



WALKING THE CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK INTERPRETATIVE TRAILS

- **Lagoon to Living Streams Walk**
- **Banksia Hill Loop**

Healthy living, healthy ecosystems



The Canning River Regional Park Interpretative Walk Trails are supported by the East Metropolitan Population Health unit.

The Swan Coastal Plain has been extensively cleared of its native vegetation for housing, industry, agriculture and other infrastructure. This has resulted in a significant loss of habitat for many native plants and animals, so the remnant bushland patches form vital wildlife refuge areas.



The importance of this corridor for native animals and plants places a responsibility on people who live in close proximity to the Canning River Regional Park. Unrestrained pets can kill or drive away native birds and small mammals, weeds can take over an area so that native species cannot germinate and grow. The area needs our help to remain a refuge for plants, animals - and people.

There are numerous paths available for walkers throughout the Canning River Regional Park. This brochure describes the features of two:

- The 'Lagoon to Living Streams Walk' along Adenia Reserve and
- The 'Banksia Hill Loop' around Banksia Hill.

Both trails are easily accessible and immediately adjacent to sites with parking and toilet facilities. The trails are accessible for people with disabilities and people with prams and pushers.

Lagoon to Living Streams Walk *Refuges and responsibilities*

You can park at Riverton Bridge and either walk up and back along the same route – or ask a friend to meet you with the car at Bannister Creek at the end of Adenia Road. A stroll one way along the trail will take about 45 minutes. Allow a little over an hour and a half to walk in both directions.

Starting at Riverton Bridge, you walk alongside the river and over the boardwalk. Pause here for a moment and let the years fall away. Almost two hundred years ago, Captain Stirling would have seen a similar view to the one you are seeing now. The wide expanse of the placid river dotted with small islands, and the fringing vegetation is little changed and it is hoped that it will stay that way for centuries to come. This area is the largest section of the Canning River Regional Park set aside for 'Conservation and Protection'. Here, the birds and other wildlife like reptiles, frogs and water rats, feed, breed and find refuge from predators - and people – amongst the reeds and sedges. Some of the wading birds are overseas visitors – such as the red-necked stint, and the curlew sandpiper –

which fly half the way around the world every year to avoid the harsh winters of the northern hemisphere. Others have had a shorter trip – flying in as water courses in our inland areas dry out over summer.

The most common tree species you will see are the sheoak (with the soft needle-like leaves), paperbark (with soft papery bark) and flooded gum. The trees provide food and homes for a range of other plants and animals at various stages of their lifecycles. You will see some good examples of older (up to 400 years old) flooded gums towards Bannister Creek. Many of these have hollows formed by broken branches, fire and termites. These are important homes for brushtail possums, parrots, and other bush and wetland birds.



Just as the path allows you to easily move along the river, the corridor of vegetation alongside the river enables animals to breed, feed and move along the length of the river. It provides a conduit, connecting bushland remnants including wetlands and woodlands on the coastal plain with the forests of the Darling Scarp.

- If you have chest pains or discomfort while walking, stop immediately and seek medical advice as soon as possible.
 - If you are unwell or injured, avoid walking. Wait until you are fully recovered.
 - Walk with a friend – it's more enjoyable and always safer.
 - Keep to the paths.
 - Enjoy yourself!
 - Remember to warm up and stretch before and after your walk to avoid injury and stiffness.
 - When you start walking, begin slowly and build the pace – and distance - gradually.
 - In summer particularly, walk in the cooler part of the day.
 - Slip (on a shirt), slop (on sunscreen), slap (on a hat) and wear comfortable shoes.
 - Drink plenty of water before, during and after your walk.
- To help you get the most out of your walk, there are a few tips you should consider:

Code of Conduct

The Canning River Regional Park is registered as part of the National Heritage Estate and is co-managed by the City of Canning, the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the Swan River Trust, and the resident volunteers of the area.

Help us keep it special by:

- Keeping your dog leashed while walking in the Park.
- Keeping to the paths - people and pets can threaten native animals, and native animals like snakes can also be a threat to people and pets.
- Responsibly disposing of rubbish and garden plant material – dumped prunings or lawn clippings will introduce weeds into the Park.
- Enjoying the wildlife by watching and listening only. Feeding native animals such as black ducks threatens their health and well-being.
- Using the barbecues supplied and keeping open fires out of the Park.

You can also actively help by joining one of the Canning River volunteer programs to assist with the protection of this unique environment (for information, contact the City of Canning).

Further Information

Do you want to know more about the Canning River, its wildlife or the volunteer programs in the area? Contact the City of Canning on 9231 0655 or the Department of Conservation and Land Management on 9431 6500, or explore the websites at <http://www.canning.wa.gov.au> and <http://www.calm.wa.gov.au>.

Banksia Hill Loop

Changes over time and space

Park your vehicle at Wilson Park (Kent Street Weir), cross over the river and follow the path past the samphire flats to the signpost marking the Banksia Hill Loop trail. This easy walk will take you around 45 minutes to complete.

Banksia Hill was originally cleared and used by the Meredith family for grazing cattle and horses and for market gardening, irrigated by the fresh water upstream of the Kent Street Weir. The landowners left the site in the 1950s and it was not until the 1990s that local people – the Canning River Regional Park Volunteers, intervened to save and extend the area of remnant native vegetation.

Plants from the early settlement – like the exotic grasses – are now being slowly replaced by native species such as Conostylis, Blue Leschenaultia, and of course the banksias from which the Hill gets its name. This natural plant succession is being helped by volunteers planting and tending additional native species.



Natural ecosystems are dynamic, ever changing with time. The structure and the composition of the vegetation changes slowly and a succession of plants species germinate, grow and die. Bushfires can hasten this process.

Fire has been a part of the natural environment of the Swan Coastal Plain for many thousands of years. Prior to European settlement, fires were started by lightning and by Nyungar Aboriginal people who used fire to "farm" food and other resources.

Native plants have evolved adaptations that enable them to persist, recover, and in some cases, depend upon fire. Grass trees and flooded gums, for example, can re-sprout after fire. The thick woody seed capsules of banksias need the heat of a fire to open the capsules and release their contents onto the newly cleared ground. The hard wattle seeds buried in the soil need heat or smoke from a bushfire to start germination (note the numbers of young wattles with the flat strap-like leaves along the trail. They are clear evidence of a recent fire event).

While fires at the appropriate intervals and seasons are beneficial, very frequent, or large and intense fires can damage the environment by changing the structure and composition of the vegetation and making the habitat unsuitable for some native animals, such as hollow-nesting birds. Today, weeds will often quickly invade an area after a fire, displacing the native vegetation and adding to the future fire hazard.



CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK

