Keep your personal safety in mind at all times. Caution is required in any natural environment with potentially hazardous terrain. Fitzgerald River National Park is no exception. Stand back from rocky headlands and cliff edges. Many areas within the park have steep, rocky slopes that can be unstable underfoot.

Choose fishing or swimming sites with great care. The Southern Ocean is unpredictable, making rock fishing and swimming especially dangerous. Huge waves and swells can suddenly occur even on calm days. Rocks become slippery when wet. Rip currents are common along the coastline. Wear a lifejacket at all times when fishing from rocks.

No pets are permitted in the park. Please leave your dogs, cats and other domestic animals at home as they can harm native wildlife and environment. Foxes and cats are predators to native animals, so the park is baited with 1080 poison to control the numbers of these introduced predators. Native animals are naturally resistant to 1080, but the baits will kill your pets.

Please heed visitor risk warnings shown on signs that display this symbol.

More information

National park rangers are available to provide information. Don’t hesitate to contact them if you need assistance.

Rangers (West)
Jacupurrumpa
Tel (08) 9835 5403

Ranger (East)
Barrrens Beach Road
Tel (08) 9836 3060

Department of Parks and Wildlife Office
13 Morgan Street
Ravenshorpe
Albany District Office
120 Albany Highway, Albany WA 6330
Tel (08) 9842 4500
Fax (08) 9841 7105
Email Albany@dpaw.wa.gov.au

Visit the Department of Parks and Wildlife’s website www.dpaw.wa.gov.au for more information on the park.

Other Fitzgerald River National Park brochures include:
- Fitzgerald River National Park information and recreation guide
- Eastern short walk trail guide

For general information about the park, including a park map and details of access roads please refer to the Fitzgerald River National Park information and recreation guide brochure.

The brochures are available from park entry stations, walk trail heads or download copies online http://park.dpaw.wa.gov.au/park/fitzgerald-river. Park Podcast series can also be found at this site.

Thanks to the Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park for contributions.
Point Ann Heritage Trail

1km return – allow one hour

This is an easy walk and is classified as class 2. Allow 1 hour return. The walktrail starts at the Point Ann car park. This gentle walk provides spectacular views over Point Charles Bay and humpback or southern right whales are often seen during the winter months.

The trail follows a section of the No. 2 rabbit proof fence, which was constructed in 1905 to stop the influx of rabbits from the eastern states. By the beginning of the 1900s, rabbits had achieved plague numbers throughout Victoria and South Australia, and there was concern the same could happen to Western Australia as the rabbit populations moved steadily westwards. The fence ran north from Point Ann for 1164km, passing the Wheatbelt town of Cunderdin and joining the No.3 fence north east of Geraldton. The fence required constant maintenance, which was carried out by boundary riders. The earlier fence riders used camels, horses and bicycles to patrol their respective sections of fence, some of which were in excess of 150kms. In 1960 the fence ceased to be maintained by the boundary riders.

In 1922 the Dallison brothers established a mallet bark stripping business at Point Ann for the extraction of tannin. Bark was stripped from mallet trees and carted by a six horse drawn dray to Point Ann, where it was loaded onto longboats and rowed out to waiting ships for transportation to Europe. The tannin extracted from the mallet bark was considered important in the early 1900s for tanning leather.

Whale watching at Point Ann

Point Ann offers a unique close viewing platform for spotting whales. Southern right whales visit the bay to calve and raise their young every year. The coastline between Doubtful Island and Hopetoun are a favourite gathering place for southern right whales and visiting humpback whales on their migration north from the Antarctic Ocean during winter and early spring (July - October). Bottlenose dolphins often come close to the shore to feed and surf the waves. Blue whales, minke whales, and orcas travel migratory routes from the Antarctic north to warmer waters around the south coast and are also occasionally seen.

The southern right whale has a characteristic V-shaped water spout when it comes to the surface to breathe. They also have unique patterns of white horny growths called callosities on their heads (outgrowths of barnacles and skin) which can be used to identify each individual whale. An adult can weigh up to 85 tonnes when mature and may reach 18m in length. In late winter to early spring, southern right whales come to sheltered bays, such as Point Ann, to give birth and nurse their young calves. At birth a calf weighs about one tonne and is 5.5m in length. The mother whale will suckle her calf for 4–6 months in these coastal waters. During this time she does not feed herself. As summer approaches she will return to deeper southern waters with her calf to feed. Females only breed every three to four years, staying in sub-Antarctic waters when not breeding.

The humpback whale is slightly smaller than the southern right whale. Most adults are 15m in length, although some can reach 18m, and weigh up to 45 tonnes. Humpback whales are noted for their haunting songs. In a playful mood, they may put on spectacular displays, breaching, rolling, and slapping their pectoral fins. The humpback has large pectoral fins that are one-third of their body length and a humped dorsal fin which varies in size and shape. It is easily identified by its 'hump' back when submerging and its mushroom-shaped blow when breathing at the surface. Newborn calves are more than 4m long and weigh about two tonnes. The mother nurses the young calf for about 11 months, by which time the calf can reach up to 8m long.

Minke whales are the second smallest baleen (filter feeder) whale and have an average length of 8m. Minke whales arch their backs while diving but do not raise their tail flukes. Their blows are usually 2-3m high. Minke whales travel either singly or in small groups (2-4), although they can be found in large aggregations in the hundreds where krill is abundant. Minke whales may live for up to 60 years. Females give birth in winter, to a single calf about 2.5m long.

Point Ann Heritage Trail Map

Legend

- National park
- Sealed primary road
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- 4WD/Track (maybe closed other wk)
- Hike/Trek
- Walking and horse riding trail
- Marine Trail
- Point Ann Heritage Trail
- West Mount Barren Walk
- Accommodation
- Beaches (gas and electric)
- Surfside gas barbecue
- Whale watching
- Camping and caravan

Parking is available at all sites.