- Entry to the Useless Loop town site and surrounding area is not permitted.

Enjoy your visit – look after the park and yourself

- Dirk Hartog Island is remote and potentially dangerous – your safety is your responsibility.
- It is recommended that you carry a satellite phone programmed with emergency numbers.
- There are no water, food, fuel or vehicle services in the area.
- The barge service must be booked in advance.
- Camp sites must be booked prior to arrival.
- Visitors must register on arrival at Steep Point/Shelter Bay and display an entry permit on vehicle dashboard.
- Open fires are not permitted. Please use portable gas cookers.
- Bury human waste at least 100m from public areas and the water.
- During summer, heat is a potential safety hazard – make sure you take enough water.
- Firearms, weapons and fireworks are not permitted.
- No pets allowed.
- A 1080 baiting program is underway on the island as part of a feral animal eradication program. 1080 baits are poisonous to pets and people.
- Shut the gate at the cat fence after driving through. It is kept closed.
- All native wildlife is protected. Leave plants, animals, rocks and shells as you find them.
- Turtles nest on the island’s beaches during summer. Please keep light to a minimum and do not disturb nesting turtles or hatchlings.
- Fishing is not permitted, and nothing may be removed from, marine sanctuary zones.
- You must take your rubbish off the island with you. While on the island, secure your rubbish to avoid being blown by the wind or foraged on by wildlife. Animals may chew through plastic bags.

Marine Bay Reserve

- 3–4m of water at Surf Point
- Several places along the island’s west coast
- From south to north:
  - Surf Point
  - Tropical fish species and coral communities occur in 3–4m of water at Surf Point. Fish include various parrotfish, wrasse, butterflyfish, angelfish and snapper. Corals include staghorns, vase and plate corals. Fishing is not permitted in the marine park sanctuary zone.
  - Blowholes
  - Ocean swells push water up through holes in the rock shelf at the base of the cliffs. Take care on the soft sandy track and sand dune.
  - Quoin Head/Charlies Harbour
  - Massive chunks of collapsed cliffs in Charlies Harbour make for dramatic scenery from Quoin Head, a place enjoyed by fishers. If fishing, take care and follow the rock fishing guidelines.
  - Mystery Beach
  - Mystery Beach is renowned for being a repository of flotsam and jetsam. Enjoy a walk along this beach to see what has washed up.
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  - Huts at these two sites provide shelter from the wind and are popular with fishers. Giant slabs of limestone dumped by a tsunami give The Block its popular name. If fishing, take care and follow the rock fishing guidelines.
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Legend

- Accommodation
- Beach access
- Bush camping
- Diving and snorkeling
- Fishing
- Historic site
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- No fishing
- No spear fishing
- 4WD only
- Sand dune heath
- Sand dunes
- Private property
- 4WD track
- Marine Park boundary
- Kilometre distance between points

Map from the track north of Sandy Point.